



ASCOT HOUSE

Ascot House, Wokingham

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

MARCH 2024

Prepared by
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1. Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 This Townscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (TVIA) has been prepared to accompany the planning application for the development of a site known as Ascot House in Wokingham (the ‘Site’) located in the Borough of Wokingham (WBC).

1.2 The development proposals (the 'Proposals') are for the extension of an existing building - Ascot House - to create ten additional residential units. The Proposals involve a 1.5 storey extension, with three additional units on the existing first floor and seven units on the proposed second floor.

1.3 The Proposals have evolved in discussion with WBC.

1.4 The TVIA has been prepared on behalf of Klara Ascot Ltd and assesses the effect of the Proposals on the townscape and visual receptors of the Site and its surroundings.

1.5 The TVIA is supported by a series of figures and photos and seven Accurate Visual Representations (AVR) of the Proposals set out in Appendix B, which illustrate the location, size and degree of visibility of the Proposals.

Planning Context

1.6 Whilst the assessment conclusions reached are independent of planning policy, relevant policies can indicate how much weight could, should or may be attached to the findings of an assessment in the subsequent decision-making process.

National Policy and Guidance

1.7 At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework¹ (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England. Of the core objectives set out in the NPPF, the environmental objective is of relevance to this appraisal. This is:

‘to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.’

1.8 Chapter 12 ‘Achieving well-designed places’ and Chapter 15 ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ of the NPPF require that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

1 Department of Housing Communities & Local Government (2023) *National Planning Practice Framework*

1.9 The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance - a web-based resource intended to provide more detailed guidance and information regarding the implementation of national policy set out in the NPPF. It includes guidance on character and visual matters within its design category section².

1.10 The National Design Guide³ sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and determines what good design means in practice and builds on paragraph 130 of the NPPF requirement to avoid development of poor design.

Local Policy and Guidance

1.11 The development plan for WBC comprises the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document⁴ (2010), the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)⁵ (2014) and various supplementary planning documents (SPDs), including the Borough Design Guide⁶ and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD⁷.

- 1.12 Statutory planning policies of relevance to townscape and visual matters comprise:
- *Policy CP1: Sustainable development* of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment;
 - *Policy CP3: General Principles of Development* requires that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area, must be of high-quality design and must contribute to a sense of place in the way the buildings integrate with their surroundings (especially existing dwellings);
 - *Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping* of the MDD aims to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping. It identifies Green Routes and Green Enhancement Areas; and
 - *Policy TB21: Landscape Character* of the MDD requires that development proposals should take consideration of the landscape character and the Borough Design Guide.

WBC Design Guide

1.13 The WBC Design Guide provides guidance and policies to ensure that development proposals in the borough are appropriate and that nearby properties are protected from the impacts of development. It reinforces the importance of development proposals responding positively to the existing context, retaining or enhancing the high quality of the built and natural environment, responding appropriately to the existing character and identity of the area and relating well to neighbours.

2 Department of Housing Communities & Local Government, Planning Practice Guidance, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design>

3 Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (2019) *National Design Guide*

4 Wokingham Borough (2010) *Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document*

5 Wokingham Borough (2014) *Managing Development Delivery Local Plan*

6 Wokingham Borough (2010) *Borough Design Guide SPD*

7 Wokingham Borough (2010) *Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD*

- 1.14 Relevant policies in the Design Guide comprise:
- *Policy R1*, which requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area;
 - *Policy R9*, which requires that the height of residential buildings should consider prevailing heights in the local context, the position of the building line in relation to the street and whether it is a potential landmark location;
 - *Policy R13*, which requires that existing mature landscape features, such as hedges and mature trees, should be retained where possible; and
 - *Policy R23*, which states that alterations and extensions to buildings should be well designed, respond positively to the original building, contribute positively to the local character and relate well to neighbouring properties.

Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD

1.15 The purpose of the Wokingham Masterplan SPD is to identify a clear, distinctive and deliverable vision for Wokingham Town Centre. The SPD identifies Key Opportunity Sites and provides specific guidelines for new development in the town centre, whihc should achieve the highest quality of architecture, urban design and environmentally responsible design to protect and enhance the quality and character of the town centre.

Relevant Planning History

1.16 Planning approval was obtained in 2021 (Ref 21/1148) for the conversion of Ascot House from offices to residential units (the ‘Approved Scheme’).



2. Assessment Methodology

2. Assessment Methodology

2.1 This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with a methodology which draws on best practice guidance as published in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment¹ (GLVIA3) published by the Landscape Institute and IEMA and Townscape Character Assessment Technical Information Note 05/2017² published by the Landscape Institute.

Summary Methodology

2.2 Albeit that the nature of the Site and the Proposals do not meet the tests which would require a statutory environmental impact assessment under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, this TVIA has been carried out in accordance with the principles of best practice set out in GLVIA3.

