

LAND AT STANBURY HOUSE, SPENCERS WOOD

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

APPENDIX 5

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER APPRAISAL TABLES

for
Cooper Estates Strategic Land Limited.

March 2025

REF: I070-LVA 2025-03-14

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AUTHOR(S)	Mark Gibbins and Mary Lister	A	2025-03-14	MG/ML	MG	Issued for planning
STATUS	PLANNING					

Landscape Baseline - Physical influences				Potential for Significant Effects	Landscape Assessment – Assessment of sensitivity	
Key constituent elements						
Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area		Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Geology / geomorphology (In landscape character terms effects on geology / geomorphology are considered in terms of physical effects on geological features in the landscape (such as characteristic scarp slopes, ridges or low lying river valleys). Effects on less visually obvious aspects of geology such as effects on groundwater reserves are the domain of other experts and fall outside the scope of Landscape Character Assessment. ¹⁾)	Within the study area (including west of the A33) bedrock geology is that of the London Clay Formation, with the site being located on an undulating clay ridge that separates the valley of the River Loddon (to the east) from that of the Foudry Brook (to the west). ² Within this area the clay is overlaid in patches by superficial River Terrace Deposits, and the Site itself is located within an area of 5th level River Terrace Deposits consisting of sand and gravel which creates a sandy plateau on the top of the ridge to the west of Spencers Wood. Areas of Search for Sand and Gravel deposits are delineated on the Council’s planning policy proposals map. These include the sandy plateau that covers the area surrounding the Site as well as other smaller deposits on the ridgeline and larger areas in the valleys to the east and west. There are no geological SSSIs within the study area on the wider clay ridge; or on the lower land to the west of the A33.	Geology appears to be intact within the study area (there is no evidence of significant departure from the general topography of the area (e.g. cut and fill, quarrying etc.)).	Medium value Undesignated component which nevertheless has value locally in terms of its influence on the character of the landscape.	No. Residential development of the nature proposed has the ability to follow landform on this site, and is therefore unlikely to affect underlying geology in landscape character terms.	-	-

¹ Such effects won’t affect landscape character unless they impact so greatly as to have indirect effects on other landscape elements such as vegetation.

² See <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/> for details.

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Soils / pedology (In landscape character terms effects on soils are considered in terms of effects on the characteristics of that landscape. For example, clay soils give rise to poorly draining landscapes where water (ponds, lakes, streams etc.) often becomes a characteristic feature, and vegetation is characterised by clay loving species such as English Oak. ³)	Soil type and conditions strongly relate to the nature of the underlying geology. In this case the Site sits entirely within the River Terrace Deposits described under geology above. Soils are acidic and give rise to distinctive vegetation, characterised by the presence of Scots pine, birch, holly and rhododendron. Away from the sandy plateau soils on the remainder of the clay ridge are classified as Stagnogley soils. These are clayey, or loamy over clayey soils with drainage impeded at moderate depths by an impermeable layer; and are frequently drained with a network of deep ditches. To the west of the A33 soils are classified as Argillic Gley soils. These are stony fine or coarse loamy soils affected by high groundwater and occasional short term flooding. Drainage channels are frequent. Agricultural land within whole area is classified as Grade 3 (Good to Moderate).⁴	Soils within the study area appear to be intact (although there has been some localised soil movement with the recently constructed 57 unit scheme).	Medium value Grade 3 agricultural land.	No. Soils would be retained on Site and there would therefore be no change (as a result of soils) to characteristics of the landscape such as drainage or vegetation.	-	-

³ Effects on soil structure or quality caused by moving soils during construction of a project are not considered as part of the assessment of landscape effects as it is assumed that these effects would be managed and minimised through a detailed construction method statement and would, therefore, have a negligible effect on landscape character.

⁴ Natural England London and South East Region 1:250 000 Series Agricultural Land Classification map (ALC007).

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Vegetation (In landscape character terms effects on vegetation are considered both in terms of the effects on the physical resource (the amount and type of vegetation added or lost as a consequence of the proposals); and the effects on the wider landscape character).	Within the study area the landscape consists largely of moderate sized pasture fields divided by hedgerows featuring significant numbers of mature trees (primarily oak). Small woodland areas are found to the north of the Site (merging with trees around Wellington Court); on the southern boundary; and part way down the ridgeline to the west of the Application Site. On the ridge surrounding the Study Area (west of Basingstoke Road) the landscape remains one of moderate sized pasture fields divided by hedgerows featuring mature hedgerow oaks. There are a number of woodlands, the most notable being to the south of 'Highlands'. To the west of the A33 the landscape is more open. It is characterised by both arable and pasture fields, but has fewer woodland areas. Vegetation is concentrated along field boundaries, with mature Oak trees being a feature. There are several Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) in the area immediately around the Site, including covering the 38 Wellingtonias (TPO776/1996) along the drive to Wellington Court (just north of the northern Site boundary); and covering the woodland between the Site and the Wellingtonia avenue, the woodland immediately south of the Site, the group of trees around the pond between the Site and the 57 unit scheme, and several other groups / individual trees within the recently constructed scheme (TPO1931/2023) (parts of which fall within the Site boundaries). Several other TPOs are found in the wider area,⁵ including those along the western side of Basingstoke Road, both to the north of the Wellington Court access road and to the south between Highlands Lodge and the Wellington Industrial Estate (TPO21/1970). The Application Site itself consists of parts of two fields of rough grassland, and is bounded by mature trees along its northern and southern boundaries; and along part of its eastern boundary (the remainder being defined by the adjacent recently constructed development). A mature hedgerow with occasional trees characterises part of its western boundary, with recently completed planting planted as part of the implemented SANG scheme forming the remainder of the boundary (see below). Significant trees within the Application Site itself consist of: • A length of Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) hedgerow along the northern part of the western Site boundary (H105, Category C Tree survey). • One Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and one Scots Pine (<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>) located on the western boundary of the Site (T74 Oak Category B, T75 Scots Pine Category C Tree Survey). • A mature Oak tree on the southern boundary of the Site (T67, Category A Tree Survey). • Three trees within a group of five mature Scots Pine trees (covered by TPO1931/2023) (two of which are on the Site boundary) located to the west of the pond found along the eastern boundary of the Site (G32, Category C Tree Survey). • A mature Oak tree located on the Site boundary to the eastern side of the existing pond which is located just offsite (T31, Category A Tree Survey). • An area of mature Oak woodland (W29, Category A Tree Survey); with Holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>) and other mixed species as understorey located to the southeast of the existing off-site pond. Part of a wider group of Goat Willow (<i>Salix Caprea</i>) (G30, Category C Tree Survey) and some Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>), English Elm (<i>Ulmus procera</i>), Hawthorn and Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>) (part of G62, Category C Tree Survey) form an edge to this woodland, creating a screen at lower level (also covered by TPO1931/2023). An up to 4m tall hedgerow consisting of English Elm, Holly, Hawthorn and Blackthorn (G62, Category C Tree Survey) is also found on Site, separating the two fields which make up the Site. This hedgerow is split by a field gate in its centre, and a small largely dead Oak (T72 Category U Tree Survey) and a mature partially collapsed Ash tree (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - T73 Category C Tree Survey) are found to the west of this gap. This hedge continues west away from the Site with further occasional emergent Oak and Ash trees (see below).	The condition of vegetation within the study area is inevitably varied, however, trees generally appear to be in good condition, (with occasional notable or exceptional specimens); and hedgerows appear it be largely intact.	High value Vegetation is important in landscape character terms and locally to the Site some is designated.	Yes Residential development of the nature proposed has the potential for significant adverse effects on vegetation on the Application Site.	Medium susceptibility Vegetation is moderately capable of accepting change of the nature proposed.	Medium-high Sensitivity

