

14 Landscape & Visual Impact

14.1 Introduction

14.1.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement has been produced by Savills Urban Design Studio. It has been prepared by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and Recognised Practitioner of the Urban Design Group.

14.1.2 It describes and evaluates any significant changes to landscape character, features and visual amenity that are predicted to arise due to the Proposed Development as set out in the Parameter Plans and described in Chapter 3. It also considers the potential additional mitigation as set out in the Illustrative Landscape Strategy drawing.

14.1.3 The main objectives of this chapter are as follows:

- Review relevant landscape policies and designations relating to the Site;
- Establishment of the baseline landscape and visual conditions, including the sensitivity/value of receptors;
- Identification and assessment of the magnitude of any potential effects;
- Identify proposed additional mitigation;
- Appraise of the significance of any residual effects.

14.2 Assessment methodology

14.2.1 This Landscape and Visual chapter (LVIA) chapter appraises the baseline and effects on landscape character, landscape features and visual amenity. This section describes the policy background and how the methodology has been informed by the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment 3rd edition ('GLVIA3', Landscape Institute & IEMA, 2013.)

International Landscape Policy Context

14.2.2 The UK signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention (ELC) in 2006-2007. This international convention focuses specifically on landscapes, promoting the importance of policies relating to their protection, management and creation. It applies to all landscapes, towns, open countryside, coast and inland areas, and includes ordinary and degraded landscapes as well as those afforded protection. The ELC does not confine itself to cultural or man-made landscape elements alone, but to all elements and the way they interact. The use of Landscape Character Assessment to inform policymaking is a well-established example of the implementation of the convention in the UK.

14.2.3 The ELC recommends that landscape policies should aim to 'protect, manage or plan' as defined below:

- *"Landscape protection: action to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by the landscape's heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or human activity.*
- *Landscape management: action from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes.*

- *Landscape planning means: strong forward looking action to enhance, restore or create landscape.”*

National Planning Policy – Landscape Matters

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (HM Government, 2018, updated 2019)

14.2.4 The 25 Year Plan sets out strategic environmental policy covering a range of aspirations. Goal 6 ‘enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment’ sets out the commitments to ensure we conserve and enhance the beauty of the natural environment, and make sure it can be enjoyed, used by and cared for by everyone. It sets out the following measures as ways to achieve this goal:

- *“Safeguarding and enhancing the beauty of our natural scenery and improving its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage.”*
- *“Making sure that there are high quality, accessible, natural spaces close to where people live and work, particularly in urban areas, and encouraging more people to spend time in them to benefit their health and wellbeing.”*
- *“Focusing on increasing action to improve the environment from all sectors of society.” (Page 28)*

14.2.5 This goal, along with the other seven presented in the 25 Year Plan, are supported by the National Planning Policy Framework.

National Planning Policy Framework

14.2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (updated December 2024) (NPPF) is a material consideration in dealing with planning applications for development. The Framework sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied and provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

14.2.7 The NPPF describes how the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to achieve sustainable development through three overarching objectives. Objective c), the ‘environmental objective’, is to:

“protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy” (NPPF paragraph 8).

14.2.8 Policy sections that are particularly relevant to the landscape design of the Site are:

Section 15 ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’

14.2.9 Paragraph 187 states that Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

“[...] a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;[...]"

Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance

14.2.10 The NPPF is supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The Natural Environment PPG (published 2016, updated February 2025), explains the key issues in implementing policy to protect biodiversity and natural environment and provides advice on how the character of landscapes can be used to inform planning decisions and what green infrastructure is and why it is important in delivering sustainable developments.

14.2.11 It makes reference to the National Planning Policy Framework, stating:

"it is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes".

14.2.12 The Natural Environment PPG also goes on to state, *"the cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully"* (Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721, Revision date: 21 July 2019).

14.2.13 At paragraph 037, the PPG identifies that landscape character assessments can be prepared, as well as Landscape and Sensitivity and Capacity Assessments to help assess the type and scale of development that may be accommodated without compromising landscape character (Paragraph: 037 Reference ID: 8-037-20190721, Revision date: 21 July 2019). The PPG also states that a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used to demonstrate the likely effects of a Proposed Development.

Adopted Local Planning Policy

***Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy
Development Plan Document (January 2010) and Wokingham Borough Managing
Development Delivery Plan (February 2014)***

14.2.14 The primary policies relating to landscape and visual amenity are set out in the WBC Adopted Core Strategy (2010) and Managing Development Delivery Plan (2014).

14.2.15 Core Strategy Policy CP1 Sustainable Development requires planning proposals to: *"maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment".*

14.2.16 Core Strategy Policy CP3 General Principles for Development requires planning proposals to:

"Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.

Maintain or enhance the ability of the Site to support fauna and flora including protected species;"

14.2.17 Delivery Plan Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping seeks to include green infrastructure networks within developments. Supporting paragraph 2.19 sets out the need for landscape and visual impact studies where the Site is located on or adjacent to development limits or where it may have an impact on the surrounding townscape. Relevant requirements of this policy are:

"Development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered and achieved the following criteria within scheme proposals:

- a) *Provide new or protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure networks, including the need to mitigate potential impacts of new development*
- b) *Promote accessibility, linkages and permeability between and within existing green corridors including public rights of way such as footpaths, cycleways and bridleways*
- c) *Promote the integration of the scheme with any adjoining public open space or countryside*
- d) *Protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features*
- e) *Incorporate high quality, ideally, native planting and landscaping as an integral part of the scheme.*

3. *Development proposals which would result in the loss, fragmentation or isolation of areas of green infrastructure will not be acceptable.*

14.2.18 Delivery Plan Policy TB21: Landscape Character requires that:

- “1. *Proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues.*
- 2. *Proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.”*

14.2.19 Amongst other requirements, Delivery Plan Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development requires that development proposals:

- a) *“Provide opportunities, including through design, layout and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing*
- b) *Provide appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated Sites as well as habitats and species of principle importance for nature conservation*
- c) *Ensure that all existing and new developments are ecologically permeable through the protection of existing and the provision of new continuous wildlife corridors, which shall be integrated and linked to the wider green infrastructure network”.*

Emerging Local Planning Policy

14.2.20 The Site has a draft allocation in the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan 2023-2040 which is specifically set out by Policy SS13. With regards to landscape and visual matters, this requires the Loddon Garden Village to deliver:

- “f) *a multi-functional country park which is accessible to settlements beyond the garden village,*
- g) *A solution to avoid or mitigate the impact of development upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area through the provision of sufficient Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) (subject to monitoring of the quality and quantity standards).”*

14.2.21 Policy SS13 sets out requirements for masterplanning the Loddon Garden Village:

- “3. *The siting, layout, and form of development, including landscaping should:*
- a) *Draw on and enhance the site's context, changes in topography and its considerable natural assets such as the River Loddon and Barkham Brook, irreplaceable habitats, and hedgerows, trees, woodland and other features;*
- b) *Protect and retain the permanent physical and visual sense of separation of Arborfield and the defined settlements of Arborfield Cross and Shinfield;...*
- d) *Establish a comprehensive and integrated network of high-quality and attractive active travel routes...*

- e) Incorporate measures to protect the separate identity of Carter's Hill;
- f) Incorporate measures to conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, including listed buildings, through appropriate design and the provision of sufficient space;...
- h) Locate higher development densities ... subject to site specific sensitivities such as landscape, character and heritage;...
- j) Draw on the recreational and ecological opportunities of the River Loddon and Barkham Brook to create a multi-functional country park which provides coherent ecological networks, recreational opportunities and active travel connectivity.

5....*The masterplan must provide:*

- a) A coordinated and comprehensive landscape led approach to development of the whole Loddon Valley Garden Village...
- b) A strategy for the quantum and distribution of land uses, access points, design and layout principles ... which draws on a detailed understanding of the area's characteristics, opportunities and constraints;

6. *Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive strategic landscape and green and blue infrastructure strategy that:*

- a) Provides a new country park incorporating the River Loddon and Barkham Brook that contributes to, and enhances, coherent ecological networks and habitats, which are integrated into the wider green and blue infrastructure beyond the garden village;
- b) Protects and enhances the identified attributes of the River Loddon Valued Landscape and Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape;
- c) Provide a network of connected, accessible and high-quality open spaces that includes tree lined streets, opportunities for local food growing and natural play, that integrate with the wider green and blue infrastructure network;
- d) Retains, and incorporates appropriate buffers for, ancient woodland, ancient or veteran trees, watercourses, hedgerows, and other trees into the connected green and blue infrastructure of the Site;
- e) Provides a network of safe, attractive, landscaped and accessible public rights of way across the site, and where appropriate demonstrates how they connect into the existing rights of way network;
- f) Contributes to establishing the Loddon long distance footpath for active travel;...

8. *Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive ecological strategy that:...*

- c) Provide a suitable buffer between the built development and ecological areas, including (but not limited to) Local Wildlife Sites, areas of irreplaceable habitat and areas of priority habitat; and
- d) Provide measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. This will include the provision of sufficient and accessible Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace on-Site (as set out in Policy NE3)."

14.2.22 In addition, the draft Local Plan has other policies relating to Green Infrastructure, Trees and Valued Landscapes across the Borough.

14.2.23 Policy C4: 'Green and Blue Infrastructure and Public Rights of Way' requires green and blue infrastructure to be protected and enhanced for their biodiversity, recreational, amenity, health, townscape and landscape value, and their contribution towards mitigating and adapting to climate change. It requires development proposals to plan for a network of publicly accessible green and blue infrastructure from the outset as appropriate and avoid the loss, fragmentation, isolation or other adverse impacts on networks of habitats and existing green and blue infrastructure unless replacement provision can be provided

14.2.24 Policy NE4: 'Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows' seeks to protect existing trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows and ensure they are well integrated within the public realm, in a suitably landscaped setting.

14.2.25 Policy NE5: 'Landscape and Design' supports development proposals that adopt a landscape led approach which protects and enhances the character and distinctiveness of landscapes using the most up-to date landscape studies (including the Landscape Character Assessment and Design Guide and any successor document). It requires development proposals to be "demonstrably informed by, and respond to, the distinctive characters set out in the Landscape Character Assessment and other relevant assessments, which provide an understanding of the valued characteristics, features and quality of local landscape character areas."

14.2.26 Policy NE5 also requires development proposals to be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed. Landscape schemes should be set within an overall masterplan for the proposed development, and should incorporate landscape spaces, public realm and green and blue infrastructure to achieve a sense of place, improve health and wellbeing and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

14.2.27 Policy NE6 'Valued Landscapes' covers the protection of a number of proposed Valued Landscapes across the borough. The majority of the Site does not lie within a valued landscape however a strip of woodland in the northern part of the site lies within the River Loddon Valued Landscape. The River Loddon Valued Landscape also lies immediately to the east of the Site whilst the Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape lies to the south of the site, on the other side of the B3030 Mole Road.

14.2.28 Policy NE6 requires development proposals located within or affecting a valued landscape to have particular regard to the following attributes:

"a) Landscape quality (condition); b) Scenic quality; c) Rarity; d) Representativeness; e) Conservation interests; f) Recreation value; g) Perceptual aspects; and h) Associations."

14.2.29 It states that development proposals affecting Valued Landscapes:

"will only be supported where they protect, and where appropriate, integrate with and/or enhance the special features, characteristics and qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the harm."

Neighbourhood Plans

14.2.30 The Site lies within the Arborfield & Barkham Parish which has a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan. This has landscape policies that reflect those in the Local Plan, seeking to provide developments with high quality landscapes and that respect the setting of the existing settlements. Relevant policies are set out below:

- Policy IRS2: Recognise, Respect And Preserve Identity And Rural Setting Of Settlements;
- Policy IRS3: Protection And Enhancement Of The Natural Environment And Green Spaces;
- Policy AD3: High Quality Development With Generous Open Space, Properly Landscaped;
- Policy GA2: Implement Local Network Of Green Routes For Non-Motorised Users.

Guidance and Best Practice

14.2.31 The following guidance has been used:

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd edition* (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013) ('GLVIA');
- *Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01: Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3)* (Landscape Institute, August, 2024);
- *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (Natural England, October 2014);
- *Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals* (Landscape Institute 2019);
- *Technical Guidance Note 08/19 Camera Auto Settings* (Landscape Institute 2019);
- *Technical Guidance Note 09/19 Earth Curvature* (Landscape Institute 2019);
- *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Sustainability & Environment Appraisal LA 107 Landscape and Visual Effects (formerly DMRB Volume 11 Section 3 Part 5 Landscape Effects and IAN 135/10) Revision 2* (Highways England, Transport Scotland, Welsh Government, Department for Infrastructure An Rinn Bonnegair, February 2020).

Baseline Survey Methodology

Desk-based Review

14.2.32 Baseline data has been collected via a desk-based survey and a number of Site visits through both the summer and winter months.

14.2.33 The desk-based survey has comprised a review of:

- Aerial photography;
- OS mapping;
- GIS database of national and local landscape, ecology and heritage designations. This chapter does not comprise an ecological or heritage review, but considers whether any natural and heritage assets contribute to the landscape character of the Site;
- National and local planning policy relating to landscape and visual matters;
- National and local landscape character assessments, comprising:
 - Natural England's *National Landscape Character Areas*
 - *Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment* (November 2019);

- *Wokingham Valued Landscapes Assessment (September 2024).*

Site Visits

14.2.34 Several site visits were undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect and Urban Design Group Recognised Practitioner from 2022 – 2025 in both the winter and summer months. The site visits confirmed the information arising from the desk study, produced a photographic record of the Site, highlighted any landscape features not already apparent from the desk study and enabled potential views into and out of the Site to be appraised. The photographs provided in Appendix 14.1 were taken in March 2022 and March 2025, when the leaves had fallen, enabling the maximum extents of visibility to be assessed.

Geographical Scope

14.2.35 The Site visit extended to Earley in the north-west, Winnersh in the north-east, Shinfield in the west, Barkham in the east and Arborfield Garrison in the south. This helped us to refine where visual change may occur. The study area shown on the figures in Appendix 14.1 extends to incorporate areas where there may be changes to views, approximately 1km from the boundaries of the Site in each direction.

Photography

14.2.36 Photographs were taken with a Canon EOS 5D digital full frame SLR camera with a 50mm lens. This is compliant with Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Photographs are presented as 'Type 1' Visualisations, namely Annotated Viewpoint Photographs. These are presented as panoramas to give a more realistic representation of the wider context. Locational data was surveyed with a Garmin GPS. Given the limited nature of visibility of the proposed development it was not considered necessary to produce visualisations or wirelines.

Figures

14.2.37 The baseline surveys are summarised in Section 14.3, with accompanying figures in Appendix 14.1. These comprise:

- Landscape Designations (Figure 14.1);
- Landscape Character Assessments (Figure 14.2);
- Landscape and Movement context (Figure 14.3);
- Landform and Water Features (Figure 14.4);
- Site Landscape Features (Figure 14.5);
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Photography Viewpoints (Figure 14.6);
- Views (Figure 14.7– 14.13);
- Illustrative Masterplan (Figure 14.14).

Landscape Assessment Methodology

14.2.38 The landscape character of the site comprises a variety of components, as defined in the DMRB, namely:

- “1) natural/physical (i.e. geology/soils, land form, river/drainage systems, land cover/vegetation, buildings);

- 2) *aesthetic/perceptual (i.e. appearance, architectural styles, scales, tranquillity), and*
- 3) *cultural/social (i.e. human interaction, land use, heritage, open spaces, street patterns) that together inform the character of the area”*

(source: DMRB Sustainability & Environment Appraisal LA 107 Landscape and Visual Effects paragraph 3.17)

14.2.39 The appraisals are based on an evaluation of the ‘sensitivity’ of the landscape and visual receptors and the ‘magnitude’ of the changes.

14.2.40 The overall ‘sensitivity’ of the landscape receptor (Table 14.3) is based on an evaluation of the combination of the ‘value’ of the visual receptors (Table 14.1) and their ‘susceptibility to change’ (Table 14.2) caused by the Proposed Development.

14.2.41 ‘Value’ refers to the value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons (GLVIA3 paragraph 5.19). The baseline review considers the individual elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and the condition/quality and ‘representativeness’ of its elements and features. Given that the Site lies outside of a nationally designated landscape, this utilises the Landscape Institute’s TGN 02/21 ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations’. Table 1 of TGN02/21 sets out a range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value and effectively updates Box 5.1 from GLVIA3 (p.84). This considers examples of indicators of landscape value, namely natural heritage, cultural heritage, landscape condition, associations (with people, events & the arts), landscape distinctiveness/identity, recreational opportunities, perceptual (scenic) qualities (primarily visual appeal), (perceptual (wildness and tranquillity) and whether they have an identifiable and valuable function.

Table 14.1 Landscape Value Criteria

Landscape Value	Criteria
High	A landscape element or area of high scenic/ perceptual qualities in good condition. Highly valued for its quality and/or Landscape character, and may be designated at a national or international level, such as World Heritage Sites, National Parks and Landscapes and Registered Parks and Gardens.
Medium	A Landscape element or area of medium scenic/ perceptual qualities, in at least moderate condition. May be designated at a regional or local level, for example, Conservation Areas and Valued Landscapes. It may also include undesignated Landscapes with some of the following: High scenic quality Intact Landscape character Presence of distinctive elements/ features in the landscape Features of particular landscape or cultural heritage importance Recreation value Historical associations
Low	An undesignated landscape that has some landscape features that contribute to its sense of place and are of value to the local community, but that may be in mixed condition and include some detractors that weaken its overall character and scenic quality.

Landscape Value	Criteria
Negligible	A landscape with few or no scenic/ perceptual qualities and in poor condition, not particularly valued, and not designated.

14.2.42 'Susceptibility to change' refers to the ability of the landscape receptor (the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies (GLVIA3 paragraph 5.40). The categorisation for susceptibility to change is set out in Table 14.2.

