Landscape and Visual Statement

Pear Tree Farm,
Elstow

November 2021
INF-N0850

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Appendices

1 Introduction

Outline

1.1 This Landscape and Visual Statement (LVS) has been prepared to review the landscape and visual implication of development on the northern parcel of the overall site allocated under the saved policy 'E2 – Employment Allocation Sites' Land south of Cambridge Road and the Allocations and Designations Policy 'AD11 – 'Land at Medbury Farm, Elstow'.

1.2 This policy is outlined below.

Policy AD11 Land at Medbury Farm, Elstow

1.3 Land at Medbury Farm will be developed for class B1 business park use. Key principles of development include:

- i. Business park with three clusters of development totalling no more than 31 hectares.
- ii. The development of the site to be guided by a Master Plan to be agreed by the local planning authority. The Master Plan should be for the whole of the site and be submitted to support the planning application.
- iii. Support for hotel associated with business use.
- iv. Design to respect local landscape priorities, with particular regard to retaining and enhancing key views of Elstow Abbey.
- v. Delivery of Forest of Marston Vale planting on land south of the A421 (Master Plan to be prepared and agreed with Forest of Marston Vale team).
- vi. Provision of a green corridor incorporating a pedestrian and cycle route south of the A421 west/east from the A6 to Bumpy Lane and the A600.
- vii. Submission of a site specific Flood Risk Assessment along with mitigation proposals.
- viii. A strategic/integrated approach to surface water management.
- ix. Pre-determination archaeological evaluation.
- x. Improvement to transportation networks and specific highway concerns to be addressed:
    - a. Pedestrian and cycle links required from south of A421 and A6 into Bedford(north/south).
    - b. Detailed information on connection to Wixams Northern and Central Gateway roundabouts on the A6.
    - c. Details of measures that will be implemented to prevent development related traffic from using village roads in Elstow to access the site.
    - d. Contribution towards the provision of traffic lights on A421 junction to facilitate pedestrian and cycle movement.
    - e. Assessment of capacity at Cow Bridge junction.

1.4 With reference to the text of the policy the key points are:

- The design and location of buildings within this site will be important in order to minimise landscape impact and coalescence with Wixams and Elstow.
- A key design consideration will be to ensure that sufficient separation is provided between the proposed employment development and Elstow village.

1.5 The LVS has been undertaken as a stand-alone report based upon the guidance contained within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA)[1]. It provides a high level review of the landscape and visual receptors with specific reference to the height and scale of the proposed units in the northern part of the allocation.

[1] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013

2 Planning Context

Introduction

2.1 Aspects of planning guidance and policy, which are of particular relevance to the LVS, are examined below. Relevant statutory, non-statutory and planning designations within the LVS study area are shown on figure INF_N0850(08)001.

International Legislation

2.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC)[2], which was signed by the UK in February 2006 and became binding in 2007, is the first international convention to focus specifically on landscape issues and aims to protect, manage and plan landscapes in Europe.

2.3 The ELC highlights the importance of developing landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes, and establishing procedures for the general public and other stakeholders to participate in policy creation and implementation.

2.4 The ELC defines landscape as *"an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors"*[3].

National Legislation

2.5 This report takes into account the legislation and policy relevant to landscape and visual amenity, and the relevant ecology and cultural heritage including the following.

Public Rights of Way

2.6 Legislation with regard to Public Rights of Way (PRoW) is in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Countryside Act 1968, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Highways Act 1980, Rights of Way Act 1990 and Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW 2000).

2.7 PRoW are recorded on Definitive Maps by the County Council and are protected under the above legislation. Applications and consultation are required for any works that would affect a PRoW, for example a temporary diversion during construction works, a permanent diversion as the result of a proposed development or any other changes to the routes.

National Planning Policy Framework

2.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[4] is a material consideration and provides guidance for regional and local planning. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which forms the basis of plan-making and decision-taking.

2.9 The NPPF sets out three objectives in order to achieve sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. The environmental objective is relevant to this report. Particularly

[2] Council of Europe, 2004
[3] Council of Europe, 2004
[4] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, July 2021

relevant is the requirement to *"contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment".*

2.10 The NPPF provides guidance on how to deliver sustainable development. The planning principles of relevance to this LVS are summarised as:

- Section 12 Achieving Well-Designed Places[5], which addresses the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and place. Developments should add to the overall quality of an area, should be visually attractive with regards to architecture, layout and landscaping, should be sympathetic to local and historic character, respond to the surrounding built environment and landscape setting and establish or maintain a sense of place. In the July 2021 NPPF update a paragraph was added into Section 12 identifying the importance that trees play in the environment; and
- Section 15 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment[6], which states (inter alia) that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be recognised. Valued landscapes such as National Parks and AONB should be conserved and enhanced, with the scale of development limited in these areas.

National Design Guide

2.11 The National Design Guide (NDG)[7] has been published to further expand the design policies set out in the NPPF providing a framework to assess proposals against in terms of achieving well designed places.

2.12 One of the key components identified in the NDG that needs to be considered to ensure good design is landscape. When addressing the identity of a place, characteristic I1 identifies the importance of landscape setting and backdrop in order to respond effectively to local identity.

2.13 A key part of the NDG assessment relates to context and how well-designed places need to be integrated into their surroundings so they relate well to them along with being influenced by and influencing their context positively[8]. Characteristic C1 emphasises the need to respond appropriately to landscape character in order to provide positive new developments.

Local Planning Policy

2.14 The site is located north of Wixams and to the south west of the village of Elstow, within the administrative area of Bedfordshire Borough Council.

2.15 The Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 was adopted in 2020 and sets out the planning policies to guide the future growth of Bedford borough up until 2030. The Allocation and Designations Local Plan was adopted in July 2013 and as set out above the site falls under Policy AD11.

2.16 The relevant local planning policy is set out below

[5] Section 12, paras 124-132 NPPF, 2018
[6] Section 15, paras 170-183 NPPF, 2018
[7] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Design Guide, January 2021
[8] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Design Guide, January 2021, p10

Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030

Policy AD11 Land at Medbury Farm, Elstow

2.17 The vision set out in the adopted Local Plan is contained in Policy S/1 and states the following:

- Land at Medbury Farm will be developed for class B1 business park use. Key principles of development include:
    - i. Business park with three clusters of development totalling no more than 31 hectares.
    - ii. The development of the site to be guided by a Master Plan to be agreed by the local planning authority. The Master Plan should be for the whole of the site and be submitted to support the planning application.
    - iii. Support for hotel associated with business use.
    - iv. Design to respect local landscape priorities, with particular regard to retaining and enhancing key views of Elstow Abbey.
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2.18 The following policies identified in the Local Plan are relevant.

