

LAND AT STANBURY HOUSE, SPENCERS WOOD

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

APPENDIX I

VISUAL IMPACT APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

for
Cooper Estates Strategic Land Limited.

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INTRODUCTION

Visual effects are the effects on people (visual receptors) from changes in the character of available views resulting from development; and the changes in the visual amenity¹ of the visual receptors.

The process of visual effect appraisal is therefore concerned with assessing how the surroundings of individuals (or groups of people) may be specifically affected by changes in the context and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and / or introduction of new elements.

This document forms an Appendix to the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) prepared for a proposed residential development on land to the west of Stanbury House in Spencers Wood.

It contains the detailed methodology applicable to the visual effect appraisal undertaken for the project and should be read in conjunction with the main LVA and the assessments contained within Appendix 4.

BASIS OF APPRAISAL

The methodology set out below is based on the third edition of the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA3) prepared jointly by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and published on the 17th April 2013. This publication contains the latest guidance on the subject of visual effect assessment, and is widely acknowledged to represent the 'industry standard' on the subject.

Reference has also been made to the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 (published in August 2024) which provides a compilation of clarifications on GLVIA3; to the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 'Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations' (TGN 02/21), published in May 2021; to the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 2/19 (published in March 2019) which provides guidance on Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA); and to the 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in planning Note 3 (second edition)' published by Historic England in December 2017 (GPA3).

In addition, all photos have been taken and presented in accordance with Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19 which was formally adopted on the 17th September 2019.

¹ Visual amenity means the overall pleasantness of the views that receptors enjoy of their surroundings (GLVIA Paragraph 2.20).

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VISUAL EFFECT APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

I. INTRODUCTION

- I.1 The process of visual effect appraisal is divided into the following stages:
- i. **Determining the Zone of Visual Influence of the development and identifying the nature of visual receptors;**
 - ii. **Selecting viewpoints to be assessed and agreeing the scope of the appraisal with the competent authority;**
 - iii. **Establishing a detailed baseline for each viewpoint selected;**
 - iv. **Presentation of photographs; and**
 - v. **The process of visual effect appraisal.**
- I.2 The details of each of these are set out below.

2. DATA SOURCES

- 2.1 Data sources used in the preparation of the visual appraisal are listed in Section 9 at the back of the main Landscape and Visual Appraisal document. Sources include Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photography, and interactive websites.

3. DETERMINING THE ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The first stage of visual effect appraisal involves identification of a preliminary study area and subsequent mapping of the visibility of the development proposals to determine the estimated Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) of the development through a combination of desk study and fieldwork.
- 3.2 The ZVI details all areas of the surrounding countryside from where development of the nature described in the development proposals section of the LVA may be seen (either from ground level or from within buildings), and is important not only for the visual appraisal but also in that it broadly establishes the extent of the study area for the landscape baseline (refer to Appendix 2), albeit the study area for the landscape baseline extends beyond the ZVI to include adjacent areas of the surrounding landscape.
- Desk study**
- 3.3 The potential extent of visibility of the development proposals is first established by identifying possible viewpoints through a desktop study of Ordnance Survey maps; web-based mapping tools; and aerial photography.
- 3.4 From this information a preliminary Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) is determined and mapped manually. At this stage the preliminary ZVI illustrates the potential visibility of the proposed development in the landscape. It takes into consideration the likely screening effects of topography and significant areas of vegetation, but is broad scale and requires refinement.

- 3.5 Digital methods using specialist software can be useful as an aid at this stage of the process to establish the ZVI (referred to as the ‘Zone of Theoretical Visibility’ (ZTV) if digital methods are used), however, such methods take little or no account of potential screening by vegetation or built form² and have not been used for this appraisal.

Fieldwork

- 3.6 Having undertaken the desktop study the preliminary ZVI is checked and revised through extensive on-site fieldwork.
- 3.7 On completion of the fieldwork an estimated ‘Zone of Visual Influence’ is mapped and a good degree of accuracy is obtained.³ At this stage the estimated ‘Zone of Visual Influence’ includes all areas of the surrounding townscape / countryside from where development of the nature described in the development proposals section of the LVA may be seen either from ground level or from within buildings.

