

David Clarke Chartered Landscape Architect and Consultant Arboriculturist Limited

David Clarke BSc (Hons) CMLI PD Arb (RFS) M Arbor A

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

at:

Land at, and to rear of, 126 Harpenden Road, St
Albans, Hertfordshire

in relation to an Outline Planning Application for:
'Residential development of up to 132 dwellings,
together with all ancillary works'.

Appendices A-E

Compiled by:
David Clarke

BSc (Hons) Land Man, PD Arb (RFS) CMLI, M Arbor A

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Offices in Hertfordshire and Warwickshire

Head Office:

Willowbrook House, Church Lane,

Fillongley, CV7 8EW

Telephone: (07775) 650 835 or (01676) 541 833

e:mail: info@dccla.co.uk

Appendix A

Definitions for Landscape and Visual Assessment

Landscape Definitions

(A) Contribution to the Landscape Character Area

Having described and evaluated the attributes that contribute to the landscape resource of the Site, methodologies apply a high, medium or low value to the landscape. It is considered that it is also useful to consider the contribution that the Site makes to the local landscape character. The definitions for this evaluation are:

Outstanding contribution: Where the existing character of the Site is representative of the local landscape character and the structure of the landscape is intact

Very positive contribution: Where the existing character of the Site contains many attributes representative of the local landscape character and the structure of the landscape is apparent

Positive contribution: Where the existing character of the Site contains some attributes representative of the local landscape character and some incongruous elements but the Site does not detract from the local landscape character

Limited contribution: Where the existing character of the Site contains some limited attributes representative of the local landscape character but there are also incongruous elements present within, or adjacent to, the site that detract from the local landscape character.

Neutral Contribution: Where the Area is not representative of the Local Landscape Character but includes some attractive features in its own right.

Negative contribution: Where the existing character of the Site contains no attributes representative of the local landscape character and the incongruous elements detract from the local landscape character.

(B) Landscape Susceptibility

Landscape susceptibility relates to the capacity of a particular landscape to accommodate the proposed development. Landscape susceptibility is appraised through consideration of the baseline characteristics of the landscape, and in particular, the scale or complexity of a given landscape. The evaluation of landscape susceptibility is undertaken with reference to a five point scale, as outlined below:

Low capacity: A finely balanced landscape where the landscape character is so well defined that even a small-scale development might cause a significant loss of landscape character

Low-Medium capacity: An established landscape with a well-defined character where only well-considered changes could be accommodated without loss of character

Medium capacity: An established landscape where change of an appropriate nature could be absorbed without loss of landscape character

Medium-High capacity: A damaged or robust landscape where appropriate change can be absorbed and could contribute to the restoration of local landscape character

High capacity: A damaged landscape where change would bring opportunities for the significant enhancement of the local landscape character or the creation of a new landscape.

(C) Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape sensitivity to change is determined by employing professional judgment to combine and analyse the identified value and susceptibility and is defined with reference to the four point scale outlined below:

High: A landscape which is valued by many people and is of particularly highly valued character and scenic quality, considered very susceptible to relatively small changes e.g. within a designated National Scenic Area, National Park, Garden and Designed Landscape.

Medium: A landscape which is valued by local communities and of regional or local value, quality or rarity, exhibiting some distinct features and some detracting elements, considered tolerant of some degree of appropriate change e.g. within a locally designated landscape or with landscape elements of local importance.

Low: An ordinary landscape of limited value to local communities, of lower scenic quality, with few distinctive elements or valued characteristics, frequent detracting features and considered tolerant of an appropriate or large degree of change e.g. landscape outside any designated areas or within a degraded landscape.

Negligible: A landscape valued by few people with few features of interest or value

Table One – Criteria for Significance for Landscape Effects

Category	Criteria
	<p>Major adverse effect: An effect that will fundamentally change and be in direct contrast to the existing landscape or views.</p>
	<p>The Proposals would have a major adverse effect as they would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape • result in a total loss or major alteration to key attributes and their setting • disrupt a finely balanced or intact landscape • cause a major deterioration to the contribution that the Site makes or has the potential to make to the local landscape character • be visually intrusive and disrupt valued views of the area • cause a major reduction in the current level of tranquillity; • introduce incongruous elements into the landscape • be incapable of adequate mitigation • be in serious conflict with local guidelines, where they exist, for the landscape character area • be in serious conflict with government policy for the protection of nationally recognised countryside.

Moderate adverse effect: An effect that will markedly change the existing landscape or views but may retain some characteristics or features currently present.