Table 14.2 Landscape Susceptibility to Change Criteria

Landscape susceptibility to change	Criteria
High	An area where landscape character would be noticeably changed by the proposed scheme, either due to the loss of important landscape features, or due to the introduction of new features that are not typical of the area. The potential for intrusive development may also be due to a relatively open character with few elements that could screen the Proposed Development.
Medium	A landscape which is partially tolerant to change of the type proposed. This may be due to the presence of existing landscape detractors or the relative lack of a strong concentration of typical landscape characteristics. The capacity of the landscape to accept change may also be due to the presence of some elements that may screen the proposed scheme, such as vegetation, buildings or landform features.
Low	An area that is tolerant of substantial change of the type proposed. This may be due to a lack of existing distinctive landscape elements or characteristics, the presence of a number of landscape detractors, or the presence of elements that may screen the proposed scheme.

Table 14.3 Overall Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape susceptibility to change (from Table 14.2)	Landscape Value (from Table 14.1)			
	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Negligible
Low	Low	Low	Low	Negligible

14.2.43 The scale of the changes arising from the proposals has then been appraised. The potential effects are also judged according to whether they are:

- Adverse, beneficial or neutral;
- Direct or indirect;
- Temporary or permanent;

- Reversible or irreversible;
- Cumulative.

14.2.44 Definitions of the size/scale of the change are provided in Table 14.4.

Table 14.4 Scale of Landscape Effects

Landscape Scale/ Size of Change	Criteria
High adverse/ beneficial	The proposals would be at total variance (adverse) or totally accord (beneficial) with the key characteristics of the existing landscape, and/or there would be a very noticeable loss or change in landscape elements, features or characteristics. Beneficial effects would restore, recreate, or permanently benefit the condition or character of the landscape.
Medium adverse/ beneficial	The proposals would noticeably be at odds (adverse) or fit well (beneficial) with the key characteristics of the existing landscape, would noticeably improve or harm the condition or character of the landscape, and/or would result in the partial loss or alteration to one or more key landscape elements, features or characteristics.
Low adverse/ beneficial	The proposals would not quite fit (adverse) or have a degree of fit (beneficial) with the key characteristics of the existing landscape, and/or there would be minor loss or alteration of landscape elements, features or characteristics. Beneficial effects would go some way towards improving the condition or character of the landscape.
Negligible adverse/ beneficial landscape impact	The proposals would create a just discernible loss/change, or improvement to the key characteristics of the existing landscape. The proposals may not be uncharacteristic of the existing landscape.
No change	The proposals would not cause any change to the key characteristics of the existing landscape.

14.2.45 The geographical scale of any effect is also considered as a 'modifier' to this judgement, as described in 3(3) and 5(11) of the LITGN-2024-01 (Landscape Institute, August 2024). This considers whether the effect is at the 'site level', 'site setting', 'landscape character area' or 'larger scale'.

14.2.46 The assessment also considers the duration/reversibility of the effect as a 'modifier' to the judgement, as covered by 3(3) of the LITGN- 2024-01. Effects of zero to five years are judged to be 'short-term', Effects lasting five to ten years are 'medium term' and effects of over 15 years are 'long term'.

14.2.47 The overall magnitude of the effect, including the considerations relating to geographical scale and duration of the effects is based on professional judgements is based on the definitions set out in Table 14.5, however ultimately the findings are subject to the judgements of the assessor.

14.2.48 Adverse landscape effects are undesirable and result from negative impacts. Beneficial effects are desirable and result from positive impacts. Neutral effects are neither adverse or beneficial.

14.2.49 It is assumed that all operational changes would be permanent and irreversible for this development.

Table 14.5 Overall Magnitude of Landscape and Visual Effects

High adverse/ beneficial	Effects of high scale/size affecting larger medium or Site setting geographical extent over the long or medium term.
Medium adverse/ beneficial	Effects of high scale/size affecting the Site level geographical extent over the long or medium term; or Effects of high size/scale affecting a larger, medium, Site setting or Site level geographical extent over the short term; or Effects of medium scale/size affecting larger, medium, Site setting or Site level geographical extent over the long or medium term.
Low adverse/ beneficial	Effects of medium scale/size affecting larger, medium, Site setting or Site level geographic extent over the short term; or Effects of low size/scale affecting the larger, medium, Site setting or Site level over the long or medium term.
Negligible adverse/ beneficial	Effects of low scale/size affecting the larger, medium Site setting or Site level scale over the short term; or Effects of negligible scale/size affecting the larger, medium, Site setting or Site level geographical extent and over the long, medium or short term.

14.2.50 The overall significance of the effects is then considered by considering the overall magnitude of change and sensitivity of the receptor group as set out in Table 14.6. As recommended by the GLVIA3, the rationale for this process is described wherever possible, rather than relying solely on the matrix. For the purposes of the assessment, impacts of moderate and above are considered to be significant.

Table 14.6 Overall Significance of Landscape Effects

Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Impact			
	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Substantial	Major	Moderate	Negligible
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Visual Assessment Methodology

14.2.51 The assessments are based on an initial appraisal of the 'sensitivity' of the key views/ visual receptors. These are selected as a representative selection of key views, as agreed with Wokingham Borough Council. Initially the sensitivity of the visual receptors are appraised, (see Table 14.9) based on a combination of the 'value' of the receptor (see Table 14.7) and its 'susceptibility to accept change' (see Table 14.8).

Table 14.7 Visual Receptor - Value Criteria

Value	Criteria
High	Views with high scenic value, views to heritage assets or valued landscape features. Recognition of value shown through planning designations or in relation to heritage assets. Views may be referenced in tourist guides or maps and accompanied by facilities to facilitate their enjoyment, such as parking or interpretation boards.
Medium	Views of medium scenic value. Views not necessarily promoted widely for their value, but may be appreciated by the local community as a popular place to walk/ visit.
Low	Views are of low value, for example, due to landscape detractors, and may only be seen for periods of shorter duration such as visibility from roads or railways.

Table 14.8 Visual Receptor - Susceptibility to Change Criteria

Susceptibility to Change	Criteria
High	Residents at home. People engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention is likely to be focused on the townscape and particular views. Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views are an important contributor to the experience. Communities where views contribute to the townscape setting enjoyed by residents.
Medium	Travellers on road, rail or other transport, where travel involves recognised scenic routes. People at their place of work where views are an important contributor to the setting and quality of working life.
Low	Vehicle users on roads used principally for passage, where the attention is not necessarily focused on the view. People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the townscape. Occupants of places of work whose attention may be focused on the work and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life.

Table 14.9 Visual Receptor: Overall Sensitivity

		Value (From Table 14.7)		
Susceptibility to change (from Table 14.8)		High	Medium	Low
High	High	High	Medium	Low
Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

14.2.52 The scale of the changes to visual amenity arising from the Proposed Development is then appraised according to the criteria set out in Table 14.10. The magnitude of the changes to visual amenity arising from the Proposed Development has then been appraised according to

the matrix provided in Table 14.7. The potential effects are either negative, positive or neutral and direct or indirect. The following are also 'modifiers' to this judgement:

- Whether the view is full/partial/glimpse.
- The proportion of the development that would be visible.
- The distance of the viewpoint from the development and whether the scale of the development within the view.
- Whether the view is stationary or transient.
- The nature of the changes to the view.
- The geographic extent of the effect (taken as the extent of a path to which visual receptors may experience the effect for example)
- How many users may be affected in the location (e.g. how busy a path may be)

14.2.53 Adverse visual effects are undesirable and result from negative impacts. Beneficial effects are desirable and result from positive impacts. Neutral effects are neither adverse nor beneficial.

Table 14.10 Scale of Visual Change: Definitions

Size/ Scale of Effect	Criteria
High	Where the development would cause a dominant or complete change to the composition of the view, and the appreciation of landscape character, contrasting in terms of form, scale and mass, height, colour and/or texture. Views of the scheme are unlikely to be screened to any extent.
Medium	Where the development would cause a clearly noticeable change in the existing view, which would have some effects on its composition, and/or the appreciation of landscape character. It would not result in a dominant change to the view however and the overall effect is likely to be mitigated either due to distance from the viewer, complementary colours and textures, or the presence of some screening elements.
Low	Where the development would cause a perceptible change in the existing view, but would not materially affect its composition, or the appreciation of landscape character, either due to its distance from the viewer, the presence of screening elements or complementary colours and textures. Views of the proposals are more likely to be glimpsed rather than full.
Negligible	Where the development would cause a barely perceptible change in the existing view, either due to the presence of screening elements or distance from the viewer. Whilst the development would be visible, it would not result in a change to the overall composition of the view or landscape character of the area.
No change	No observable change to the view.

14.2.54 The overall significance of the effects is then judged by utilising the categories set out in Table 14.11. As recommended by the GLVIA3, the rationale for this process is described wherever

possible, rather than relying solely on the matrix. For the purposes of the assessment, impacts of moderate and above are considered to be significant.

Table 14.11 Significance of Visual Effects

Magnitude of Visual Change (From Table 14.9)				
Sensitivity of Visual Receptor (From Table 14.8)	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Substantial	Major	Moderate	Negligible
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible

Temporal Scope

14.2.55 The magnitude of the changes has been assessed at three different points:

- During construction .
- Operational effects at Year 0 of occupation (assuming no vegetation planting in any phase is established). This is considered to be a 'potential effect'
- Operational effects at Year 15 after completion (when additional mitigation planting throughout the scheme is well established). This is considered to be a 'residual effect'.

Consultation

14.2.56 In addition to the EIA scoping exercise we have liaised with the Wokingham Borough Council Landscape Officer to gain agreement on which viewpoints should be assessed. We have also liaised with Council officers throughout the masterplanning process to gain input on landscape mitigation measures and the design development has been informed by consultation responses from WBC. Meetings have included attendance at a virtual pre-application meeting as well as additional meetings to discuss the wider Loddon Garden Village, including proposals for the University of Reading and Hatch Farm land.

Assumptions and Limitations

14.2.57 The baseline review has been undertaken based on information readily available at the time of the assessment, the published documents set out in this chapter, and on Site visits undertaken in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

14.2.58 In undertaking the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development, the following assumptions have been made:

- This landscape and visual assessment does not consider the significance of heritage assets, or any potential direct or indirect impacts on these assets or their settings. This assessment is made in Chapter 9 'Cultural Heritage'.
- The establishment and growth rates of the landscape mitigation proposals are based on established forestry (Forestry Commission/Enterprise) methods and it is assumed that

planting of new trees and shrubs would achieve a height of 7 to 10 m after 10 to 15 years, allowing for the local growing conditions/environment. This timescale could be shortened if semi-mature specimens are used.

- The Proposed Development is based on that set out in the Parameter Plans (see Chapter 3). In particular, as shown on the Building Heights Parameter Plan, the tallest buildings would be a maximum of 16m high. The location of open space in relation to development is also assessed as shown on the Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan.
- The visual assessment focusses on public views and visual amenity. Whilst the report does consider potential impacts on views from private residences, it is not a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment. No access was gained to private properties when undertaking the assessment.
- The assessment considers daytime visual effects only.

14.3 Baseline conditions

Current Baseline – Landscape

Landscape Designations

14.3.1 Designations are shown on Figure 14.1.

14.3.2 The Site is not covered by any adopted landscape amenity designations. A small part of the Site is covered by the draft 'River Loddon Valued Landscape' designation, as described in the *Wokingham Borough Council Valued Landscapes Assessment* (December 2024) and covered by Policy NE6 in the *Wokingham Borough Council Draft Local Plan Public Consultation* Feb 2020-Mar 2020. This coincides with an area of ancient woodland along the Site's northern boundary.

14.3.3 Adjacent to the red line boundary, to the east, there is a further area of the draft River Loddon Valley Valued Landscape whilst to the south of Mole Road there is an area of countryside is covered by the 'Barkham and Bearwood' Valued Landscape. Given that these are draft local designations they are considered to have a 'medium' value. The areas would have a 'medium' susceptibility to change, given that no development is proposed within the areas but would be visible from them. Their overall sensitivity would therefore be 'medium'.

14.3.4 Approximately 0.6km to the north-east of the Site is the Bearwood College Registered Park and Garden. This has a significant area of woodland which restricts intervisibility with the wider area. Adjacent to the Site, off Church Lane, is a 'non-designated heritage asset' recognised by Wokingham Borough Council. Approximately 0.1km to the east of the site, Mole Bridge Farmhouse is a listed building. The effects of development on the settings of these heritage assets are covered by Chapter 9 Built Heritage of this Environmental Statement.

14.3.5 There is one area of ancient woodland within the Site boundary adjacent to its northern boundary, known as Dog Kennel Copse. There is a further area to the east of St. Bartholomew's Church close to the Site's western boundary, known as Brick Kiln Coppice. Both of these are also Deciduous Woodland on the Priority Habitat Inventory.

14.3.6 There are no trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders within the Site but a number of nearby TPOs along Church Lane:

- TPO 1883/2022 Ref A1, a woodland order covering trees within St. Bartholomew's Church yard;

- TPO 1883/2022 Ref W1, a woodland order covering trees to the west of St. Bartholomew's Church;
- TPO 1883/2022 Ref W2, a woodland order covering trees to the west of Reading Room Cottage;
- TPO 1126/2006 – T1 – T5 - Five individual oak (*Quercus robur*) trees close to the Site's southern boundary along Church Lane;
- TPO 1952/2024 G1 – four trees on the junction of Mole Road and Ellis's Hill.

14.3.7 Effects on Wildlife designations are covered in Chapter 11 Ecology.

Landscape Character

14.3.8 The study area is covered by two tiers of landscape character assessments, the national Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, last updated 2012), and the district-level Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment (November 2019). The character area boundaries in these respective assessments are shown on Figure 14.2. The parts of the Site that have a draft Valued Landscape designations are also covered by the Wokingham Valued Landscape Assessment (September 2024) document.

National Landscape Character Areas

14.3.9 The Site is covered by two National Landscape Character Areas. The northern part of the Site lies within NCA115 Thames Valley, and the southern part of the Site is within NCA 129 Thames Basin Heaths. This boundary appears to be arbitrary and does not relate to obvious landscape differences within the Site.

14.3.10 NCA115 Thames Valley is described as a mainly low-lying, wedge-shaped area, widening eastwards from Reading, which includes Slough, Windsor, the Colne Valley and the southwest London fringes. The River Thames is described as provides a unifying feature through a very diverse landscape of urban and suburban settlements, infrastructure networks, fragmented agricultural land, historic parks, commons, woodland, reservoirs and extensive minerals workings. The area is typified by much development, both in the past and planned for the next 20 years, and with 'virtually no undisturbed land'.

14.3.11 Key characteristics of the Thames Valley described in the assessment that are relevant to the study area are:

- *"Flat and low-lying land*
- *The underlying geology is dominated by the London Clay which, over much of the area, is overlain by river-lain sands and gravels.*
- *The numerous hydrological features provide unity to an area which otherwise lacks homogeny; these features include the River Thames and its tributaries...*
- *The field pattern is medium-scale and irregular, with smaller fields to the west...*
- *The area has an urban character, and there are very few villages of more traditional character..."*

14.3.12 The assessment states that "*farming is limited and that where it survives, grazed pasture is the major land use with the landscape being generally open, flat and featureless*". The field pattern is described as being medium-scale and irregular. The Site includes both pasture and arable land uses as well as the small area of woodland within its boundary and forms part of a wider

rural area. It is not typified by any large hydrological features other than a field ditch through its centre. In this regard it is not especially typical of the Thames Valley character area.

14.3.13 NCA129 Thames Basin Heaths stretches westwards from Weybridge in Surrey to the countryside around Newbury in Berkshire. It is described as a densely settled area with gardens amounting to a significant area of greenspace. The area has a relatively high percentage of woodland, reflecting its low-grade agricultural land. These are often planted on former heathland. In general, the Site is not typical of this landscape character either.

14.3.14 Given that the Site is not strongly typical of the either NCA115 nor NCA129, and given that Wokingham Borough Council has its own Landscape Character Assessment, the National Landscape Character Assessment is not used in the assessment below.

Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment

14.3.15 The Site is situated entirely in Character Area J2, 'Arborfield & Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay'. This area continues northwards to Sindlesham to the west of Mole Road and continues south to include Arborfield and Arborfield Cross. It also covers land to the west of the Site. Further east, Area C1 Arborfield River Terrace runs parallel to Area J2, occupying a linear route on the eastern side of the River Loddon. As it is not directly adjacent to the Site and has no/limited intervisibility effects on Area C1 are not included in this assessment.

14.3.16 To the east of the Site, Character Area L1 Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills occupies the more elevated area between the Site and Wokingham, including The Coombes and Bearwood College Registered Park and Garden. Whilst not within the Site, the western part of this character area has some limited intervisibility with the Site so could be indirectly affected by the Proposed Development.

14.3.17 The Character Assessment (page 238) provides a comprehensive and relevant set of key characteristics for Area J2, the relevant ones being:

- *"A gently undulating landscape between 50m and 65m AOD, underlain by London Clay with localised areas of River Terrace Gravels. Shallow wooded valleys follow the course of the Barkham Brook, which is geologically marked by areas of alluvium."*
- *Wooded context provided by characteristic mature hedgerow and in-field trees, combined with woodland belts, with BAP priority habitats and ancient woodland, and the wooded horizons of the surrounding hills. This creates a loose sense of enclosure."*
- *Arable farming dominates, with pasture on higher ground and horse paddocks near settlement. Fields are large and geometric, bound by fragmented hedgerows supported by post and wire. Fields used for paddocks are often subdivided with horse tape."*
- *Older scattered settlement of farms, hamlets and small nucleated villages at Barkham and Arborfield Cross."*
- *A network of busy local roads cross the area. They tend to be rural in character, with ditches, hedges and hedgerow trees, sometimes opening directly onto the arable fields."*
- *Public rights of way run between the settlements, and provide access for recreational use"*
- *A rural character away from development and roads, with views across to adjacent character areas including across the Loddon Valley."*

14.3.18 The Assessments judges the following 'valuable' Landscape Attributes that are relevant to the Site (page 240):

- *“Pattern of arable and pastoral fields, which provides a rural character away from settlement, and creates an important separation between settlements.*
- *Mature hedgerow trees and in-field trees which provide a wooded character and visual interest within the landscape.*
- *Rural settlement pattern of farms, hamlets and small nucleated villages outside the urban area which provides a rural character and a link to the past.*
- *Recreational value of the network of rights of way between settlements.*
- *Views across the landscape to surrounding character areas, particularly across the river valleys to the west and to the wooded hills to the north and south provides a loose sense of enclosure.”*

14.3.19 The Landscape Character Assessment judges the landscape condition of Area J2 to be ‘moderate’. In the area of the site this is due to the pattern of arable and pastoral fields. It notes that the hedgerow network is fragmented however and that other issues relevant to the Site relate to development pressure, light pollution and recreational pressure.