- Policy 29: Design quality and principles.
- Policy 30 : the impact of development – design impacts
- Policy 35S – Green Infrastructure
- Policy 37 – Landscpae character
- Policy 38 – Landscaeping in new development

Designations & Registered Sites

2.19 There are no designated heritage assets located within or adjacent to the site. The site is located within the Marston Vale Community Forest, just south of the Bedford and Kempston urban area boundary.

2.20 The two Grade II* designated heritage assets within the 2km search boundary are Moot Hall (listing no.1136906) and Bunyan's Mead (listing no. 1136945), located approximately 800m north of the site. Both Grade II* listed buildings sit within the conservation area (Elstow CA) boundary. The nearest Grade II listed buildings are 199 and 200, Wilstead Road (listing no.1321612) and Barn to North of Number 200 (listing no.1114176), both situated within the Marston Vale Community Forest approximately 250m east of the site boundary. There are also few Grade I listed buildings within the conservation area, the closest being Hillersdon Mansion (listing no.1321607) approximately 670m north of the site.

2.21 The site is located approximately 580m south of the closest Scheduled Monument, Elstow Manor House (listing no.1005405). Another Scheduled Monument is The Moot Hall (listing no.1004507) which sits approximately 800m north of the site. Both Scheduled Monuments are situated within the conservation area boundary.

2.22 The site is located approximately 500m north of Elstow Pit Country Wildlife Site (CWS).

Public Rights of Way

2.23 There are no Public Rights of Way across or within the site.

2.24 Running along the southern boundary is Cycle Route AD39 which connects the site to Kempston and Bedford in the north and disperses into further public footpaths. This route also crosses the A6 southwards and links the site to the village of Wixams. Along the A6 adjacent to the western site boundary is a proposed Cycle Route AD39 which connects to the existing route on the A6.

2.25 The John Bunyan Trail BW14 is a long-distance footpath which connects to Cycle Route AD39 approximately 50m east of the site. This route provides links between Flitwick, Ampthill, Ridgmont, Cranfield, Bromham, Clapham, Bedford, Elstow, Shefford and Barton-le-Clay. Footpath Elstow 7 connects the John Bunyan Trail to the village of Wixams.

3 Methodology

Guidance

3.1 The format of this LVS is based on the principles set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition[9], the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland[10] and An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment[11]. A detailed methodology can be provided.

3.2 Viewpoint photographs have been presented in accordance with the Landscape Institute's Advice Note TGN Visual Representation 06/19 (Landscape Institute 2019).

Study Area

3.3 A ZTV was not run for this project due to the nature of the promotion. Following the initial desktop study, a site visit was carried out and the actual visibility of the site and the proposed development, where landscape and visual impacts could potentially occur, was found to be considerably restricted by the surrounding landform combined with intervening vegetation. Based on this information the study area of the LVS has been defined as a maximum of 2 km from the site.

3.4 Only landscape and visual receptors within the LVS study area have been considered in the assessment, as there is no potential for any significant landscape and/or visual effects to be incurred beyond that area.

[9] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013
[10] Former Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002
[11] Natural England, 2014

4 Landscape and Visual Baseline

4.1 This section reviews the landscape and visual baseline of the site and its surroundings and sets out the overriding landscape character of the study area.

Local Landscape Character Areas

Central Bedfordshire LCA and Bedford Borough LCA

4.2 This is a revision to the previous LCA for the county of Bedford and provides a seamless assessment between Bedford Borough to the north and Central Bedfordshire. It fits within an overarching assessment of the whole of the County. The site is within 5E East Marston Clay Vale character area which is located within the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands.

Landscape Character Area

5E East Marston Clay Vale

4.3 The majority of the character area is within the Bedford borough and is characterised as a large scale flat open landscape now predominantly intensive arable land. The key characteristics relevant to this report are:

- Expansive views across the vale to the Mid Greensand Ridge (6B) that forms a prominent backdrop to the Vale and which provides some sense of containment.
- Coniferous shelterbelt plantings act as unsympathetic visual buffers to large industrial features e.g. the Cardington Airship Sheds at Shortstown and on the edges of settlement. The Cardington Airship Sheds are a prominent landmark heritage feature and widely visible across the vale.
- Elstow Abbey is a significant landscape feature despite being constrained by modern development. The Abbey retains its relationship with the historic core of Elstow village.
- Large scale industrial features punctuate the flat vale landscape such as distribution warehouses south of Bedford, plus former and current mineral workings.
- The A6, A600 A603, A421 and various secondary roads e.g. Southill and Northill Road, cut through the landscape, having a strong visual and audible presence.
- The urban edge of Bedford, on the northern boundary and development along the A6, associated with Wixams and Wilstead, brings urban fringe characteristics to the landscape and nearby settlements of Shortstown.
- Regeneration of the Cardington RAF base in Shortstown to mixed use development.

4.4 Key positive landscape features/strategic sensitivities of the landscape are:

- Remaining areas that create an open setting to the southern edge of Bedford.
- The striking flat, open character, which can be disrupted by inappropriate bunding, earth mounding, tree screening or creation of domed landforms which appear as incongruous features within the vale context.
- Green lanes form recreational routes including the John Bunyan trail from Elstow.

4.5 Visual sensitivities are:

- The flat, open landscape with the potential for any large scale development both within and along the boundary of the landscape area to be highly visible.
- Clear views to Mid Greensand Ridge (6B), from across the area.

4.6 Development guidelines:

- Conserve the clear views and visual relationship with the Mid Greensand Ridge (6B). Avoid any large scale, taller development of land at the base of the ridge to retain the dramatic visual contrast between the flat vale and steep slopes.

Landscape Observation

The Site

4.7 The site is part of three agricultural fields on the western edge of Elstow, between Wilstead Road, the A421 and the A6. The site is currently accessed off the A6 directly to Pear Tree Farm, located to the northwest of the parcel. The site is subdivided by hedgerows and bound to the A6 and the Wilstead Road by a planted native scrub, hedgerow and shrub mix. This field pattern is clear on the 1885 mapping.

The Landscape Character of the Surrounding Area

4.8 The village of Elstow is located to the north west of the site. The village straddles the A421 with the majority of it on the northern side of the road. The village is elongated and spread along Wilstead Road. Historic mapping shows that the older area of the settlement is located to the north and this is now designated as a Conservation Area. The old village is now almost completely surrounded by modern development. Elstow Abbey is located north of the site, on the other side of the A421 and is somewhat separated from this part of the village. It is identified as a significant landscape feature, in the LCA, which retains a strong relationship with the historic setting of Elstow village.