The Proposals would do one or more of the following:

- be out of scale with the landscape, or at odds with the local pattern and landform
- result in a partial loss of key attributes, or reduce or remove their setting
- cause a noticeable deterioration to the contribution that the Site makes or has the potential to make to the local landscape character
- be visually intrusive and adversely affect views into and across the area
- cause a noticeable reduction in the current level of tranquillity
- introduce prominent new elements that are not entirely characteristic
- be incapable of full mitigation
- be in conflict with local guidelines, where they exist, for the landscape character area
- conflict with local and/or national policies to protect open land and nationally recognised countryside as set out in NPPF.

Minor adverse effect: An effect that will entail limited or localised change to the existing landscape/views or will entail more noticeable localised change but including both adverse and beneficial effects and is likely to retain or incorporate some characteristics or features currently present

The Proposals would do one or more of the following:

- not quite fit the landform and scale of the landscape
- result in a minor loss of key/characteristic elements or features or their setting reduced
- cause a minor deterioration to the contribution that the Site makes or has the potential to make to the local landscape character
- although not very visually intrusive, would adversely affect certain views into and across the area
- cause a minor reduction in the current level of tranquillity
- introduce noticeable new elements that are not entirely characteristic
- not fulfil local guidelines, where they exist, for the landscape character area
- conflict with local authority policies for protecting the local character of the countryside

Negligible effect: An effect that will be discernible but of very limited change to the existing landscape or views

The Proposals would do one or more of the following:

- complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape
- incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure that the scheme will blend in well with surrounding landscape
- avoid being visually intrusive and have adverse effects on the current level of tranquillity of the landscape
- have no adverse effect on the current level of tranquillity of the landscape
- maintain existing landscape character in an area which is not a designated landscape or vulnerable to change
- avoid conflict with government policy towards protection of the countryside
- a negligible effect can also be the result of the removal of incongruous or intrusive elements and the introduction of new elements.

Minor beneficial effect: An effect that will entail some change to the existing landscape/views but is likely to retain or incorporate some characteristics or features currently present. Any minor adverse effects are mitigated for or outweighed by any beneficial effects or proposals arising from the proposals.

The Proposals would do one or more of the following:

- fit well with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape
- incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure they will blend in well with surrounding landscape
- enable some sense of place and scale to be restored through well-designed planting and mitigation measures
- make a minor improvement to the contribution that the Site makes to the local existing landscape character
- be in line with local guidelines, where they exist, for the landscape character area
- make a small contribution towards government policy towards protection of the countryside.
- have limited effects on views

Moderate beneficial effect: An effect that will entail limited or localised change to the existing landscape/views and is likely to retain or incorporate most characteristics or features currently present. Any minor adverse effects are greatly mitigated for or outweighed by any beneficial effects or proposals arising from the proposals.

The Proposals would provide an opportunity to enhance the landscape because they do one or more of the following:

- fit very well with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape
- have the potential, through mitigation, to enable the restoration of key/characteristic features, partially lost or diminished
- make a noticeable improvement to the contribution that the Site makes to the local landscape character through well-designed planting and mitigation measures
- enable some sense of quality to be restored or enhanced through beneficial landscape proposals and sensitive design
- support objectives in local guidelines, where they exist, for the landscape character area
- further government objectives to regenerate degraded countryside.

Major beneficial effect: An effect that will entail no or very limited change to the existing landscape/views and is likely to retain or incorporate all characteristics or features currently present. The proposals provide significant beneficial effects or proposals within the site or local area.

The Proposals would do one or more of the following:

- mitigate substantially an existing severe adverse effect
- fulfil objectives in local guidelines, where they exist, for the landscape character area
- make a major improvement in the contribution that the landscape makes to the local landscape character by restoring the integrity of a damaged landscape.

(D) Magnitude of Landscape Change

The magnitude of landscape change refers to the extent to which the proposed developments would alter the existing characteristics of the landscape and combines judgements on; size or scale of effect, geographical extent of the area influenced and duration/reversibility. Changes to landscape characteristics can be both direct and indirect. Direct change occurs where the proposed developments would result in a physical change to the landscape within or adjacent to the proposed development site. Indirect changes are a consequence of the direct changes resulting from the proposed developments. They occur often away from the proposed development site (for example, off-site construction staff parking). They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects.

