

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 S78

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

of

John-Paul Friend

HND (LGD) BA Hons Dip LA CMLI

on

Landscape and Visual Matters

on behalf of

St Albans City and District Council

in respect of the development

Outline planning application for up to 45 new homes, including 40% affordable new homes and 10% self-build and custom housing, new landscaping and public open space and associated infrastructure works, with all matters reserved except for the mean of access.'

at Land Rear of High Street, Colney Heath

PINS Ref: APP/C1950/W/23/3333685

LPA Ref: 5/22/0599

LVIA Ltd Ref: STA1394lpoe

Date: March 2024



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Landscape Proof of Evidence	
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1.0 Introduction

Witness

- 1.1.1 I am John-Paul Friend. I am the Director of LVIA Ltd and I specialise in landscape and visual planning issues associated with development and change.
- 1.1.2 I have provided evidence for planning appeals by inquiry, written representations and hearing for over seven years.

Qualifications

- 1.1.3 I hold a BA (Hons) degree in Landscape Architecture and Post Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture from the University of Gloucestershire. I am a chartered member of the Landscape Institute.

Professional Practice

- 1.1.4 I am the Director of LVIA Ltd and I have been practising landscape architecture for 16 years, all in private practice as a Landscape Architect.
- 1.1.5 I have previously been an associate lecturer at the University of Gloucestershire, where I taught undergraduate and postgraduate students on the Landscape Architecture course. I am currently an associate lecturer at both the University of the West of England and the University of Gloucestershire where I teach Planning students and Landscape Architects.
- 1.1.6 I have an active involvement in schemes across the United Kingdom. The range of projects in which I have been involved include residential, agricultural, defence, highways and energy. I am also involved in the production of environmental impact assessment, environmental statements and general landscape design. During my professional career I have carried out a substantial number of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, Townscape Assessments, Landscape Appraisals and Character Assessments on a wide variety of sites and areas.
- 1.1.7 LVIA Ltd carries out impact assessments, masterplanning, landscape evaluations and detailed landscape proposals for a wide variety of clients. I liaise with local authority officers in many local planning authorities (London boroughs, district and borough Councils) across Britain; and a high proportion of my practice's activity is based on site evaluation and landscape design.
- 1.1.8 I am familiar with the Application Site and its surroundings, having reviewed all relevant background information and undertaken field surveys in February 2024. Before accepting the instruction to act as an expert witness I reviewed all pertinent information and was satisfied that I would be comfortable defending the Council's case on landscape and visual matters.

Declaration of Truth

- 1.1.9 I declare that the evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal is true. It has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of the Landscape Institute and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.
- 1.1.10 Before I accepted involvement in the project, I familiarised myself with the submitted information and ascertained that I could support the issues identified within the reason for refusal.

1.1.11 The scope of my Proof of Evidence is to deal with the landscape and visual impact issues associated with the site, and the Appellants' submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal.

Project Involvement

1.1.12 LVIA Ltd were appointed by St Albans City and District Council to prepare landscape and visual evidence in respect of the proposed development at High Street, Colney Heath.

Scope of Evidence

1.1.13 My evidence addresses the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. In preparing my evidence I have considered (among other things):

- the application plans,
- the Appellant's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment dated January 2022 produced by Turley ("the TLVIA"); and
- the Planning Statement, the Appellant's Statement of Case.

Reasons for Refusal

1.1.14 The Council refused permission for the following reason that refers to landscape and visual matters:

Refusal Reason 1: The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the proposed development represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. In addition to the in-principle harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, other harm is identified as a result of the proposed development in terms of: its detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt, harm to Green Belt purposes, harm to landscape character the adjacent Grade II listed building, loss of high quality agricultural land, and the impacts on social and physical infrastructure. The potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is not clearly outweighed by other considerations; and as a result the Very Special Circumstances required to allow for approval of inappropriate development in the Green Belt do not exist in this case. The proposal is therefore contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and Policy 1 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994.