4.9 Historic mapping shows that the southern part of the village was always sparsely populated, development of the housing on Moss Lane and South Avenue showing on the 1950's mapping. Overall, this part of the landscape has been more rural in appearance, however the A6 and the significant development at Wixams has brought more activity and development to this landscape. This strategic growth area includes employment, care and residential development across a wide area between the A6 and the railway line to the west and includes areas which adjoin the Elstow Pit County Wildlife Site (CWS).

4.10 The A6 and A421 roads surrounding the site have a strong visual and audible presence, both are main trunk roads connecting north – south and east to west. This landscape features employment and industrial buildings primarily focused on the junctions off the A421 including Progress Park and the Interchange Retail Park at the A6/A421 junction, a large Industrial Park off Wolseley Way at the Woburn Road junction and development off Cardington Road at the A600 junction. Larger residential development also feature particularly to the west at Harrowden where new housing is under construction with the back drop of the Cardington Airship sheds which now house the Cardington Studios.

Visual Observations

4.11 This section summarises the key viewpoints which have been recorded to understand the existing baseline position and the potential impact of the proposals. The site was visited on 11 November 2021 and representative views were recorded across the wider landscape to understand the potential visually sensitive receptors. Those selected to support this report, and which represent the most sensitive receptors, are outlined below.

- Elstow VP01
- John Bunyan Trail and residents of Elstow VP02 & 03
- Wixams mixed use development VP04
- North of the A421 VP05
- Public Right of Way users to the south of the proposals VP06

Visual Character

4.12 Views were recorded in the southern part of the village of Elstow, on Wilstead Road, Moss Lane, Pear Tree View and Medbury Lane. Those residents on Medbury Lane face directly towards the development site, however there is a run of mature trees between Pear Tree View and Wilstead Road which limits virtually all views and enclose this street. The western edge of Wilstead Road is also heavily vegetated with mature trees, and in combination, they restrict any visual connection beyond the immediate street scape.

View on Pear Tree View looking north

4.13 The surrounding streets such as Moss Lane and South Avenue are also heavily vegetated, within the domestic curtilages but also on the south western road boundary, allowing only limited views

through the hedgerows. Further north on the southern side of the A421 views are restricted by built form and vegetation (VP03), views are focused on the immediate village streetscape and there is little appreciation of other industrial developments, the road or the edge of Kempston to the north. The mature tree planting surrounding this part of the village filters the impact of the close suburban developments. Looking south from VP03 the Cardington Studios are a prominent feature of the landscape, as they are from many surrounding locations due their scale. They stand at an impressive 48m and 37m high, far exceeding any other developments and are an unusual shape. They draw interest from their historic connections and their new use as a studio.

View from Medbury Lane looking south

4.14 The John Bunyan Trail follows the route of Medbury Lane south to Medbury Farm and Cottages before continuing south to the village of Haynes which lies on the higher ground. The village lies at approximately 90m AOD in comparison to Elstow at around 35m AOD. VP02 is recorded adjacent to the entrance to Medbury Farm and looks west over the modern housing towards the proposals site. The edge of the settlement is visible amongst the vegetated edge and the proposals will be located beyond this edge. No commercial units are visible in the view.

4.15 VP01 is recorded from the recreation ground in Elstow on the northern edge of the A421 and is representative of this part of the village. Views are open in the foreground due to the recreation facilities but a strong mature boundary to the ground itself and a backdrop along the boundary of the A421 largely restricts further views. Where there are breaks the industrial units at Progress Park are just glimpsed amongst the vegetation.

4.16 Wixams is a substantial mixed use development area to the south of Kempston on the A6. The development is bringing forward industrial and commercial units, care provision and residential development. The site is just south of the Elstow Pit CWS and the most northerly residents overlook the ponds off Wilstead Road. VP04 is representative of this view, looking across the

A6 towards the allocated site and the application area. The view below shows that typically in this location the residents, workers and visitors experience existing views of the relatively large industrial units amongst residential development.

Typical view of Wixams

4.17 Parallel to Wixams to the east, views are recorded from ProWs which connect across this area of arable landscape. VP06 is representative of these views, which generally look across the flat open landscape in the foreground towards the well vegetated edge of Elstow and Kempston behind. Residential development breaks the skyline as do the existing industrial units at Progress Park and the Interchange Retail Park.

4.18 Views looking south towards the site, from north of the A421, are represented by VP05 recorded on Abbeyfields where the road crosses the brook (which passes through the landscape of the Former Abbey). These views are focussed primarily along the road and over the immediate fields to the west. Again, the units at Progress Park are visible set in a backdrop of vegetation associated with the road infrastructure and the park itself.

Summary and Conclusions

4.19 In summary, this is a landscape where commercial and industrial buildings are a common feature in views. They are not a consistent element but come into and out of views depending on proximity, vegetation and existing built form, as receptors move through the landscape. The area south of the A421 and east of the A6 is currently a rural landscape and although allocated, industrial and commercial development has not yet been brought forward south of the A421 in this location. However, west of the A6 the Wixams development includes large scale industrial units.

4.20 The site is visually and physically connected to the A6 junction with the A421 and to a degree any development will be read as being related to the surrounding industrial units. The flat landscape and the areas of dense vegetation, particularly around the part of Elstow south of the A421, separate it from the allocation, visually and perceptually. This part of the village feels connected to the southern landscape which has a more open aspect.