⁵ See Wokingham Protected Tree Map: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/c0ad4ce95f8e46cfb28bb8cb126eac0>

	Immediately around the Site, vegetation along the boundaries is characterised as follows: The northern Site boundary: • This boundary is dominated by the avenue of Giant Redwood, or Wellingtonia trees (<i>Sequoiadendron giganteum</i>) covered by TPO776/1996. These are significant, good quality trees (G60, Category A Tree Survey) of high landscape value, reaching 30m in height. • Immediately along the Site boundary (between the Redwood trees and the Site) is an area of woodland containing Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>), Oak and Hawthorn of Category A and B with one Category A Turkey Oak (<i>Quercus cerris</i>) and one Category U Sycamore (W43 and T107-112) (covered by TPO1931/2023). • To the west of the above trees there is a group of 9 Oak and Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) trees (G106, Category B Tree survey) and a mature Oak tree (T104, Category B Tree survey) (also covered by TPO1931/2023) which are located adjacent to further trees within the grounds of Wellington Court. • A line of Oak trees also runs along the northern side of the Redwood avenue, providing complete screening of the Site as seen from the northeast. The southern Site boundary: • South of the southeastern corner of the Site further mature Oak trees are found just off Site (part of W29 and T63 and T64, Category A Tree Survey). • The remainder of the southern boundary is characterised by a 3m tall Hawthorn and Blackthorn hedgerow (H68, Category C Tree Survey), flanked in part by a line of Oak and Scots Pine trees (G69, Category A Tree Survey). This hedge continues west away from the Site with further occasional emergent Oak and Scots Pine trees, where it meets a small woodland part the way down the hill towards the A33 (see below). The eastern Site boundary: • The northern part of this boundary is open, being characterised by the built edge of the recently constructed 57 unit scheme, however, there is woodland in the southeastern corner as described above, as well as vegetation surrounding the pond which lies on this boundary including part of the group of Category C Scots Pine trees (G32), and part of the a group of Category C Goat Willow trees (G30) described above. The western Site boundary: • The southern half of this boundary (which was previously open to the adjacent field) has recently been planted as part of the adjacent SANG works, and now includes a hedgerow along the boundary, with an area of scrub and tree planting behind. • The northern half of the boundary is defined in part by the existing Category C Hawthorn hedgerow (H105 - mentioned above, which extends offsite to the north), and two trees (T74 Oak Category B, T75 Scots Pine). Hedgerow planting has been planted underneath the trees as part of the SANG works. • Running west from the centre of the boundary, however, is a continuation of the Category C mixed hedgerow which runs through the Site (G62, containing Elm, Holly, Hawthorn and Blackthorn); with occasional Oak and Ash trees (including T76 Category A Oak, and G77 Category B Oak and Ash, and further oak and ash further west).
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Landscape Assessment – Assessment of magnitude								Landscape effect significance		
Element (and sensitivity)	Description of size / scale of change	Geographical extent over which landscape effects would be felt	Reversibility of effect			Type of effect		Magnitude	Significance of effect (Sensitivity x Magnitude)	
			Permanent / temporary	Reversible / irreversible effect	Avoidable / unavoidable	Direct / indirect	Adverse / beneficial / neutral			
Vegetation (Medium-high Sensitivity)	Vegetation makes an important contribution to the character of the landscape.	The effects on vegetation would largely be felt at the Site level; however, there would be some effects on views into the Site from the associated SANG land.	The effects of the removal of vegetation would largely be felt during construction and the early years, however, as planting on Site grows the effects of additional planting would be felt. Effects of loss are therefore temporary and reversible in the medium to longer term, however, given the nature of the development they are unavoidable.			Direct effects on the vegetation resource and indirect effects on wider landscape character.	<u>Construction</u> Adverse.	<u>Construction – Direct effects</u> Medium adverse	<u>Construction – Direct effects</u> Appreciable Adverse Effect on site	
	The proposals retain the majority of trees and hedgerows within the Site and there would not be any effects on surrounding vegetation.								<u>Construction – Indirect effects</u> Neutral	<u>Construction – Indirect effects</u> Neutral on the wider setting
	During construction the existing grassland would be replaced with a construction site and a 10m length of the Category C hedgerow (including a couple of smaller hedgerow trees) separating the southern field from the northern field on Site would be lost. In addition, the almost dead Category U oak tree (T72) and a partially collapsed Category C Ash tree (T73) at the eastern end of this hedgerow would be removed.									
	At this stage in terms of vegetation on Site the loss of the grassland, the (almost dead) Oak tree, the single Category C Ash, and the 10m length of the internal hedgerow would be moderately damaging to the vegetation resource on Site and would not be adequately mitigated through new planting (which would only be undertaken at the end of the construction period). From the wider landscape, however, the impacts would barely be visible.									
	-----	From viewpoints further afield the effects on vegetation would not be significant (refer to visual assessment).					<u>Year I</u> Adverse / neutral	<u>Year I – Direct effects</u> Low adverse	<u>Year I – Direct effects</u> Slight Adverse Effect on site	
Once the scheme is completed it would include new tree planting (including some large scale trees where space allows along the internal streets, around the attenuation ponds / central space, around the boundaries, and within back gardens of the proposed houses); new native hedges along parts of the western and northern boundaries; other existing hedgerows would be gapped up as required; new hedge and shrub planting would be undertaken around the house frontages; marginal and aquatic plants would be planted within the attenuation ponds; amenity grass would be sown within back gardens and amenity spaces; and wildflower grass would be sown around the attenuation ponds, the edges of the Site and in incidental areas where space allows.								<u>Year I – Indirect effects</u> Neutral	<u>Year I – Indirect effects</u> Neutral on the wider setting	