14.3.20 The Character Assessment states that the Landscape Strategy to maintain the landscape character of the area is to:

“conserve and enhance the remaining rural character of the landscape. The key aspects to be conserved and enhanced are the field pattern with mature hedgerow trees, wetland and woodland habitats, rural lanes and historic features. In terms of development, the aim is to integrate new development into its landscape setting, and retain the open and rural character of the landscape between settlements” (page 241)

14.3.21 Based on the judgements and descriptions set out in the Wokingham Character Assessment we consider that the character of the Site is of ‘medium’ value (see Table 14.1 for definitions). The majority of the Site is not designated for its landscape value and whilst a small part of the site is within the draft River Loddon Valued Landscape, this is a local designation and has yet to be adopted. The site benefits from pastoral and arable land uses with backdrops of woodland/mature trees on all sides, however its tranquillity/remoteness is eroded by the relatively busy Mole Road corridor to the south.

14.3.22 The character of the Site is judged to have a ‘medium’ susceptibility to change (see Table 14.2). This reflects its rural character and relatively open nature when viewed from the immediate surroundings, but also reflecting the visual enclosure provided by the nearby woodlands and hillsides (including Brick Kiln Coppice to the south-west, Dog Kennel Copse to the north and the wider Ellis’s Hill and The Coombs woodland to the south-east.)

14.3.23 When considering its value and susceptibility to accept change together, using Table 14.3, the Site has a ‘medium’ landscape sensitivity.

14.3.24 The area to the east of the site within Character Area L1 Bearwood Sand and Gravel Hills has the following relevant characteristics:

- *“Rolling hills of London Clay to the north and west with steeper hillsides in the south and east...*
- *Higher sandy areas are generally dry but there are a number of small open water bodies and the larger Bear Wood Lake historically used for mineral extraction...*

- *Heavily wooded landscape with swathes of BAP priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland interconnected with blocks of coniferous planting, mainly Scots pine. Beechwoods are characteristic on the higher slopes.*
- *Most of the area is designated as LWS for its semi-natural woodlands (Bearwood Estate, Hazeltons Copse and The Coombes) but also for areas of open water and remnant heathland in the Bearwood Estate and dry acid grassland in The Coombes.*
- *Historic parkland of the Bearwood estate (Grade II* Registered Park and Garden) forms the core of the area, centred on a large lake with woodlands and open parkland with clumps of trees...*
- *Smaller scale rural patchwork of deciduous woodland and sheep pasture associated with the hills and incised coombe valleys in the south.*
- *Largely unsettled, with most buildings relating to the estate, and occasional farmhouses.*
- *Well used for formal and informal recreation including ... a good network of public rights of way around The Coombes used for dog walking and horse riding...*
- *A secluded landscape with access restricted in the north of the area around Bearwood College and the buildings are largely screened by woodland. The south of the area is particularly tranquil with an experience of dark skies despite the close proximity to Wokingham town and the localised visual and audible intrusion of the M4.*
- *Area provides a wooded backdrop to views from the surrounding landscape and screens the western boundary of Wokingham town.*
- *Views are enclosed by the extensive woodland, but open out on the edge of the woodland across the Loddon Valley towards Reading.” (page 283)*

14.3.25 The Character Assessment judges the landscape of Area L1 to be in good condition and describes it as a “*distinctive landscape with a strong sense of place*” (page 224).

14.3.26 Based on the judgements and descriptions set out in the Wokingham Character Assessment we consider the character of the southern part of L1 Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills to be of ‘high’ value (see Table 14.1 for definitions). The area is within the Bearwood and Barkham draft Valued Landscape and has a distinctive rural landscape.

14.3.27 We judge the southern part of L1 to have a ‘medium’ susceptibility to change (see Table 14.2). Whilst no development is proposed in the area, it could be visible from this landscape and has the potential to erode its rural character. The landscape does however, benefit from numerous hedgerows and areas of woodland which provide screening.

14.3.28 When considering its value and susceptibility to accept change together, using Table 14.3, the Site has a ‘medium’ landscape sensitivity.

Landscape Features

Land Use and Vegetation

14.3.29 The Site is described in Chapter 2 above and shown on Figure 14.5. At the time of the survey in March 2025 it comprised three arable fields (which we refer to as ‘Field A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’) covering 17.38ha of the Site, and a single pasture field (Field D) which cover approximately 4.45ha of the Site (source: Ecology chapter). These are subdivided by two native hedgerows with trees and a fence line.

14.3.30 All of the Site's external boundaries comprise native hedgerows. These are all clipped and allow views into the Site. In total, the site has 2.393km of ecologically 'poor' (source: *Newlands Farm Technical Report: Biodiversity Net Gain*, EPR, November 2025). In arboricultural terms, the hedgerows are Category C ('low quality') (*Arboricultural Impact Assessment*, Aspect Arboriculture October 2025). An extract of these arboricultural drawings are provided in Appendix 14.4.

14.3.31 The pasture areas of the Site and associated native hedgerows are reflective of the historic meadow landscape that would have typified the area, and whilst these have been improved over years, in landscape terms these areas are judged to be of 'medium' value. The arable field reflects more recent agricultural changes with and is judged to be of 'low' value.

14.3.32 The Site includes a small (0.67ha) lowland mixed deciduous woodland adjacent to its northern boundary, known as Dog Kennel Copse. Part of this is ancient woodland. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Aspect Arboriculture, October 2025) categorises the majority of this woodland as category A, with 2 no. category A English oak trees (T1 and T2) to the west and a further 6 no. category A and B English oak, ash and field maple trees to the south (T4 – T10) (see Appendix 14.4).

14.3.33 Within and immediately adjacent to the Site, there are number of other trees that contribute to the rural character of the landscape. These comprise:

- 2 no. category A English oaks (T18 and T20) and 1 no. category B oak (T19) between Fields A and B/C;
- 2 no. category A English oak trees (T12 and T15) and 4 no. category B ash and oak trees (T11, T13, T14 and T17) within the hedgerow along the Site's north-eastern boundary. A category A woodland (W3) and oak tree (T34) also lies adjacent to this boundary. Whilst these are outside of the Site, their canopies and root protection area extend into the Site;
- 5 no. category A English oak trees (T27 – T31) within/adjacent to the site's north-western boundary adjacent to ARB03 byway (linking Church Lane to Monk's Cottage);
- 3 no. category B English oak trees (T25, T26 and T52) outside of the site's boundary, adjacent to ARB03. Whilst these outside of the Site, their canopies and root protection area extend into the Site;
- 5 no. category A English oak (T44, T47, T49 - T51) and 2 no. category B English oak and ash trees within the hedgerow boundary adjacent to Church Lane (T45 – T46);
- 3 no. category A English oak trees within the hedgerow that separates Fields B and D (T38, T48, T42);
- 4 no. category B English oak trees within the Site's southern hedgerow boundary, adjacent to Mole Road (T39 - T41, T43);
- 1 no. category A English oak tree (T36) within the site's south-eastern boundary hedge close to Mole Road.
- 1 no. category B Turkey oak tree (T55) and 3 no. category A English and Turkey oak trees (T56 – T58) to the south of Mole Road
- 2 no. Category B oak trees to the south of Ellis's Hill to the south of the site (Whilst these outside of the Site, their canopies and root protection area extend into the Site).

14.3.34 There are no veteran trees or trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders within the Site.

14.3.35 The Ecology Chapter describes the baseline habitats on the Site in further detail.

14.3.36 With regards to the value of the vegetation on the Site, all Category A trees and ancient woodlands are judged to be of 'high' value in landscape terms, given the contribution that they make to the pastoral wooded landscape and scenic quality of the area.

14.3.37 The Category B and C trees and hedgerows are judged to be of 'medium' value, reflecting their contribution to the landscape character, but lower arboricultural value.

14.3.38 All trees and hedgerows have a 'medium' susceptibility to change, given that there is the potential for development to be designed to avoid the removal of trees and hedgerows.

Landform and Water Features

14.3.39 Landform is shown on Figure 14.4. The Site occupies part of a gently undulating terrace, formed by the River Loddon which is situated to the north west. The Site rises to 56m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at its southern boundary, near the junction of Mole Road and Church Lane and slopes down to 45m AOD adjacent to its northern-eastern boundary

14.3.40 Beyond the Site to the east and north, the landform incorporates a local valley, created by Barkham Brook, before rising up Ellis's Hill towards The Coombs woodland to the east, which sits at 80m AOD. To the south and west of the site the landform slopes gently down towards the River Loddon which is situated at between 40 and 45m AOD.

14.3.41 Whilst the surrounding landscape has been sculpted by the River Loddon and Barkham Brook, the Site itself has no natural water features. It has drainage ditches running adjacent to hedgerows within the Site and also to the south of Dog Kennel Copse.

14.3.42 The topography of the Site and adjacent area is judged to be of 'medium' value. Ellis's Hill to the east provides a good degree of visual enclosure whilst the river terrace and valleys to the west, north and east contribute to the wider landscape character. The limited level changes within the Site mean that construction can take place without requiring significant adaptions to landform or the need for cut and fill. The susceptibility of this landscape characteristic to accept change is therefore judged to be 'medium'.

14.3.43 The drainage ditches within the Site contribute little to the landscape character and are judged to be of 'low' value.

Access

14.3.44 There is currently no public access to the Site. A byway that connects Arborfield with Carter's Hill, ARBO3, runs adjacent to the Site's south-western boundary. Visual effects on its users are covered in the Visual Assessment section below.

Table 14.12 Landscape Receptor Baseline Summary

Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
Landscape Designations			
Draft River Loddon Valued Landscape (to north of the Site only)	Medium	High ¹	Medium ¹

¹ Part of the Valued Landscape within and adjacent to the Site

Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
Draft Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape (to the south-east of the Site only)	Medium	High ²	Medium ²
Bearwood College Registered Park & Garden	High	Low ³	Medium ³
Trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders	High	High	High
National Landscape Character Areas			
NCA 115 Thames Valley	Not assessed – is not representative of the Site's character		
NCA 129 Thames Basins Heaths			
WBC Landscape Character Areas			
J2 Arborfield & Barkham Settled & Farmed Clay	Medium	Medium ⁴	Medium ⁴
L1 Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills (to the south-east of the Site only)	High	Medium ⁵	Medium ⁵
Landscape Features			
Land Use: Pasture Farmland	Medium	High	Medium
Land Use: Arable Farmland	Low	High	Medium
Trees – Ancient Woodland, Trees covered by TPOs and Category A Trees	High	Medium	Medium
All other trees	Medium	Medium	Medium
Hedgerows	Medium	Medium	Medium
Gently undulating river terrace landform	Medium	Medium	Medium
Water features	Low	Low	Low
Access & Public Rights of Way	High	Low	Medium

Future Baseline - Landscape

14.3.45 If the Proposed Development were not to go ahead, the baseline landscape of the Site would not change. The farmland would continue to be managed as arable and pasture with the associated woodlands and hedgerows retained.

14.3.46 The landscape of the wider area to the north and east could change however, if the University of Reading proposals for the wider Loddon Garden Village (submitted under a separate planning application, reference 252498, but also pursuant to policy SS13) are consented and developed. This would result in the introduction of a new park and houses to the north and west which would affect the rural setting of the Site. This is considered further in the assessment of cumulative effects below.

Current Baseline – Visual Amenity

14.3.47 The site visits and computer-generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Figure 14.7) showed that the Site is generally well concealed from the wider area, with screening provided by:

² Adjacent to the Site's southern and south-eastern boundaries.

³ Numerous areas of mature hedgerow vegetation screens the land between the Site and RPG.

⁴ Within the Site.

⁵ Southern part of the character area, with views towards the Site.

- Wooded hill terrain to the east and south (towards Arborfield Cross and The Coombes, Barkham)
- Dog Kennel Copse woodland and mature oaks along the ARBO3 byway to the north
- Brick Kiln Coppice and housing along Church Lane and Mole Road to the west and south

14.3.48 Changes to views would primarily be within 1km radius of the Site (Figure 14.7 and this would change further with the construction of the proposed University of Reading Loddon Garden Village development to the north (see Cumulative Effects Section 14.7 below).

14.3.49 Visual receptors that could experience change are described in Table 14.13, with representative photographs provided in Figures 14.11 to 14.17. Table 14.13 also evaluates their sensitivity according to the definitions set out in Tables 14.7 and 14.8.

14.3.50 The value of all views are either 'medium' or 'high'. They are all rural in character, but some include pylons, large arable fields or the Mole Road as a relatively dominant element in the view, which lowers their value to 'medium' rather than 'high'. Views which include parts of the draft Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape as a dominant element in the view are judged to be of higher value.

14.3.51 With regards to the viewers 'susceptibility to change', users of Public Rights of Way are judged to have a 'high' susceptibility to change whilst users of Mole Road have a 'low' susceptibility to change. Users of Church Lane are judged to have a 'medium' susceptibility to change, given that vehicle users will not be choosing to use the route for its visual amenity but there may be some horse riders, cyclists and walkers who will be using it for recreational purposes.

14.3.52 Overall, the visual receptors using the public rights of way to the south of the site (ARBO9 and ARBO10) have the highest sensitivity, reflecting their location within the draft Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape and the recreational status of users. Whilst closer to the Site, users of Mole Road have a 'low' overall sensitivity, given that they are road users rather than recreational visitors, and their views include the road infrastructure in the foreground. All other visual receptors are of 'medium' sensitivity.

14.3.53 The only residential properties which could have views of the Site are:

- Monk's Cottage to the north.
- Newlands Lodge, Mole Bridge Farm and Hunters Point on Mole Road to the east and south-east.
- Oaklands Plant Nursery, Reading Room Cottage, and The Pheasantries off Church Lane to the south-west.

14.3.54 Whilst effects on views have been considered, no access was gained to these private properties.

Table 14.13 Visual Receptor Baseline Summary

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Value of View (Table 14.7)	Susceptibility to Change (Table 14.8)	Overall Sensitivity	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
Views from the north						
1	0.7km	Users of ARB03 to the west of Carter's Hill	Medium	High	Medium	<p>View across pasture farmland with hedgerow trees in the distance. The view has a strong rural character but is not recognised for its high scenic quality. The development sits over the brow of the hill. <i>NB: This view will change significantly if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with new open space and housing in the foreground</i></p>
2	0.12km	Users of ARB03 to the north-east of Monk's Cottage	Medium	High	Medium	<p>Clear view across the majority of the Site with housing on Church Lane in the distance. The view has a strong rural character but is not recognised for its high scenic quality. Pasture field in the foreground. PRoW users have high susceptibility to change.</p> <p><i>NB: This view will change significantly if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with new open space in the foreground.</i></p>
Private view	25m	Residents of Monk's Cottage	Private view – not visited. Assumed 'Medium'	Private view – not visited. Assumed 'Medium'	Medium	<p>View assumed to be of 'Medium' value given the domestic gardens in the foreground and rural setting beyond.</p> <p>Susceptibility to change assumed to be 'medium' given that these are residential receptors but benefit from a degree of screening from the site by hedgerows around the garden and field boundaries.</p>
Views from the east						
3	0.48km	Users of ARBO4 byway to the south of Carter's Hill (joining	Medium	High	Medium	<p>View across pastoral farmland towards Arborfield. The view has a strong rural character and includes part of the draft River Loddon Valued Landscape in the foreground. <i>NB: This view will change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with new housing in the middle distance.</i></p>

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Value of View (Table 14.7)	Susceptibility to Change (Table 14.8)	Overall Sensitivity	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
		Carter's Hill with Mole Road)				
4	0.34km	View from Mole Road	Medium	Low	Low	View across pastoral farmland towards Dog Kennel Copse. The rural character is partially eroded by the Mole Road corridor in the foreground and large conifers around the house in the foreground. Road users have low susceptibility to change.
Private view	119m	Residents of Mole Bridge Farmhouse (Mole Road)	Private view – not visited. Assumed 'Medium'	Private view – not visited. Assumed 'Medium'	Medium	<p>View assumed to be of 'Medium' value given the domestic gardens in the foreground and rural setting beyond.</p> <p>Susceptibility to change assumed to be 'medium' given that these are residential receptors but benefitting from a degree of screening from the site by hedgerows around gardens and field boundaries.</p>
Views from the south-east						
Private view	78m	Residents of Hunters Point (Ellis's Hill)	Private view – not visited. Assumed 'Medium'	Private view – not visited. Assumed 'Medium'	Medium	<p>View assumed to be of 'Medium' value given the domestic gardens in the foreground and rural setting beyond.</p> <p>Susceptibility to change assumed to be 'medium' given that these are residential receptors but benefitting from a degree of screening from the site by hedgerows around gardens and field boundaries.</p>
5	0.44km	Users of Ellis's Hill/ ARBO8 byway to east of Ellis's Hill Farm	High	Medium	Medium	View across rolling pastoral farmland with mature hedgerows and oak trees. Landscape within the view (excluding the Site) is within the Barkham & Bearwood draft Valued Landscape. PRoW users have high susceptibility to change however numerous hedgerows and trees provide intermittent screening of the Site.
6	0.48km	Users of ARBO9 at junction with ARBO10	High	High	High	View across rolling pastoral farmland with mature hedgerows and oak trees. Landscape within the view (excluding the Site) is within the Barkham & Bearwood draft Valued Landscape. PRoW users have high susceptibility to change.