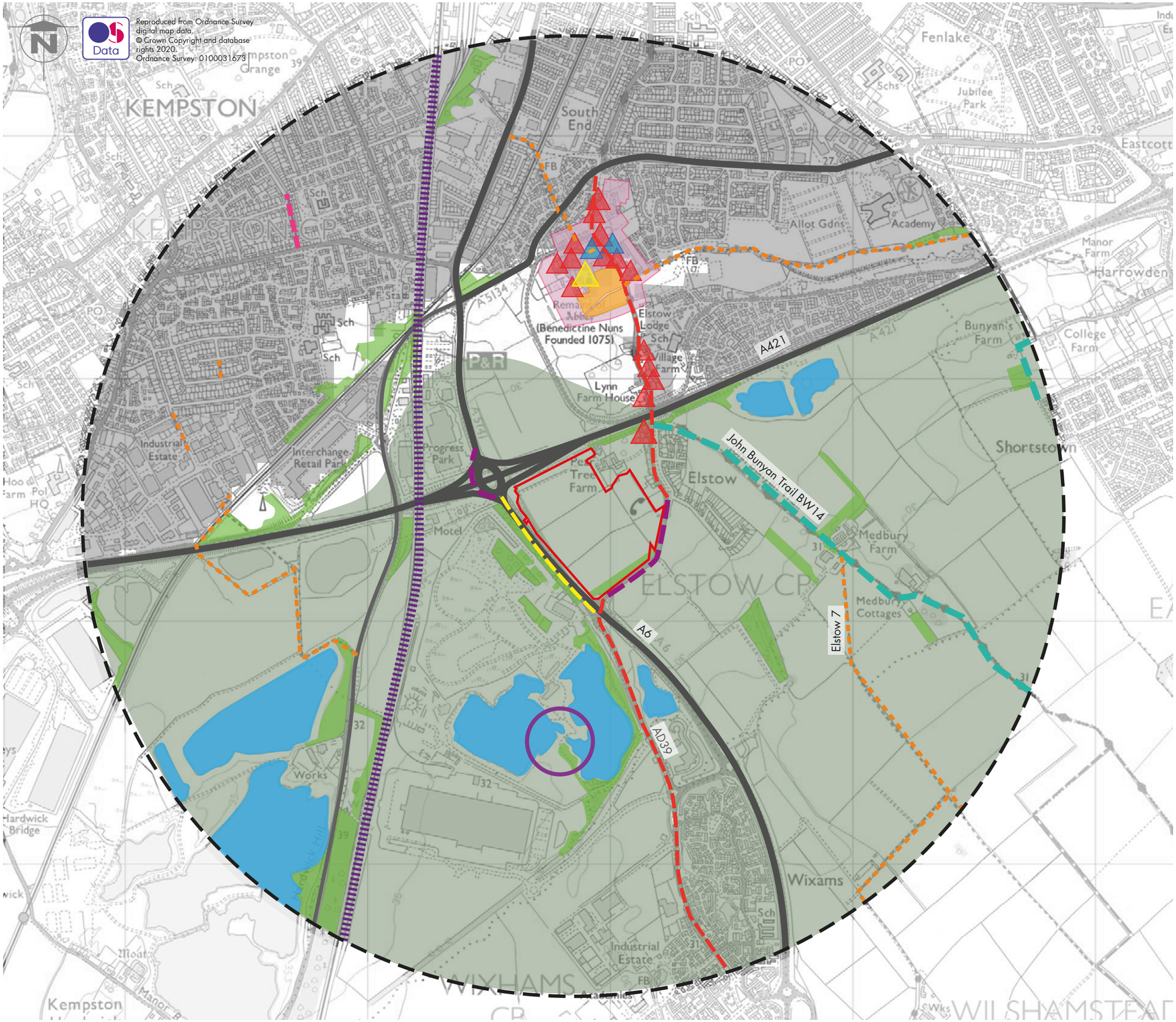
4.21 From wider locations to the south there are constant views of similar types of development but they do not dominate the landscape, they are simply a reoccurring feature. The proposals will appear the same, an infrequent element in views as receptors move through the landscape but not a prominent part of any view.

4.22 No recorded views were focussed on Elstow Abbey and it was not apparent that any visual connections across the landscape would be compromised.

4.23 Policy AD11 refers to strong Green Infrastructure routes, incorporating recreation provision and delivery of a planting scheme to respond to the Forest of Marston Vale location which will further mitigate any views and provide for enhanced and new landscape features representative of the character. The provision of Urban Gaps through policy as muted in wider policy in combination with the GI and recreation routes will separate the development further from Elstow and there will be no real or perceived coalescence. Similarly, with Wixams, the northern aspects which are retained as ponds and wildlife areas provide a fixed buffer to any forthcoming development.

4.24 From the field survey and the consideration of the landscape and visual receptors outlined above it is recommended that units which are of a similar size and scale to those in the surrounding area can be developed on the northern parcel of the allocation.

Figures



Legend

- Application Site
- 2 km radius

Landscape Features

- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Scheduled Monuments
- Woodland Blocks
- Settlement
- Conservation Area
- PRoW Footpath
- Bridleway
- Existing Cycle Route - AD39
- Improve Cycle Route AD39
- Proposed Cycle Route - AD39
- John Bunyan Trail BW14
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Railway
- Lakes
- Elstow Pit County Wildlife Site (CWS)
- Marston Vale Community Forest

0m 500m 1km

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PROJECT
Pear Tree Farm, Elstow

CLIENT
Southill Estate

TITLE
Context and Designations Plan

STATUS	FINAL		
SCALE	NTS	DATE	Oct 2021
DRAWN	CD	CHECKED	SB

JOB NO:	DWG NO:	REV NO:	ORIGINAL SIZE
N0850	(08)001	-	A3

Urban

5E

5D

Legend

- Application Site
- 2 km radius

Landscape Character Area

- 5E East Marston Clay Vale
- 5D North Marston Clay Vale
- Urban Area - Bedford/Kempston

National Character Area (NCA)

The study area sits wholly within NCA profile:
88: Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands

0m 500m 1km

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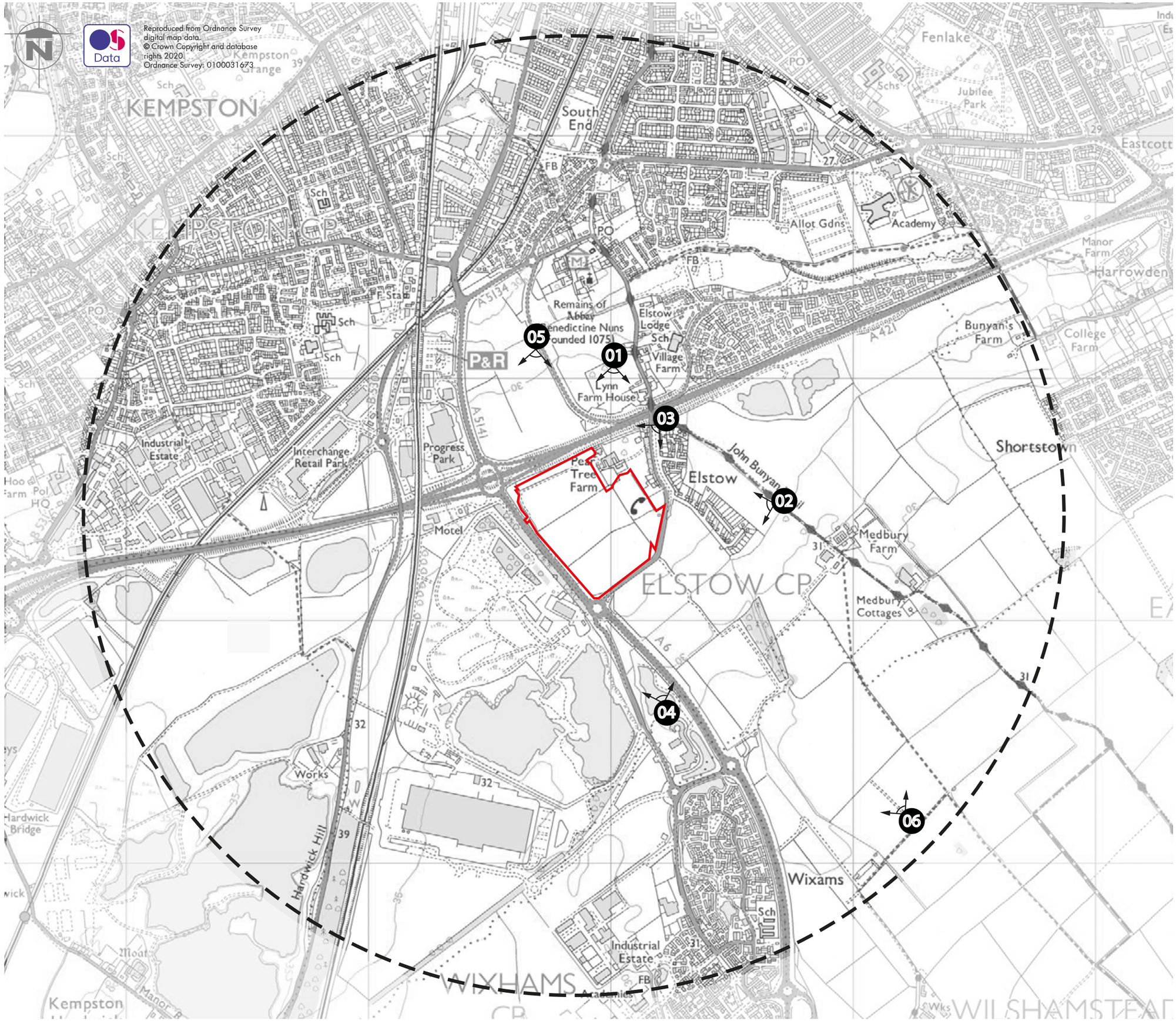
PROJECT
Pear Tree Farm, Elstow

CLIENT
Southill Estate

TITLE
Landscape Character Plan

STATUS	FINAL		
SCALE	NTS	DATE	Oct 2021
DRAWN	CD	CHECKED	MM

JOB NO:	DWG NO:	REV NO:	ORIGINAL SIZE
N0850	(08)002	-	A3



Legend

- Application Site
- 2 km radius
- 07 Viewpoint Locations

0m 500m 1km

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PROJECT
Pear Tree Farm, Elstow

CLIENT
Southill Estate

TITLE
Viewpoint Location Plan

STATUS	DRAFT		
SCALE	NTS	DATE	Oct 2021
DRAWN	CD	CHECKED	MM

JOB NO:	DWG NO:	REV NO:	ORIGINAL SIZE
N0850	(08)003	-	A3

Representative Viewpoint 01

Representative Viewpoint 02

Viewpoint and Camera Details:

Camera:	Canon EOS 1100D						
Lens:	EF 50mm 1:1.8						
Date:	11.10.21						
Time/ OS Grid Reference:	VP001	10.52	TL	505005	247076	197m	31m
Distance to Site/ Elevation	VP002	10.59	TL	505706	246475	508m	29m

These views are representative of visual receptors at this location. They are for information purposes only and are not to scale. Scaled images can be provided upon request.

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PROJECT
Pear Tree Farm, Elstow

CLIENT
Southill Estate

TITLE
Viewpoint 01 & 02

STATUS	FINAL		
SCALE	NTS	DATE	21.10.21
DRAWN	CD	CHECKED	SB

JOB NO:	DWG NO:	REV NO:	ORIGINAL SIZE:
N0850	(08)004	-	A3

Representative Viewpoint 03

Representative Viewpoint 04

Viewpoint and Camera Details:

Camera:	Canon EOS 1100D
Lens:	EF 50mm 1:1.8
Date:	11.10.21

Time/ OS Grid Reference:	VP003	11.06	TL	505194	246815	201m	31m
Distance to Site/ Elevation	VP004	11.48	TL	505234	245605	563m	32m

These views are representative of visual receptors at this location. They are for information purposes only and are not to scale. Scaled images can be provided upon request.

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PROJECT
Pear Tree Farm, Elstow

CLIENT
Southill Estate

TITLE
Viewpoint 03 & 04

STATUS FINAL

SCALE NTS DATE 21.10.21

DRAWN CD CHECKED SB

JOB NO:	DWG NO:	REV NO:	ORIGINAL SIZE:
N0850	(08)005	-	A3

Representative Viewpoint 05

Representative Viewpoint 06

Viewpoint and Camera Details:

Camera:	Canon EOS 1100D						
Lens:	EF 50mm 1:1.8						
Date:	11.10.21						
Time/ OS Grid Reference:	VP005	12.07	TL	505535	245429	323m	30m
Distance to Site/ Elevation	VP006	12.24	TL	506264	245163	1528m	32m

These views are representative of visual receptors at this location. They are for information purposes only and are not to scale. Scaled images can be provided upon request.

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PROJECT
Pear Tree Farm, Elstow

CLIENT
Southill Estate

TITLE
Viewpoint 05 & 06

STATUS FINAL

SCALE NTS DATE 21.10.21

DRAWN CD CHECKED SB

JOB NO:	DWG NO:	REV NO:	ORIGINAL SIZE:
N0850	(08)006	-	A3

Appendices

Appendix A Methodology

A Methodology

Guidance

1.1 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and supporting studies and surveys were conducted in accordance with the principles set out by Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland [1]and Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition[2].

1.2 Other guidance with regard to developments in the landscape that has informed the LVIA include Hedgerow Regulations[3] and Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice[4].

1.3 Viewpoint photographs have been presented in accordance with the Landscape Institute's (LI) Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals[5].

Scope of the Landscape and Visual Assessment

1.4 The LVIA considers the predicted effects of development on landscape resources (both features and character) and on people's visual amenity.