2.3 This TVIA has been undertaken with an informed understanding of the nature of the Proposals and its purpose is to assess how it may affect the character and visual amenity of identified townscape and visual receptors. In line with best practice, whilst interrelated, townscape and visual effects are considered separately.

Study Area and Scope

2.4 It is necessary to define an appropriate study area in order to ensure a thorough and robust assessment of the effect of a development on townscape and visual receptors; the study area for the purposes of this assessment includes the townscape and visual receptors within a 500 meter (m) radius around the Site, as shown in Figure 2.1. This study area is considered appropriate based on the height of the Proposals and the surrounding existing built form.

2.5 In determining the townscape character receptors, account has been taken of relevant character assessments and conservation area appraisals. The study area has also been informed through establishing the Site's visual envelope, i.e. the areas from which the Site, and therefore development of it, may be visible.

Establishing Baseline Conditions

2.6 A preliminary desk study was undertaken to establish the physical components of the public realm, building form and mass, vegetation, topography and land use of the Site and its surroundings to inform the townscape character assessment. Ordnance Survey (OS) maps were utilised to identify these features, supplemented by aerial photography.

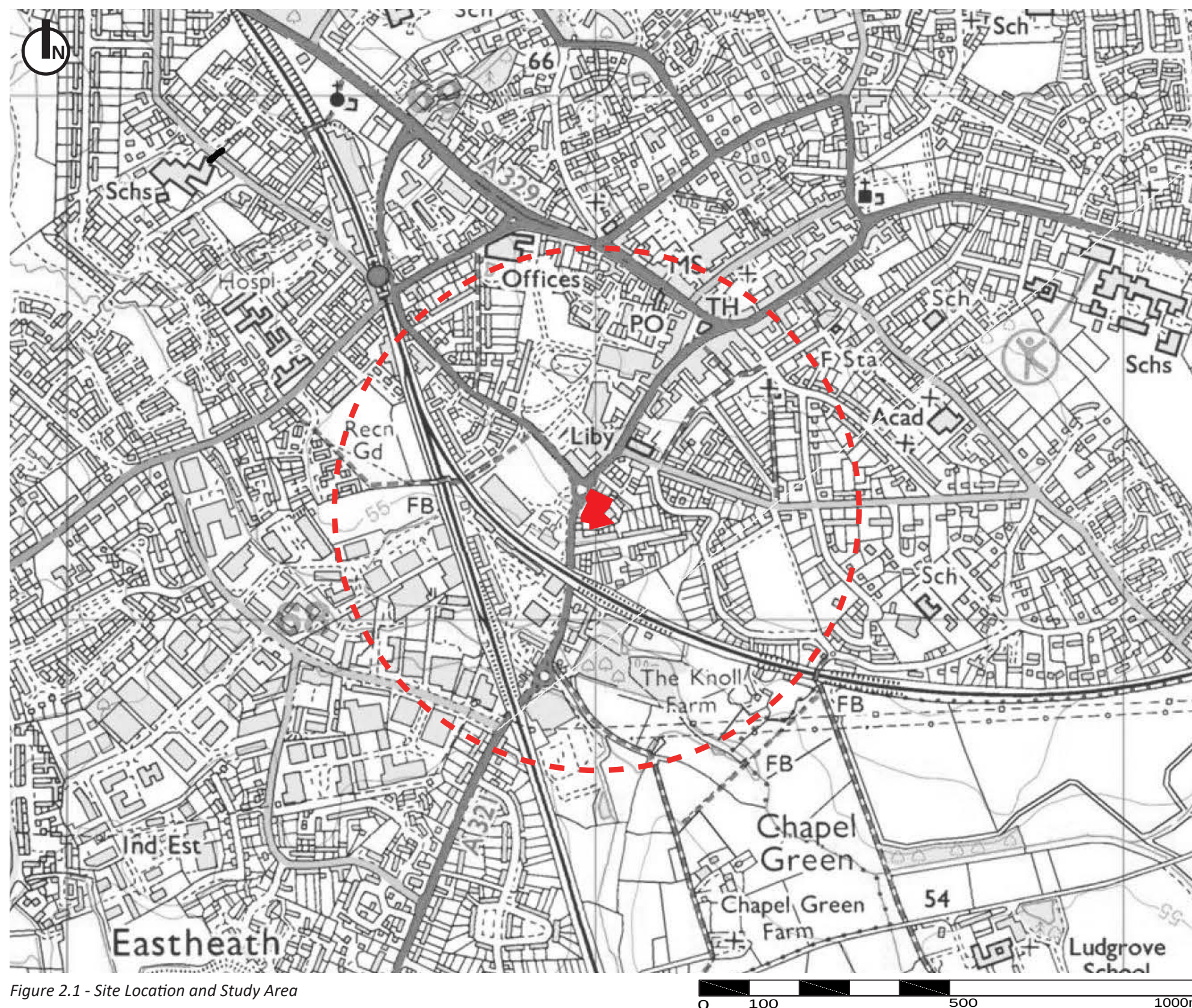


Figure 2.1 - Site Location and Study Area

— Site
 --- 500m Study Area

¹ Landscape Institute and IEMA (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Third Edition, 2013

² Landscape Institute *Townscape Character Assessment Technical Information Note 05/2017*

2.7 Field studies were undertaken in June 2023. The field studies involved travelling throughout the study area, allowing the identification of receptors. The term ‘*receptor*’ refers to an element or assemblage of elements (e.g. people who may have views of the Proposals or a townscape character area) which may be affected by the Proposals.