	In the short term (year 1) however, whilst planting and re-seeding would be complete, plants would be of limited stock sizes and would have only limited effect on the vegetation resource on Site. At this stage the loss of the single Ash and the nearly dead Oak tree, the 10m length of hedge, and grass across the Site would not be adequately mitigated by the new planting, and when considered with the new planting the loss would be slightly damaging to the vegetation resource. From the wider landscape the impacts would barely be visible. In the medium term planting would be well established. The grass areas and hedges would be fully established and specimen trees would begin to contribute more significantly to the landscape resource. At this stage vegetation lost would be adequately compensated for by new planting and the effect on both the Site and the wider landscape would be neutral. In the longer term grass areas would be fully established and the proposed tree and hedgerow planting would become a significant landscape resource and would integrate fully with the character of the existing landscape. At this stage the new planting would more than adequately compensate for the loss of the single Ash and the (almost dead) Oak tree, the 10m of hedgerow and the grass on Site, and would provide slight overall enhancement to the vegetation resource on Site. In the wider landscape the effect of the additional planting would also create a very slight overall enhancement.				<u>Year 7</u> Neutral.	<u>Year 7 – Direct effects</u> Neutral	<u>Year 7 – Direct effects</u> Neutral effect on site
						<u>Year 7 – Indirect effects</u> Neutral	<u>Year 7 – Indirect effects</u> Neutral on the wider setting
					<u>Year 15</u> Beneficial.	<u>Year 15 – Direct effects</u> Low beneficial	<u>Year 15 – Direct effects</u> Slight beneficial effect on site
						<u>Year 15 – Indirect effects</u> Very-low beneficial	<u>Year 15 – Indirect effects</u> Very slight beneficial effect on the wider setting

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Landform / Topography (In landscape character terms effects on topography / landform are considered both in terms of the effects on the physical resource (the amount the existing landform is changed by cut and fill operations to accommodate the proposals); and the effects on the wider landscape character).	Spencers Wood is located on top of a low ridge that sits some 20m above the surrounding landscape (at a level of between approximately 50 and 69 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)) with the valley of the River Loddon to the east and Foudry Brook to the west. It forms the highest part of the northeast-southwest orientated clay ridgeline which forms the 'Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay Character Area' in the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment. The lower lying land around the Foudry Brook to the west of A33 lies between 40 and 45m AOD, and the land around the River Loddon to the east lies at around 45m AOD. Within the study area the top of the ridge lies along the western boundary of the Application Site (refer to topographical survey of the Site), with the associated SANG land falling away to the west and Basingstoke Road lying at a slightly lower level to the east. The Application Site itself rises slightly to the west from a level of approximately 66m AOD at its southeastern corner to approximately 68.6m AOD at its southwestern-most corner.	Levels on the Application Site follow the form of the surrounding landscape - there is no sign of intervention. Condition is good.	Medium value Topography is an undesignated component of the landscape, however given the nature of the ridge it contributes to landscape character and has value locally.	No Residential development of the nature proposed is able to follow landform on Site without the need for significant cut / fill.	-	-

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Drainage / Water Bodies (In landscape character terms effects on drainage / water bodies are considered both in terms of the effects on the physical resource (for example an effect on the course of a river or stream itself); and any effects on wider landscape character (for example the change in wider character caused by draining of an area of flood plain normally subject to seasonal flooding)).	Water is an important feature of the wider landscape around Spencers Wood, with the Foudry Brook and River Loddon defining the form of the landscape in the area, however, as set out above, the Site lies at the top of a low ridge on an isolated area of sands and gravels within an otherwise clay dominated landscape. There are no rivers or lakes on Site or within the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposed development, however, a drainage ditch and a pond are found along part of the southern / eastern Site boundaries. The Site lies within Flood Zone 1,⁶ although there is some risk of flooding from surface water along the southern and eastern Site boundaries around the ditch / pond (see Environment Agency Flood Map).⁷	Drainage within the study area appears to be in keeping with the general drainage pattern of the area, with ditches used to drain fields towards the lower lying rivers. The pond on the eastern boundary of the Application Site is heavily overshadowed and in poor condition. Similarly, the ditch on the southern boundary is heavily overshadowed. It appears to take the form of a shallow ditch which follows hedgelines along field boundaries and drains towards the east.	Low value The water bodies present around the Site are undesignated components which only have value at a local level.	No Residential development of the nature proposed can be accommodated without the need to significantly affect water bodies on or around the Site. With the exception of the necessary outfalls from the proposed SuDS ponds, the various ditches around the southeastern end of the Site and the adjacent (offsite) pond would be unaffected by the proposals. Whilst clearly the roof areas and hard surfaces on Site would be positively drained as part of the development, and SuDS ponds are required which would include areas of permanent water, at the detailed stage they would be designed by the project engineers to minimise changes to green field run-off (in accordance with SuDS principles). In terms of landscape character any changes are unlikely to have an effect on the existing drainage features, and whilst additional ponds are proposed on Site they would not have an effect on the wider landscape character.	-	-

⁶ See: [https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/flood-zone-results?polygon=\[\[471056,166961\],\[471565,166954\],\[471560,166590\],\[471054,166607\],\[471056,166961\]\]¢er=\[471309,166775\]&location=spencers%2520wood](https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/flood-zone-results?polygon=[[471056,166961],[471565,166954],[471560,166590],[471054,166607],[471056,166961]]¢er=[471309,166775]&location=spencers%2520wood)

⁷ See: <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map?easting=471309&northing=166775&map=SurfaceWater>