1.5 Landscape and visual assessments are two separate but interlinked processes that are undertaken in parallel. The assessments are informed by a combination of desk and site based appraisal techniques and professional judgements.

1.6 The landscape assessment considers the effects of the proposed development on the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character, and how this is experienced; separately considering the effects of development on:

- Landscape character areas (area with recognisable, consistent pattern of landscape elements identified at different scales by Natural England, county and local councils);
- Designated landscape resources (areas of landscape designated and protected under national and local policy);

1.7 The visual assessment considers the potential changes that would occur to available views in a landscape as a result of the development proposals, the resultant effect on visual amenity and people's responses to the changes.

1.8 The LVIA comprises, firstly the identification, understanding and description of the existing landscape and visual baseline conditions (landscape receptors and groups of views likely to be impacted by the proposed development within a defined study area) and secondly the

[1] Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002
[2] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management 3rd Edition, 2013
[3] UK Parliament, 1997
[4] Department for Communities and Local Government, 1997
[5] Landscape Institute, 2019

identification and description of the impacts arising from the development on the landscape and the visual receptors.

1.9 The assessment examines both construction phase impacts and impacts on completion of the proposed scheme, to include assessing the impacts on Day 1 of completion and 15 years into operation. The impacts are assessed based on professional judgements and an understanding of the construction phases and phasing of completion, which are summarised in the LVIA and include any proposed landscape and visual mitigation works.

Stages in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

1.10 The LVIA process comprises the following stages:

- Baseline assessment: record and analyse the existing nature and value of the landscape character and features, and visual amenity of the study area through desk and field based appraisal;
- Description of the nature, forms and features of the proposed development including and constraints and opportunities;
- Assessment of sensitivity of the existing landscape and identified visual receptors to change and assessment;
- Identification of potential landscape and visual impacts due to the proposed development;
- Identification of proposed mitigation measures appropriate to the development and its landscape context;
- Assessment of the magnitude of effect upon the identified receptors, likely to result from implementation of the proposed development;
- Assessment of the significance of the residual effects on landscape and visual resource, taking into account appropriate mitigation.

1.11 The assessment process is iterative; the analysis of the baseline conditions and evaluation of the potential effects resulting from a development informs the evolution of the proposed development. It is, therefore, important to take into consideration the mitigation that is inherent or proposed as part of the development in order to assess the residual effects and their significance.

1.12 The assessment process is recorded in two principal stages: a baseline study of the existing landscape and surrounding visual receptor groups, followed by the impact assessment.

Study Area

1.13 Published guidance provides recommendations on the extent of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) that should be produced in order to assess the area that would potentially experience significant visual effects.

1.14 The purpose of the LVIA is to identify significant landscape and visual effects. It is, therefore, reasonable to limit the study area in various respects in order to meet the requirements of the specific project in its landscape context and to reflect the likelihood of significant effects arising over very long distances. It is also important that the more significant effects occurring over shorter distances are given appropriate emphasis. The report has adopted the following approach:

Computer based Visibility Analysis – Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

1.15 In order to identify landscape resources and visual receptors within the landscape surrounding the application site that may be affected by a development, a ZTV plan is produced to illustrate the worst case extent of the potential visibility of the proposed development. The ZTV identifies the maximum area over which it is theoretically possible to see some part of the proposed development, but does not take account of screening that may result from vegetation, localised variations in topography and built form. The ZTV is created using a terrain model, which is based on ordnance Survey (OS) data at 1:25000 scale with contours at 5m intervals.

1.16 It should be noted that ZTVs are used as a working tool to inform the assessment and do not convey the nature or magnitude of visual effects. The actual visual effects of the proposed development are assessed through a more detailed analysis of specific viewpoints, and based on field survey observations. In combination with a site visit, this information enables the identification of a provisional list of representative viewpoints, and allows the determining authority and consultees to judge how representative these are and whether they include particularly sensitive receptors and vantage points.

1.17 A bare ground ZTV has been prepared around the proposed development site, to take account of the worst case scenario based on proposed building heights. This comprehensive ZTV has been examined in order to identify particularly sensitive locations that would potentially experience significant visual effects e.g. particularly important visitor destinations, or those in protected landscapes (if appropriate) or promoted viewpoints and national trails.

1.18 An appropriate study area has been selected for the assessment as it is considered to represent the most concentrated and significant potential impacts. This is based on professional experience of residential and mixed use development assessment, that visibility over greater distance does not have as much potential to result in significant changes to landscape and visual receptors in the landscape context.

1.19 The LVIA focusses on potentially significant landscape and visual effects likely to occur within the localised study area.

Landscape Assessment

1.20 The former Countryside Agency Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland[6] makes a distinction between the characterisation process and the judgement-making process. The baseline section of the LVIA, therefore, deals predominantly with the characterisation process, in which the attributes of the landscape are described.

1.21 In order to be effective, this LVIA needs to consider the landscape resource within the study area at an appropriate level of detail. Initially, a desktop study is undertaken in order to identify any existing landscape character assessments that describe landscape designations and character areas within the LVIA study area. Following this desk based analysis, site visits are carried out to verify the existing landscape characterisation and identify and assess the

[6] Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002

physical components and structure of the landscape within the application site and its surroundings.

1.22 The baseline divides the application site and surroundings into a series of landscape character areas, which are then brought forward for the assessment if the potential for impact on the landscape resource is identified.

1.23 In addition to landscape character, the proposed development's effect on landscape elements and features is also considered. The relevant groups of landscape elements and features include:

- Landform;
- Land cover and vegetation (trees, hedgerows, grassland etc.);
- Land use (including Public Open Space);
- Watercourses;
- Accessibility (public footpaths/cycleways).

Landscape Sensitivity

1.24 Landscape is a combination of both cultural and physical components that give rise to patterns that are distinctive to particular localities and help to define a 'sense of place'. Landscape character is defined by the interaction of influences and components such as landform, hydrology, vegetation, landcover, land use pattern and cultural features and associations, and their relationship with the surroundings.

1.25 Although landscape has some intrinsic sensitivity, different landscape receptors have different elements and features that can accommodate a variety of development types. To reliably inform detailed assessment of impacts, landscape sensitivity needs to be determined with reference to the changes arising from a specific type of development. Therefore landscape sensitivity is assessed combining judgments on the value attached to a landscape and the susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed.

1.26 Landscape value is the relative value attached to a potentially affected landscape. Landscape value is relative in relation to the different stakeholders and different parts of society that use or experience a landscape. Factors that have been considered in making judgments on landscape value include designations (both national and local), local planning documents, status of features (eg. TPO's or Conservation Areas) and local community and interests (for example local green spaces, village greens or allotments). Landscape value will vary in response to the specific landscape that is being considered.