2.8 Distinct townscape character area (TCA) receptors which share common features and characteristics are established, considering the existing elements and characteristics that contribute to the Site’s setting. These TCAs have recognisable patterns of elements, which together create a particular sense of place for the Site and for the surrounding townscape. The baseline townscape appraisal includes reference, where relevant, to published character assessments and conservation area appraisals.

2.9 Potential visual receptors, i.e. the people whose views may change following implementation of the Proposals, are identified, along with representative views which provide an understanding of the Site’s - and therefore of the Proposals - visibility for these receptors.

Assessment of Receptor Sensitivity

2.10 The value of the identified townscape and visual receptors and their susceptibility to the proposed change is established, applying a methodology based on the principles laid out in GLVIA3; the assessment methodology is provided in full in Appendix A of this report. The value is then used to establish the sensitivity of each receptor. The Proposals are then considered and from this the potential degree of ‘effect’ at the first year of operation on the identified receptors is predicted and assessed.

Identifying Likely Effects

2.11 The appraisal of effects has been informed by seven Accurate Visual Representations (AVR), set out in Appendix B, which illustrate the location, size and degree of visibility of the Proposals. For each view, photography of the baseline situation and an AVR is provided. The AVRs have been prepared through overlaying photographs of the baseline situation with a model of the Proposals. The methodology for preparing the AVRs aligns with the guidance provided in ‘Visual Representation of Scheme Proposals – Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19’³.

2.12 In considering the potential effects of the Proposals upon the identified townscape and visual receptors, the appraisal has been informed by the drawings that comprise the application and are submitted for approval. Consideration has also been given to the additional illustrative material which accompanies the application within the project architect’s Design and Access Statement (DAS).

Assumptions and Limitations

2.13 The field surveys and site visits were undertaken in June 2023, when deciduous trees were in leaf, evident in the representative views (Appendix B). However, the appraisal of effects considers the ‘worst case’ scenario in terms of visibility i.e. when intervening deciduous tree cover is not in leaf.

2.14 The TVIA has been undertaken based on access to publicly accessible areas; whilst potential effects from residential properties have been considered, no access was gained and the appraisal is based on professional judgement based on the nearest publicly accessible locations.

2.15 Whilst this appraisal considers the relationship between the Site and any heritage or ecological assets within the study area, and the value of any such assets is a factor in determining the value of the townscape and visual receptors, the appraisal does not assess the significance and setting of the heritage assets or the potential effect on any features with ecological value.

3 Landscape Institute (2019) Visual Representation of Scheme Proposals Technical Guidance Note 06/19



3. Baseline Conditions

3. Baseline Conditions

3.1 This section identifies potential townscape and visual receptors and sets out the existing townscape and visual context of the Site and surrounding study area in terms of:

- The townscape character of the surrounding area;
- The nature and extent of the Site’s visibility for visual receptors; and
- The sensitivity of the identified townscape and visual receptors to the change proposed.

Townscape Baseline Assessment

3.2 This section describes the components that make up the existing townscape and combine to create its character.

3.3 The assessment of townscape effects requires the identification of the components of the townscape that are likely to be affected by the proposed development (townscape receptors), such as overall character, key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects.

3.4 A townscape assessment of the study area, which considers any relevant published townscape assessments, has been carried out which considers features such as land use, built form, streetscape, urban grain, significant views, skylines, landmark buildings, extent and character of open space, and vegetation.



Photos 1-2: Ascot House

Site Appraisal

3.5 The Site, which measures approximately 0.25ha in area, is occupied by Ascot House, a two storey building recently converted from offices to residential use and associated parking (Photos 1-2).

3.6 Ascot House is bound to the north and east by Kendrick Close and Nos. 1-7 Kendrick Close, to the south by hard standing and parking, with residential dwellings on Carey Road beyond, and to the west by the busy roundabout junction of Finchampstead Road, Wellington Road, Denmark Street and Kendrick Close. Access is along Kendrick Close, from the roundabout.

3.7 An arboricultural survey (AS) carried out by Greengage Ltd in accordance with BS 5837:2012 in May 2021 surveyed four individual trees and two tree groups on the Site and its boundaries. The survey assessed the relative quality of the trees by reference to grading categories. It shows that one of the individual trees and one of the tree groups are of moderate quality (Cat B); the remainder are of low quality.