4. IDENTIFYING THE NATURE OF THE VISUAL RECEPTORS

- 4.1 Having established the estimated Zone of Visual Influence, the people (visual receptors) using the various areas within this zone are identified.
- 4.2 People have differing responses to changes to views and visual amenity depending on both the context and their purpose for being in a particular place. They are therefore identified according to their activity and location.
- 4.3 Receptors at public viewpoints (land and buildings with public access) may include the following:

Table B.1 – Activity and Location – Public Viewpoints

People passing through the area on transport routes. ▪ Arterial routes (motor ways / dual carriageways / trunk roads). ▪ Major roads (A roads). ▪ Minor roads (B and C class roads). ▪ Railways (excluding scenic routes). ▪ Waterways used for transport. ▪ Cycle routes used primarily for commuting.	People using facilities / undertaking activities (including walking, cycling, mountain biking and horse riding) or visiting promoted attractions specifically associated with experience and enjoyment of the landscape. ▪ Public Rights of Way (Roads / Footpaths / Bridleways / Restricted Byways / Byways / Cycle routes (rural) / Rural lanes). ▪ Scenic routes (National Trail / Long Distance Route). ▪ Open access land. ▪ Acknowledged viewpoints. ▪ Tourist facilities. ▪ Canals and rivers used for recreation. ▪ Scenic railways.
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Table continued below

² There is some discussion on page 103 of GLVIA3 on the use of computer modelling; but acknowledgement that this has limitations and that “site surveys are therefore essential to provide an accurate baseline assessment of visibility”.

³ The Zone of Visual Influence takes into consideration the screening effects of topography, built form and areas of vegetation as noted from the site work, however, it is estimated (as access to private land is not possible) and it should be recognized that there will always be areas within the ZVI shown on the drawings where the complexity of the landscape / townscape

makes it impossible reasonably to delineate the exact visibility of the proposed development. For example, there will be areas of private land within the mapped ZVI where localised intervening vegetation or buildings screen the site from view. In reality, there will be some areas within the mapped ZVI where the proposed development will not be visible, and there may be some un-mapped areas where glimpses of the proposed development would exist.

People visiting designated landscapes. - National Parks. - National Landscapes (AONB).	People engaged in formal outdoor recreation activities of different types. - Sports pitches. - Golf courses.
People located at or in the setting of a heritage asset. ⁴ - National Trust properties. - Registered Parks and Gardens. - Conservation Areas. - Listed Buildings. - Scheduled Monuments. - Non-designated heritage assets.	People living and working in the area. - Roads / pavements used by locals and for commuting. - People accessing residential properties. - People using community facilities (e.g., station, supermarket or public library).

4.4 Receptors from private viewpoints (land and buildings with no open public access) may include:

Table B.2 – Activity and Location – Private Viewpoints

People living in the area. Private houses / flats and private gardens.	People working in the area. - Offices. - Commercial / industrial premises.
People visiting facilities requiring membership / permission for access. - Allotments. - Scout huts. - Private golf courses.	
(Note: In large parts of the estimated ZVI (for example on farmer's fields) there will be no public access and very few people will experience visual effects created by the proposed development. The effects on receptors in these locations are not normally assessed).	

5. SELECTING VIEWPOINTS

5.1 Following the fieldwork; establishment of the estimated ZVI; and identification of the visual receptors in each area, a number of representative viewpoints from locations within the public domain⁵ are selected for assessment of the visual effects.

5.2 Viewpoints selected can be:

1. **Representative viewpoints:** Chosen to represent the effects experienced from a number of viewpoints which cannot all be included individually, and where the significance of effects are unlikely to differ (for example a viewpoint chosen to represent views along a particular footpath).
2. **Specific viewpoints:** Chosen because they are key and sometimes promoted viewpoints within a landscape, or to assess views from specific private residences.
3. **Illustrative viewpoints:** Chosen to demonstrate a particular effect or specific issue (which might, for example, be the restricted visibility at certain locations; or the effect of distance).

5.3 Selection takes account of a range of factors including accessibility; sensitivity and potential numbers of receptors who may be affected; viewing distance, direction and elevation; the nature of the viewing experience (static, sequential); the type of view (glimpse, vista, panorama); and the potential for cumulative views in conjunction with other developments.