1.27 The value is assessed as high, medium or low and the assessment is made based on the following factors:

- The quality placed on the landscape, including the scenic quality;
- The presence of rare elements or features, or rare landscape character types;
- Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements considered to be particularly important examples;
- The presence of nature, historical or cultural features of interest;

- Evidence that the landscape is important for recreational users;
- Perceptual aspects, such as tranquillity or wildness;
- Associations of the landscape with particular people in history (such as artists or writers), or historical events, that contribute to the perception of natural beauty.

1.28 The second component of landscape sensitivity relates to susceptibility. Landscape susceptibility to change is the ability to accommodate change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. In this context, the term landscape receptors can be expanded to cover overall character areas, condition or a particular landscape character type or an individual landscape element or feature. Landscape susceptibility will vary in response to the specific landscape that is being considered and to the nature of the type of change that may occur.

1.29 To assess landscape susceptibility it is important to appreciate the key characteristics and attributes of the landscape of the application site and surrounding study area, in order to understand local landscape variations and if the landscape of the application site fits with the description of the LCT/LCA that it is within.

1.30 The characteristics of the landscape that should be considered with regard to their susceptibility to change include a variety of attributes, such as scale and enclosure, landform, nature of land use, nature of existing elements or nature of existing features. Landscape susceptibility is described on the verbal scale as high, medium or low.

1.31 Sensitivity is a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgments of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor. Receptors can include specific elements of features or may be judged at a wider scale and include landscape character parcels, types or areas.

1.32 The consideration of value of the landscape receptor combined with susceptibility to the type of change arising from the proposal, allows for assessment of sensitivity of the landscape receptor. The sensitivity of landscape receptors is categorised as high, medium or low; the criteria for each category is outlined in Table A-1.

Table A-1 Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

Receptor Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
High	A landscape of particularly distinctive character and high or exceptional scenic quality. Strong representation of the typical landscape character type. Intact landscape with excellent condition of elements and features. Presence of rare features in the landscape. May be nationally and/or regionally designated landscape for its scenic quality and character, such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or National Park. High recreational value with strong cultural and historical associations. High susceptibility to changes arising from the proposal.

Receptor Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
Medium	A landscape of moderately distinctive character and scenic quality. Typical landscape character type is apparent. Relatively intact landscape with occasional features of interest. May be locally designated for its quality and character. Receptor of higher value but lower susceptibility to the type of change or development, or vice versa.
Low	A landscape of little distinctive character or scenic quality or is damaged, neglected or poor character and lacking scenic quality. Landscape has become eroded with no more than occasional elements and features of interest. Not subject to any form of landscape designation. Receptor of low value and low susceptibility to the type of change arising from the proposal.

Magnitude of Landscape Effect

1.33 Once the sensitivity of the landscape receptors has been determined, the effect that the proposed development would have on the landscape resource can be assessed.

1.34 The magnitude of effect from the proposed development on landscape character, designations or features is appraised, taking into account each phase (construction and completion) of the proposed development and any inherent / proposed mitigation. The assessment of the magnitude of effect takes into account the following factors:

- The distance of the landscape receptor from the proposed development;
- The degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones, for example removal of hedges may change the small-scale, intimate landscape into a large-scale, open one, of the introduction of new buildings or tall structures may alter open skylines;
- The extent of existing landscape elements that would be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape;
- The scale of the overall predicted change to character;
- The timescale or phasing of the construction stages;
- Whether the landscape change would be reversible or not.

1.35 The magnitude of effect is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. This is a professional judgement based on the criteria for each magnitude as outlined in Table A-2 below. Different combinations of the below variables can apply in reaching an overall judgement on magnitude.

Table A-2 Magnitude of Landscape Effects

Magnitude of Effect	Typical Factors
High	The proposed development would cause a large, irreversible change to the existing landscape for a long period of time or permanently. Impact upon landscape features of international and national importance or on fundamental landscape elements such that this would change the key characteristics of that landscape. Long-term or permanent change to the existing landscape conditions.
Medium	The proposed development would cause a noticeable change to the existing landscape; however, few elements and features that contribute to the overall character would be affected. Medium or short-term change to landscape conditions. Moderate alteration to the individual components of the landscape, leading to small change in aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape.
Low	The proposed development would cause a small impact / change and would affect relatively few receptors. Temporary or reversible change in landscape conditions. The key characteristics of the landscape contributing to its character would not be significantly affected.
Negligible	The proposed development is appropriate in its context or barely perceptible. It may be difficult to differentiate from its surroundings and has very little or no impact on receptors compared to the baseline situation. No key characteristics of the landscape, contributing to its character would be affected.

Visual Assessment

1.36 Following desk studies and site visits a range of visual receptors (people) that have a potential to be affected by the proposed development are identified. They would include local residents, users of footpaths and other routes, road users, users of recreational facilities, visitors to popular tourist attractions and noted viewpoints, or people at their place of work.

1.37 Potential viewpoints and areas for investigation are then identified following an initial study of Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, analysis of Zone of Theoretical Visibility and, most importantly, site visits; based on the following criteria:

- Distance from the application site to the receptor;
- The proportion of the application site / proposed development visible, as well as the absolute visibility of the proposed development;
- The height of the proposed development relative to the receptor with reference also to the scale of other features in the view;
- The number and character of elements that would be lost from or added to the view;

- High concentrations of viewers, such as settlements, local recreational facilities, public footpaths and attractions etc;
- Views illustrating the visual character of the surrounding area; and
- Areas identified as having a high potential for visual impact.

1.38 A site visit was carried out to assess both general landscape character and views experienced by different types of visual receptors during the day.

1.39 Following desktop research to understand the surrounding potentially sensitive receptors, a selection of viewpoints was made to represent key relevant visual receptor types likely to be affected by the proposed development, such as residents of nearby properties, users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), pedestrians, cyclists or road users; to enable the assessment of the proposed change in views and the significance of effect on these receptors.

1.40 Photographs illustrating views from this series of representative viewpoints were taken either using a Canon EOS 500D Digital SLR with lens set to a 35mm focal length to provide the closest possible approximation of a 50mm lens focal length ('true eye' vision) on a traditional 35mm film SLR camera, or a fixed 50mm FL Lens. The photographs have been reproduced in a series of viewpoint sheets with annotation and details of the image recorded. Where contextual views consist of more than one frame, the relevant frames are merged together using Photoshop Creative Cloud (CC) software. This is consistent with Visualisation Type 1: annotated viewpoint photographs and Visualisation type 3: Photomontage / Photowire.