The following definitions are used to describe the magnitude of landscape change or landscape effects:

<i>MAGNITUDE</i>	<i>CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA</i>
Negligible	No discernible change in any component
Low	Virtually imperceptible change in landscape receptors
Moderate	Moderate change in localised areas
High	Notable change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to a very intensive change over a more limited area

Visual Definitions

(E) Visual Susceptibility

Visual susceptibility relates to the importance of views to receptors at a certain location and is informed by the type of receptor and the activity with which they are engaged. This considers the extent to which receptors' attention or interest is focused on the view or visual amenity. For example residents in their home, walkers whose interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or a particular view, or visitors at an attraction where views are an important part of the experience often indicate a higher level of susceptibility. Whereas receptors occupied in outdoor sport where views are not important or at their place of work are often considered less susceptible to change. Visual susceptibility is determined with reference to the three point scale and criteria outlined below

SUSCEPTIBILITY CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

High	Receptors for which the view is of primary importance and are likely to notice even minor change.
Medium	Receptors for which the view is important but not the primary focus and are tolerant of some change.
Low	Receptors for which the view is incidental or unimportant and is tolerant of a high degree of change.

(F) Visual Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity to change is determined by employing professional judgment to combine and analyse the identified value and susceptibility and is defined with reference to the three point scale outlined below:

VISUAL SENSITIVITY CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

High	Locations where receptors experience a highly valued, impressive or well composed view, with no detracting features and where changes would be highly noticeable.
Medium	Locations where receptors experience a valued view which generally represents a pleasing composition but may include some detracting elements and is tolerant of a degree of change.

Low Locations where the view is incidental but not important to the receptors and the nature of the view is of limited value or poorly composed with numerous detracting features and is tolerant of a large degree of change.

(G) Magnitude of Visual Change

Visual effects are direct effects as the magnitude of change within an existing view will be determined by the extent of visibility of the proposed developments. The following definitions are used to determine the magnitude of change caused by visual effects:

MAGNITUDE	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
Negligible	The development will cause a barely discernible change in the existing view
Low	The development will cause very minor changes to the view over a wide area or minor changes over a limited area
Moderate	The development will cause minor changes to the existing view over a wide area or noticeable change over a limited area
High	The development will cause a considerable change in the existing view over a wide area or a significant change over a limited area

(H) The table below provides the definition of the duration of landscape and visual effects:

DURATION	DESCRIPTION
Temporary	Effects lasting one year or less
Short Term	Effects lasting one to seven years
Medium Term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years
Long Term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years
Permanent	Effects lasting over sixty years

(I) Nature of Effects Description

Neutral: This will neither enhance nor detract from the landscape character or view

Positive (Beneficial): This will improve or enhance the landscape character or view

Negative (Adverse): This will have an adverse effect on the existing landscape character or view

Table Two– Indicators of Significance for effects on visual amenity

<u>Category</u>
High adverse effect - where the Proposals would cause a major deterioration to the existing visual amenity.
Moderate adverse effect - where the Proposals would cause a noticeable deterioration to the existing visual amenity.
Low adverse effect - where the Proposals would cause a minor deterioration to the existing visual amenity.
Neutral : Where there are noticeable changes but no deterioration or improvement to the existing visual amenity.
Negligible - Where changes are visible but they are not readily discernible, often because they are distant views or screened by vegetation.

No change - where one might expect change but none is anticipated.
Low beneficial effect - where the Proposals would cause a minor improvement to the existing visual amenity.
Moderate beneficial effect - where the Proposals would cause a noticeable improvement to the existing visual amenity.
High beneficial effect - where the Proposals would cause a major improvement to the existing visual amenity.

(J) Significance of Effects Matrix

The overall significance of effects can be deduced from the following matrix.

SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS (effects rated Moderate and above are considered significant)		SENSITIVITY TO CHANGE		
		High	Medium	Low
Magnitude of Change	High	Major	Moderate-Major	Moderate
	Moderate-High	Moderate-Major	Moderate	Minor-Moderate
	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Minor-Moderate	Minor-Negligible
	Low	Minor-Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low-Negligible	Minor-Moderate	Minor-Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

(K) Categories of Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

After considering both the nature of the receptor and the nature of the effect, the significance of the effect is stated according to the following definitions. The significance can be adverse or beneficial (positive):