5.4 Viewpoints are chosen to:

- i. Cover as wide a range of situations as possible (from locations both near to the Site and more distant).
- ii. Cover important sequential views along key routes.
- iii. Cover the full range of different visual receptors who may be affected.
- iv. Demonstrate the influence of distance.
- v. Demonstrate the effects on receptors at any specific landmarks or heritage assets.
- vi. Be as typical as possible of views likely to be experienced in each location.

5.5 The emphasis here is on proportionality in relation to the scale and nature of the development proposal and its likely "Significant"⁶ effects.

5.6 In the case of these proposals, comment has been made on the effects on receptors at private residences although a specific Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) has not been undertaken;⁷ and the effect on receptors in commercial properties have also been considered (refer to the scoping exercise in Section 2 of the main LVA). As part of this process (where appropriate) properties have been grouped so that those where the effects will be similar have been considered together. These comments are based on views from publicly accessible locations close to the properties and from views looking out from the Site. No access has been gained to these residences.

⁴ Setting of a heritage asset: "The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral". (Annex 2: Glossary, National Planning Policy Framework).

⁵ Planning is primarily concerned with effects on the public domain.

⁶ Refer to paragraphs 10.20 – 10.23 below for definition of "Significant".

⁷ Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) is a stage beyond LVA/LVIA which focuses exclusively on private views and private visual amenity, and is one component of 'Residential Amenity' (which also considers aspects of residential amenity such as noise, dust, access to daylight etc.). Refer to the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 2/19 for further detail.

6. DETERMINING THE SCOPE

- 6.1 Having determined the ZVI; established the nature of visual receptors; and considered appropriate viewpoints for assessment; the scope of the visual assessment can then be determined.
- 6.2 Elements considered / agreed in this exercise include:
- i. The extent of the study area (based on the survey work undertaken).
 - ii. The location of viewpoints to be examined in detail.
 - iii. The time periods for the assessments (in this case construction and both the short term (year 1), medium term (year 7), and longer term (year 15)).⁸
 - iv. The requirement for seasonal assessments (summer and winter).
 - v. The eye level for assessments undertaken (generally c.1.6m).
 - vi. The requirement for assessments from private residences / land.
 - vii. The requirement for assessments during an enabling works demolition phase; the construction phase; and during a potential future decommissioning phase.
 - viii. The requirement for assessments at night.
 - ix. The requirement for cumulative assessments.
 - x. The requirement for future monitoring.
- 6.3 GLVIA3 places an emphasis on determining a reasonable approach (proportional to the scale and nature of the development proposed and the nature of its likely effects).⁹ It is, therefore, normal to “scope out” those potential impacts which are felt to be unnecessary or unreasonable (given the nature of the proposals in question).
- 6.4 Details of the scope of the Appraisal are contained within Section 2 of the main Landscape and Visual Appraisal to which this methodology forms an Appendix.

7. ESTABLISHING THE BASELINE FOR EACH VIEWPOINT TO BE ASSESSED

- 7.1 Having established the scope of the assessment the visual baseline is recorded for each viewpoint selected.
- 7.2 For each viewpoint a photographic record is presented (in this case taken in winter) and details of the location, description of the existing view, and the sensitivity of receptors, are recorded in Appendix 4:
- i. Viewpoint locations are accurately mapped and the approximate direction of the view; approximate elevation; approximate horizontal and vertical view angles covered by the photograph presented; approximate distance to the closest edge of site; landscape and heritage designations at the viewpoint; and any other comments are recorded (the intention being that sufficient information is provided to allow any person to return to the location and record the same view).
 - ii. The nature of the existing view is recorded in detail including a description of the scene; the type of view (panoramic, open, contained, restricted, enclosed, filtered, fragmented, glimpsed); the extent of the site visible; the approximate angle of view in relation to main activity of the receptor;

⁸ In this way the effectiveness of mitigating measures over time is considered within the assessment process.

⁹ GLVIA3, Paragraphs 1.17, 3.16, 6.2 and 6.21 (amongst others).