3.8 The trees on the boundary with Finchampstead Road (G1 in the AS), which are up to six m in height, provide screening from Finchampstead Road and contribute to the leafy character of the area (Photo 3). Finchampstead Road is identified on Map 341 of the MDD as a Green Route Enhancement Area.

3.9 The majority of the Site is enclosed by boundary walls associated with the adjoining residential properties.

3.10 The Site is level with the roundabout on its western boundary at approximately 61.0m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), falling away to the east to approximately 59.0m AOD.



Townscape Context

3.11 The Site is located close to the town centre, which the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD characterises as defined by a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces, reflecting its historic pattern, with the primary network of streets and spaces defined by the historic cross axis with Market Place. However, the junction of Finchampstead Road, Wellington Road and Denmark Street is identified in the SPD as a weak gateway with a poor sense of arrival.

Land use

3.12 Land use in the study area comprises a confined retail and leisure core in the town centre, focussed on the Market Place, with some office and commercial space. Areas to the east and west are predominantly residential, with associated community uses, open space etc.

Built form

3.13 There is some generally larger scale built form to the west of the Site, such as a four/five storey Premier Inn, the Carnival Pool with associated multi-storey parking (characterised in the Town centre SPD as a leisure quarter), an Aldi store and recently constructed three storey apartment blocks on Wellington Road and fronting on to Elms Field. The scale and materials of Ascot House sit comfortably with the other built form fronting on to the roundabout, which is one of the gateways to the town centre.

3.14 Built form to the north, east and south of the study area is generally lower rise, being predominantly two storey residential development, with a more suburban character.



Photo 3: Trees on Site boundary with Finchampstead Road

3.15 The prevailing roof style in the wider townscape is pitched (Photo 8), however there are examples of alternate roof arrangements, such as the Premier Inn (Photo 7), the Carnival Hub (Photo 4) and more recent development south of Elms Field, which have flat roofs.

3.16 In the town centre there are several more prominent buildings, such as the Grade II* Town Hall in the Market Place. There are more modern estate developments away from the historic centre.

Landform

3.17 The local topography within the study area rises up east towards the town centre at roughly 75m AOD, before falling further east beyond the town centre.

Movement

3.18 Wokingham Railway Station is located approximately 650 m northwest of the Site, providing links with central London. Railway lines pass approximately 200 m west of the Site.

3.19 The Site has good connections to the primary highway network with secondary and tertiary routes, accessed from the primary routes, providing access to retail, leisure and surrounding residential areas.

Public Open Space

3.20 Significant areas of public open space within the study area, shown on Figure 3.1, include Elms Field to the north east of the Site (Photo 6), which provides for outdoor games and contains an equipped play area, Latimer recreation ground to the west, Langborough Recreation Ground to the southeast and Howard Palmer Gardens to the northeast of the Site. They provide seating, play and informal recreation and appear well used.

Townscape and Heritage Designations

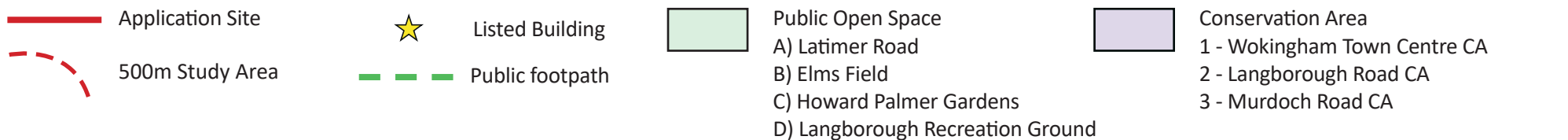
3.21 There are no listed buildings on the Site and the Site is not subject to any designations which would denote townscape value.

3.22 There are several listed buildings within the study area (see Figure 3.1); the closest is the Duke's Head Public House, approximately 90m northeast of the Site, at the junction of Denmark Street and Langborough Road, which is Grade II listed.

3.23 The Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area (CA) lies approximately 100m north of the Site. The Town Centre CA abuts the smaller Langborough Road and Murdoch Road CAs (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1 - Site Context



Townscape Receptors

Townscape features

3.24 The trees on the Site boundary (Photo 3) are townscape features which could experience direct effects as a result of the Proposals. They are considered to be of medium value.

Townscape Character

3.25 To identify potential townscape effects on character, distinct townscape character area (TCA) which share common features and characteristics are established. This exercise is informed by reference to both desk-top studies and field studies.

Published character assessments

National Character Assessment

3.26 At a national level the Site falls within National Character Area (NCA) Profile: 115 Thames Valley¹, which is described as flat and low-lying land, rising to low, river-terraced hills with numerous hydrological features such as the River Thames and its tributaries; although densely populated and developed, there are pockets of woodland, open grassland, parkland, wetlands and intimate meadows which provide escape and tranquillity.

3.27 Whilst this description provides a useful overview of the wider landscape setting of Wokingham, the national character assessment covers a wide area and the Proposals are not of a sufficient scale to result in landscape or visual effects on its key characteristics. No further reference is therefore made to it within this appraisal.