SIGNIFICANCE CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF EFFECT
Major Beneficial Effect:	<p>The project would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greatly enhance the character (including quality and value) of the landscape; • enable the restoration of characteristic features and elements lost as a result of changes from inappropriate management or development; • enable a sense of place to be created or greatly enhanced; • cause a very noticeable improvement in the existing view; and • open up a new view of local landscape dominate the future view.
Moderate Beneficial Effect:	<p>The project would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance the character (including quality and value) of the landscape; • enable the restoration of characteristic features and elements partially lost or diminished as a result of changes from inappropriate management or development; • enable a sense of place to be restored; and • cause a noticeable improvement in the existing view.
Minor Beneficial Effect:	<p>The project would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complement the character (including quality and value) of the landscape; • maintain or enhance characteristic features and elements; • enable some sense of place to be restored; and • cause a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view. This will typically occur where the viewer is at some distance from the development and the development newly appears in the view, but not as a point of principal focus. It will also occur where the development is closely located to the viewpoint but is seen at an acute angle and at the extremity of the overall view.
Negligible Effect:	<p>The project would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain the character (including quality and value) of the landscape; • blend in with characteristic features and elements; • enable a sense of place to be retained; and

- not result in a discernible improvement or deterioration in the existing view.

Minor Adverse Effect:

The project would:

- not quite fit the character (including quality and value) of the landscape;
- be at variance with characteristic features and elements;
- detract from a sense of place; and
- cause a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view. This will typically occur where the viewer is at some distance from the development and the development newly appears in the view, but not as a point of principal focus. It will also occur where the development is closely located to the viewpoint but is seen at an acute angle and at the extremity of the overall view.

Moderate Adverse Effect

The project would:

- conflict with the character (including quality and value) of the landscape;
- have an adverse impact on characteristic features or elements;
- diminish a sense of place; and
- cause a noticeable deterioration in the existing view.

Major Adverse Effect:

The project would:

- be at complete variance with the character (including quality and value) of the landscape;
- degrade or diminish the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements;
- damage a sense of place or cause a sense of place to be lost;
- cause the integrity of characteristic features and elements to be lost;
- cause a very noticeable deterioration in the existing view; and
- obstruct an existing view of local landscape and the development will dominate the future view.

Appendix B

National Character Area 111: 'Northern Thames Basin'

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4721112340496384?category=587130>

Appendix C

Local Character Area 102 - 'Ayres End Valleys and Ridges'

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/landscape/landscape-character-assessments/area102.pdf>

Appendix D

Key Viewpoints 1-12

Land at, and to rear of, 126 Harpenden
Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire

Aerial Photo - Photo Viewpoints



Local Views (0-750 m from The Site)



Photograph 1 - Looking east towards The Site from junction of Carnegie Road and New Greens Avenue.



Photograph 2 - Looking east towards The Site from junction of Footpath 17 and Harpenden Road.

Land at, and to rear of, 126 Harpenden Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire @ A3



Photograph 3 - Looking east towards the proposed pedestrian access to The Site from Harpenden Road.



Photograph 4 – Looking east towards the proposed vehicular access to The Site from 126 Harpenden Road.

Land at, and to rear of, 126 Harpenden Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire @ A3



Photograph 5 – Looking east towards The Site from the junction of Footpath 94 and Harpenden Road.



Photograph 6 – Looking towards The Site from Sandridgebury Lane.

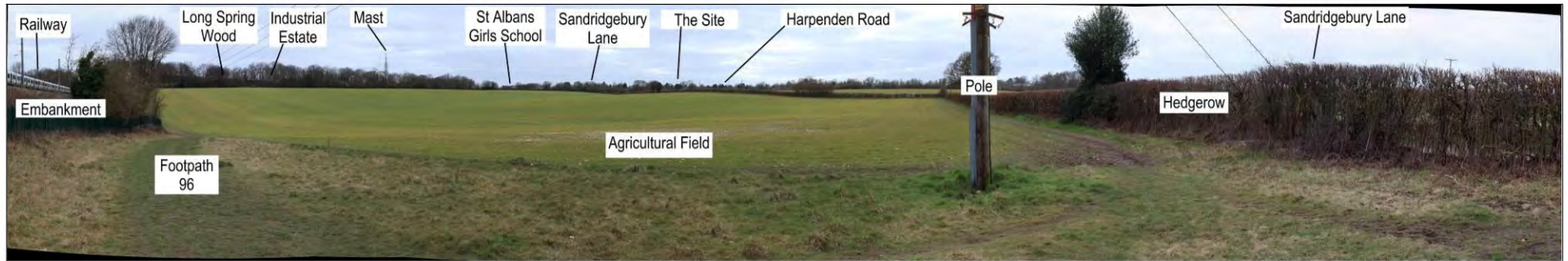
Land at, and to rear of, 126 Harpenden Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire @ A3



Photograph 7 – looking north-west towards The Site from the junction of Sandridgebury Lane and Valley Road.