¹⁰ As no firm data on the exact numbers of people using footpaths / roads etc is available, this is made in the form of a relative judgement (high / moderate / low), however, it should be recognised that the number of people at any viewpoint does not

and the viewpoint type (representative, specific or illustrative). Other elements considered include whether it is one of a sequence (for example along a footpath); the relative amount of time view will be experienced; whether any heritage assets are visible in the scene; whether the view is from a specific viewpoint where parking, benches, sign boards or interpretative material are provided; whether the view appears in art, literature, guidebooks, on tourist maps etc.; and any additional comments.

iii. The Sensitivity of Visual receptors is also recorded in these tables (although this forms part of the assessment process set out below). This involves consideration of the value and susceptibility of receptors as noted in Section 10 below, and includes a recording of the primary activity of receptors; the focus of receptors; whether the receptors are stationary or transient (so see the view only for a short time); and an estimate of the approximate / relative numbers of people at each viewpoint.¹⁰

8. PRESENTATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

- 8.1 Assessment photographs are presented in Appendix 6, with reference images in Appendix 12, and are intended to be viewed digitally. These were taken with a Nikon D3400 or D3500 digital SLR camera with a fixed 35mm focal length lens and are presented using a multiplication factor of 1.5 to give the equivalent of 52.5mm focal length. They replicate normal eye level viewed at approximately 1.6 metres above ground level and are presented in the appendices with viewing distances stated; all in accordance with Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19.
- 8.2 Refer to Technical Methodology in Appendix 10 for further details.

9. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSALS

- 9.1 Following the recording of the visual baseline the proposals are described at a level of detail applicable to the application.¹¹
- 9.2 For Outline Planning Applications the assessments made are based purely on a series of parameters (for example maximum building heights and a broad materials palette) set out in this section of the document. Taking this approach provides an assessment of the essential basis of the scheme, rather than details which may or may not be built in the future, and means the assessment remains relevant at a future point as long as these parameters are adhered to. It also means that the worst-case scenario has been assessed (for example heights of buildings assume the worst case, whereas at the detailed planning stage some buildings may be reduced in height to provide architectural and visual interest within the scheme or assist in the reduction of effects).

10. THE PROCESS OF VISUAL APPRAISAL

- 10.1 Recording of the visual baseline and the description of the proposals is followed by a systematic identification of likely effects on potential visual receptors at each viewpoint.
- 10.2 The process involves considering the sensitivity of receptors, the magnitude of change, and making an assessment of the level (sometimes referred to as significance) of effect.

Sensitivity of visual receptors x Magnitude of effect = Level of effect

affect the sensitivity of an individual receptor or the magnitude of effect from a viewpoint. The relative numbers of people at each viewpoint may simply be referred to, therefore, in concluding the overall visual assessment.

¹¹ The description of proposals is constantly updated throughout the preparation of the proposals and the visual effects assessment, thereby ensuring modifications to the design are reflected in the assessments presented.

DETERMINING THE SENSITIVITY OF VISUAL RECEPTORS

- 10.3 The first stage of the assessment process involves determining the sensitivity of the visual receptors.
- 10.4 Visual receptors at each viewpoint selected for assessment are identified and evaluated (using table B.3 below) according to:
- Their susceptibility to change in a view and visual amenity.
 - The value attached to each particular view.
- 10.5 Susceptibility is a function of the occupation / activity of the receptor at that particular location and, as a consequence, the extent to which their attention / interest may therefore be focused on the view and the visual amenity they experience.
- 10.6 Value takes account of value attached to views in relation to heritage assets; planning designations; and value attached to views by visitors or residents (may be indicated by reference to views in nationally well-known art,¹² literature,¹³ poetry, TV / film or music; associated with science, other technical achievements or a notable historical event, or associated with a famous person or people; or referenced in guidebooks, on tourist maps, and indicated by the provision of facilities for the enjoyment of the views (such as sign boards / interpretative materials / parking areas and benches)).

Table B.3 – Susceptibility and Value

	Susceptibility	Value
High	Viewers whose focus is primarily on their setting: • Viewers visiting heritage assets, or other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience. • Viewers using Public Rights of Way (Roads / Footpaths / Bridleways / Restricted Byways / Byways open to all traffic (BOATs)); Access Land; permissive paths, railways; canals; or other facilities for the enjoyment of the countryside / townscape. • Residents in their private homes and gardens.	• Views from landscapes of high scenic quality, normally designated for the preservation of the beauty of the countryside at a national level (National Parks, National Landscapes (formerly AONBs)). • Views from Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings or Registered Parks and Gardens; or their immediate setting. • Views from private residential properties / gardens. • Nationally well-known viewpoints referenced in art, literature, poetry, TV / film or music; associated with science, other technical achievements or a notable historical event; or associated with a famous person or people. • Viewpoints shown on Ordnance Survey maps which may also be referenced in guidebooks / on tourist maps. Interpretation may be provided for the enjoyment of the view.