Landscape Baseline - Influences of human activity				Potential for Significant Effects	Landscape Assessment – Assessment of sensitivity	
Key constituent elements					Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area			
Heritage assets (Refer to drawing 1070-A-04, Appendix 3). (In landscape character terms effects on designated heritage assets (including World Heritage Sites / Conservation Areas / Listed Buildings / Scheduled Monuments / Registered Parks and Gardens / Registered Battlefields / Protected Wreck Sites) and non-designated assets (such as non-designated parkland or locally listed non-designated heritage assets)⁸ are considered in terms of the way the heritage assets affect the character of the landscape, and whether any changes to these assets or the way they are experienced (as a consequence of the development) would change this established character.)⁹	There are no Conservation Areas / Sites of Archaeological Importance / Scheduled Monuments / Historic Battlefields / or Historic Parks and Gardens within the study area or the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposed development. • The nearest Conservation Area is at Swallowfield, some 2.15km to the southeast of the Site. • The nearest Scheduled Monument lies at Sheepbridge Court, approximately 1.48 kilometres to the southeast of the Application Site. • The nearest Registered Park and Garden lies at Swallowfield Park, with the closest point being approximately 1.62 kilometres to the southeast of the Site. There are numerous Listed Buildings around Spencers Wood, but none fall within the estimated Zone of Visual Influence of the development. The “Library School House”¹¹ (previously a school and school house; now a library and a house) is located on Basingstoke Road approximately 150m to the east of the nearest part of the Site, however, it is evident that there are unlikely to be any views of the development from this building (as potential views are screened by intervening vegetation along the rear of the properties and along the southern Site boundary, as well as built form within the recently constructed 57 unit scheme). No other Listed Buildings lie within the Zone of Visual Influence of the development, however, an “Area of Special Character” is located to the east side of Basingstoke Road (assessed under ‘Character of Buildings and Built Form’ below); and there are remnants of (non-designated) parkland associated with the former Highlands and Stanbury Estates in the form of the avenue of Redwood trees to the north of the Site (leading to the site of the former Stanbury Manor which was destroyed by fire in 1960) and groups of mature trees (including a few groups within the recently constructed 57 unit scheme).	Based on a brief external examination from the adjacent road the “Library School House” appears to be in good condition and buildings within the “Area of Special Character” also appear to be in good condition, a few of which having been recently redeveloped. In terms of the remnant (non-designated) parkland, whilst the Redwood avenue is in good condition, Stanbury Manor is no longer present and the remainder of the parkland associated with the former Stanbury Estate is limited to remnant tree groups. Whilst the Redwood avenue is covered by a Tree Preservation Order from 1996, and those within / surrounding the 57 unit scheme have recently been protected (in 2023, see under vegetation above), the remainder of the trees are not. As a whole the remnant parkland is in poor condition. The remnant parkland associated with the Highlands estate is more coherent, with the house remaining and larger numbers of remnant trees (particularly within the field adjacent to Basingstoke Road), however, the house and grounds are all non-designated.	Medium value Heritage Assets are highly valued by nature, however, the “Library School House” and “Area of Special Character” are outside the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals, and only traces of the former parkland remain. Furthermore the “parkland” is not on the Historic England 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens'; it is not subject to any local designation; and the Site is not within the setting of a Listed Building or other heritage asset.	No Neither the “Library School House” (the only designated asset present) nor the “Area of Special Character” would be affected. With respect to the remnants of the former parkland there are no remnant parkland trees within the Site; none of the remnant parkland trees in the area surrounding the Site are to be removed; and the Redwood avenue (by far the most significant remaining element of the former parkland) would be unaffected.	-	-

⁸ Some Local Planning Authorities compile lists of non-designated heritage assets. These are “buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets” as defined in paragraph 039 of the Historic Environment section of the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance. The appearance of a non-designated asset on a local list does not give it statutory protection but it does identify that it is a valued asset and ensures that it is taken account of in the planning process.

⁹ Effects on the significance of the heritage assets themselves (including how their setting (defined in the NPPF as “the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced”) contributes to this significance) are considered by Heritage Consultants and fall outside the scope of this assessment.

¹¹ Library School House - Built Approximately 1890 - Grade II listed – English Heritage List entry Number: 1312952.

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Land use / management (Refer to aerial photograph, drawing 1070-A-01, Appendix 3). (In landscape character terms effects on land use are considered both in terms of the effects on the site itself and effects on wider landscape character (considering the nature of surrounding land uses, and the visibility of the site). The questions that are considered are “what are the effects on the site itself”; and “what are the effects of this change on the wider setting”).	Land use within the area around the Site is a mix of agricultural and urban land-uses and falls into four types: • Transport corridors – consisting of the Basingstoke Road to the east and the A33 to the west. • Urban land uses within the built-up area of Spencers Wood – consisting of: ○ Residential land uses including properties within the recently constructed 57 unit scheme, properties along Basingstoke Road; cottages on the Highlands estate; and properties within Wellington Court. There is only limited settlement within the wider countryside ○ Commercial and civic land uses including Highlands, the Wellington Industrial Estate, and properties along Basingstoke Road. • Recreational land use – consisting of the adjacent SANG land. • Agricultural land uses covering the Application Site and areas to the south and west, consisting of: ○ Largely pastoral land uses on Site and on the surrounding clay ridge (grazed grassland or forage, including hay meadows). ○ Largely arable land uses on the lower lying land to the west of the A33	Land use within the study area is relatively intact.	Medium value Land use found on and surrounding the Site is generally in keeping with land use patterns found along and to the west of Basingstoke Road which is identified as being of moderate quality in the Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment - as such the land uses currently on the Site are valued at a local and district level.	Yes Land use on the Site would change significantly as a result of the nature of the proposals.	Medium susceptibility The landscape is moderately capable of accepting change of the nature proposed. Around the Site residential land use already exists immediately to the east of the Site, along Basingstoke Road and in Wellington Court to the north-northwest. The area has moderate ability to accommodate the nature of the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.	Medium sensitivity

Landscape Assessment – Assessment of magnitude								Landscape effect significance	
Element (and sensitivity)	Description of size / scale of change	Geographical extent over which landscape effects would be felt	Reversibility of effect			Type of effect		Magnitude	Significance of effect (Sensitivity x Magnitude)
			Permanent / temporary	Reversible / irreversible effect	Avoidable / unavoidable	Direct / indirect	Adverse / beneficial / neutral		
Land use / management (Medium sensitivity)	Land-use and its management makes an important contribution to the character of the landscape.	The effects on land use / management would largely be felt at the Site level; however, there would be some effects on views into the Site from the associated SANG land; and there would be glimpses from a section of the private drive leading to Wellington Court and from the (limited) PRow surrounding the Site. From viewpoints further afield the effects on land use would not be significantly perceived (refer to visual assessment).	The effects of the change of land use would be felt during construction and in the short, medium and long term. Effects of the change in land use would be permanent and irreversible; and given the nature of the development they are unavoidable.	Direct effects on the land use on Site and indirect effects on wider landscape character.	<u>Construction</u> Adverse <				