2.0 The Proposed Site: Local Context and Character

Site Character and Boundaries

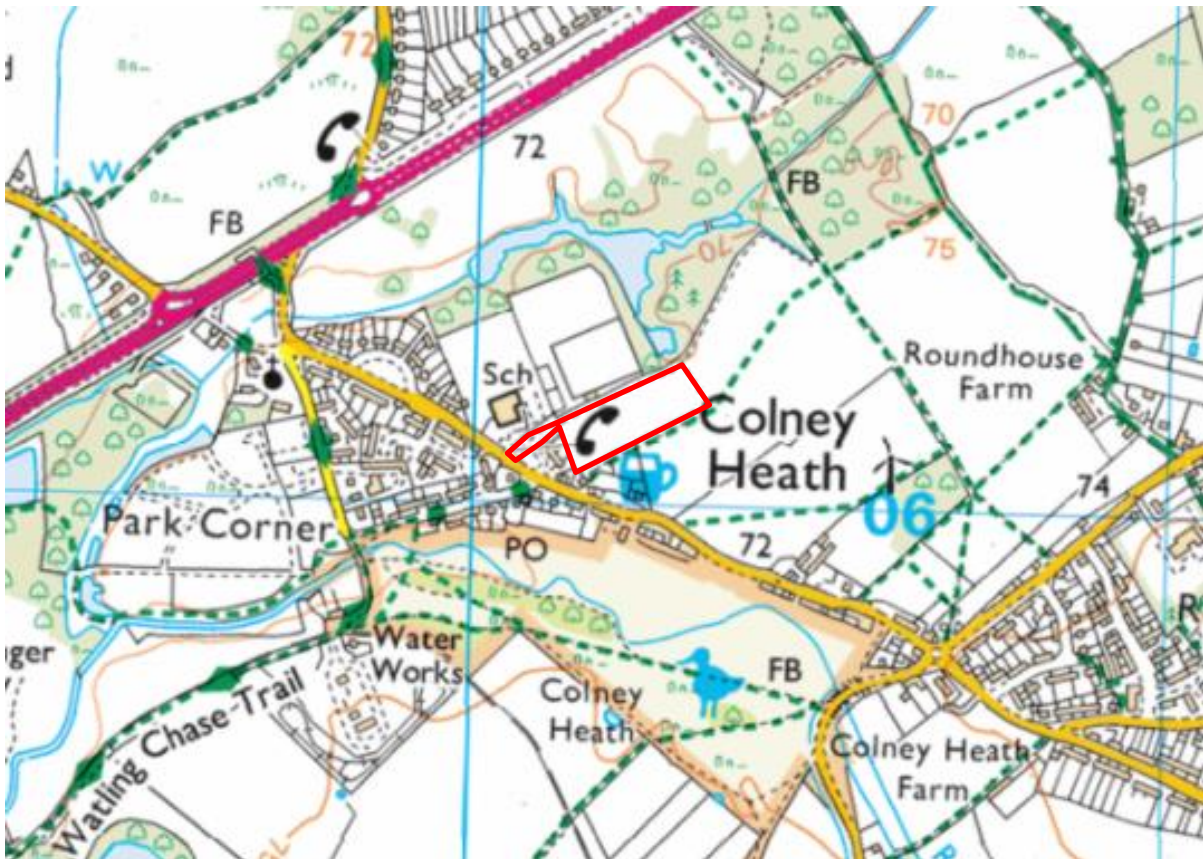


Image 1: Site location shown on 1:25000 OS map base

- 2.1.1 The site is located to the north of the settlement edge of Colney Heath. The total site area is approximately 1.68 hectares. The site is proposed to be accessed from High Street. The site sits to the north of the settlement edge that is formed by a 'ribbon' of existing dwellings that are situated along High Street.
- 2.1.2 The site is currently undeveloped and in use as part of a larger field that is in agricultural use. The field is defined by mature vegetation formed by hedgerow and trees to the north west which bounds Colney Heath Football Club, to the north east by an open field boundary that connects to the wider field network, to the south east by a hedgerow of varying quality and the south west by the rear curtilages of a ribbon of dwellings that face onto High Street.
- 2.1.3 To the north east of the field sit further fields of a similar nature that are currently in agricultural use and crossed by a number of well used public rights of way.
- 2.1.4 The site sits within no areas of national designation related to landscape. The entire site area falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt which is not a landscape designation, but the visual aspect of openness is of relevance. Further analysis is provided within the planning evidence. The site sits outside of the defined settlement boundary.
- 2.1.5 Within the site itself, it appears relatively rural although visual connectivity exists with dwellings to the south with some detracting elements noticeable in the form of pylons and road noise from transport corridors in the wider area.

- 2.1.6 Views from within the site provide links to the generally agricultural landscape to the north east and also to the south where the ribbon of dwellings along High Street form the current settlement edge.
- 2.1.7 The landscape to the north and east of the site that is mainly experienced by users of the PRoW represents a landscape that although exhibiting features that relate to the fringe of Colney Heath remains generally rural in its nature.
- 2.1.8 The development would form an encroachment into the landscape that sits to the north of the current settlement boundary of Colney Heath in this location. The impacts of this to Green Belt is dealt with by Mr Philip Hughes in his evidence.