Medium	Viewers whose focus is not primarily on their setting, but who may value the setting as part of the activity in which they are involved: • People engaged in outdoor recreational sports. • Viewers using roads for local access. • Viewers accessing residential properties. • Viewers using Public Rights of Way and other areas with public access other than for the specific enjoyment of the countryside / townscape (e.g., for local access). • Recreational area user groups.	• Views from landscapes judged to be of moderate to good scenic quality (potentially identified in local Landscape Character Assessments). • Views from non-designated heritage assets or from areas with local landscape / townscape designations. • Views from residential areas. • Viewpoints where locally valued features are a major component of the scene. • Locally well-known viewpoints. Limited facilities may be provided for the enjoyment of the view (such as / parking areas / benches), but no interpretation materials or references on Ordnance Survey maps.
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Low	Viewers whose focus is primarily on the activity in which they are involved and not on their setting and / or whose view may be transitory: • Viewers travelling <u>through an area</u> on trains or in vehicles on major roads. • Viewers working in / using commercial premises including shopping. • Viewers working in and around industrial premises • People engaged in formal sports.	• Views from landscapes judged to be of limited scenic quality / no particular merit (potentially identified in local Landscape Character Assessments). • Views dominated by negative elements in the scene or negative experiential aspects of the viewpoint (for example a viewpoint dominated by a noisy road). • No national or local landscape / townscape designations. • No references to the location in guidebooks / tourist maps. No facilities provided. •
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10.7 When there are visual receptors of differing susceptibility to change to consider in one particular location, the estimated frequency of use by each receptor will normally determine the overall susceptibility of receptors from that location. For instance, when local roads are frequently used by walkers as part of a popular walk or a National Trail the high susceptibility receptor (viewers using designated Public Rights of Way for the enjoyment of the countryside) will take precedence. However, when local roads are only used by occasional walkers then the medium sensitivity receptor (viewers using roads for local access) will take precedence. Only in specific situations will both be assessed.

10.8 To reach an assessment of the **sensitivity** of each receptor, 'Susceptibility' and 'Value' are then combined using table B.4 below. For example, a receptor playing a football match (low susceptibility) in a National Park (high value) would have a medium level of sensitivity.

¹² For example Constable's view of Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Ground.

¹³ For example references to Stonehenge in Thomas Hardy's writings; or to views of Top Withens (the Wuthering Heights farmhouse) in Emily Bronte's 'Wuthering Heights'.

Table B.4 – Sensitivity of Receptors

		Value		
		High	Medium	Low
Susceptibility	High	High sensitivity	Medium - high sensitivity	Medium sensitivity
	Medium	Medium - high sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Medium - low sensitivity
	Low	Medium sensitivity	Medium - low sensitivity	Low sensitivity

Determining the need for detailed reporting

- 10.9 Having determined the Sensitivity of receptors the potential for ‘significant effects’ is assessed.¹⁴ This is recorded in the tables as “None” or “Some”, and reasons for exclusion or inclusion are given. Visual receptors that are identified as having no potential to experience ‘significant’ effects’ are not carried forward to detailed reporting.
- 10.10 For those viewpoints where it is estimated that there may be ‘significant effects’ on receptors, the magnitude of effects is then established.

DETERMINING THE MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL EFFECT

- 10.11 The magnitude of a visual effect considers the degree to which changes in views and visual amenity will occur as a result of the proposed development. Change may arise from built form, engineered forms and / or from soft landscape elements of the development.
- 10.12 Each of the visual effects identified is evaluated in terms of its size / scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the type of effect.
- 10.13 For each viewpoint and assessment period chosen, consideration is given to:

The nature of the view

- The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;
- The angle of the view in relation to the receptor: oblique / straight on;
- The type of the view: panoramic, open, contained, filtered, fragmented, glimpsed; and
- Whether the view is stationary or transient¹⁵ or one of a sequence of views.