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Pattern / character of settlement (In landscape character terms effects on settlement pattern and the character of settlement are considered in terms of the shape of settlements (e.g. linear, clustered etc); and their character (urban, suburban, rural etc.).)	Elements of the study area retain a rural character, however around the Site there is a strong suburbanising influence as a result of the proximity to the A33, the built-up area of Spencers Wood, and to the large town of Reading. Spencers Wood is a broadly linear settlement laid out along Basingstoke Road, with extensions to the east along Clares Green Road and Hyde End Road (with significant new development further east towards Shinfield). It is a largely residential area, with commercial enterprises and civic facilities at intervals along the main road. The nature of this ribbon development gives the impression of a higher density of development as one travels along the roads than is actually the case. Despite the Strategic Development Location (SDL) between Spencers Wood, Ryeish Green and Shinfield (to the northeast), there is reasonably good separation between the settlements (and also between Swallowfield to the southeast); but there is only very limited separation (where fields are found on both sides of the Basingstoke Road) between Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross (to the north). Immediately to the west of the A33, settlement pattern and character is more rural, with the small village of Grazeley and with farmsteads scattered across the low-lying land to the west of the Foudry Brook. The Application Site itself lies outside the built confines of Spencers Wood, but builds upon the recently constructed 57 unit scheme immediately to the east; properties at Wellington Court form a developed cluster to the north-northwest of the Site; and further north and south along Basingstoke Road development is found to the west of the road at: • Stanbury Gate, Pursers Farm and Sevenoaks Drive (to the northeast of the Site); • Clements Close; Diana Close; Norman Rise, Langford Avenue; Elisha Close (to the south of the Site on the west side of Beech Hill Road); • In the triangle of land between Basingstoke Road, Beech Hill Road and Lambs / Back Lane (to the south-southeast of the Site). For two short lengths of Basingstoke Road running through Spencers Wood (to the north and south of the Site) development is restricted to the east side of the road allowing fields to meet the road edge, however, along the road frontage to the north of Wellington Court this relationship is barely appreciated due to the density of the roadside vegetation and along the frontage of the Highlands Estate the landscape character is one of a designed 'parkland' rather than pastoral.	The historic settlement pattern of Spencers Wood is only moderately intact (at best). Development has spread away from the linear pattern that historically developed along the Basingstoke Road, and there is now significant development both east and west of the Basingstoke Road and on both sides of Hyde End Road. Wellington Court also breaks the pattern being somewhat separated from Basingstoke Road.	Medium value The relationship of Basingstoke Road with the agricultural land to the west is valued locally.	Yes Settlement pattern would change.	Medium susceptibility The pattern / character of the settlement is moderately capable of accepting change of the nature proposed. Residential land use already exists within the 57 unit scheme immediately to the east of the Application Site and along Basingstoke Road, and further development to the west in this location (where the rural edge is already separated from the Basingstoke Road) would have only limited impact on the settlement character. Development in this location would not impact upon the relationship between Basingstoke Road and the designed 'parkland' landscape currently seen at Highlands, or the landscape to the north of Wellington Court.	Medium sensitivity

Landscape Assessment – Assessment of magnitude								Landscape effect significance	
Element (and sensitivity)	Description of size / scale of change	Geographical extent over which landscape effects would be felt	Reversibility of effect			Type of effect		Magnitude	Significance of effect (Sensitivity x Magnitude)
			Permanent / temporary	Reversible / irreversible effect	Avoidable / unavoidable	Direct / indirect	Adverse / beneficial / neutral		
Pattern / character of settlement (Medium sensitivity)	Spencers Wood is a linear settlement with limited development to the west side of Basingstoke Road (although this has changed in recent years with the development at Norman Rise, Langford Avenue; Elisha Close to the south, and the recently built 57 unit scheme immediately to the east of the Application Site). It is largely residential already (described as “densely settled” within the Council’s Landscape Character Assessment);¹² and residential land uses already exist immediately to the east of the Site. Further development to the west in this location (where the rural edge is already separated from the Basingstoke Road) would have only limited impact on the settlement <u>character</u> which would remain suburban. In terms of settlement <u>pattern</u>, whilst further north and south of the Site development extends further away from the Basingstoke Road, in this part of Spencers Wood extension of development further west would cause slight alteration to the existing settlement pattern. This applies in all periods (construction, short, medium and long term) and would be slightly damaging to the linear pattern of development seen in this location, however, the development would only have a minor effect on the pattern of Spencers Wood as a whole; the development would extend an existing housing site to the west of Basingstoke Road; and this change would only be appreciated on the Site itself and from a few publicly accessible locations in the immediately surrounding landscape.	The effects on pattern / character of the settlement would primarily be felt at the Site level; and from a few publicly accessible locations in the immediately surrounding landscape. From the wider landscape and from the majority of Spencers Wood itself the change in settlement pattern would not be appreciated.	The effects of the change of settlement pattern would be felt during construction and in the short, medium and long term. Effects of the change in settlement pattern would be permanent and irreversible; and given the nature of the development they are unavoidable.	Direct effects on the settlement pattern.	<u>Construction</u> Adverse	<u>Construction</u> Low adverse	<u>Construction</u> Very slight Adverse Effect		
					<u>Year 1</u> Adverse	<u>Year 1</u> Low adverse	<u>Year 1</u> Very slight Adverse Effect		
					<u>Year 7</u> Adverse.	<u>Year 7</u> Low adverse	<u>Year 7</u> Very slight Adverse Effect		
					<u>Year 15</u> Adverse.	<u>Year 15</u> Low adverse	<u>Year 15</u> Very slight Adverse Effect		

¹² Area J3, “Key Characteristics” on page 249 (refer to Appendix 9).

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Character of buildings & built form (In landscape character terms effects on the character of buildings & built form are considered in terms of architectural style, heights, materials, massing etc. of buildings / built form; and whether the proposals would be compatible with the existing built form found in the surrounding landscape).	Built development within the study area illustrates a large range of different house styles and use of materials. Along Basingstoke Road buildings are largely 2-storey. Materials vary, but red brick with contrasting detailing under clay or slate tiled roofs predominates. In the area of the Site the Library is a particularly notable building, listed for its heritage value (see above), and an “Area of Special Character” is located to the east side of Basingstoke Road opposite the Site (refer to drawing 1070-A-04). This is a local townscape designation (defined under Policy TB26 of the Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan) that is used where there are areas or groups of buildings of a consistent period or character reflecting areas past but where a Conservation Area designation is not justified. In this case a cluster of Victorian semi-detached and detached properties exists, as well as more modern development (some of which have been recently redeveloped). Hedges form the most common boundary with the street frontage along Basingstoke Road, although there are also some brick wall, railings and timber fences. To the west of the A33 the traditional built form is still the rural farmstead, constructed to 2-storey height from soft red brick under clay tiled roofs, with weatherboarding on agricultural outbuildings. There are no buildings on the Application Site itself, however the recently constructed 57 unit scheme immediately adjacent to the Site consists of 2-storey red brick dwellings with occasional white painted houses under reproduction grey slate roofs.	Within the Study Area buildings are of varied merit and condition. The Listed ‘Library School House’ is of considerable value as are some of the older (particularly Victorian) properties on the east side of Basingstoke Road, however, there are no buildings on the Application Site itself, and those immediately adjacent to the Site are newly built.	Medium value Within the Study Area the ‘Library School House’ is of considerable value as are some of the Victorian properties on the east side of Basingstoke Road (although these are not Listed or within a Conservation Area); however, these fall outside the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals, there are no buildings on the Application Site, and the remainder of built form is generally of low importance and has value only at a local scale.	No. Whilst the nature of development would result in significant new built form within the Application Site, at the detailed design stage buildings would be designed to be compatible with the local vernacular (including the adjacent 57 unit scheme); and the built form on Site would sit behind the adjacent 57 unit site (which would be seen from Basingstoke Road), and are unlikely to have a significant effect on the character of buildings and built form in the area.	-	-