3.0 The Submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal

- 3.1.1 The TLVIA that accompanies the application has been considered as part of this proof of evidence.
- 3.1.2 The methodology provided within Appendix 2 (Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal Methodology) of the TLVIA generally complies with the approach set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition), published by the Landscape Institute and the IEMA (2013) (GLVIA). However, that does not necessarily mean that I agree with every judgment within the TLVIA.
- 3.1.3 With this in mind, I will provide my views on the outcomes and identify where my judgement varies from the outcomes of the submitted TLVIA in the following chapters of this document.
- 3.1.4 Where paragraphs are stated, they refer to the TLVIA unless otherwise detailed. Sections of the text stated within the TLVIA will be provided where useful for ease of reference but should be read in conjunction with the submitted LVIA for full detail.
- 3.1.5 The TLVIA provides an assessment of the proposals as described:
- “Outline planning application for up to 45 new homes, including 40% affordable new homes and 10% self-build and custom housing, new landscaping and public open space and associated infrastructure works, with all matters reserved except for the mean of access.”*
- 3.1.6 I have used the TLVIA methodology for ease of reference but have used commonly accepted terminology such as ‘major’ as effects for clarity. This is because tables that combine sensitivity with magnitude of change in landscape or visual terms to provide a defined outcomes have not been provided (see Figure 3.5 from GLVIA below which summarises the usual approach). This is not technically outside of the guidance provided within GLVIA but is an unusual approach and does make the process less transparent to the reader and also makes comparisons of assessed effect more difficult.
- 3.1.7 Bullet 4 from page 153 of GLVIA states:
- *Clear definitions should be provided for any technical terms that are used, supported by a glossary of terms.*
- 3.1.8 This illustrates that the assessment process would benefit from the inclusion of definitions of the outcomes to ensure clarity for readers.

3.1.9 Figure 3.5 Assessing the Significance of Effects from GLVIA details the process undertaken to transparently identify the effects of development on receptors.