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Value of View (Table 14.7)	Susceptibility to Change (Table 14.8)	Overall Sensitivity	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
7	0.53km	Users of ARBO9 close to the sewage works	High	High	High	View across secluded pastoral valley created by the Barkham Brook, with distant glimpse of the Site. Landscape within the view (excluding the Site) is within the Barkham & Bearwood draft Valued Landscape. PRoW users have high susceptibility to change.
Views from the south						
8	0km - 0.17km	From A3030 Mole Road to the south of the Site	Medium	Low	Low	Rural view with pasture and mature oak trees. Mature overgrown hedgerow screens the north-western part of the site however there are glimpses of the southern part of the Site across the clipped boundary hedgerow. Immediately adjacent to the Site boundary there are clearer views into Field D of the Site. Land to the south of Mole Road is within the Barkham & Bearwood draft Valued Landscape. Carriageway of Mole Road detracts from the view. Road users have low susceptibility to change.
Private view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7m • 29m • 27m 	Residents of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Room Cottage • The Pheasantry • Oakland House (Church Lane) 	Private views – not visited. Assumed 'Medium'	Private views – not visited. Assumed 'Medium'	Medium	<p>Views assumed to be of 'Medium' value given the domestic gardens in the foreground and rural setting beyond.</p> <p>Susceptibility to change assumed to be 'medium' given that these are residential receptors but benefitting from a degree of screening from the site by hedgerows around gardens.</p>
9A	0km	Users of Church Lane to the south of the site (looking to the north-east)	Medium	Medium	Medium	Views across arable field (Field B) with a backdrop of mature trees in Brick Kiln Coppice and adjacent to ARB03 byway. Pylons and overhead power lines are clearly visible within the Site and this view is not within a draft Valued Landscape. These road users judged to have a medium susceptibility to change as they could include recreational users such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Value of View (Table 14.7)	Susceptibility to Change (Table 14.8)	Overall Sensitivity	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
						<i>NB: Photograph taken from a field-gate. Other views from Church Lane have a hedgerow and highway infrastructure in the foreground. In addition, this view may change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with glimpses of the roofs of new housing beyond the Site.</i>
9B	0km	Users of Church Lane to the south of the site (looking to the south-east)	Medium	Medium	Medium	<p>Views across arable and pasture field towards Dog Kennel Copse and the Barkham and Bearwood draft Valued Landscape. The view has a strong rural character. Road users are judged to have a medium susceptibility to change as they could include recreational users such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders.</p> <p><i>NB: Photograph taken from a field-gate. Other views from Church Lane have a hedgerow and highway infrastructure in the foreground.</i></p>
Views from the west						
10A	0km	Users of byway ARBO3 (looking to the north-east)	Medium	High	Medium	<p>View down gravel byway with the Site seen beyond a clipped native hedgerow in the foreground. Overhead cables, timber utility poles and signage detract from the rural character. The front garden of Reading Room Cottage is visible to the west and the CEDAR facility is visible in the distance. Byway users judged to have a 'medium' susceptibility to change given the existing visual detractors and screening provided by the hedgerow.</p> <p><i>NB: This view may change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with glimpses of the roofs of new housing beyond the Site.</i></p>
10B	0km	Users of byway ARBO3/Church	Medium	Medium	Medium	Views of the Site from the junction of ARBO3 and Church Lane. Clipped hedgerow provides some screening of the Site even during the Winter

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Value of View (Table 14.7)	Susceptibility to Change (Table 14.8)	Overall Sensitivity	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
		Lane (looking to the south)				months. Wooded hillside including The Coombes provides a backdrop (part of the draft Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape). Byway users judged to have a 'medium' susceptibility to change given the existing screening provided by the hedgerow.
11	0.83km	Users of ARBO2 footpath between Hall Farm and the CEDAR facility	Medium	High	Medium	<p>Rural view across wide arable fields. Area does not fall within a Valued Landscape. The Site is not visible from here, lying beyond the brow of the hill, however there is the potential for roofs of new homes to be visible, depending on their location and height.</p> <p><i>NB: This view will change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with the potential for a new school, housing and playing fields constructed between the viewer and the Site.</i></p>

Future Baseline – Visual Amenity

14.3.55 If the Proposed Development were not to go ahead, the visual amenity of the Site will depend whether the proposed University of Reading development (application 252498) is consented and constructed. If this adjacent development does not take place, then the future baseline is likely to remain the same. The farmland would continue to be managed as arable and pasture with the associated woodlands and hedgerows retained. If the University of Reading proposed development at Loddon Garden Village were to go ahead, the visual context would change however, with glimpsed views of new built development and public open space to the north of the Site and consequent reduced rural context.

14.4 Inherent design mitigation

14.4.1 Measures to mitigate the potential landscape and visual effects of the development have been considered and integrated throughout the process of Site promotion and masterplanning. These involve measures to avoid, reduce and offset, remedy or compensate for the potential effects, and have included consideration of the siting of development, protection of existing landscape elements and creation of new landscape features.

14.4.2 The inherent mitigation measures are those committed to on the Parameter Plans. As this is an Outline application, the detailed design of some of these features would be subject to Reserved Matters applications, however the Illustrative Landscape Strategy (see Appendix 14.2) and Planting Plans for the access road (see Appendix 14.3) demonstrate how these elements can be incorporated within an emerging detailed design for the Proposed Development.

14.4.3 The masterplan shown in the parameter plans has been designed to incorporate a generous setting of open space, both surrounding the Site and within the layout of the proposed buildings and highways. These inherent design mitigation elements include:

- masterplan designed to incorporate all existing hedgerows, with the only loss of hedgerows to be where new highways cut through them for access/sight line purposes;
- masterplan designed to allow the retention of all existing trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders and all ancient woodland, together with a minimum 15m buffer of semi-natural land to protect root systems and canopies;
- development designed to allow for the retention of the majority of mature trees, with buildings focussed in the areas of existing farmland which have no trees (subject to further detailed design work at reserved matters stage);
- network of open spaces shown within the parameter plans would provide multi-functional green spaces to be provided within easy access of all homes. This can incorporate existing vegetation as well as new tree planting to screen/soften views of new properties. The spaces would also provide space for new facilities within the landscape, such as play and food-growing;
- SuDS basins can be designed as positive landscape features, including opportunities for natural play;
- the majority of development parcels would accommodate buildings no more than two to three storeys in height (maximum 12m to ridge height);
- the tallest buildings would be placed along the proposed spine road through the centre of the Site, away from the wider existing road network. These would be no more than four storeys in height (maximum 16m to ridge height).

14.5 Potential and Residual Effects: Landscape Designations, Character and Features

14.5.1 This section assesses the potential effects on the landscape character and features within the Site during its construction and operational phases. Potential effects during the operational phase are taken at Year 0 following completion of the final phase of development. The residual landscape effects assume that strategic landscape planting has taken place (see Appendices 14.2 and 14.3) and is well established (at 15 years after planting). The specific location and design of the planting would be covered by future planning applications.

Construction Phase

14.5.2 A description of the construction works is set out in Chapter 3. It is anticipated that the construction would start by January 2028, with delivery peaking at 100 units per year and completion of the construction within 8 years.

14.5.3 The assessment is based on the following assumed activities/features during construction:

- the construction of a vehicular/pedestrian vehicular access off Mole Road, including hedgerow removal. This would include the construction of a ghost island within Mole Road and a greenway to the south of Mole Road;
- the construction of a vehicular/pedestrian access connecting to the proposed University of Reading land to the north, including hedgerow removal;
- the construction of a greenway/active travel access off Mole Road, including hedgerow removal;
- the construction of a greenway/active travel access off Church Lane, including hedgerow removal;
- the construction of a greenway/active travel access off the ARB03 byway (via an existing field gateway);
- the construction of an emergency access off Church Lane (via an existing field gateway).
- The potential construction of a shared-used path to the north-east of the Site, including hedgerow removal, subject to agreement;
- excavations/soil stripping activity;
- presence of Site hoardings/fencing, including protective fencing to vegetation to be retained;
- removal of, or remedial works to, vegetation at the Site boundaries;
- presence of temporary haul roads;
- presence of fixed and mobile vehicles and construction plant;
- presence of materials stockpiles;
- presence of Site compound/huts, and temporary utilities;
- presence of completed and partially completed buildings, streets and open spaces;
- removal of small sections of hedgerows within the Site to allow the construction of the spine road, a primary street, a greenway route and two footpaths;
- cultivation of land for open spaces.

14.5.4 The potential effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape character and feature receptors identified in the section above are assessed according to the 'sensitivity' of the landscape receptor and the 'magnitude' of the landscape effect. These are then combined to assess the significance of the landscape Impact during the construction period. The results are summarised in Table 14.14.

Potential Effects on Landscape Designations During Construction

14.5.5 With regards to effects on landscape character, the only significant effects of construction would be on the parts of the Wokingham Borough Council landscape character area 'J2 Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay' that would have the new roads, and buildings within them. The construction would have a 'direct major adverse' effect on the small part of this character area situated within the Site and an 'indirect moderate adverse' effect on this character to the immediate north and west of the Site.

14.5.6 To the south-east, the views of the construction site would also have an 'indirect moderate adverse' effect on a small part of Character Area L1 Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills.

Potential Effects on Landscape Character During Construction

14.5.7 With regards to effects on landscape character, the only significant effects of construction would be on the parts of the Wokingham Borough Council landscape character area 'J2 Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay' that would have the new roads, and buildings within them. The construction would have a 'direct moderate adverse' effect on this character area within the Site and an 'indirect moderate adverse' effect on this character to the immediate north and west of the Site. To the south-east, the views of the construction site would also have an 'indirect moderate adverse' effect on a small part of Character Area L1 Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills.

Potential Effects on Landscape Features During Construction

14.5.8 With regards to the effects of construction on specific landscape features within the Site, the construction would result in:

- the removal of approximately 13.14 ha of arable farmland;
- the removal of approximately 3.34 ha of pasture (2.89ha of temporary grass and clover leys and 0.45ha of neutral grassland);
- the removal of approximately 0.45ha of other neutral grassland;
- the construction of new SuDS basins, footpaths, meadows and play areas;
- the planting of new trees and hedgerows throughout the public open space (precise design subject to Reserved Matters applications);
- the removal of 3 no. Category B English Oak trees on Mole Road (T39, T40, T41);
- the removal of a total of 319 linear metres of native hedgerow along Mole Road and within the site to facilitate access. These would comprise sections of H1 (c.28m), H2 (c.5m) H4 (c.46m), (c.46m) H5 (c.177m), H6 (c.44m), H7(c.14m) and H8 (c.5m). Despite this loss, approximately c.86% of hedgerow within influence of the proposals will be retained (source: *Arboricultural Impact Assessment*, Aspect Arboricultural, October 2025) (see drawings in Appendix 14.4)

14.5.9 Overall, the construction would have a significant (moderate adverse) effects on the pasture and arable land uses across the Site as these are removed and replaced with construction site.

14.5.10 The construction would also have a 'direct moderate' impact on the hedgerows, with 14% of the site's hedgerows removed to accommodate access.

14.5.11 Other construction effects on landscape features such as terrain would be 'minor' or 'negligible' adverse.

14.5.12 The construction would not result in any change to water features or to public access other than the construction of new SuDS and footpaths.

Table 14.14 Potential Landscape Effects during Construction

Potential Landscape Receptor	Overall Sensitivity (Table 14.12)	Size/ Scale of Effect (Table 14.4)	Direct/ Indirect	Duration	Geog. Extent	Overall Magnitude (Table 14.5)	Overall Significance (Table 14.6)
Landscape Designations							
Draft River Loddon Valued Landscape (to north of the Site)	Medium	No direct effects. Medium adverse indirect effect on the rural setting of Dog Kennel Copse (within the Site) and a small area of adjacent farmland to the north-east of the Site.	Indirect	Medium term	Site and site setting	No direct effects Medium indirect adverse effects on Dog Kennel Copse and land to the north immediately to the north of the Site.	No direct effects. Moderate indirect adverse effect on setting of Dog Kennel Copse and land immediately to the north of the Site.
Draft Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape (to the south-east of the Site)	Medium	No direct effects. Medium adverse indirect effect on the rural setting of landscape to the south-east of the Site.	Indirect	Medium term	Site setting	No direct effects. Medium adverse indirect	No direct effects. Moderate indirect adverse effect on the setting of a small area of farmland to the south-east of the Site.
Bearwood College Registered Park & Garden	Medium	No change (no intervisibility with the Site).	N/A	N/A	N/A	No change	No change
Trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders	High	No change (no trees covered by TPOs or their Root Protection Areas) affected by the construction.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No change	No change
Wokingham Landscape Character Areas							
J2 Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay	Medium	High adverse (construction of housing and roads within the Site)	Direct / Indirect	Medium term	Site and immediate site setting	High adverse (the Site)	Major adverse direct (the Site)

Potential Landscape Receptor	Overall Sensitivity (Table 14.12)	Size/ Scale of Effect (Table 14.4)	Direct/ Indirect	Duration	Geog. Extent	Overall Magnitude (Table 14.5)	Overall Significance (Table 14.6)
		Medium adverse indirect (views of construction from area to the north of the Site)				Medium adverse indirect (land immediately adjacent to the Site)	Moderate adverse indirect (land immediately adjacent to the Site)
L1 Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills	Medium	Medium adverse indirect (views of construction of housing and roads from the area to the south-east of the Site)	Indirect	Medium term	Site setting	Medium adverse indirect (land immediately adjacent to the Site)	Moderate adverse indirect (land immediately adjacent to the Site)
Landscape Features							
Land Use: Grassland	Medium	High adverse (c.3.34 ha of grassland replaced by a construction site)	Direct	Medium term	Site level	High adverse	Major adverse direct
Land Use: Arable Farmland	Medium	High adverse (c.13.14 ha of arable land would be replaced by construction site)	Direct	Medium term	Site level	High adverse	Major adverse direct
Gently undulating river terrace landform	Medium	Negligible adverse (localised cut and fill to accommodate development but retention of overall undulating terrain character).	Direct	Medium term	Site level	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse direct
Water features	Low	No change. Existing drainage ditches retained/adapted.	Direct	Medium term	Site level	No change	No change
Trees – Ancient Woodland, Trees covered by TPOs and Category A Trees	Medium	No ancient woodland or trees covered by TPOs to be removed.	Direct	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Potential Landscape Receptor	Overall Sensitivity (Table 14.12)	Size/ Scale of Effect (Table 14.4)	Direct/ Indirect	Duration	Geog. Extent	Overall Magnitude (Table 14.5)	Overall Significance (Table 14.6)
All other trees	Medium	Medium adverse (three Category B trees to be removed along Mole Road)	Direct	Long term	Site level	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse direct
Hedgerows	Medium	Medium adverse (319 linear metres (14%) of hedgerow to be removed to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian access)	Direct	Long term	Site level	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse direct
Access & Public Rights of Way	Medium	No change. No public access/ PRoWs within the Site.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Potential Effects on Landscape Receptors during Operation

14.5.13 The potential effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape character and feature receptors identified in the section above are assessed, according to the 'sensitivity' of the landscape receptor and the 'magnitude' of the landscape impacts. These are then combined to assess the significance of the landscape effect.

14.5.14 The assessments assume that Green Infrastructure areas will accommodate new planting but at this stage assumes no specific planting locations. The results are described in Table 14.15 below.

14.5.15 References to Year 15 effects relate to residual effects following additional and specific strategic planting mitigation relating to landscape character and features. These would be subject to later planning applications but an indicative landscape scheme is shown on the drawings in Appendices 14.2 and 14.3).

Potential and Residual Effects on Landscape Designations During Operation

14.5.16 The assessment shows that during there would be no direct effects on the draft Valued Landscapes. Whilst part of the River Loddon draft Valued Landscape covers the site, this area would be retained as woodland.

14.5.17 The appraisal shows that there would be localised effects on the draft River Loddon Valued Landscape and Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscapes, however these are not adopted designation at the time of writing.

14.5.18 At Year 0, there would be 'indirect moderate adverse' effects on the parts of the River Loddon and Barkham and Bearwood draft Valued Landscapes that have views of the new homes, highways infrastructure and open spaces which would slightly erode their rural setting. These areas are limited to a relatively small area of farmland to the north and south-east of the Site. As mitigation planting establishes (Year 15), these indirect effects would reduce to a residual effect of 'minor adverse' significance.

14.5.19 The proposed development would have no direct or indirect impacts on the Bearwood College Registered Park and Gardens or any of the trees covered by TPOs to the west of the Site.

Potential and Residual Effects on Landscape Character During Operation

14.5.20 The only potential significant effects on landscape character at Year 0 would be on the parts of the Wokingham Borough Council landscape character area 'J2 Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay' that would have the new road infrastructure and buildings within it.

14.5.21 The Proposed Development would have a 'direct major adverse' effect on this character area within the Site and an 'indirect moderate adverse' effect on this character to the immediate north and west of the Site. As mitigation planting establishes (Year 15), the residual effects would reduce to a 'moderate adverse' effect on the character of the Site and a 'minor adverse' residual effect on the wider landscape that has glimpsed views of the new homes.

14.5.22 To the south-east, the views of the new housing would slightly erode the rural setting of a small part of Character Area L1 Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills, having an 'indirect moderate adverse' effect at Year 0.

Potential and Residual Effects on Landscape Features During Operation

14.5.23 With regards to the effects of specific landscape features within the Site, the Proposed Development would result in:

- the removal of approximately 13.4ha of arable farmland and 3.34 ha of pasture farmland;
- the removal of approximately 319 linear metres of hedgerows;
- the removal of 3 no. Category B tree groups on Mole Road;
- the planting of over 10ha of new Green Infrastructure to include the following (subject to Reserved Matters planning application) (source: EPR, November 2025):
 - Numerous new trees within open spaces, orchards and streets
 - Approximately 292 linear metres of new hedgerow and 1.6km of new tree lines
 - Approximately 5.85 ha neutral grassland
 - Approximately 0.5ha of orchard
 - Approximately 1.94ha of modified grassland (source: Ecology BNG metric)
 - 2 new equipped play areas
 - The construction of approximately 1.15ha of new SuDS features

14.5.24 With the planting of the new neutral grassland meadows, the Proposed Development would have a 'direct moderate beneficial' effect on the grassland within the Site at Year 0 given that this would establish well during the first year. These grassland benefit would remain the same as the wider landscape matures.

14.5.25 The replacement of c.13.4ha arable land with a variety of newly established green infrastructure housing, private gardens and road infrastructure would have a 'direct moderate adverse' effect on this land use. This would not be directly mitigated, however the new alternative landscape uses such as grassland, orchards and play areas would be beneficial.