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Dark skies (In landscape character terms effects on dark skies are considered in terms of whether lighting is proposed, whether this will integrate with existing lighting in the landscape surrounding a site, and whether this would have an effect on the darkness of night skies in the area).	Significant lighting and associated skyglow exists within the landscape around the Site. Whilst elements of the study area to the west of Basingstoke Road (and in particular west of the A33) and to the south of Spencers Wood retain a rural character with low levels of lighting and darker skies, in the area around the Site there is a strong sub/urbanising influence as a result of the proximity to the built-up area of Spencers Wood to the east and the large town of Reading to the north, and within these urban areas the landscape / townscape contains significant lighting. Lighting is also found within the recently constructed 57 unit scheme immediately to the east of Site, and cars using the A33 are also a source of additional lighting to the west. The Site is located within an area noted as 'brighter' on the CPRE 'Light Pollution and Dark Skies' website,¹³ with the M4 / A33 junction and Reading to the north falling within the brightest area on the scale.	Significant lighting is present within the landscape around the Site, and there is significant skyglow, particularly from Reading to the north.	Medium value Significant existing lighting with associated skyglow exists within Spencers Wood and within Reading to the north, but to the south and west there are areas of darker skies within the more rural landscape west of the A33 and to the south of Spencers Wood.	No. Whilst the nature of development would result in significant new built form within the Application Site itself (with associated lighting), and there may be glimpses of lighting on Site from darker areas of the landscape to the west, the proposals would be seen in the context of other lighting already present within the landscape and would have little effect on darkness of night skies in the wider area.	-	-

¹³ See: <https://www.cpre.org.uk/light-pollution-dark-skies-map/>

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Recreational access / movement Refer to drawing 1070-A-06, Appendix 3. (In landscape character terms effects on access / movement are considered in terms of effects on public access within the landscape (roads, footpaths, bridleways, byways, access land etc.).	Within the area around Spencers Wood generally, the road network is dominated by the A33 (which runs along the bottom of the ridge to the west of the Application Site); and by Basingstoke Road which runs through Spencers Wood to the east of the Site (and provides access to the Site). The A33 has relative few access points, however, Basingstoke Road is linked to the surrounding countryside by numerous side roads branching both east and west; and to the west of the A33 a network of minor roads and lanes cross the lower lying land to the west of the Foudry Brook. Within the study area there are no National Trails or Long Distance Paths and only a limited network of other Public Rights of Way (Footpaths, Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open To All Traffic); however National Cycle Route 23 passes through the landscape to the west of the A33 and the adjacent SANG land also provides opportunities for informal recreation. Recreational access consist of: • 'Woodcock Lane', a Byway Open to All Traffic (Shinfield Byway 25) which runs through woodland along the bottom of the ridge, parallel to the A33. • 'Kiln Lane', a Bridleway (Shinfield Bridleway 24) which connects Woodcock Lane to Beech Hill Road. • Shinfield Footpath 23, which connects Kiln Lane to Basingstoke Road just to the south of the entrance to 'Highlands'. • National Cycle Route 23 (passing along Kybes Lane, Pump Lane and the Grazeley Road to the west of the A33). • The SANG land immediately west of the Site (providing alternative natural greenspace to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects of this (and other) development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area). Private roads are limited to those providing access to the buildings on the 'Highlands' estate and within Wellington Court.	Roads are in good condition and provide useful links throughout the urban area. Footpaths / Bridleways / Byways are in good condition and provide useful (albeit limited) links through the surrounding countryside. The SANG is newly constructed and therefore is in good condition, providing additional public access and linking to existing footpaths.	Medium value The roads and footpaths within the study area are Public Rights of Way which are valued for access at a local level.	No Existing roads / footpaths would not be affected by proposals of this nature. Whilst housing of this nature would create additional public access within the Application Site itself, this is not considered to be of significant benefit in itself unless links to the wider countryside are created (and in this case the associated SANG land already has permission and has separate access, and therefore there would only be minimal benefits in terms of access to the SANG land and wider countryside through the Application Site).	-	-

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Landscape pattern (In landscape character terms effects on Landscape Pattern are considered in terms of effects on the pattern of the landscape created by boundary features (e.g. roads, rail lines, hedgerows, woodlands, shelter belts, copses etc.)).	The landscape pattern within the Zone of Visual Influence is one of linear development along Basingstoke Road (see above under pattern / character of settlement); to the west of which lies an agricultural landscape made up of moderately small scale fields divided by largely intact hedgerows and small to moderate woodland blocks. The strong hedgerow field boundaries create a strong landscape pattern; however, this is diluted by the presence of Basingstoke Road and the influence of the suburban edge in some views. To the west the A33 and the Basingstoke to Reading railway line form strongly linear features in the landscape, as does the M4 to the north, however, these all fall outside the Zone of Visual Influence of the development.	On the clay ridge around the Site strong hedgerow field boundaries create a strong landscape pattern, however, this is diluted by the presence of Basingstoke Road and the influence of the suburban edge in some views. Condition and intactness are moderate to good.	Medium value The landscape pattern on the clay ridge is identified as being of good condition in the Local Character Assessment and is valued at the local scale.	No Whilst the land use and the shape of the settlement (settlement pattern) would change as a result of the proposed development (see above), development would be contained within existing field boundaries and the wider landscape pattern would be retained.	-	-
				All surrounding field boundaries and vegetation would be retained with the exception of a couple of trees and a short section of the central hedgerow. Overall, whilst the presence of built development would mean that the boundary features are appreciated in a different way from within the Site, the development would barely affect the views of these features from publicly accessible viewpoints in the surrounding landscape; and containment of the development largely within the existing field boundaries would help to prevent any significant harm to the overall small scale and intimate character of the landscape.		