Visual Receptors

1.41 Visual receptors are groups of people, which include the public or community at large, residents, visitors and other groups of viewers. Study of OS data, production of a ZTV and consultation with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) assist with identifying viewpoints for assessment that best represent the visual receptors likely to be affected by the proposed development.

1.42 Representative viewpoints are validated through site visits; resulting in the repositioning or exclusion of some of the preliminary viewpoints, due to lack of visibility towards the application site.

Visual Sensitivity

1.43 Sensitivity of visual receptors, whose groups are represented by a selection of viewpoints, depends on their susceptibility to change in views and the value attached to the views that they experience.

1.44 The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is judged, based on:

- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and
- The extent to which their attention or interest may, therefore, be focussed on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

1.45 Judgements about the value of views take account of:

- Recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage / cultural assets, or through planning designations;
- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment and references to them in literature and art (Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).

1.46 The sensitivity of the visual receptors is categorised as **high**, **medium** or **low**, as defined in Table A-3 below.

Table A-3 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Receptor Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
High	People with a particular interest in their surroundings or with prolonged viewing opportunities, examples include: • Users of promoted viewpoints (often with interpretation boards); • Users of tourist and visitor destinations including recreational or heritage sites (such as ornamental parks and open spaces); • Visitors to recreational hilltops and peaks; • Residential locations and occupiers of residential properties; • People using important recreational routes, such as National Trails / long distance promoted routes, National Cycle Routes; • Users of paths and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in nationally or locally designated landscapes.
Medium	People with a general interest in their surroundings or with some viewing opportunities, examples include: • Users of public open spaces and outdoor recreational spaces; • Users of other public routes and PRoW; • Visitors to local viewpoints and resting places.
Low	People with a more limited or passing interest in their surroundings, examples include: • Users of more transitory routes such as other public routes; • Users of the local road network and major highways; • People at their place of work; • Users of indoor or sporting recreational facilities.

Magnitude of Visual Effect

1.47 For each of the identified groups of receptors, the potential magnitude of visual effect (in comparison to the existing 'baseline' situation) was assessed, taking into account each phase of the proposed development and any inherent / proposed mitigation. The magnitude of visual effect takes into consideration the following factors:

- The scale of change to the view with respect to loss or addition of features within the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;
- The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics;

- The nature of the view of the proposed development, considering the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views would be full, partial or glimpsed;
- The degree of visual intrusion or obstruction that would occur from the proposed development;
- The angle of the view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
- The duration and reversibility of the assessed effect.

1.48 The magnitude of effect is categorised as **high**, **medium**, **low** or **negligible**. As with landscape, different combinations of the variables in the below table may apply.

Table A-4 Magnitude of Visual Effects

Magnitude of Effect	Typical Factors
High	Severe change to views; Removal of valuable landscape features / elements that highly contribute to the overall quality and nature of the view; Total change to the visual character of the surrounding landscape; Large number of viewers affected over a prolonged period of time; Development is highly prominent in the view.
Medium	Moderate alteration to views; Development affects few visual features / elements on or adjacent to the application site. Reversible effect, affecting only a part of the wider view. Development 'stands out' in the view.
Low	The proposed development would cause a small impact / change and would affect relatively few receptors. Change to views on transitory routes such as infrequently used paths and roads. Small change to more complex views for a small number of viewers with no particular focus on the proposed development.
Negligible	The proposed development is appropriate in its context or barely perceptible. It may be difficult to differentiate from its surroundings and has very little or no impact on receptors compared to the baseline situation. It would have no or minimal effect on visual features / elements on or adjacent to the Application Site.

Nature of Effects

1.49 The nature of effects contributes to the assessment of magnitude of landscape and visual effects.

1.50 The LVIA considers whether the landscape and visual changes that would arise as a result of the proposed development would be beneficial or adverse. An adverse effect is one that introduces a new, discordant or intrusive element to the landscape or a view. A beneficial effect would be from an overall improvement to the landscape or a view, through the removal of existing discordant features and / or introduction of features of similar scale to those in the surrounding landscape or view that would contribute to its overall character.

1.51 With regard to the duration of landscape and visual effects, short to medium term effects are normally considered to be temporary and associated with the construction of the proposed development, and long-term effects are normally associated with a fully completed and operational scheme. Permanent effects are those which result in an irreversible change to the baseline conditions or will last for the foreseeable future.

1.52 The duration of landscape and visual effects is typically categorised as follows:

- Long-term – 15 years and beyond;
- Medium-term – 5 to 15 years;
- Short-term – 0 to 5 years.

1.53 Landscape and visual effects can be direct (effects that are caused by activities which are an integral part of the scheme) or indirect (effects that are due to activities that are not part of the scheme, e.g. regeneration benefits attributable to the scheme).

Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

1.54 Assessment of landscape and visual effects refers to the change that is predicted to take place to the existing (baseline) condition of the landscape and views as a result of the proposed development.

1.55 The significance of an effect is broadly determined by assessing the sensitivity to change, of the landscape and visual receptors, against the magnitude of change predicted upon them. The assessment of the effects takes into account mitigation measures implemented as part of the proposed development. Table A-5 is used as a guide only and the assessment of the significance of effect takes into account other modifying factors, based on professional judgement. Ultimately the assessment of sensitivity and magnitude will lead to effects that are of **major**, **moderate**, **minor** or **negligible** significance.

Table A-5 Significance of the Effect to the Landscape and Visual Receptors

Magnitude of Effect	**Description**		
High	Moderate	Major	Major
Medium	Minor	Moderate	Major
Low	Minor	Minor	Moderate

Magnitude of Effect	Description		
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
	Low	**Medium**	**High**
	Receptor Sensitivity		

1.56 The following table A-6 provides a brief definition of the key landscape and visual significance criteria.

Table A-6 Definitions of Significance

Significance	Description
Major	Important or substantial change in landscapes of national, district or local importance, or substantial changes in views experienced by most sensitive visual receptors.
Medium	Noteworthy or medium change to sensitive landscape and visual conditions.
Low	Inconsiderable or small change in landscape and visual conditions.
Negligible	No discernible effect upon landscape or visual conditions. No effect or an effect that is beneath the level of perception, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.

1.57 Major effects are usually deemed significant. Similarly, effects of medium magnitude on a highly sensitive receptor or effects of high magnitude on receptors of medium sensitivity may also be judged 'significant'.

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