Local Character Assessment

Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment

3.28 The Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment² (WLCA), updated in 2019, provides a comprehensive and up to date landscape character assessment of the land in the borough. However, since it assesses land outside the defined settlement boundaries, the Site and its context are not assessed within the WLCA.

WBC Design Guide SPD

3.29 The WBC Design Guide SPD defines character types within the borough; the Site is located at the southern-most extent of Character Type 3B.2.1 Urban Centre, south of the historic core of the town centre.

- 3.30 Key characteristics of 3B.2.1 are identified in the Design Guide SPD as:
- Buildings are generally grouped or in terraces, rather than being detached;
 - Buildings and boundary walls, interspersed with landscape boundary treatments, define and enclose the streets;
 - Building groups are set back a consistent distance from the pavement, but this may vary between different groups, with some at back of pavement and others with front gardens; and
 - Building heights are generally 2 storeys, or 3 storeys with the top floor in the roof.

Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD

3.31 The Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD defines eight Character Areas in the town centre (Figure 3.2). The Site falls within Area 6 Elms Field.

3.32 The SPD finds that buildings within Area 6 are not well integrated within the wider town centre and have little townscape quality.

3.33 The Site is located adjacent to the southern extent of the Elms Field and Paddocks Car Park Key Opportunity Site as defined in Figure 1.1 of the SPD.

3.34 The Masterplan SPD states that new development in the town centre will achieve the highest quality of architecture, urban design and environmentally responsible design to protect and enhance the quality and character of the town centre. Guidelines on building heights in the SPD state that it is envisaged that new development should not exceed three storeys and should protect and enhance the existing varied and rich local roofscape.

3.35 The Masterplan SPD does not define any specific strategies for the Site itself.

3.36 Figure 3.2 of the Town Centre Masterplan SPD – Constraints – identifies the Wellington Road/ Finchampstead Road roundabout as a weak gateway. Finchampstead Road and Wellington Road are both identified in the SPD as vehicle dominant streets, with potential for the junction to be improved.

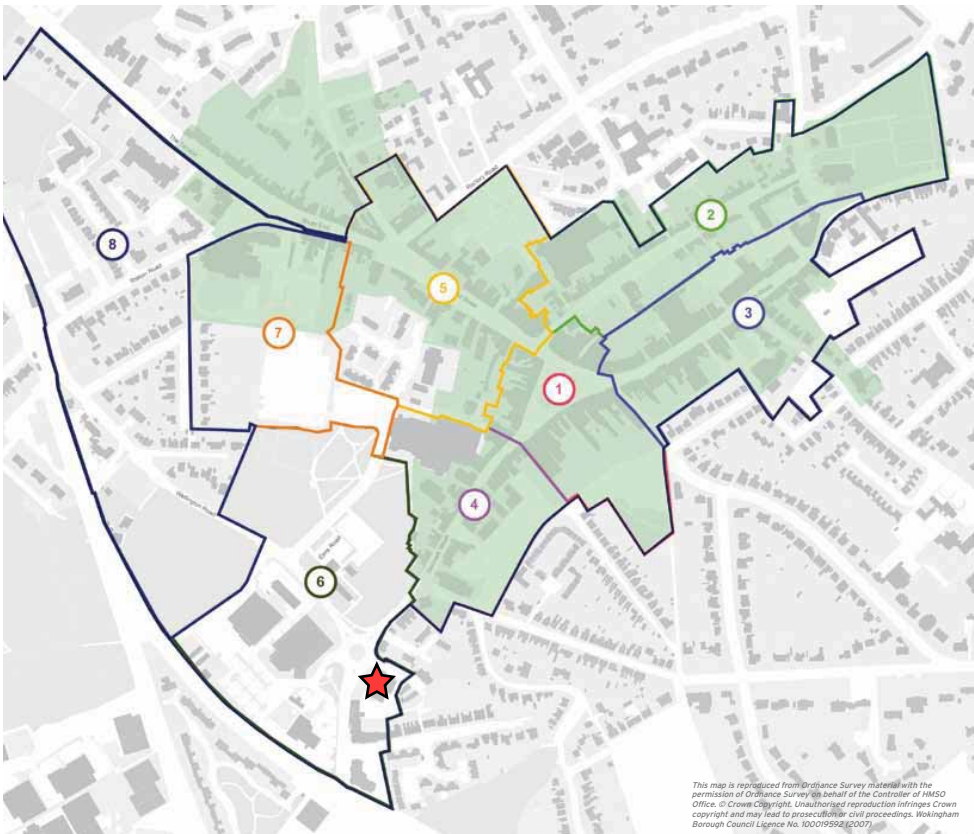


Figure 3.2 - Town Centre Character Areas (Wokingham Town Centre SPD)

★ Site

1 Natural England (2013) (web based) *National Character Area Profile: 115 Thames Valley*
2 Wokingham Borough Council (2019) *Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment*

Townscape Character Areas

3.37 Applying the findings of the desk-top studies and the field studies, four Townscape Character Area (TCA) receptors have been identified within the study area.