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Condition / intactness of element within the Study Area	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Cultural associations (In landscape character terms effects on cultural associations are considered in terms of whether there are any <u>references to the landscape</u> in well-known art, literature, poetry, TV / film and music; associated with science, other technical achievements or a notable historic event; or associated with a famous person or people (such as Constable's view of Salisbury Cathedral or references to the "Secret Low Weald" in Rudyard Kipling's Poem Puck's Song), and the effects development would have on these characteristics).	Whilst the landscape around Spencers Wood has links to numerous historical figures,¹⁴ the most commonly known landscape related cultural association is to Mary Russell Mitford (1787-1855), author of 'Our Village' who once resided at Three Mile Cross and often walked along Woodcock Lane (now running parallel to the A33 to the west of the Site). Her accounts provide vivid pictures of a seemingly idyllic country life which in the past would have applied to Woodcock Lane and the rural landscape around the study area.¹⁵ <i>"How beautiful the lane is to-day, decorated with a thousand colours! The brown road, and the rich verdure that borders it, strewn with the pale yellow leaves of the elm, just beginning to fall; hedgerows glowing with long wreaths of the bramble in every variety of purplish red; and overhead the unchanged green of fir, contrasting with the spotted sycamore, the tawny beech, and the dry sere leaves of the oak, which rustle as the light wind passes through them; a few common hardy yellow flowers... flowers of many sorts, but almost of one tint, still blowing in spite of the season, and ruddy berries glowing through all. How very beautiful is the lane."</i> <i>"In that very lane am I writing on this sultry June day, luxuriating in the shade, the verdure, the fragrance of hayfield and beanfield, and the absence of any noise except the song of birds and the whir of a thousand forms of insect life so often heard among the general hush of a summer noon."</i> The World War II GHQ 'Stop Line' also ran through the lower lying landscape surrounding the Site, using the Foudry Brook to the west and the Rivers Loddon and Blackwater to the south and east as a natural tank defence, (with the gap between those watercourses being strengthened by pillboxes, tank ditches and other defences); and where the clay ridge at Spencers Wood offered a commanding position above the countryside for observation and artillery.	Elements of the GHQ Stop Line exist within the wider landscape in the form of occasional pillboxes, tank ditches and other defences but there is no evidence of such features on or in the immediate area of the Site. Similarly Mary Mitford's description of the landscape has little current relevance to the study area today. The A33 has a strong influence on the tranquillity (both visual and aural) of Woodcock Lane, and whilst elements of such writings would have some relevance to a few of the most rural lanes to the west of the A33 (where major transport corridors and urban development are out of sight and sound), these locations are limited and fall outside the study area surrounding the Site).	High value The landscape has associations with numerous historical figures and the WW2 GHQ stop line, and is referred to in nationally famous literature. At its most remote (hidden in some of the rural lanes west of the A33) the landscape still has links to the writings of Mary Mitford and therefore has value.	No. Development on the Application Site would not impact on the remnants of the GHQ Stop Line or any remaining links to the writings of Mary Mitford in any meaningful way.	-	-

¹⁴ See page 156 of the Wokingham Borough Council Valued Landscapes Assessment, September 2024.

¹⁵ See page 277 of the Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment 2004, and page 252 of the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2019.

Landscape Baseline - Aesthetic and perceptual factors			Potential for Significant Effects	Landscape Assessment – Assessment of sensitivity	
Key constituent elements					
Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Value of element within the Study Area		Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Landscape scale (In landscape character terms effects on scale are considered in terms of effects on the size of elements in the landscape such as fields or woodland areas (where large scale refers to large elements such as large fields / large areas of woodland and small scale refers to small fields / elements); and effects on the scale of built form).	Within the study area the landscape on the ridgeline to the west of Basingstoke Road the is one of rolling farmland predominately made up of moderately small scale fields divided by largely intact hedgerows and small to moderate woodland blocks. Visibility between fields is restricted. Within the built-up area along Basingstoke Road buildings are relatively small scale, mostly 2 storey residential properties. On the lower lying land to the west of the A33 the landscape scale is larger, with an irregular field pattern and some fairly large fields. Fields are divided by low neatly clipped thorn hedgerows and some hedgebanks; with some post and wire fencing. The area is generally devoid of woodland but hedgerow oaks are features of field boundaries and where hedges have been lost, remain as freestanding specimens. Visibility is much more open. The Application Site is typical of the pattern on the ridgeline, with field boundaries to north and south in particular being contained by vegetation resulting in restricted visibility into the Site from these directions.	Medium value Scale within the Study Area is typical of that found within many rural areas of the district. It contributes to landscape character and is therefore valued at a local level.	No. Field boundaries would be retained (and enhanced), and buildings would be of a similar scale to those existing along Basingstoke Road and within the adjacent 57 unit scheme (and therefore compatible).	-	-

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Complexity (In landscape character terms effects on complexity are considered in terms of the effects on the number and type of differing elements that make up the landscape (where a complex landscape is composed of many interconnected parts; and a simple landscape contains only a few component elements)).	The landscape of the area around Spencers Wood falls across several landscape character areas and is based on complex geology; however, it is of moderate complexity, consisting of rural elements (including fields, hedgerows and some woodland); transport elements (Basingstoke Road and the A33); and urban elements (primarily residential). West of the A33 the landscape is less complex, however, consisting primarily of an arable, agricultural landscape.	Low value The complexity of the study area is typical of that found within many areas of the district near urban centres. It is unremarkable and of little importance other than at a local scale.	No. The development would not introduce elements not already present in the landscape. Complexity within the study area would not be significantly affected by the nature of the proposed development.	-	-