14.5.26 The Proposed Development would not result in any impacts on trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders or Category A trees (*Arboricultural Impact Assessment*, Aspect, October 2025). Three Category B English Oak trees would be removed to facilitate the construction of the widening of Mole Road on the southern side of the site (see Appendix 14.4). These could be more than compensated for with the planting of numerous trees throughout the Site (subject to Reserved Matters planning applications), including trees within open spaces, street trees and orchards. At Year 0, these trees would remain young and not compensate in landscape terms with the loss of the three mature oaks, continuing to have a 'moderate adverse' effect on Category B and C trees. As the new trees mature, the loss of the three oak trees would be compensated for, and the new trees would in addition, contribute to the wider wooded character of the landscape, overall having a residual 'Major beneficial direct' effect at Year 15.

14.5.27 The proposed development would require the removal of c. 319 linear metres of hedgerow to facilitate access, totalling approximately 14% of hedgerows within the Site. The greatest extent of removal would be along Mole Road to allow for new visibility splays. Approximately 292 linear metres of replacement hedgerow could be planted to compensate for this loss (source: EPR BNG Technical Report) however until this matures, the hedgerow removal would result in a 'moderate adverse direct' effect. As these new hedgerows, together with additional scrub planting matures (and subject to detailed design) the effect on the landscape would be compensated for. The potential for additional scrub and shrub planting throughout the scheme would ultimately result in a minor beneficial residual effect on this planting type by Year 15.

14.5.28 The new homes and roads and drainage basins would necessitate localised earthworks but not change the river terrace terrain of the Site. Both potential and residual effects on terrain would therefore be 'negligible adverse.'

14.5.29 The introduction of new SuDS features, including swales and attenuation basins could result in a greater variety of water features across the Site, depending on the detailed design at the Reserved Matters stage. This is likely to have at least a 'minor beneficial' effect on water features within the Site at Year 0.

14.5.30 The Proposed Development would result in significant (major) beneficial effects to public access throughout the Site. As soon as the works are complete, there will be new cycle, pedestrian and equestrian routes through an area of countryside that currently has no public access. This will enhance connectivity to the countryside to the south-east of the Site and the village of Arborfield to the south-west as well as any other consented development at Loddon Garden Village (University of Reading) to the north.

Table 14.15 Potential Landscape Effects during Operation (Year 0) and Residual Landscape Effects during Operation (Year 15)

Note: The assessment of 'potential landscape effects assumes there will be no specific mitigation provided by new strategic planting. This is appraised at Year 0. The assessment of 'residual' effects assumes that appropriate strategic planting can be secured through Reserved matters applications and appraises these at Year 15 when vegetation would be well established. All effects are judged to be long term.

Potential Landscape Receptor	Overall Sensitivity (Table 14.4) (Table 14.12)	Size/ Scale of Effect	Geog. Extent	Overall Magnitude (Table 14.5)	Overall Significance (Table 14.6)
Landscape Designations					
Draft River Loddon Valued Landscape (to north of the Site)	Medium	No direct effects (Year 0 and Year 15). 'Medium adverse indirect' effect on the rural setting of Dog Kennel Copse (within the Site) and a small area of adjacent farmland to the north-east of the Site. (Year 0) This would reduce to 'Low' adverse effect at Year 15 as new vegetation establishes around the northern and north-eastern sides of the proposed housing and helps to screen them.	Site and site setting	No direct effects (Year 0 and Year 15). Medium indirect adverse effects on Dog Kennel Copse and land to the north of the Site (Year 0) reducing to Low indirect adverse as vegetation establishes (Year 15).	No direct effects (Year 0 and Year 15). Moderate indirect adverse effect on setting of Dog Kennel Copse and land immediately to the north the Site (Year 0) reducing to Minor indirect adverse (Year 15).
Draft Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape (to the south-east of the Site)	Medium	No direct effects. Medium adverse effect on the rural setting of landscape to the south-east of the Site (Year 0). This would reduce to 'Low' adverse effect at Year 15 as new vegetation establishes around the southern and south-eastern sides of the proposed housing and helps to screen them.	Site setting	No direct effects (Year 0 and Year 15). Medium adverse indirect (Year 0) reducing to Low indirect adverse as vegetation establishes (Year 15).	No direct effects (Year 0 and Year 15). Moderate indirect adverse effect on the setting of a small area of farmland to the south-east of the Site (Year 0) reducing to Minor indirect adverse as vegetation establishes (Year 15).

Potential Landscape Receptor	Overall Sensitivity (Table 14.12)	Size/ Scale of Effect (Table 14.4)	Geog. Extent	Overall Magnitude (Table 14.5)	Overall Significance (Table 14.6)
Bearwood College Registered Park & Garden	Medium	No change (no intervisibility with the Site).	N/A	No change	No change
Trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders	High	No change.	N/A	No change	No change
Wokingham Landscape Character Areas					
J2 Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay	Medium	<p><u>Within the Site:</u> High adverse direct (Year 0) reducing to Medium adverse direct as new planting matures (Year 15)</p> <p><u>Immediate rural setting of the Site</u> Medium Indirect effects (Year 0) on the. This would reduce to 'Low indirect effects as planting within the public open spaces matures (Year 15).</p>	Site and immediate site setting	<p><u>Within the Site:</u> High adverse (Year 0) reducing to Medium adverse (Year 15) within the Site.</p> <p><u>Immediate rural setting of the Site</u> Medium adverse indirect (Year 0) reducing to Low adverse indirect (Year 15)</p>	<p><u>Within the Site:</u> Major adverse direct (Year 0) reducing to Moderate adverse direct (Year 15) within the Site.</p> <p><u>Immediate rural setting of the Site</u> Moderate adverse indirect (Year 0) reducing to Minor adverse in (Year 15)</p>
L1 Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills	Medium	<p>Medium indirect adverse (Year 0) (views of housing and roads from the land immediately adjacent to the Site only)</p> <p>Low indirect adverse (Year 15) as trees screen the new homes to the south.</p>	Site setting	<p>Medium adverse indirect (Year 0)</p> <p>Low indirect adverse (Year 15)</p>	<p>Moderate adverse indirect (Year 0)</p> <p>Minor adverse indirect (Year 15)</p>
Landscape Features					

Potential Landscape Receptor	Overall Sensitivity (Table 14.12)	Size/ Scale of Effect (Table 14.4)	Geog. Extent	Overall Magnitude (Table 14.5)	Overall Significance (Table 14.6)
Land Use: Grassland	Medium	Medium direct beneficial (Year 0 and Year 15) (3.34 ha of modified and temporary grassland would be more than compensated for by at least 6.9 ha of policy-compliant semi-natural green space within the site)	Site level	Medium beneficial direct (Year 0 and 15)	Moderate beneficial direct (Year 0 and 15)
Land Use: Arable Farmland	Medium	Medium direct adverse (Year 0 and Year 15) (13.4 ha arable land would be replaced by a wider scheme including 10ha of Green Infrastructure including neutral and modified grassland, existing woodland, orchards, SuDS features and play spaces, plus built and highway infrastructure and private gardens)	Site level	Medium adverse direct (Year 0 and Year 15)	Moderate adverse direct (Year 0 and Year 15)
Terrain	Medium	Negligible adverse (Year 0 and Year 15) (Localised cut and fill to accommodate development but retention of overall undulating terrain character).	Site level	Negligible adverse direct (Year 0 and Year 15)	Negligible adverse direct (Year 0 and Year 15)
Water features	Low	Low direct beneficial. (Years 0 and 15) Existing drainage ditches retained and incorporated within swales. New SuDS attenuation basins could also introduce new wet meadow or pond areas, subject to detailed design at Reserved Matters stage.	Site level	Low beneficial (Years 0 and 15)	Minor beneficial direct (Years 0 and 15)
Trees – Ancient Woodland, Trees covered by TPOs and Category A Trees	Medium	No ancient woodland or trees covered by TPOs to be removed.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Potential Landscape Receptor	Overall Sensitivity (Table 14.12)	Size/ Scale of Effect (Table 14.4)	Geog. Extent	Overall Magnitude (Table 14.5)	Overall Significance (Table 14.6)
All other trees	Medium	<p>Medium direct adverse (Year 0)</p> <p>Three Category B trees would be removed along the Mole Road boundary. These contribute to the wider landscape character and whilst new trees would be planted throughout the Site these would not have established well at Year 0.</p> <p>High direct beneficial (Year 15)</p> <p>The open spaces within the Proposed Development can accommodate numerous new trees that compensate for the three trees to be removed and create an increased wooded character to the landscape.</p>	Site level	<p>Medium adverse direct (Year 0)</p> <p>High beneficial direct (Year 15)</p>	<p>Moderate adverse direct (Year 0)</p> <p>Major beneficial direct (Year 15)</p>
Hedgerows and Scrub vegetation	Medium	<p>Medium adverse (Year 0).</p> <p>c.319 linear metres of mature hedgerow to be removed to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian access. Compensatory c.292 linear metres of new hedgerow will not have matured.</p> <p>Low beneficial (Year 15)</p> <p>Compensatory hedgerows will have matured and also supplemented by additional scrub vegetation (subject to Reserved Matters applications)</p>	Site level	<p>Medium adverse direct (Year 0).</p> <p>Low beneficial direct (Year 15)</p>	<p>Moderate adverse direct (Year 0).</p> <p>Minor beneficial direct (Year 15)</p>
Access & Public Rights of Way	Medium	<p>High beneficial (Year 0 and 15).</p> <p>Numerous new routes for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians through the Site.</p>	Site level	<p>High beneficial direct (Year 0 and 15).</p>	<p>Major beneficial direct (Year 0 and 15).</p>

14.6 Potential and Residual Effects on Visual Amenity

Effects on Visual Receptors during Construction

- 14.6.1 The assessment of the visual impacts during the construction period are summarised in Table 14.16. All effects are judged to be 'medium-term' given the 8 year programme. Assumptions on what the construction will include is set out in the Section 14.5 above.
- 14.6.2 The assessment shows that the main adverse effects would be on receptor groups immediately surrounding the Site. Beyond this, natural screening is provided by the hillside terrain to the south-east and existing woodland and hedgerow vegetation around and within the Site.

Construction Views from the North

- 14.6.3 To the north of the Site, Dog Kennel Copse provides a good degree of screening from the wider landscape beyond. In any event, given the rural nature of this area, the only potential visual receptors would be from the byway ARB03 which connects Arborfield with Carter's Hill to the north. If the University of Reading Loddon Garden Village proposal is constructed, this area would also include new visual receptors such as residents of houses and users of public open space in this area (see Cumulative Effects, Section 14.7).
- 14.6.4 When seen from ARB03 close to Carter's Hill (see Figure 14.8, View 1), approximately 1km from the Site, the Proposed Development would sit over the brow of a hill, and there would not be views of the ground-level construction, however there could be views of taller structures such as cranes during the construction period as well as the upper storeys of new homes (see Figure 14.7 Zone of Theoretical Visibility). These elements would not form a dominant element from this area, having a 'low adverse' effect on receptors here. Given the high sensitivity of these footpath users, the overall significance of the effect would be 'minor adverse'.
- 14.6.5 Closer to the Site (north of Monk's Cottage) there are clearer views of the Site from ARB03 (see Figure 14.7 Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Figure 14.8, View 2). Stretches of hedgerow provide screening, especially in the summer, however there are some clear views of the site. The construction site would form a dominant element when seen from stretches of this footpath, having a 'high adverse' magnitude of change. Given the high sensitivity of these footpath users, the overall significance of the effect would be 'major adverse'.
- 14.6.6 From Monk's Cottage, there are likely to be glimpsed private views of the construction site beyond the garden boundary and northern field boundary to the Site, especially from the first floor windows. Given that public open space is proposed in the area adjacent to the property and the closest houses would be approximately 80m from the Monk's Cottage the construction would not be in the foreground however it is likely that there would be some clear changes to views. It is assumed that this could result in changes of 'high adverse' magnitude from the upper part of the house and have a potential 'major adverse' effect on the visual amenity of these residents.

Construction Views from the East

- 14.6.7 There are few visual receptors that would have views of the proposed construction from the east given the rural nature of the area and lack of public access or residences.
- 14.6.8 The only public views would be from the public byway ARB04 to the south of Carter's Hill to the north-east (see Figure 14.9, View 3) and from a short stretch of Mole Road to the east (see View 4).

14.6.9 The ZTV shows that views from byway ARB04 (View 3) are glimpsed, however the site visit showed that in reality it is unlikely there will be any views from this area, due to the presence of foreground hedgerow and further woodlands and hedgerows around the site boundary. If the University of Reading Loddon Garden Village proposal is constructed, an area of new housing would be seen in the middle distance and screen the view further (see Cumulative Effects, Section 14.7). Overall the effects on this visual receptors here are judged to be of 'negligible adverse' magnitude and significance.

14.6.10 Views from Mole Road to the east of the Site are seen by drivers passing at relatively high speed. Close to the Site there are some clear views of the eastern part of the Site, however elsewhere on Mole Road foreground hedgerows screen the Site in its entirety (see View 4). Where visible, the construction site would result in a change of 'high' magnitude. Given the low sensitivity of the receptors, the change would be of 'moderate adverse' significance.

14.6.11 Mole Bridge Farmhouse is a private residence to the east of the Site. Whilst this was not visited, it is likely that the property would have glimpsed views of the construction site in the middle-distance beyond existing garden and field hedgerows. Given the current rural context, and sensitivity of the receptors, this would result in a 'major adverse' effect on the visual amenity of the private residents.

Construction Views from the South-East

14.6.12 To the south, the ZTV (Figure 14.7) shows that the Site is well screened by vegetation and buildings at Arborfield and by the terrain of Ellis's Hill. Areas that have views of the Site are generally rural in character and inaccessible to the public. Key views are from Ellis's Hill/ARB08 to the south-east of Mole Road (View 5), users of ARB09 on Ellis's Hill (Views 6 and 7) to the south-east and Mole Road immediately to the south of the Site (View 8). In addition there could be views from the private property Hunters Point on Ellis's Hill close to its junction with Mole Road. The ZTV also shows potential glimpsed views from Reading Road to the west of Arborfield Cross however the site visit indicated that dense hedgerows screen this road from view towards the Site.

14.6.13 Hunters Point residence was not visited but can be glimpsed from Mole Road. It is likely that this property would have views of the construction works on Mole Road and within the field to the south of Mole Road which will accommodate a new footpath. In addition residents of the house may have views of the construction site to the north of Mole Road beyond the garden and field boundary vegetation. Given the current rural context, and sensitivity of the receptors, this would result in a 'moderate adverse' effect on the visual amenity of the private residents.

14.6.14 View 5 shows that the Site is primarily screened by foreground hedgerows and trees, however the southern edge of the Site would be glimpsed from the more elevated parts of ARB08 up Ellis's Hill. Construction on the southern part of the Site would be glimpsed from part of this track but not form a dominant element in the view. Overall, the effect would be of low magnitude, having a 'minor adverse' effect on users of the PRoW.

14.6.15 Users of ARB09 along the ridge of Ellis's Hill (View 6) are further from the Site than those at View 5 however due to the elevated nature of the viewpoint there is a short stretch of path that would have some clearer views of the Site. From here, the Site is not seen in its entirety however, benefitting from screening by mature hedgerow trees. Whilst the construction on part of the site would be visible, it would be approximately 0.5km away. Visual effects would therefore be of 'low adverse' magnitude and 'moderate adverse' significance given the high sensitivity of these receptors.

14.6.16 Close to the Sewage works, the users of ARB09 (Figure 14.11, View 7), are at a lower level than View 6, but also have glimpsed views of the southern part of the Site. Whilst existing woodland (Hazelton's Copse), hedgerow trees and the undulating valley terrain provide some screening, part of the construction site would be visible, resulting in a 'low adverse' magnitude of change. Effects on these high sensitivity visual receptors would therefore also be of 'moderate adverse' significance.

Construction Views from the South

14.6.17 Immediately adjacent to the south of the Site, views are generally screened by roadside vegetation (see Figure 14.11, View 8) however users of the stretch of Mole Road within the Site (north of Church Lane) will experience 'high adverse' magnitude changes to the view, with new road construction in the foreground and housing construction within the fields beyond. Given the low sensitivity of these receptors, the significance of the visual effects will be 'moderate adverse' here.

14.6.18 Public views from the wider area to the south-west and west are well screened by existing housing on Church Lane and Brickyard Copse, however there would be clear views of the construction site from users of byway ARB03 and Church Lane which run immediately adjacent to the Site boundaries (see Views 9 and 10, Figures 14.12 – 14.13.). Given the medium sensitivity of the visual receptors using these rights of way, and the 'high adverse' magnitude of the visual changes, the effects would be of 'major adverse' significance.

14.6.19 In addition there would be potential changes to the private views from Oakland House, Reading Room Cottage and The Pheasantries on Church Lane. These properties are all situated on Church Lane adjacent to the Site. Reading Room Cottage and The Pheasantries appear to be primarily single storey properties and benefit from screening by the site and garden hedgerow boundaries, however it is likely that there would be views of the construction site above these hedges, resulting in a 'moderate' and 'minor' adverse effect respectively. Oakland House benefits from closeboard fencing at the ground level which provides screening however it appears that there would be changes to the views from its first floor windows which overlook Church Lane. Effects on this part of the property would be of 'moderate adverse' significance.

Construction Views from the West

14.6.20 To the north-west of the Site, the ZTV drawing (Figure 14.7) shows that there is an area of farmland to the south of the CEDAR farm which would have views of the Site. Much of this area is inaccessible to the public however and has no visual receptors, with the closest public viewpoints being from the ARB02 PRoW to the immediate south of the CEDAR farm. View 11 (Figure 14.14) demonstrates that this area also benefits from screening by the mature hedgerow trees to the north of the site as well as the Brick Kiln Coppice. It is likely that there would be glimpsed views of the construction of new homes in the northern part of the Site, especially if cranes are used, however given the distance of the viewer from the Site (approximately 0.8km), these construction elements would not form a dominant element in the view. Overall, the construction would result in a 'low adverse' magnitude change to the view and would be of 'minor adverse' significance.

Table 14.16 Effects on Visual Receptors – During Construction

Note: All visual effects during construction are judged to be medium-term and direct.