The nature of the visual effect

- The proportion of the development visible;
- Degree of change in the view (the extent of the view over which changes would be evident) / the proportion of the view occupied by the development;
- Extent of change in composition of the view (e.g. change from field to built development);

¹⁴ GLVIA 3 recommends that only those effects with the potential for “Significant” effects should be carried forward to detailed reporting (GLVIA paragraph 6.24, page 111).

- Whether the development is the focus of view due to proximity / scale;
- Features lost from the view, and their extent;
- New features – both man-made objects and vegetation with particular features noted – (Is there a new visual focus in the view?);
- Change in visual scale;
- Change in the degree of visual enclosure;
- Change to the skyline;
- Change in the simplicity/complexity of the view;
- The degree of contrast / integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with existing / remaining landscape elements / characteristics in terms of form, scale / mass, line, height, colour, texture;
- The effectiveness of mitigating measures;
- Whether there is a deliberate relationship with a heritage asset, and if so, how this is affected;
- If a heritage asset is seen, whether it is a designed view, major component or an incidental element, and whether the view of it has changed (improved, lost, partially retained); and
- If the site is seen in a designed view from a heritage asset, whether it is in the immediate, wider or extended setting.

The type of effect

- Adverse, beneficial or neutral.

- 10.14 Finally the **duration**, **reversibility** and **avoidability** of the effects are considered, where:
- Duration** is considered in terms of how long the effects will last (for example, temporary, 10, 15, 20 years etc. or permanent).
 - Reversibility** is a judgement about the prospects and the practicality of the development (and therefore the effects) being reversed.
 - Avoidability** is a judgement as to whether the effect is avoidable or unavoidable.
- 10.15 Magnitude of effects are then determined using the guidance in Table B.5 below. Considering the magnitude of effect involves careful consideration of the complex interrelationships between the differing elements set out above. An informed professional judgement is made on these relationships and whether visual effects are positive or negative (or neutral) and their consequences for views and visual amenity. This is based on a judgement about whether the changes will affect the quality of the visual experience for those groups of people who will see the changes, given the nature of the existing views.

¹⁵ Oxford English Dictionary definition of transient is “lasting only for a short time”

Table B.5 – Magnitude of Visual Effects

Magnitude of effect	Guidance for assessing magnitude of visual effects
Very high adverse	The development proposals would have a severely detrimental effect on the overall scene.
High adverse	The development proposals would have a substantially detrimental effect on the overall scene.
Medium-high adverse	Where the development proposals would have a considerably detrimental effect on the overall scene.
Medium adverse	Where the development proposals would have a moderately detrimental effect on the overall scene.
Medium-low adverse	Where the development proposals would have a notably detrimental effect on the overall scene.
Low adverse	Where the development proposals would have a slightly detrimental effect on the overall scene.
Very low adverse	Where the development proposals would have a very slightly detrimental effect on the overall scene.
Neutral	Where the development proposals would, on balance, have little effect on the overall scene and are neither adverse or beneficial: • The development cannot be seen or • The development would be scarcely appreciated in the overall view, and/or • The view may have changed but the overall effect is no worse or better than the existing.
Very low beneficial	Where the development proposals would cause a very slight improvement to the overall scene.
Low beneficial	Where the development proposals would cause a slight improvement to the overall scene.
Medium-low beneficial	Where the development proposals would cause a notable improvement to the overall scene.
Medium beneficial	Where the development proposals would cause a moderate improvement to the overall scene.
Medium-high beneficial	Where the development proposals would cause a considerable improvement to the overall scene.
High beneficial	Where the development proposals would cause a substantial improvement to the overall scene.
Very high beneficial	Where the development proposals would cause abundant improvement to the overall scene / sense of place restored.

DETERMINING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VISUAL EFFECTS

10.16 The overall **visual effect significance** is then determined by combining the sensitivity of the individual receptors and the magnitude of visual effect. These are defined in Table B.6 below.