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Degree of Enclosure / Openness (In landscape character terms effects on the degree of enclosure / openness are considered in terms of the openness (or otherwise) of views across the landscape (where openness refers to a landscape with wide, expansive views across an area). Landscape enclosure / openness is generally determined by the number of elements above eye level; including buildings, slopes, tall vegetation such as woods and tall hedgerows, and walls / fences).	Within the study area the landscape to the west of the A33 is fairly open (with relatively long views across open fields); but the landscape on the ridge to the west side of Basingstoke Road is fairly enclosed, with fields being generally enclosed by hedgerows and small woodland areas, and with strong field boundaries. Close to Basingstoke Road this is a fairly enclosed landscape. Looking to the west from the western end of the Application Site there is a sense of openness where there are views towards the west / northwest, however, these views are contained by the trees to the north and south of the adjacent SANG land, and by individual mature trees within the SANG itself. To the north, south and east the Site is enclosed. Within the urban area along Basingstoke Road vegetation and built form restricts visibility. There is some visibility into the landscape that forms the frontage to the Highlands Estate, however, in the area of the Application Site the west side of the road is bounded by development (including the recently constructed 57 unit scheme to the east of the Site) and / or substantial vegetation, enclosing the road corridor and emphasising the linearity of the space. The Zone of Visual Influence of the Application Site has limited penetration into the urban area.	Medium value The enclosure found within the Study Area is typical of that found on the ridge, with more openness to the west. It contributes to landscape character and is valued at a local level.	No. The degree of enclosure / openness within the study area would not be significantly affected by the nature of the proposed development.	-	-
Along Basingstoke Road the degree of enclosure / openness would not change (as the access road to the Site has been built as part of the 57 unit scheme), and Basingstoke Road would remain an enclosed, linear space. In terms of effects on the enclosure / openness of the wider landscape, the Application Site is surrounded by vegetation to the north and south, and along part of the western boundary (with new planting along the southern part of this boundary), and by a combination of vegetation and development along the eastern boundary. The Zone of Visual Influence within the wider landscape is very small; and views into the Site from the public domain are very limited in number (refer to visual assessment). From the majority of the surrounding landscape the proposed development would not be perceived, and the degree of enclosure / openness within the Study Area would not be affected.					

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Tranquillity (Tranquillity is measured in terms of both noise (aural tranquillity) and visual intrusion (visual tranquillity). In landscape character terms a tranquil place is one that is calm, peaceful, quiet, serene; without detractors both aural and visual. Effects on tranquillity are therefore considered in terms of the effects on these characteristics of the landscape on and around a site).	Within the study area the ridgeline to the west of Spencers Wood is a predominately pastoral and wooded landscape that is still largely rural and has some sense of perceived tranquillity away from the urban edge, however, background noise levels are constantly present (due to the presence of both Basingstoke Road and the A33). The urban area along Basingstoke Road to the east of the Site is not considered tranquil. Basingstoke Road is a busy thoroughfare with constant traffic movements and associated noise. Only within the depths of the woodland along Kiln Lane (just outside the ZVI) is there any real sense of tranquillity. Woodcock Lane lacks significant tranquillity due to the proximity to the A33 (although it is largely screened from the lane along much of its length). To the west of the A33 there is a greater sense of tranquillity, as this is an agricultural landscape with rural lanes. Higher levels of tranquillity exist in this location, although this is again affected by the presence of the A33 (and Reading and the M4 to the north); by the railway and further west by the presence of the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Burghfield. These observations are backed up by the 2007 CPRE Tranquillity study¹⁶ which shows tranquillity levels on the Site on the 'least tranquil' side of the range of tranquillity given.	Medium value Whilst there are higher levels of tranquillity to the west of the A33 there is limited tranquillity within the area surrounding the Site which sits between the A33 and the urban edge along the Basingstoke Road.	No. Tranquillity within the study area is limited and would not be significantly affected by the nature of the proposed development.	-	-
As a consequence of the buildings proposed, movement, and noise levels generated by users of the proposals the degree of tranquillity would inevitably be affected on the <u>Site itself</u>; however, no change would be perceived to aural or visual tranquillity levels experienced along Basingstoke Road; and no (or only minimal) change would be experienced by people using the public footpaths or bridleways in the surrounding landscape (e.g. Woodcock Lane to the west or Kiln Lane / Shinfield Footpath No. 23 to the south). On the land immediately surrounding the Application Site (including adjacent SANG land and along the drive leading to Wellington Court) there would be a small reduction in localised perceptions of tranquillity, however, the access drive to Wellington Court is private land (where there would be no effect on the wider public); and these effects would fall away rapidly from the Site boundaries. Overall there would be minimal effects on wider visual tranquillity (refer to visual assessment); and those aural changes experienced immediately around the Site would not be significant given the background noise levels generated by the surrounding road network.					

¹⁶ CPRE tranquillity map - see <https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/tranquillity-map-england/>

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Wildness (A truly wild landscape is uninhabited, uncultivated, unaffected by human intervention. Although clearly there are degrees of wildness, in landscape character terms effects are considered in terms of the effects on these characteristics both on Site, and in the wider landscape).	The area around Spencers Wood is not a wild landscape. Human influences in the form of transport elements; the urban area; agriculture and built form dominate the landscape; and background noise levels are ever present. Even away from the main urban areas the landscape is a rural / agricultural landscape – a result of centuries of human intervention.	Low value Wildness is not an element of value in this landscape.	No. The Study Area is not wild in any sense.	-	-

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Remoteness (A remote landscape is one that is located far away, distant, far from civilization. Although clearly there are degrees of remoteness, in landscape character terms effects are considered in terms of the effects on these characteristics both on Site, and in the wider landscape).	The landscape around the Application Site is not a remote landscape. It is not distant from civilization. Locally to the Site development dominates the landscape along Basingstoke Road, and there is an “<i>urbanising influence of [the area’s] proximity to Reading</i>”;¹⁷ and whilst away from the transport corridors and settlements (particularly west of the A33), the area retains a rural character, it is not remote.	Low value Remoteness is not an element of value in this landscape.	No. The Study Area is not remote.	-	-

¹⁷ See summary on page 248 of the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2019 - Character Area J3 (copy in Appendix 9).

Element	Description, location and geographic extent.	Value of element within the Study Area	Potential for Significant Effects	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Sense of place (In landscape character terms, sense of place is considered in terms of whether there are characteristics (or a combination of characteristics) that makes a place distinctive. A location with a strong sense of place has something unique or particular to that location, whilst one with little sense of place is unremarkable and looks much like many other similar locations).	The study area lies in a predominately agricultural landscape bounded by lower ground to the west; with hedgerows, woodland, and characteristic Oaks within open fields and hedgerows, however, residential elements along the Basingstoke Road; the A33 to the west; and the nearby presence of Reading and the M4 diminishes any real sense of this being a strongly rural landscape. There is some sense of history (and therefore Sense of Place) as a result of the presence of some nearby Victorian buildings and the presence of the Redwood avenue immediately to the north of the Application Site, but these are not considered to be particularly unique elements (in the way that Oast Houses are distinctive in Kent for example).	Medium value Sense of place is not an element of particular value in this landscape.	No. Existing sense of place within the study area is limited and would not be significantly affected by the nature of the proposed development. Whilst the nature of development would result in significant new built form within the Application Site the proposals would not introduce elements not already present in the landscape or remove any special elements or views to or from the urban area.	-	-