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
Views from the north						
1	0.7km	Users of ARB03 to the west of Carter's Hill	Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse	<p>There would be glimpsed views of the upper parts of construction/cranes from short stretches of this footpath only. Foreground hedgerow vegetation would provide further screening, especially during the summer.</p> <p><i>NB: This view would change significantly if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with new open space and housing in the foreground</i></p>
2	0.12km	Users of ARB03 to the north-east of Monk's Cottage	Medium	High adverse	Major adverse	<p>Clear views across the majority of the construction site would result in a dominant change to the view from rural fields to construction. Foreground vegetation filters some stretches of this path, especially in the summer though, reducing this effect.</p> <p><i>NB: This view would change significantly if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with new open space in the foreground.</i></p>
Private view	25m	Monk's Cottage	Medium	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse	<p>Year 0: This property was not visited but can be seen from the Site and byway ARB03. It is therefore likely that there would be views of the new homes when seen from the property. The house does however benefit from some screening provided by hedgerows around its boundary and the adjacent fields.</p> <p>Year 15: There is a large area of open space on the northern side of the Site close to Monk's Cottage that can be planted with additional hedgerow species and trees. At Year 15 these would be well established and provide a good degree of screening. The nature of the change will ultimately depend on the quality of</p>

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
						the landscape proposals here and the detailed design of any visible housing beyond.
Views from the east						
3	0.48km	Users of short stretches of ARBO4 byway to the south of Carter's Hill (joining Carter's Hill with Mole Road)	Medium	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse	Foreground hedgerows provide good screening even during the winter. The ZTV shows that there is the potential for glimpsed views from this PRoW however further vegetation around the site means that it would scarcely be seen and not be a dominant element in the view. <i>NB: This view will change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with new housing in the middle distance.</i>
4	0.34km	Stretches of Mole Road to the north-east and east of the Site.	Low	High adverse	Moderate adverse	The eastern part of the construction site would form part of a wider rural context and as such result in a clear change to the view when seen from the short stretches of Mole Road closer to the Site.
Private view	119m	Residents of Mole Bridge Farmhouse (Mole Road)	Medium	High adverse	Major adverse	This private property was not visited but would have glimpsed views of the construction site in the middle-distance through existing garden and field hedgerows. Given the current rural context, this would be experienced as a notable change.
Views from the south-east						
Private view	78m	Residents of Hunters Point (Ellis's Hill)	Medium	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse	This private property was not visited but can be glimpsed from Mole Road. It is likely that the property would have views of construction works on Mole Road, especially the new footpath to the south of the Mole Road.

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
5	0.44km	Users of Ellis's Hill/ ARBO8 byway to east of Ellis's Hill Farm	Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse	Landscape within the view (excluding the Site) is within the Barkham & Bearwood draft Valued Landscape. Construction within the southern part of the site would form a distant glimpsed feature in the view.
6	0.48km	Users of ARBO9 at junction with ARBO10	High	Low adverse	Moderate adverse	Landscape within the view (excluding the Site) is within the Barkham & Bearwood draft Valued Landscape. Construction within the southern part of the site would form a distant glimpsed feature in the view.
7	0.53km	Users of ARBO9 close to the sewage works	High	Low adverse	Moderate adverse	Landscape within the view (excluding the Site) is within the Barkham & Bearwood draft Valued Landscape. Construction within the southern part of the site would form a distant glimpsed feature in the view.
Views from the south						
8	0km - 0.17km	From A3030 Mole Road to the south of the Site	Low	Negligible adverse – High adverse	Negligible adverse– Moderate adverse	Views of the Site generally concealed by roadside vegetation and the bend in the road to the south of Church Lane. Mole Road runs through the red line boundary of the Site and will experience widening to facilitate the new access. Here, there will be clear and dominant changes to the view, with road construction within and adjacent to Mole Road and housing construction beyond, including the removal of the roadside hedgerow.
Private view	• 7m • 29m	Residents of Church Lane adjacent to the Site: • Reading Room Cottage • The Pheasantry	Medium	• Reading Room Cottage: Medium adverse	• Reading Room Cottage: Moderate adverse	Views from these properties are partially screened by garden vegetation. Whilst the properties were not visited it is apparent from the road that Oakland House has clear views into the site from its first floor front windows. Reading Room Cottage is primarily a single storey property and views of the Site are partially screened by the site boundary hedgerow. The Pheasantry is single storey property set within a mature front

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
	• 27m	• Oakland House		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pheasantries: Low adverse • Oakland House: Medium adverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pheasantries: Minor adverse • Oakland House: Moderate adverse 	garden which is likely to provide good screening, however there would be views from the house via the driveway.
9A	0km	Users of Church Lane to the south of the site (looking to the north-east)	Medium	High adverse	Major adverse	<p>Fields A and B of the Site is visible in the foreground and comprises the majority of the view. Existing glimpses of the countryside beyond to the north will be screened by the new construction site, which will dominate the view.</p> <p><i>NB: Photograph taken from a field-gate. Other views from Church Lane have a hedgerow and highway infrastructure in the foreground. In addition, this view may change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with glimpses of the roofs of new housing beyond the Site.</i></p>
9B	0km	Users of Church Lane to the south of the site (looking to the south-east)	Medium	High adverse	Major adverse	<p>The Site is visible in the foreground and comprises the majority of the view. Glimpses of the countryside beyond will be screened by the new construction site, which will dominate the view.</p> <p><i>NB: Photograph taken from a field-gate. Other views from Church Lane have a hedgerow and highway infrastructure in the foreground.</i></p>
Views from the west						
10A and 10B	0km	Users of byway ARBO3 (looking to the north-east)	Medium	High adverse	Major adverse	The northern part of the Site is visible in the foreground and comprises the majority of the view, albeit screened by the Site's clipped boundary hedgerow. The construction site will be clearly

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
						<p>visible above this hedge, forming a dominant element in the view.</p> <p><i>NB: This view may change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with glimpses of the roofs of new housing beyond the Site reducing the value of the view.</i></p>
11	0.83km	Users of ARBO2 footpath between Hall Farm and the CEDAR facility	Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse	<p>Rural view across wide arable fields. Area does not fall within a Valued Landscape. The Site is not visible from here, lying beyond the brow of the hill, however there is the potential for roofs of new homes to be visible, depending on their location and height.</p> <p><i>NB: This view will change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with the potential for a new school, housing and playing fields constructed between the viewer and the Site.</i></p>

Operational Phase – Potential Visual Effects (Year 0) and Residual Visual Effects (Year 15)

14.6.21 The assessment of the visual impacts during the operational period are summarised in Table 14.17. All effects are judged to be ‘long-term’ and as such the ‘magnitude’ of change is the same as the ‘scale’, with no consideration of how this might be reduced in the short-term.

14.6.22 The effects are judged at two stages. The assessment of ‘potential’ visual effects assume that there is no specific mitigation planting designed to mitigate visual impacts. Any vegetation that may have formed part of the new Green Infrastructure is assessed at Winter of Year 0 and therefore would not be well-established. This provides the ‘worst-case’ scenario.

14.6.23 A second assessment assumes that ‘additional mitigation’ has taken place, in the form of strategic planting to screen and soften key views of development. This assessment is taken at 15 years after planting, and therefore allows for new trees to have established. This assesses the ‘residual’ visual effects. An indicative landscape scheme is provided in Appendices 14.2 and 14.3 however these would be subject to Reserved Matters planning application(s).

14.6.24 The assessment shows that the main adverse effects would be on receptor groups immediately surrounding the Site. Beyond this, natural screening is provided by the hillside terrain to the south-east and woodland areas to the north and west.

Potential and Residual Operational Effects on Views from the North

14.6.25 To the north of the Site, Dog Kennel Copse provides a good degree of screening from the wider landscape beyond. The most distant views towards the Site are glimpsed views from ARB03 close to Carter’s Hill (see Figure 14.8, View 1), approximately 1km from the Site. From here, the Proposed Development would sit over the brow of a hill, and generally be well screened by foreground hedgerows. Given the distance from the viewer the visual effects of the proposed properties are likely to result in a ‘negligible adverse’ effect at worst, even without additional mitigation planting. If the University of Reading Loddon Garden Village proposal is constructed, new housing in the foreground would ultimately screen views of the Site from this PRoW (see Cumulative Effects, Section 14.7).

14.6.26 Closer to the site there are clear views from byway ARB03 to the north-east of Monk’s Cottage (see Figure 14.8, View 2). From short stretches of this PRoW there would be potential views towards the northern and western parts of the site with proposed housing visible beyond an open field in the foreground. New homes (up to 4 storeys in height) would be seen along the northern site boundary behind newly planted open space and some existing mature hedgerow trees. This would result in a ‘high adverse’ magnitude of change potential effect of ‘major adverse significance’.

14.6.27 With additional mitigation planting along the northern boundary of the Site, the views of new homes would be softened and filtered views of the new homes, however they would not be totally screened. At Year 15, the magnitude of the visual effect from ARB03 would reduce to ‘medium adverse’, resulting in a ‘moderate adverse’ residual effect. If the University of Reading Loddon Garden Village proposal is constructed, new public open space would be created in the foreground of this view. This could provide further screening of the Proposed Development due to additional tree and hedgerow planting (see Cumulative Effects, Section 14.7).

14.6.28 From Monk’s Cottage, there are likely to be glimpsed private views of the Proposed Development beyond the garden boundary and northern field boundary to the Site, especially from the first storey windows. Given that public open space is proposed in the area adjacent to the property and the closest houses would be approximately 80m from the Monk’s Cottage the

new housing would not be in the foreground however it is likely that there would be some clear changes to the existing rural views. It is assumed that this could result in changes of 'high adverse' magnitude from the upper part of the house and have a potential 'major adverse' effect on the visual amenity of these residents. With additional mitigation planting in the open space that wraps around the northern part of the Site the views of new homes will be softened however it is unlikely that they would be totally screened, especially as there are proposed four storey houses in this area. Overall the significance of residual visual effects is likely to be 'moderate adverse'.

Potential and Residual Operational Effects on Views from the East

14.6.29 There are few visual receptors that would have views of the proposed housing from the east, given the rural nature of the area and lack of public access or residences. The only public views would be from the public byway ARB04 to the south of Carter's Hill to the north-east (see Figure 14.9, View 3) and from a short stretch of Mole Road to the east (see View 4). In addition there would be views from the private residence Mole Bridge Farmhouse.

14.6.30 View 3 shows that the Site is generally not visible from the byway to the south of Carter's Hill, ARB04, due the presence of foreground hedgerow and further woodlands and hedgerows around the site boundary. The ZTV indicates that there could be views from parts of this route, however at most these would be glimpsed, filtered views of homes, having a 'negligible adverse' effect. With additional vegetation planting along the eastern side of the Site any views would be screened and the proposed Development would have no residual effects on these visual receptors. If the University of Reading Loddon Garden Village proposal is constructed, an area of new housing would be seen in the middle distance and screen the view of the Site from the outset (see Cumulative Effects, Section 14.7).

14.6.31 Views from Mole Road to the north-east of the Site are seen at a relative speed, by low sensitivity visual receptors. Close to the Site there are some clear views of the eastern part of the Site, however other foreground hedgerows screen the Site in its entirety (see View 4). Where visible, the development would result in a potential moderate adverse effect on road users given that new homes could be seen within an otherwise rural setting. With additional mitigation planting along the eastern boundary of the Site this would reduce to a 'minor adverse' residual effect by Year 15, as new trees soften views of the housing beyond and integrate them with the wider rural landscape.

14.6.32 Mole Bridge Farmhouse is a private residence to the east of the Site. Whilst this was not visited, it is likely that the property would have glimpsed but clear views of the new housing in the middle-distance, beyond existing garden and field hedgerows. Given the current rural context, and sensitivity of the receptors, this could initially result in a potential 'major adverse' effect on the visual amenity of the private residents. The proposed housing is c.170m from the house however with a large area of open space proposed around the eastern side of the Site. This that can be planted with additional mitigation planting such as a woodland buffer and orchard trees and when these are established they would soften views of the new homes, ensuring they are not a dominant element in the view, especially during the summer months. The nature of the change will ultimately depend on the quantum of tree planting and the quality of the detailed design of the housing beyond and the residual effect could therefore either be 'moderate adverse' or 'neutral'.

Potential and Residual Operational Effects on Views from the South and South-East

14.6.33 To the south, the ZTV (Figure 14.7) shows that the Site is well screened by vegetation and buildings at Arborfield and by the terrain of Ellis's Hill. Areas that have views of the Site are generally rural in character and inaccessible to the public. Key views are from Ellis's Hill/ARB08

to the south-east of Mole Road (View 5), Users of ARB09 on Ellis's Hill (Views 6 and 7) to the south-east and Mole Road immediately to the south of the Site (View 8). The ZTV also shows potential glimpsed views from Reading Road to the west of Arborfield Cross however the site visit indicated that dense hedgerows screen this road from view towards the Site.

14.6.34 The Hunters Point private residence was not visited, but given that it can be glimpsed from Mole Road it is likely that this property would have views of the new footpath to the south of Mole Road and new housing to the north of Mole Road, resulting in a potential 'moderate adverse' effect. As new vegetation within the southern part of the Site matures (including a replacement hedgerow), the rural setting of Mole within the views would be partially restored. The nature of the residual effect will ultimately depend on the quality of the detailed design of the housing beyond and would either be 'moderate adverse' or 'neutral'.

14.6.35 Further from the Site to the south-east there are glimpsed views from Ellis's Hill/PRoW ARB08. View 5 shows that the Site is primarily screened by foreground hedgerows and trees when seen from here, however there would be glimpses of the new housing within the southern part of the Site from the more elevated parts of ARB09. This would result in a potential 'moderate adverse' effect, given the existing rural character of views. As additional mitigation planting establishes within the southern part of the Site the new housing would diminish in the view, resulting in a 'negligible adverse' residual visual effect.

14.6.36 Users of ARB09 along the ridge of Ellis's Hill (Views 6 and 7) would also have a few glimpsed views of the Site. From here, the Site is not seen in its entirety however, benefitting from screening by mature hedgerow trees and woodland in the middle distance. Whilst new housing would be visible, it would be approximately 0.5km away. Given the introduction of housing into an otherwise rural views, the potential visual effects would initially be of 'moderate adverse' significance. Given that additional mitigation planting is proposed within a wide area of open space around the Site's southern boundary the residual landscape effect would reduce to 'negligible adverse' as new trees mature and soften and screen the new development.

14.6.37 To the south of the Site, views are generally screened by roadside vegetation along Mole Road and Church Lane (see Figure 14.11, View 8) however users of the stretch of Mole Road within the Site (north of Church Lane) will experience potential 'high adverse' magnitude changes to the view. Here there will be views of widening of Mole Road immediately to the south of the Site and new housing beyond. Given the low sensitivity of these receptors, the significance of these potential visual effects will be 'moderate adverse'. This will reduce to a residual 'minor adverse' effect as additional mitigation planting establishes within the proposed open spaces adjacent to Mole Road and Church Lane.

Potential and Residual Operational Effects on Views from the West and South West

14.6.38 Public views from the wider area to the south-west and west of the Site are well screened by existing housing on Church Lane and by Brickyard Copse, however users of byway ARB03 and Church Lane would have views of the new housing and open spaces immediately adjacent to the Site boundaries (see Views 9 and 10, Figures 14.12 – 14.13). Given the proximity of the Proposed Development to these viewers, this would result in 'major adverse' potential visual effects. Given that the Site's western and north-western areas will incorporate wide areas of open space, there is the potential for tree planting to help screen and soften views of the new housing here. This will reduce the visual impact, however there will still be a clear change to the view and the residual effects will therefore either be 'moderate adverse' or 'neutral'. The overall nature of the effect will depend on the quality of the architecture and materials used for the housing, which will be determined at the Reserved Matters Application stage.

14.6.39 In addition to the changes to the public views there would be potential changes to the private views from Oakland House, Reading Room Cottage and The Pheasantries on Church Lane. Reading Room Cottage and The Pheasantries appear to be primarily single storey properties and benefit from screening by the site and garden hedgerow boundaries, however it is likely that there would be views of parts of new homes above these hedges, resulting in potential 'moderate' and 'minor' adverse effect respectively. Oakland House benefits from closeboard fencing at the ground level which screens occupiers from the Site however it appears that there would be changes to the views from its first floor windows which overlook Church Lane. Potential effects on this part of the property would be of 'moderate adverse' significance. With additional mitigation planting within the proposed open spaces around the southern and western sides of the Site, these residual effects would diminish to either 'minor adverse' or 'neutral' (Reading Room Cottage and Oakland House) or 'negligible adverse' or 'neutral' (The Pheasantries) depending on the ultimate quality of the architecture and materials of the proposed housing.

Potential and Residual Operational Effects on Views from the North-West

14.6.40 To the north-west of the Site, there is an area of farmland to the south of the CEDAR farm which would have views of the Site. Much of this area is inaccessible to the public however and has no visual receptors. The only views would be from the ARB02 PRoW to the immediate south of the CEDAR farm (see View 11, Figure 14.14). Given the distance from the Site (c. 0.8km), and the position of the Site beyond a small hill and existing mature trees along the ARB03 PRoW, the majority of the Proposed Development would not be visible from this area. At most, it is likely that housing on the northern edge of the site would be visible on the distant ridge, comprising a small element in a much wider panoramic view. The potential visual effects on users of ARB02 would be of 'minor adverse' significance. With mitigation planting around the northern and western edges of the Site, the residual effects would be 'negligible adverse'.

14.6.41 If the proposed University of Reading Loddon Garden Village development is constructed within this area to the north-west of the Site, the views from ARB02 would be screened by new intervening built form and the Proposed Development would not be visible in the view.

Table 14.17 Effects during Operation: Potential Effects on Visual Receptors (Year 0) and Residual Effects on Visual Receptors (Year 15)

Note: The assessment of potential visual effects assumes there will be no specific mitigation provided by new strategic planting, whilst the assessment of residual effects considers that strategic planting can be secured through Reserved matters applications and appraises these at Year 15 when it would be well established. All visual effects judged to be long-term and direct.