3.38 These are shown in Figure 3.3 and comprise:

- TCA 1 Wokingham Town Centre;
- TCA 2 Elm Fields;
- TCA 3 Langborough Residential; and
- TCA 3 Wokingham South

3.39 Table 3.1 summarises the assessment of townscape value for each of the identified TCAs.

TCA 1 Elms Field

3.40 The Site is located at the southern extent of TCA 1 Elms Field.

3.41 TCA 1 is centred on Elms Field park (Photo 6). It is bounded to the south by the railway line and bisected by Wellington Road. It is characterised by a higher proportion of isolated buildings designed for dedicated single uses – such as the Aldi store and the Premier Inn (Photo 7) – often surrounded by surface car parking, compared to the prevailing finer grain of the town centre.

3.42 The Premier Inn terminates the vista approaching the town centre along Finchampstead Road, providing a landmark and increasing legibility of the town centre.

3.43 The area has been the focus of recent investment, manifest in the new Carnival Centre, retail outlets and restaurants on Elms Walk (Photo 5) and apartment blocks fronting on to the park and on Wellington Road (Photo 6). The dominant overall style or form of development in the area is more contemporary than in other areas of the townscape.

3.44 The area experiences high levels of traffic which backs up from the roundabout, particularly during the morning and evening rush hours.

3.45 The TCA does not include any designated heritage assets or Conservation Areas. It is considered to have a low townscape value.

TCA 2 Wokingham Town Centre

3.46 The majority of TCA 2 falls within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal states that:

‘The building styles are generally modest, predominantly of red brick with tiled clay roofs. The buildings tend to be of a small scale and offer the characteristics of a traditional Berkshire market town. Although the town has no dominant building types, the scale colouring and variation in detailing make it rich in texture and character.’

3.47 The built form in Denmark Street (Photo 8), the closest part of the Conservation Area to the Site, is described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as typically *‘of two/three storeys in height, generally gable fronted and either in red brick or with rendered frontages.’*

3.48 It is considered that due to the Conservation Area designation, TCA 2 has a medium townscape value.



Photo 4 - Carnival Hub on Wellington Road



Photo 5 - Elms Walk

TCA 3 Langborough Residential

3.49 TCA 3 encompasses areas east of the Site which have been developed for residential use.

3.50 There is a finer urban grain, characterised by two storey residential development of varying styles and age, although predominantly conventional mid- and late- twentieth century. The scale and character is more ‘suburban residential’ than ‘town centre’, with tree-lined streets and areas of public open space such as Langborough Recreation Ground. Red brickwork, red clay roof tiles and tile hanging are common festures.

3.51 The Langborough Road and Murdoch Road Conservation Areas lie in the north of the TCA. Langborough Road has the qualities of a Victorian development, with large ornate villas and smaller artisan cottages, predominantly in the red brick characteristic of the context (Photo 9)

3.52 Overall TCA 3 is considered to have a medium - low townscape value.

TCA 4 Wokingham South

3.53 TCA 4 encompasses areas south of the railway line, which contains and defines the southern edge of the town.

3.54 The urban grain is looser, characterised by allotments, ‘big box’ development and areas of open space. There is a limited area of residential, between the railway lines on Oakey Drive.

3.55 Overall TCA 4 is considered to have a low townscape value.

Table 3.1 – Townscape Value

Townscape Character Area	Townscape Value
TCA 1 Elms Field	Low
TCA 2 Wokingham Town Centre	Medium
TCA 3 Langborough Residential	Low to Medium
TCA 4 Wokingham South	Low

