



Rainier Developments Ltd

**Bromham, Bedfordshire**

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL TOPIC PAPER

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Figure 1: Viewpoint Location Plan

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been carried out for the proposed development by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (January 2018). This Topic Paper provides a summary of the LVA study and the anticipated landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development. The landscape and visual effects have been considered in relation to the proposed development detailed below.

### Site Location

- 1.2 The site is situated on the north western edge of Bromham in the Borough of Bedford, and lies approximately 470 metres from the village centre. The site lies immediately to the south of Northampton Road and is contained to the west by the A428 Bromham bypass. Residential areas on the edge of Bromham contain the site to the south east.

### Proposed Development

- 1.3 There are currently two development options under consideration as follows:
- Option A – Up to 345 new homes, two points of access from Northampton Road, associated infrastructure including open space and a community building and playing field.
  - Option B – Up to 345 new homes, two points of access from Northampton Road, associated infrastructure including open space and a 1 Form Entry Primary School.
- 1.4 With both Options A and B part of the proposed development comprises public open space, including provision for children's outdoor play/ recreation as well as amenity open space. In addition to the retention of perimeter hedgerows and mature tree groups within the site (where possible) it is anticipated that new tree, shrub and hedgerow planting would take place, as part of the development.

## 2.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

### Landscape Character

- 2.1 The site lies within the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands National Character Area (NCA 88) and the Pavenham Wooded Wolds Landscape Character Area (LCA 2B) defined by the Bedford Borough Landscape Character Assessment (May 2014).

### Designations

The site does not fall within any areas afforded a level of protection and value as a result of regional or national landscape designation. Similarly there are no identified Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings on or adjacent to the site. No other landscape related designations have been identified within the immediate surrounding area.

### Site and Immediate Context

- 2.2 The site extends to approximately 17.21ha and consists of an intensively managed arable field, bounded by well-established hedgerows and occasional trees, together with a small paddock comprising semi-improved grassland grazed by horses. It is strongly defined along its western

boundary by the A428 Bromham Bypass and the northern site boundary has a road frontage to Northampton Road of circa 700m. Vehicular access to the site is currently taken from Northampton Road in two locations. A Public Bridleway extends through the site for approximately 275m adjacent to the southern site boundary. It is judged that overall the site and the immediate landscape context is of **medium** landscape value.

### Visual Baseline

2.3 A visual appraisal has been undertaken for the site. This has explored the nature of the existing visual amenity of the area and sought to establish the approximate visibility of the site from surrounding locations and receptors. A series of photo viewpoints have been selected which support this analysis. Figure1 illustrates the photo viewpoint locations and identified visual receptors.

### 3.0 KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- It is considered that the site has the potential to accommodate change in the form of well planned development, yet it is recognised that the masterplanning response needs to take into account the site's relationship with Northampton Road to the north, existing public rights of way within and in close proximity to the site, and neighbouring properties to the east and south east. Appropriate design and mitigation approaches should be adopted to minimise impacts on landscape character including retention and enhancement of the perimeter hedgerows and trees where possible. The site's landscape would also benefit from improvements to the existing perimeter hedgerows and planting structure through new tree, shrub and hedgerow planting.
- The interaction of undulating topography, existing built form and overlapping vegetation results in a relatively restricted visual envelope. Receptors of high susceptibility to change are limited to the public bridleways running through the south east part of the site and adjacent to the southern site boundary together with those residential properties abutting or in close proximity to the site boundary.
- The Glade and recently established built development to the north of Northampton Road together with belts of mature trees and an established block of woodland (Salem Thrift) contain the site and reduce viewing opportunities of the site from the northwest;
- Established vegetation including hedgerows and trees along the A428 and Northampton Road corridors limit views towards the site from these locations;
- A relatively small number of residential properties on the western edge of Bromham have views from predominantly upper storey windows towards the site, however views from ground and lower storey windows are largely screened by intervening features including existing garden vegetation, fences, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- The main views towards the assessment site, and which are most likely to be sensitive to the development of the site, are from Bromham Grange, a small number of residential properties on the western edge of Bromham and users of public rights of way which extend through or are in close proximity to the site.
- There are no views from the vast majority of properties within Bromham.