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
Views from the north						
1	0.7km	Users of ARB03 to the west of Carter's Hill	Medium	Year 0: Negligible adverse	Year 0: Negligible adverse	<p>Years 0 and 15: There could be glimpsed views of some homes from a short stretch of this PRoW however given the presence of foreground hedgerows and the distance from the viewer this is unlikely to result in a noticeable change. With mitigation planting adjacent to the northernmost parcels this may diminish further</p> <p><i>NB: This view would change significantly if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with new open space and housing in the foreground</i></p>
2	0.12km	Users of ARB03 to the north-east of Monk's Cottage	Medium	Year 0: High adverse Year 15: Medium adverse	Year 0: Major adverse Year 15: Moderate adverse	<p>Year 0: There would be views towards the northern and western parts of the site from short stretches of this path, beyond an open field in the foreground. New homes (up to 4 storeys in height) would be seen on the northern site boundary behind newly planted open space and some existing mature hedgerow trees.</p> <p>Year 15: There is the potential for mitigation planting within new open spaces around the Site's northern boundary. Once mature this would soften and filter views of the new homes, however they would not be totally screened. There would therefore be a clear change to the view, albeit well integrated with the wider rural landscape.</p>

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
						<i>NB: This view would change significantly if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with new open space in the foreground.</i>
Private view	25m	Monk's Cottage	Medium	Year 0: High adverse Year 15: Medium adverse	Year 0: Major adverse Year 15: Moderate adverse	<p>Year 0: This property was not visited but can be seen from the Site and byway ARB03. It is therefore likely that there would be glimpsed views of the new homes when seen from the property. The house does however benefit from some screening provided by hedgerows around its boundary and the adjacent fields. The closest new homes would be c.80m from the house, which would further reduce their dominance in the view but would still be visible to the south-east from the upper storey windows.</p> <p>Year 15: There is a large area of open space on the northern side of the Site close to Monk's Cottage that can be planted with additional hedgerow species and trees. At Year 15 these would be well established and soften views of new homes however given that four storey housing is proposed in this area it is likely that housing will be visible from the upper storey windows of the Cottage eroding its rural setting.</p>
Views from the east						
3	0.48km	Users of short stretches of ARBO4 byway to the south of Carter's Hill (joining Carter's Hill with Mole Road)	Medium	Year 0: Negligible adverse Year 15: No change	Year 0: Negligible adverse Year 15: No change	<p>Year 0: Hedgerows in the foreground and closer to the Site provide good screening from this byway even during the winter. It is unlikely that there would be views of new development, even when new planting has not established.</p> <p>Year 15: With the establishment of mitigation planting on the eastern side of the site it is unlikely that there would be any views of new homes from this byway.</p>

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
						<i>NB: This view will change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with new housing in the middle distance.</i>
4	0.34km	Stretches of Mole Road to the north-east and east of the Site.	Low	Year 0: High adverse Year 15: Low adverse	Year 0: Moderate adverse Year 15: Minor adverse	Year 0: Whilst new homes would be set back from the eastern site boundary, there would be glimpses of new homes from short stretches of the Mole Road, introducing a more urban element into the otherwise rural context. Year 15: A wide open space on the north-eastern side of the site can accommodate tree, hedgerow and scrub planting, both along the site's boundary and also adjacent to the proposed housing further into the Site. Once established, these could soften views of the new homes, integrating them into the landscape.
Private view	119m	Residents of Mole Bridge Farmhouse (Mole Road)	Medium	Year 0: High adverse Year 15: Medium adverse or neutral	Year 0: Major adverse Year 15: Moderate adverse or neutral	Year 0: This property was not visited but can be seen from the Site. It is therefore likely that there would be clear winter views of the new homes when seen from the property. Year 15: There is a large area of open space on the eastern side of the Site that can be planted with woodland buffer and orchard trees. At Year 15 these would be well established and integrate the new homes with the wider landscape, ensuring they do not form a dominant element in the view, especially during the summer months. The nature of the change will ultimately depend on the quality of the detailed design of the housing beyond.
Views from the south-east						

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
Private view	78m	Residents of Hunters Point (Ellis's Hill)	Medium	Year 0: Medium adverse Year 15: Medium adverse or neutral	Year 0: Moderate adverse Year 15: Moderate adverse or neutral	Year 0: This property was not visited but can be glimpsed from Mole Road. The home may have glimpses of the new footpath to the south of Mole Road and new housing to the north of Mole Road. Year 15: As new vegetation within the southern part of the Site matures (including a replacement hedgerow), the rural setting of Mole within the views will be partially restored. The nature of the change will ultimately depend on the quality of the detailed design of the housing beyond.
5	0.44km	Users of Ellis's Hill/ ARBO8 byway to east of Ellis's Hill Farm	High	Year 0: Low adverse Year 15: Negligible adverse	Year 0: Moderate adverse Year 15: Negligible adverse	Year 0: There would be occasional glimpses of new homes within the southern part of the Site, however these would be generally screened by existing foreground hedgerows and trees. Year 15: A new green corridor adjacent to Mole Road provides space for tree planting. These can soften/screen views of new homes, meaning they would scarcely be seen from this route.
6	0.48km	Users of ARBO9 at junction with ARBO10	High	Year 0: Low adverse Year 15: Negligible adverse	Year 0: Moderate adverse Year 15: Negligible adverse	Year 0: There would be distant views of new homes within the south-western part of the Site from this elevated location. Whilst these would not be a dominant element in the wider panoramic views, given its current rural context, the development would result in a recognisable change. Year 15: A new green corridor provides space for tree planting. These can soften/screen views of new homes, meaning they would scarcely be seen from this route.

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
7	0.53km	Users of ARBO9 close to the sewage works	High	Year 0: Low adverse Year 15: Negligible adverse	Year 0: Moderate adverse Year 15: Negligible adverse	Year 0: There would be distant views of new homes within the south-eastern part of the Site. Whilst these would not be a dominant element in the wider panoramic views, given its current rural context, the development would result in a recognisable change. Year 15: A new green corridor adjacent to Mole Road provides space for tree planting. These can soften/screen views of new homes, meaning they would scarcely be seen from this route.
Views from the south						
8	0km - 0.17km	From A3030 Mole Road to the south of the Site	Low	Year 0: No change – High adverse Year 15: No change – Medium adverse	Year 0: No change – Moderate adverse Year 15: No change – Minor adverse	Year 0: Views of the Site are generally concealed by roadside vegetation and the bend in the road to the south of Church Lane. Mole Road runs through the red line boundary of the Site and will be widened to facilitate the new access however. Here, there will be clear and dominant changes to the view, with a wider road, the replacement of much of the roadside hedgerow with new planting and new homes beyond. Year 15: The widening of Mole Road cannot be visually mitigated however the new open space immediately parallel to Mole Road can include new tree and hedgerow planting which will visually soften views of new homes.
Private view	• 7m	Residents of Church Lane: • Reading Room Cottage	Medium	<u>Reading Room Cottage:</u> • Year 0: High adverse • Year 15: Medium	<u>Reading Room Cottage:</u> • Year 0: Major adverse • Year 15: Moderate	Views from these properties are partially screened by garden vegetation. Whilst the properties were not they could experience the following effects: Reading Room Cottage could have glimpsed views of new homes set behind the existing site boundary when seen from its

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29m • 27m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pheasantries • Oakland House 		adverse or neutral <u>The Pheasantries:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 0: Low adverse <u>Oakland House:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 0: High adverse • Year 15: Medium adverse or Neutral 	adverse or neutral <u>The Pheasantries:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 0: Minor adverse • Year 15: Major adverse <u>Oakland House:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 0: Moderate adverse or neutral 	<p>eastern elevation (Year 0). This would diminish by Year 15, given the wide area of open space here with proposed trees and orchards which would have matured. The overall nature of the effect would depend on the quality of the detailed architecture and landscape proposals.</p> <p>Oakland House would have views of the new homes from its first floor front windows. The views would be filtered and softened as new vegetation within the western side of the Site matures but remain noticeably different to the current open rural views. The overall nature of the effect would depend on the quality of the detailed architecture and landscape proposals.</p> <p>The Pheasantries is single storey benefitting from relatively good garden screening, however there would be views of new open space with housing beyond via the driveway of the house (Year 0) This would diminish as vegetation within the open spaces and gardens of the new homes matures..</p>
9A	0km	Users of Church Lane to the south of the site (looking to the north-east)	Medium	Year 0: High adverse Year 15: Medium adverse or neutral	Year 0: Major adverse Year 15: Moderate adverse or neutral	<p>Year 0: New houses will be clearly visible in the foreground, set behind an area of newly planted public open space.</p> <p>Year 15: The views of new housing will be filtered by the established new planting in the foreground. From parts of Church Lane the new homes could be totally screened (especially in the summer) or be glimpsed through public gateways into the Site. In these areas, the nature of the change will ultimately depend on the quality of the architecture and materials used.</p>

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
						<p><i>NB: Photograph taken from a field-gate. Other views from Church Lane have a hedgerow and highway infrastructure in the foreground. In addition, this view may change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with glimpses of the roofs of new housing beyond the Site.</i></p>
9B	0km	Users of Church Lane to the south of the site (looking to the south-east)	Medium	Year 0: High adverse Year 15: Medium adverse or neutral	Year 0: Major adverse Year 15: Moderate adverse or neutral	<p>Year 0: New houses will be clearly visible in the foreground, set behind an area of newly planted public open space.</p> <p>Year 15: The views of new housing will be filtered by the established new planting in the foreground. From parts of Church Lane the new homes could be totally screened (especially in the summer) or be glimpsed through public gateways into the Site. In these areas, the nature of the change will ultimately depend on the quality of the architecture and materials used.</p> <p><i>NB: Photograph taken from a field-gate. Other views from Church Lane have a hedgerow and highway infrastructure in the foreground.</i></p>
Views from the west						
10A and 10B	0km	Users of byway ARBO3	Medium	Year 0: High adverse Year 15: Medium adverse or neutral	Year 0: Major adverse Year 15: Moderate adverse or neutral	Year 0: The northern and western parts of the Site is visible in the foreground and comprises the majority of the view, albeit screened by the Site's clipped boundary hedgerow. This area will include a wide swathe of public open space with new housing set behind it, curtailing the current longer distance rural views.

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
						<p>Year 15: As new planting within the proposed foreground open space matures this view will become more enclosed, with views of new homes more filtered. Whilst this will help to restore its rural setting it will be a clearly different view. The nature of change will ultimately depend on the quality of the architecture and materials of any visible housing.</p> <p><i>NB: The view to the north (View 10A) may change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with glimpses of the roofs of new housing beyond the Site reducing the value of the baseline view.</i></p>
11	0.83km	Users of ARBO2 footpath between Hall Farm and the CEDAR facility	Medium	<p>Year 0: Low adverse</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible adverse</p>	<p>Year 0: Minor adverse</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible adverse</p>	<p>Year 0: New homes could be glimpsed over the brow of the hill in the vicinity of Monk's Cottage. Much of the built form would be screened due to the terrain and presence of mature trees around the Site boundaries however.</p> <p>Year 15: Space around the western and northern parts of the Site will allow new trees to be planted. As they mature they will screen and soften views of the new buildings. Given the distance of the viewer from the Site the new homes may be overlooked.</p> <p><i>NB: This view will change if the University of Reading proposals for Loddon Garden Village go ahead, with the potential for a new school, housing and playing fields constructed between the viewer and the Site. This would totally screen views of the Site.</i></p>

14.7 Additional Mitigation

14.7.1 Strategic planting will help mitigate some of the visual effects, and whilst this planting is shown on the Illustrative Landscape Strategy the final design would be secured at the Reserved Matters application stages. The assessment of residual effects described in Sections 14.5 and 14.6 and shown in Tables 14.15 and 14.17 therefore gives an indication as to how effects would be reduced if such additional planting mitigation were to be incorporated in the scheme, but acknowledges that this is conditional on the specific nature of the final landscape design.

14.8 Residual effects

14.8.1 The landscape assessments in Sections 14.5 has been based on the assumption that the proposed areas of Green Infrastructure will incorporate a variety of vegetation features as an inherent part of the spaces and as reflected in the initial BNG calculations. Later planning applications can contribute to the screening/softening of the visual setting of the new development, which is classified as additional mitigation. This will result in the diminishing of the final, residual effects.

Summary of Residual Landscape Effects

14.8.2 The only significant adverse residual landscape effects would be on a small part of Character Area J2 'Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay' (Wokingham Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment) which would inevitably change from arable/pasture fields to a residential development and associated open space and road infrastructure. Similarly there would be a significant adverse effect on the arable land use which would not be replaced.

14.8.3 There would however, also be some significant beneficial residual landscape effects resulting from the Proposed Development. These would include a direct 'moderate beneficial' residual effect on neutral grassland within the Site, which would replace some of the arable and improved/temporary grassland. Whilst three Category B oak trees would be removed to facilitate the construction of the Mole Road access, there would also be a significant ('major') beneficial effect on trees within the Site in general, with new trees would be planted within the public open spaces, streets and orchards (subject to Reserved Matters applications).

Summary of Residual Visual Effects

14.8.4 With regards to the visual assessment in Section 14.6, the additional mitigation planting would reduce visual effects from a number of viewpoints. The precise benefits would be subject to the Reserved Matters application(s) but are likely to result in the following significant residual adverse effects on the following receptors:

- Users of ARB03 byway to the north and west of the Site;
- Users of Church Lane to the south of the Site.

14.8.5 In addition, it is likely that five private residences close to the Site that could experience significant residual effects from either the house or gardens, however these properties were not accessed. These are:

- Residents of Monk's Cottage to the north of the Site;
- Residents of Mole Bridge Farmhouse and Hunters Point to the east of the Site;
- Residents of Reading Room Cottage and Oakland House to the south of the Site.

14.8.6 Whilst there would be clear changes to the views from these properties, there is the potential for the residual effect to be 'neutral' rather than adverse. This will depend on the quality of the detailed housing and landscape design at the Reserved Matters Application stages.

14.9 Implications of Climate Change

- 14.9.1 The impact of climate change has been considered based upon UK CP18 Climate Change Projections. This indicates a move towards warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. However, natural variations mean that some cold winters, some dry winters, some cool summers and some wet summers will still occur.
- 14.9.2 It is unlikely that these predicted changes will lead to wholesale change to the future landscape baseline within the lifetime of the Proposed Development. Changes might include certain tree species or grasslands becoming more dominant/prevalent, although it is unlikely that these changes would have a prominent impact on landscape of the area. The impact of climate change on the existing and proposed tree and shrub species within the Site is also covered in Chapter 11.
- 14.9.3 Similarly for visual effects, it is unlikely that this climate change scenario would lead to any greater, or different, effects to those predicted, given that the screening effects currently provided by topography, and any changes relating to tree and hedgerow species composition can still continue to include specimens that provide a suitable level of screening.

14.10 Cumulative effects

14.10.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for residual negative effects of the Proposed Development to act cumulatively with other committed schemes as identified within Chapter 5, as well as the additional development proposed within the wider Loddon Valley Garden Village Strategic Development Location. This identified that due to the distance and lack of intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the other committed schemes the only potential cumulative effects would be as a result of the remainder of the Loddon Valley Strategic Development.

Loddon Valley Garden Village Strategic Development Location

14.10.2 The proposals would not result in any significant cumulative effects, with the only nearby relevant developments being the additional housing areas at Loddon Garden Village to the north of the Site. To the north-east, the Hatch Farm proposals has no intervisibility with the Proposed Development.

14.10.3 Taken together, all three parts of the Garden Village would inevitably result in a greater loss of arable and modified grass fields. Given the extensive provision of proposed and enhanced Green Infrastructure across all three Sites, this would not result in a significant cumulative effect.

14.10.4 The proposed University of Reading development to the north and north-east of the site has the potential to reduce or eliminate some of the visual effects of the Proposed Development. In particular there would be changes to the visual receptors set out in Table 14.18. This shows that users of ARB03 (View 1) and ARB02 (View 11) between Carter's Hill and Hall Farm and ARB04 to the south of Carter's Hill would no longer have views of parts of the Proposed Development due to the screening effects of development within the University of Reading land.

14.10.5 It also shows that proposed open space immediately to the north of the Site would result in foreground changes to views from ARB03 and Mole Cottage to the north. Tree planting here would help screen the Proposed Development, however when the two schemes are considered

together they would result in a slightly greater cumulative visual effect given the additional foreground changes.

14.10.6 Finally, the development of housing on the eastern side of the University land may result in a sequential cumulative effect experienced by vehicle users of Mole Road to the north-east of the Site. Given the retained foreground rural context and gaps between the housing parcels and the low sensitivity of the receptors this would not result in a significant cumulative effect however.

Table 14.18 Cumulative Visual Effects

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
Views from the north						
1	0.7km	Users of ARB03 to the west of Carter's Hill	Medium	No change	No change	Proposed built form and open space within the University land would screen views of the Site resulting in no changes to this visual receptor group.
2	0.12km	Users of ARB03 to the north-east of Monk's Cottage	Medium	The view of the two schemes would include proposed open space and spine road and bus link infrastructure in the foreground. Taking this as the new baseline, the Proposed Development would benefit from the additional tree planting within the University land which would result in a reduced adverse impact on the current rural views. Taking the two schemes together there would be a significant change to the existing rural view with the greatest effects resulting from the development on the University of Reading land in the foreground.		
Private view	25m	Monk's Cottage	Medium	The view of the two schemes would include proposed open space and spine road and bus link infrastructure to the east when seen from the upper storeys of the house. Taking this as the new baseline, the Proposed Development would benefit from the additional tree planting within the University land which would help screen the proposed housing. Taking the two schemes together there would still be a significant change to the existing rural view, with the greatest effects resulting from the development on the University of Reading land in the foreground to the east.		
Views from the east						
3	0.48km	Users of short	Medium	No change	No change	Proposed built form and open space would

View Ref.	Approx. distance	Potential Visual Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude	Overall Significance	Description of View/ Rationale for Judgement
		stretches of ARBO4 byway to the south of Carter's Hill				screen views of the site resulting in no changes to this visual receptor group.
4	0.34km	Stretches of Mole Road to the north-east and east of the Site.	Low	Views of the Site will generally remain the same, however there will be glimpses of development on the eastern side of the University scheme further to the north of the Site, meaning that cumulatively the sequential effect on users of Mole Road will be slightly greater. Given the low sensitivity of these receptors and rural setting of the foreground fields, the overall cumulative effect will not be significant however.		
Views from the north-east						
11	0.83km	Users of ARBO2 footpath between Hall Farm and the CEDAR facility	Medium	No change	No change	Proposed built form and open space within the University of Reading land would screen views of the site resulting in no changes to this visual receptor group.

Wider Committed Development

14.10.7 No other committed development projects would result in cumulative effects when taken into consideration with the Proposed Development due to the distances and lack of intervisibility with the Site.