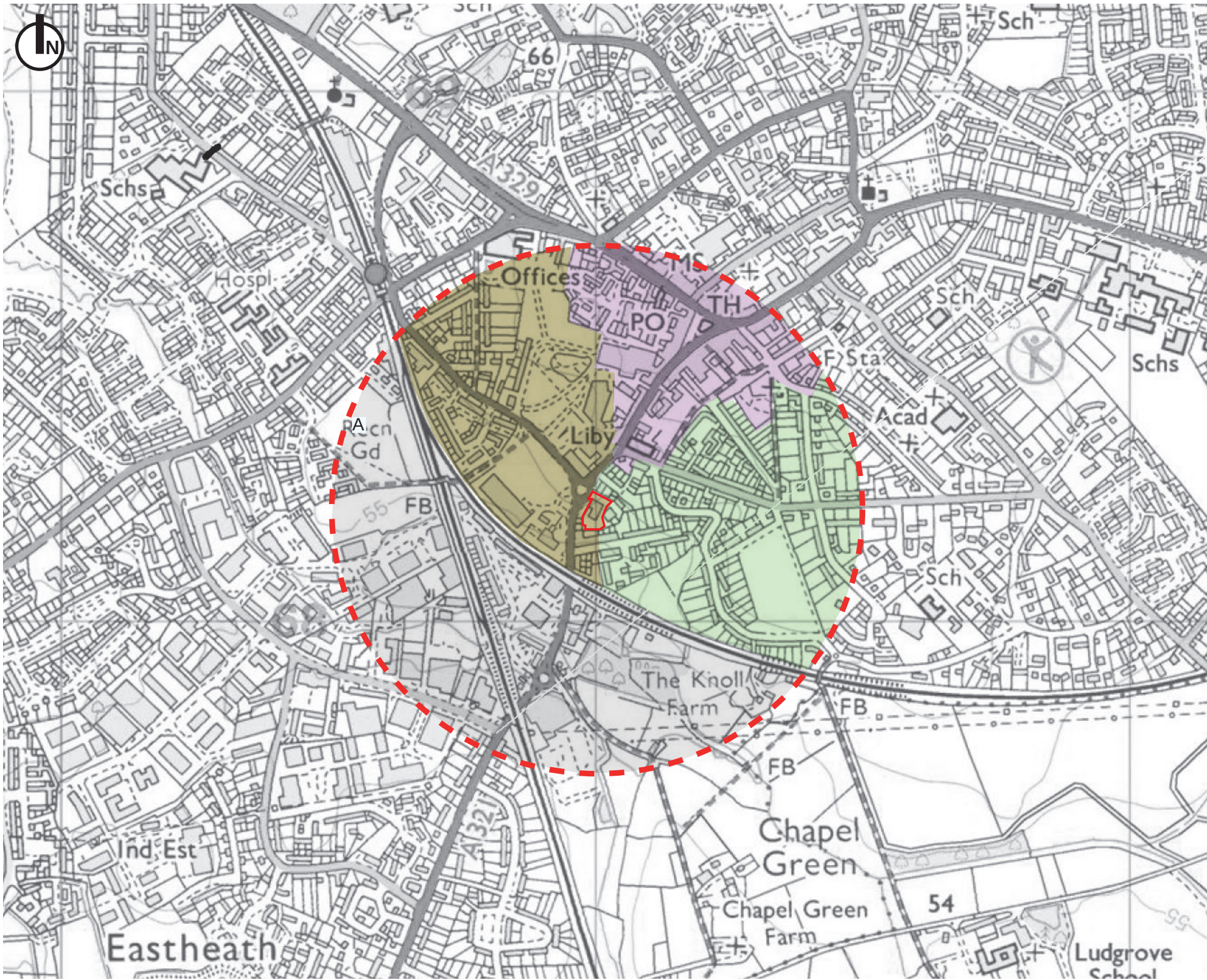
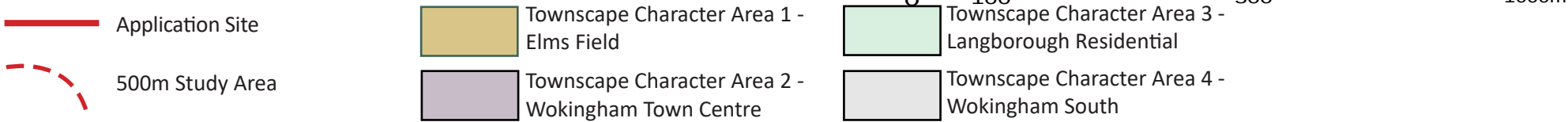


Figure 3.3 - Townscape Character Areas



Visual Baseline Assessment

3.56 The first stage in assessing the visibility of the Site, and therefore potential visibility of the Proposals, was to establish the Site’s visual envelope and identify visual receptor groups, defined in GLVIA3 as ‘people who will be affected by changes in views or visual amenity at different places’. Areas of public open space, as well as roads and footpaths, were visited to determine the visibility of the Site, acknowledging that there may be a contrast in visibility between summer and winter months, with trees during the summer limiting views towards the Site.

3.57 The field studies in June 2023 identified that due to the comparatively low-rise nature of the built form currently present on the Site, the lack of any taller features such as communication masts on the Site and the quantum of intervening visual barriers, particularly built form, existing visibility of the Site is limited.

3.58 Seven representative views were identified as an appropriate selection to demonstrate the visibility of the Site from the visual receptors and to illustrate any changes in the view which would occur following completion of the Proposals. Their locations are shown in Figure 3.3; photography and descriptions of the existing situation are provided in Appendix B of this report. The value of the views has been assessed applying the criteria in Table 2.2 and is summarised in Table 3.2.

3.59 In identifying the representative views, consideration was given to WBC local planning policy. The Site does not fall within or adjacent to any sensitive or key views identified in relevant planning policy or guidance and the Town Centre Masterplan SPD identifies that there are no important townscape views or vistas of note in the area.

- 3.60 The evaluation of the identified representative viewpoints also took into account the following:
- Type and relative numbers of people, and their occupation or activity;
 - Location, nature and characteristics;
 - Nature, composition and characteristics of the views (including directions); and
 - Elements which may interrupt, filter or otherwise influence the views.