Photograph 8 – looking west towards The Site from Sandridgebury Lane
Land at, and to rear of, 126 Harpenden Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire @ A3

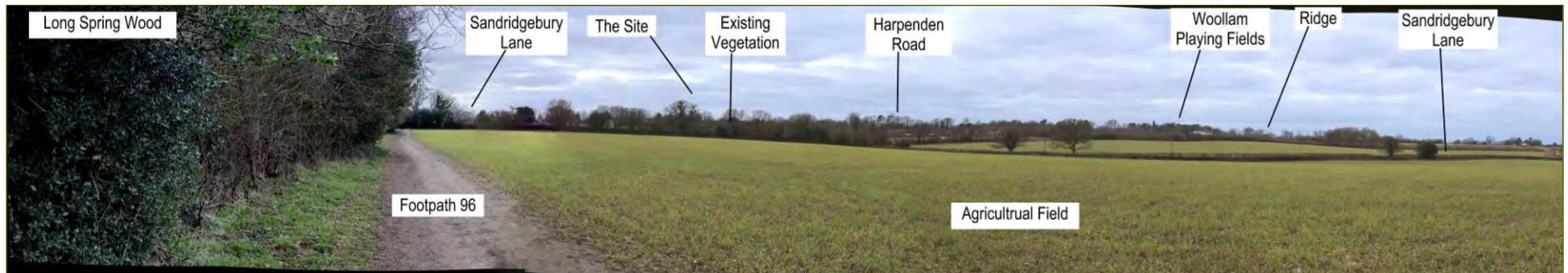


Photograph 9 – Looking west towards The Site from Footpath 96.



Photograph 10 – Looking north and west from Footpath 96.

Land at, and to rear of, 126 Harpenden Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire @ A3



Photograph 11 – Looking west from Footpath 96.

Medium Range Views (750-1500 m from The Site)



Photograph 12 – Looking towards The Site from the bridge over the main line railway

Land at, and to rear of, 126 Harpenden Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire @ A3

Appendix E - Landscape and Visual Effects Table

Landscape Effects

Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Value Overall	Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable are the Effects Reversible?	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse or Beneficial	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse or Beneficial
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible/None	Yes No N/A		
Northern Thames Basin (Area 111) – National Character Area	Varies – overall Low-Medium	Varies – overall Low-Medium	Varies – overall Low-Medium	Construction: None/ Negligible Completion: None/ Negligible	No	Negligible	Negligible
Ayres End Valleys and Ridges (Area 102) – Landscape Character Area	Varies – overall Low - Medium	Varies – overall Low - Medium	Varies – overall Low - Medium	Construction: Negligible/ Low Completion: Negligible	No	Negligible	Negligible

Site and Immediate Context	Low	Low	Low	Construction: Low Completion: Low	No	Minor Adverse	Negligible
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Visual Effects

LVIA Visual Receptor Group Ref And Relevant LVIA Photo Viewpoints (in brackets)	Receptor Type and Location	Judged Sensitivity of Visual Receptor			Judged Magnitude of Visual Effect		Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect upon Completion
		Susceptibility to Change High Medium Low	Value Overall High Medium Low	Sensitivity High Medium Low	Distance from Site Boundary (or Built Development where stated) (approx. m/km)	Size/Scale of Visual Effect (incl. degree of contrast/integration) (at Stages of Project) High Medium Low Negligible/ None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse or Beneficial	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse or Beneficial
A	Residents of Residential Development adjacent to The Site	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	adjacent	Construction: Medium Completion: Low	Minor Adverse	Negligible
B	Users of Woollam Playing Fields	Low	Low	Low	adjacent	Construction: Low-Medium Completion: Low	Negligible - Minor Adverse	Negligible

C (LVIA VPs 1, 3-4 and 6-8)	Users of Harpenden Road and Sandridgebury Lane adjacent to The Site	Low- Medium	Low- Medium	Low	Varies	Construction: Low-Medium Completion: Low	Negligible - Minor Adverse	Negligible
D (LVIA VPs 2, 5 and 9-12)	PRoW Users – Footpaths 9, 17, 94 and 96	Low- Medium	Low- Medium	Low- Medium	Varies	Construction: Negligible - Low Completion: Negligible	Minor Adverse - Negligible	Negligible