14.11 Summary

14.11.1 This impact assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Appraisal 3rd edition* (The Landscape Institute & IEMA, 2013). It assesses the effects that the Proposed Development would have on landscape designations, landscape character and features and visual amenity.

14.11.2 Potential significant landscape and visual effects have been identified through a desktop study and Site surveys undertaken by Savills between 2022 and 2025. This work also informed the masterplanning process.

14.11.3 The Proposed Development incorporates inherent mitigation measures to help avoid impacts on key landscape characteristics and sensitive views. This has included focussing development within an area primarily occupied by arable farmland within the centre of the Site, enabling it to be surrounded by wide corridors of open space on all sides; retaining existing hedges and trees within green corridors and incorporating the lowest building heights around the edges of the development.

14.11.4 The Site is not covered by an adopted landscape designations, but is partly covered by the draft River Loddon Valued Landscape as proposed in the *Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan 2023-2040*. No proposed housing would be located within this designated area. There are no trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders within the Site. Whilst there is a Tree Preservation Order covering Brickyard Plantation to the west of the Site the Proposed Development would not affect the canopies or roots of any of these trees.

14.11.5 The Proposed Development would result in an inevitable significant change to landscape character, with existing arable and pasture fields replaced by housing, public open space and road infrastructure. This would have a residual 'moderate adverse' effect on the small area of the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment Area 'J2 Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay' in which the Site is located.

14.11.6 Whilst the proposals will result in the loss of arable farmland, there will be some significant benefits to other landscape features across the Site, with significant benefits to neutral grassland and recreational access for example. Other benefits would include new wetland areas as part of the Sustainable Drainage proposals.

14.11.7 The Proposed Development would result in the removal of 3 no. Category B oak trees and removal of 319 linear metres of native hedgerow. Whilst these effects would initially be significant, compensatory hedgerow and tree planting will eliminate the residual effects and there would be significant residual benefits to trees within the Site.

14.11.8 The Proposed Development would not be visible from a wide area and instead is well contained by its valley terrace location. To the north, Dog Kennel Copse provides screening whilst to the west the Site is visually enclosed by Brick Kiln Coppice. To the south properties and hedgerows on Church Lane and Mole Road screen views whilst to the south-east the nearby Ellis's Hill curtails views. Views of the Proposed Development would therefore be primarily within a 1km radius of the Site, with the only clear views of new development being from the routes and properties immediately adjacent to it.

14.11.9 The only significant residual changes to public views would only be experienced by users of the byway that runs to the west and north of the Site (ARB03) and users of Church Lane to the south. These changes would initially be adverse, but with sensitive design, the effects on these receptors could be neutral. Whilst there will be clear changes to Mole Road as it runs through the southern part of the Site, given that visual receptors here are low sensitivity, the effects would not be significant.

14.11.10 The proposals could also result in significant adverse residual effects on a few residential properties close to the Site. Given that these were not accessed and are private views these findings may be less accurate. It is likely that there would be significant residual effects on residents of Mole Cottage to the north, Reading Room Cottage and Oakland House to the west and Hunters Point and Mole Bridge Farmhouse to the east. The nature of these effects may not be adverse however, and will depend upon the detailed architectural and landscape design of the Reserved Matters scheme. With sensitive design, effects on these receptors may be neutral.

14.11.11 The proposals would not result in any significant cumulative effects, with the only nearby relevant development being the additional housing areas at Loddon Garden Village to the north. To the north-east, the Hatch Farm proposals have no intervisibility with the Proposed Development. If completed, the housing proposals on the University of Reading land to the north and north-east of the Site would reduce visual impact, with new housing here curtailing the (already limited) views from ARB02, ARB03 and ARB04 to the west and south of Carter's Hill. Whilst there would be a slight sequential cumulative effect on users of Mole Road to the

north-east of the Site, who would have glimpsed views of both the Proposed Development and housing on the eastern side of the University land this would not be significant, due to the low sensitivity of the receptors and the retained rural character of this corridor in the foreground.

14.11.12 A summary of the assessment is set out in Table 14.20 below.

14.12 References

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd edition* (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013) ('GLVIA').
- *Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3)* (Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2024-01, August 2024)
- *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (Natural England, October 2014)
- *Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals* (Landscape Institute 2019)
- *Technical Guidance Note 08/19 Camera Auto Settings* (Landscape Institute 2019)
- *Technical Guidance Note 09/19 Earth Curvature* (Landscape Institute 2019)
- *National Landscape Character Areas* (National England, 2013)
- *Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment* (November 2019)
- *Wokingham Valued Landscapes Assessment* (September 2024)
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landscape-and-seascape-character-assessments> (2014)
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC): Available at: <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/magicmap.aspx>
- Wokingham Borough Council (2010). *Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework, Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document*, January 2010. Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/local-plan-and-planning-policies>.

14.13 Assessor information

Table 14.19 Assessor Information

Chapter	Responsibility	Name	Qualifications	Assessor information
14 Landscape and Visual Assessment	Savills	Ruth Bishop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSc. Hons Geography • Diploma Landscape Architecture • Master of Arts, Landscape Design • Master of Arts, Urban Design • Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute 	<p>Ruth is a Director at Savills and leads the company's Landscape team. She has over 30 years' experience in Landscape Design, Impact Assessment and Masterplanning. She is been responsible for managing and undertaking assessments and landscape-led masterplanning and Green Infrastructure design for development proposals at all scales including major road schemes and housing developments.</p> <p>She has a thorough understanding of the UK planning process and has undertaken many Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments for a variety of schemes and provided evidence on landscape and visual matters at planning inquiries.</p>

Table 14.20 Summary of effects

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
Construction Phase					
Landscape Designations					
Draft River Loddon Valued Landscape	Medium	Indirect only: Glimpsed views of construction from small part of the draft Valued Landscape within and adjacent to the Site	Inherent mitigation: Proposed Development designed to minimise loss of vegetation and integrate development with the landscape.	Moderate indirect adverse	Significant
Draft Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape	Low	Indirect only: Glimpsed views of construction from small part of the draft Valued landscape to the south-east of the Site.	Inherent mitigation: designed to minimise view of development from this area	Moderate indirect adverse	Significant
Landscape Character Areas					
J2 Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay: Mole Road	Medium	Construction of housing, roads and open space within the Site.	Inherent mitigation: Proposed Development designed to minimise loss of vegetation and integrate development with the landscape.	Major adverse direct	Significant
L1 Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills	Medium	Views of construction of housing, roads and open space within the Site.	Inherent mitigation: designed to minimise view of development from this area	Moderate adverse indirect	Significant
Landscape Features					
Land Use: Grassland	Medium	Land to be replaced by construction site.	None (at construction stage)	Major adverse direct	Significant
Land Use: Arable Farmland	Medium	Land to be replaced by construction site.	None (at construction stage)	Major adverse direct	Significant

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
River terrace landform and water features	Medium	Limited localised cut and fill to accommodate levelling of plots and road gradients.	None (at construction stage)	Negligible adverse	Not significant
Water Features	Low	Construction of new SuDS features and enhanced ditches.	None (at construction stage)	No change	Not significant
Trees – Ancient Woodland, Trees covered by TPOs, Category A Trees	High	No change	Inherent mitigation. Proposed Development avoids all protected trees.	No change	Not significant
All other trees	Medium	Loss of 3 no. Category B oak trees. Planting of new trees within open spaces and streets.	Inherent mitigation. Proposed Development designed to retain existing trees wherever possible.	Moderate adverse direct	Significant
Hedgerows	Medium	Removal of 319 lin. m hedgerows.	Inherent mitigation. Proposed Development designed to retain existing hedgerows wherever possible.	Moderate adverse direct	Significant
Access - PRoWs	Medium	N/A No public access to Site.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Visual Effects					
Users of ARB03 to the west of Carter's Hill	Medium	Glimpsed distant views of cranes and upper storeys of buildings.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the northern boundaries of the Site.	Minor adverse	Not significant
Users of ARB03 to the north-east of Monk's Cottage	Medium	Clear views of construction site from stretches of footpath.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the northern boundaries of the Site.	Major adverse	Significant
Residents of Monk's Cottage*	Medium	Clear views of construction site from upper storeys of house	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the boundaries of the Site.	Moderate adverse	Significant

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
Users of short stretches of ARBO4 byway to the south of Carter's Hill (joining Carter's Hill with Mole Road)	Medium	Potential glimpses of cranes and upper storeys of houses behind trees in distance.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the northern and eastern boundaries of the Site.	Negligible adverse	Not significant
Stretches of Mole Road to the north-east and east of the Site.	Low	Glimpsed views of construction within the eastern part of the Site in an otherwise rural setting.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the eastern boundary of the Site.	Moderate adverse	Significant
Residents of Mole Bridge Farmhouse (Mole Road)*	Medium	Glimpsed views of construction beyond existing hedgerows in an otherwise rural setting.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the eastern boundary of the Site.	Major adverse	Significant
Residents of Hunters Point (Ellis's Hill)*	Medium	Likely views of construction within and adjacent to Mole Road corridor as well as oblique views of wider construction site.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the south-eastern boundary of the Site.	Moderate adverse	Significant
Users of Ellis's Hill/ ARBO8 byway to east of Ellis's Hill Farm	Medium	Distant glimpsed views of construction within the southern part of the site.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the south-eastern boundary of the Site.	Minor adverse	Not significant
Users of ARBO9 at junction with ARBO10	High	Distant glimpsed views of construction within the southern part of the site.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the south-eastern boundary of the Site.	Moderate adverse	Significant
Users of ARBO9 close to the sewage works	High	Distant glimpsed views of construction within the southern part of the site.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the south-eastern boundary of the Site.	Moderate adverse	Significant
From A3030 Mole Road to the south of the Site	Low	Views generally concealed by roadside vegetation but clear views north of the junction with Church Lane	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the south-eastern boundary of the Site.	Negligible adverse - Moderate adverse	Significant

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
Residents of Reading Room Cottage, Church Lane*	Medium	Private views, partially screened by foreground garden boundaries.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the southern boundary of the Site.	Major adverse	Significant
Residents of The Pheasantries, Church Lane*	Medium	Private views, partially screened by foreground garden boundaries.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the southern boundary of the Site.	Minor adverse	Not significant
Residents of Oakland House, Church Lane*	Medium	Private views from upper storey windows.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the southern boundary of the Site.	Major adverse	Significant
Users of Church Lane to the south of the site	Medium	Clear views into construction site from adjacent lane. Degree of screening provided by clipped hedge.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the southern boundary of the Site.	Major adverse	Significant
Users of byway ARBO3 (looking to the north-east)	Medium	Clear views into construction site from adjacent byway. Degree of screening provided by clipped hedge.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the western and northern boundaries of the Site.	Major adverse	Significant
Users of ARBO2 footpath between Hall Farm and the CEDAR facility	Medium	Much of the Site is over the brow of a hill and also benefits from screening by existing mature trees and woodland to the north and east of the Site. Potential views of cranes and upper storeys of new buildings.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the northern boundary of the Site.	Minor adverse	Not significant
Operation Phase					
Landscape Designations					
Draft River Loddon Valued Landscape	Medium	Indirect only: Glimpsed views of housing from small part of the draft Valued Landscape within and adjacent to the Site	Inherent mitigation: Proposed Development designed to minimise loss of vegetation and integrate development with the landscape.	Minor indirect adverse	Not significant

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
			Additional mitigation: Tree around site boundaries to screen views of new development.		
Draft Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape	Low	Indirect only: Glimpsed views of housing from small part of the draft Valued landscape to the south-east of the Site.	Inherent mitigation: designed to minimise view of development from this area. Additional mitigation: Tree planting around site boundaries to screen views of new development.	Minor indirect adverse	Not significant
Landscape Character Areas					
J2 Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay: Mole Road	Medium	New housing, roads and open space within the Site.	Inherent mitigation: Proposed Development designed to minimise the loss of vegetation and integrate development with the landscape. Additional mitigation: Tree planting around site boundaries to screen views of new development.	Moderate adverse direct (within the Site) Minor adverse indirect (adjacent to the Site)	Significant
L1 Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills	Medium	Views of housing, roads and open space within the Site.	Inherent mitigation: designed to minimise view of development from this area Additional mitigation: Tree planting around site boundaries to screen views of new development.	Minor adverse indirect (adjacent to the Site)	Not significant
Landscape Features					

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
Land Use: Grassland	Medium	Land to be replaced by a construction site.	Inherent mitigation: Proposed Development incorporates extensive areas of semi-natural greenspace. Additional mitigation: Neutral grassland within open spaces.	Moderate beneficial direct	Significant
Land Use: Arable Farmland	Medium	Land to be replaced by construction site.	None	Moderate adverse direct	Significant
River terrace landform and water features	Medium	Limited localised cut and fill to accommodate levelling of plots and road gradients.	Inherent mitigation: development and routes located to respect landform.	Negligible adverse direct	Not significant
Water Features	Low	New SuDS features and enhanced ditches.	Additional mitigation: SuDS designed with naturalistic design to provide scope for wildlife opportunities and scenic value.	Minor beneficial direct	Not significant
Trees – Ancient Woodland, Trees covered by TPOs, Category A Trees	High	No change	Inherent mitigation: Proposed Development avoids all protected and Category A trees.	No change	Not significant
All other trees	Medium	Loss of 3 no. Category B oak trees. Planting of new trees within open spaces, orchards and streets.	Inherent mitigation: Proposed Development is designed to retain existing trees wherever possible. Additional mitigation: numerous trees to be planted within open spaces, orchards and streets.	Moderate beneficial direct	Significant

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
Hedgerows	Medium	Removal of 319 lin. m hedgerows. Planting of new scrub and hedgerows within open spaces	Inherent mitigation: Proposed Development designed to retain existing hedgerows wherever possible. Additional mitigation: New hedgerow to compensate for loss of hedgerows, especially along Mole Road. Additional scrub and shrub planting can be planted throughout open spaces.	Minor beneficial direct	Not significant
Access - PRoWs	Medium	Provision of new routes within the open spaces surrounding the proposed development.	Inherent mitigation: Proposed Development designed to introduce new pedestrian, cycle and equestrian routes.	Major beneficial direct	Significant
Visual Effects					
Users of ARB03 to the west of Carter's Hill	Medium	New housing is generally screened by new and existing trees. Potential for glimpses of rooftops or upper storeys.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the northern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Negligible adverse	Not significant
Users of ARB03 to the north-east of Monk's Cottage	Medium	Clear views of proposed housing set behind new tree planting. Seen from stretches of footpath where there is no foreground hedgerow.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the northern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Moderate adverse	Significant

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
Residents of Monk's Cottage*	Medium	Filtered views of housing from upper storeys of house set behind proposed open space.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the northern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Moderate adverse or Neutral	Significant
Users of short stretches of ARBO4 byway to the south of Carter's Hill (joining Carter's Hill with Mole Road)	Medium	Potential glimpses of housing screened by existing and proposed tree planting.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the northern and eastern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	No change	Not significant
Stretches of Mole Road to the north-east and east of the Site.	Low	Glimpsed views of housing within the eastern part of the Site in an otherwise rural setting.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the northern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Minor adverse	Not significant
Residents of Mole Bridge Farmhouse (Mole Road)*	Medium	Glimpsed views of housing beyond existing hedgerows in an otherwise rural setting.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the eastern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Moderate adverse or neutral	Significant
Residents of Hunters Point (Ellis's Hill)*	Medium	Likely views of housing within and adjacent to Mole Road corridor as well as oblique views of wider construction site.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the northern boundary of the Site.	Moderate adverse or neutral	Significant

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
			Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.		
Users of Ellis's Hill/ ARBO8 byway to east of Ellis's Hill Farm	Medium	Distant glimpsed views of housing within the southern part of the site.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the southern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Negligible adverse	Not significant
Users of ARBO9 at junction with ARBO10	High	Distant glimpsed views of housing within the southern part of the site.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the southern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Negligible adverse	Not Significant
Users of ARBO9 close to the sewage works	High	Distant glimpsed views of housing within the southern part of the site.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the southern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Negligible adverse	Not Significant
From A3030 Mole Road to the south of the Site	Low	Views generally concealed by roadside vegetation but filtered views of new housing and highway changes to the north of the junction with Church Lane	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the southern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	No change – Minor adverse	Not Significant

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
Residents of Reading Room Cottage, Church Lane*	Medium	Private views, partially screened by foreground garden boundaries.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the southern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Moderate adverse or neutral	Significant
Residents of The Pheasantries, Church Lane*	Medium	Private views, partially screened by foreground garden boundaries.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around southern boundary of the Site.	Minor adverse	Not significant
Residents of Oakland House, Church Lane*	Medium	Private views from upper storey windows.	Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Moderate adverse or neutral	Significant
Users of Church Lane to the south of the site	Medium	Filtered views into the site from the adjacent lane. The degree of screening will depend on the level of proposed planting.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the southern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Moderate adverse or neutral	Significant
Users of byway ARBO3 (looking to the north-east)	Medium	Filtered views into the site from the adjacent lane. The degree of screening will depend on the level of proposed planting	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the southern boundary of the Site. Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Moderate adverse or neutral	Significant
Users of ARBO2 footpath between Hall Farm and the CEDAR facility	Medium	Much of the Site is over the brow of a hill and also benefits from screening by existing mature trees and woodland to the north and east of the Site.	Inherent mitigation: Open space retained around the northern boundary of the Site.		Not significant

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
			Additional mitigation: Tree planting within open spaces around the site boundary.	Negligible adverse	

*Potential views from private properties which were not accessed as part of the assessment.

14.14 Mitigation commitments Summary

Table 14.21 Summary for Securing Mitigation

Identified receptor	Type and purpose of additional mitigation measure (prevent, reduce, offset, enhance)	Means by which mitigation may be secured (e.g. planning condition / legal agreement)	Delivered by	Auditable by
Construction Phase				
Trees	Root protection areas (prevent)	Planning condition	Contractor	LPA
Operation Phase				
Access routes	Provision of enhanced recreational routes through the landscape (enhance)	Planning condition	Developer	LPA
Landscape character and features	Enhancements to green infrastructure (enhance)	Planning condition	Developer	LPA
Strategic screen planting	Detailed planting strategies to reduce visual impact & compensate for lost plants (prevent, offset)	Planning condition	Developer	LPA