- 3.61 The following potential visual receptor groups were identified:
- Residents of dwellings located adjacent to the Site;
 - Visitors to commercial and other business premises located within 500m of the Site; and
 - Users of public highways and transport infrastructure located within 500m of the Site.

3.62 Visibility of the Site experienced by the various visual receptor groups varies depending on proximity and the height and mass of intervening visual barriers. Some views are kinetic, for example for users of roads, and visibility therefore varies as the visual receptors move around.

3.63 Where there are views of the Site and the built form within it (Ascot House) these are limited to short distance open to partial views along Wellington Road and Denmark Street (representative views 3, 4, 5 and 7). There are views of the trees on the boundary approaching the Site from the south along Finchampstead Road; these screen views of Ascot House (representative view 2).

3.64 GLVIA3 places emphasis on assessing visual effects on public areas and viewpoints, rather than individual private residential properties; however, it is acknowledged that residents may be particularly sensitive to changes in their visual amenity. As part of this appraisal, the effects on residential properties have been considered. When considering views from properties, views from ground floor windows and garden space (which are occupied during waking/ daylight hours) are considered to be the most sensitive. It should be noted that in planning terms there is no private right to a view.

3.65 It is assumed that the Site would be visible from the windows of residential and other buildings, such as the Premier Inn, where they are orientated towards the Site (representative view 3).

3.66 There are no views of the Site from areas of public open space.

3.67 Table 3.2 summarises the findings of the visual baseline assessment.



Photo 6 - Elms Field Park and residential development on Earle Crescent



Photo 7 - Holiday Inn



Photo 8 - Denmark Street

Table 3.2 – Value of Visual Receptors Representative Views

Locations	Distance from Site	Existing Visibility	Value
1) Kendrick Close	25m	Open	Low
2) Finchampstead Road	25m	Glimpsed	Low
3) Wellington Road- entrance to Holiday Inn	50m	Open	Low
4) Denmark Street (Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area)	110m	None	Medium
5) Wellington Road- junction with Earle Crescent	120m	Open	Low
6) Denmark Street Car Park (Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area)	225m	None	Medium
7) Junction of Wellington Road/ access to Superbowl	45m	Open	Low



Figure 3.4 - Location of Representative Views

Application Site Location of Representative View

Summary of receptors and sensitivity

3.68 To assist in predicting the townscape character and visual receptors effects, the sensitivity of the townscape character and visual receptors is considered.

3.69 As outlined in the methodology, sensitivity is determined by combining the assessments of value and an appraisal of the susceptibility of the receptors to the proposed development.

Townscape receptors

3.70 The trees on the Site boundary with Finchampstead Road have a high susceptibility to the type of change proposed, as defined in the methodology Table A3, and are assessed as having a high sensitivity.

3.71 The site is located within TCA 1 Elm Fields. WBC have set out a vision of change for the area, including to attract new businesses, make more efficient use of land and create an improved urban environment. The proposed development aligns with this vision and it is therefore considered that TCA 1 Leyton Fringe can accommodate the proposed development and has a low susceptibility to change. Through combining the value and susceptibility to change, it is considered that TCA1 Elm Fields has a low sensitivity to the Proposals.

3.72 The remaining townscape receptors are also considered to have low susceptibility to the type of change proposed and therefore have low sensitivity to the Proposals.

3.73 Table 3.3 presents the assessment of the value and susceptibility to change of each townscape character area and their sensitivity.

Visual Receptors’ Representative Views

3.74 In determining the sensitivity of each representative view, the identified value is combined with its susceptibility to the change proposed (Table A.4 of the methodology). The latter is established by considering the occupation or activity of people and extent of attention or interest that may therefore be focused on the views and visual amenity.

3.75 A detailed assessment of the sensitivity of each visual receptors' representative view is provided at Appendix B of this report; the conclusions are summarised in Table 3.4.

Table 3.3 – Sensitivity of Townscape Receptors

Townscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility to change	Sensitivity
Trees	Medium	High	High
TCA 1 Elm Fields	Low	Low	Low
TCA 2 Wokingham Town Centre	Medium	Low	Low
TCA 3 Langborough Residential	Low to Medium	Low	Low
TCA 4 Wokingham South	Low	Low	Low

Table 3.4 – Sensitivity of Visual Receptors Representative Views

Locations	Value	Susceptibility to Change	Sensitivity
1) Kendrick Close	Low	Low	Low
2) Finchampstead Road	Low	Low	Low
3) Wellington Road- entrance to Holiday Inn	Low	Low	Low
4) Denmark Street (Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area)	Medium	Medium	Medium
5) Wellington Road- junction with Earle Crescent	Low	Low	Low
6) Denmark Street Car Park (Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area)	Medium	Medium	Medium
7) Junction of Wellington Road/ access to Superbowl	Low	Low	Low



4. Assessment of Effects of the Proposals