- Circa 10 properties to the south on Partridge Lane, Peartree Close and Walnut Close potentially have mid-range northerly views towards the site, albeit the southern site boundary hedgerow partially screens the site in these views.
- More distant glimpsed views of the site are available in places from the public bridleway (Ref. BW7) on higher land to the north, however the visible extents of the site form a small component within a large expansive view and are seen in context with existing residential properties on the western edge of Bromham.

#### 4.0 NECESSARY MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENTS

##### Landscape Design and GI Objectives

#### 4.1 The key objectives of the landscape and GI proposals for the scheme are to:

- Provide new accessible public open space within the development to include; play facilities, recreational space and new planting to create a soft settlement edge;
- Retain and enhance existing landscape features of value and provide additional landscape features such as hedgerows and trees;
- Create a well-designed development, sensitive to its location on the settlement edge;
- Ensure development is in keeping with the context and character of Bromham and its landscape surrounds;
- Be sensitive to the adjacent residential area to ensure the retention of the privacy and light of the adjoining properties;
- Minimise any potential adverse landscape and visual effects of the development through careful layout design of the proposed development and location of public open space and screening vegetation; and
- Create a well landscaped development with appropriately designed gateways, open spaces, footpaths, buildings and streets which will be safe and attractive to use.

##### Landscape and Green Infrastructure (GI) Proposals

#### 4.2 In summary the GI proposals include:

- Retention of existing landscape features of value where possible including the existing mature trees and perimeter hedgerows.
- The provision of circa 4.8ha of land dedicated to landscape, public open space, play and habitat related proposals – representing approximately 28% of the total site area;
- New areas of public open space to be formed within and around the perimeter of the site, creating a buffer between the new development, adjacent fields and existing settlement;
- Setting back of buildings from the southern, eastern and western boundaries of the site to create landscaped buffers between the new and existing housing and adjacent fields to the south and west. New houses will also be set back from the boundaries of nearby properties including Bromham Grange and neighbouring properties on Browning Close, Howkin Close, Wisdom Close and Barker Drive to retain privacy and light for these existing properties.

- New tree planting within areas of public open space across the whole of the site. This will soften the development for close proximity views in particular;
- Retention and enhancement of the landscaped frontage to Northampton Road creating a positive sense of arrival to Bromham for road users.

## 5.0 LVA SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The proposed development would alter the character of the site from an undeveloped agricultural site to a medium density built residential development. At the National and Borough level it is considered that landscape effects would be no worse than minor adverse. At a site wide scale it is considered that the effect caused by the loss of arable farmland and open space would be moderate - major adverse during construction and upon completion; however this adverse effect would be reduced to moderate in the longer term offset by the beneficial effects arising from the maturing of the GI proposals. For other landscape receptors including site landform, vegetation and watercourses effects would be no worse than minor adverse at the outset. Whilst there would be, to varying degrees, some elements of change to each of these receptors, the nature and extent of these changes would not bring about any unacceptable adverse landscape effects. The implementation of a suitably robust GI framework and the application of an appropriate landscape management regime would also offer some localised and longer term benefit.
- 5.2 Properties adjacent or in close proximity to the site boundary - including Bromham Grange and a number of dwellings to the south east - will experience the greatest visual effects arising from the proposed development, especially during the construction phase when change will be most conspicuous. It is anticipated that those properties which immediately abut or are in close proximity to the site –on Browning Close, Howkin Close, Peacock Road, Wisdom Close and Barker Drive - will initially experience moderate/major adverse effects, reducing to minor or moderate adverse after ten years.
- 5.3 Overall users of public rights of way extending through or in close proximity to the site will experience moderate – major adverse effects initially reducing slightly to become minor or moderate adverse once the proposed landscaping has established. Users of more distant public rights of way including those on the elevated ridge to the north would experience no worse than minor adverse effects where the clearest views are available.
- 5.4 Users of the A428 bypass and Northampton Road approaching Bromham from the northwest - with the clearest views into the site - will experience moderate adverse effects at worst upon completion of the scheme. The visual effects for the majority of other road users are considered to be negligible or minor adverse upon completion of the scheme.
- 5.5 To conclude, despite the inevitable adverse effects of built development upon the local landscape character and on a limited number of visual receptors immediately adjacent to the site, it is considered that there would be no unacceptable adverse effects that should preclude the proposed development in landscape and visual terms.