Table B.6 – Visual Effect Significance Matrix

		Sensitivity of visual receptors					
		High	Medium - high	Medium	Medium - low	Low	
Magnitude of effect	Very high adverse	Severe adverse effect	Substantial adverse effect	Major / substantial adverse effect	Major adverse effect	Appreciable adverse effect	N E G A T I V E
	High adverse	Substantial adverse effect	Major / substantial adverse effect	Major adverse effect	Appreciable adverse effect	Moderate adverse effect	
	Medium-high adverse	Major / substantial adverse effect	Major adverse effect	Appreciable adverse effect	Moderate adverse effect	Slight adverse effect	
	Medium adverse	Major adverse effect	Appreciable adverse effect	Moderate adverse effect	Slight adverse effect	Very slight adverse effect	
	Medium-low adverse	Appreciable adverse effect	Moderate adverse effect	Slight adverse effect	Very slight adverse effect	Very slight / negligible adverse effect	
	Low adverse	Moderate adverse effect	Slight adverse effect	Very slight adverse effect	Very slight / negligible adverse effect	Negligible adverse effect	
	Very low adverse	Slight adverse effect	Very slight adverse effect	Very slight / negligible adverse effect	Negligible adverse effect	Negligible / neutral adverse effect	
	Neutral	Neutral effect	Neutral effect	Neutral effect	Neutral effect	Neutral effect	NEUTRAL
	Very low beneficial	Slight beneficial effect	Very slight beneficial effect	Very slight / negligible beneficial effect	Negligible beneficial effect	Negligible / neutral beneficial effect	P O S I T I V E
	Low beneficial	Moderate beneficial effect	Slight beneficial effect	Very slight beneficial effect	Very slight / negligible beneficial effect	Negligible beneficial effect	
	Medium-low beneficial	Appreciable beneficial effect	Moderate beneficial effect	Slight beneficial effect	Very slight beneficial effect	Very slight / negligible beneficial effect	
	Medium beneficial	Major beneficial effect	Appreciable beneficial effect	Moderate beneficial effect	Slight beneficial effect	Very slight beneficial effect	
	Medium-high beneficial	Major / substantial beneficial effect	Major beneficial effect	Appreciable beneficial effect	Moderate beneficial effect	Slight beneficial effect	
	High beneficial	Substantial beneficial effect	Major / substantial beneficial effect	Major beneficial effect	Appreciable beneficial effect	Moderate beneficial effect	
	Very high beneficial	Abundant beneficial effect	Substantial beneficial effect	Major / substantial beneficial effect	Major beneficial effect	Appreciable beneficial effect	

Conclusion of effects on overall visual amenity

- 10.17 Following assessment of the individual viewpoints selected an assessment of the effects on overall visual amenity (meaning the overall pleasantness of the views that receptors enjoy of their surroundings)¹⁶ is made within the assessment conclusions.
- 10.18 This considers the effects of the proposed development as a whole, and considers both those viewpoints where effects are “Significant” as well as those with lesser effects. In concluding the overall effect of a development on visual amenity, it is important that the focus does not become purely on a single or limited number of “Significant” effects, when the bigger picture may be one of generally minimal effects (and may also include beneficial as well as adverse effects).

The use of photomontage to assist in the assessment process

- 10.19 Photomontages have not been prepared for this project.

“Significant” visual effects

- 10.20 As set down in GLVIA3 the aim of the assessment process (as part of an Environmental Statement and required under EIA legislation) is to determine any ‘Significant’ effects.
- 10.21 In carrying out a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), however, although GLVIA3 and LITGN-2024-01 makes it clear that “*it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant*” [emphasis added],¹⁷ whether an effect is or is not ‘significant’ is often considered within the planning process. Establishing significance within a Landscape and Visual Appraisal which is not part of an Environmental Statement (and which has instead been prepared to accompany a non-EIA level planning application) therefore remains a useful tool to assist the Local Planning Authority in making a decision on the proposals.
- 10.22 “Significant” effects vary from project to project and are appropriate to the nature, size and location of the proposed development. In this case (as for the landscape appraisal) for the purposes of planning, ‘appreciable’, ‘major’, ‘substantial’, ‘severe’ and ‘abundant’ effects (and their combinations in Table B.6) are considered “Significant”.
- 10.23 However, as noted in paragraph 10.18 above, those viewpoints where the effects are not considered to be “Significant” are considered in the main LVA and are not disregarded. Whilst considering the effects of a development on overall visual amenity it is clearly important to consider not only those receptors experiencing “Significant” effects, but those with lesser effects as well.

¹⁶ GLVIA Paragraph 2.20

¹⁷ Quote taken from LITGN-2024-01, page 7, paragraph 3(1). See also GLVIA3 page 26 paragraph 3.2 (second bullet point) and table 3.1.