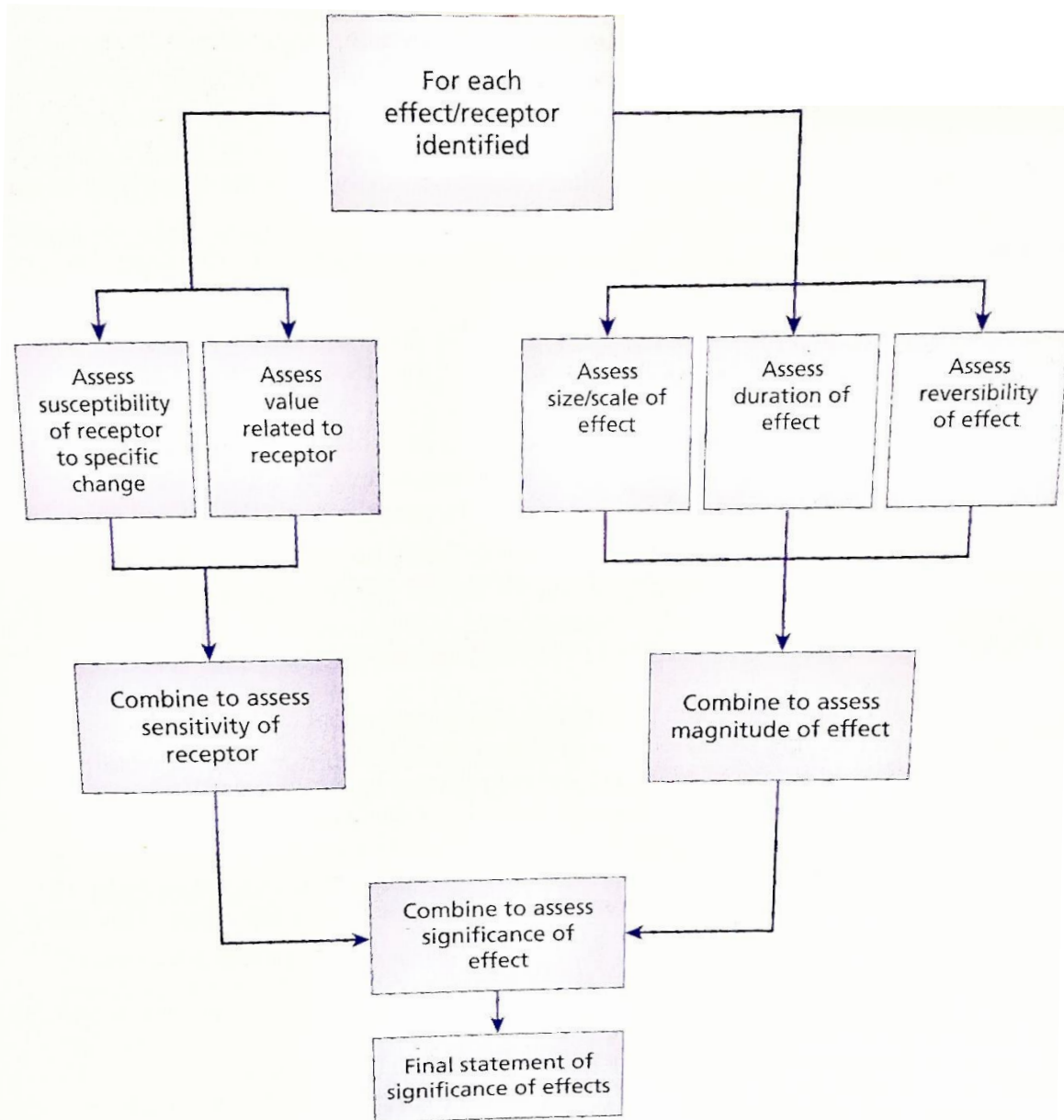


Figure 3.5 Assessing the significance of effects

4.0 Landscape Sensitivity and Effects

Published Landscape Character

- 4.1.1 The site falls within published National Character Area (NCA) 111: Northern Thames Basin.
- 4.1.2 Within the East of England Landscape Framework, the Application Site falls within Landscape Typology Lowland Settled Farmlands.
- 4.1.3 At a more local level, the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment is identified. It is noted that the site falls within the Landscape Character Area (LCA) 30: Colney Heath Farmland.
- 4.1.4 Additionally, analysis has been undertaken to identify more local landscape character from paragraph 4.29 within the TLVIA by Turley, with the use of local landscape character areas (LLCA) illustrated on page 12 at Figure 4.3.
- 4.1.5 It is noted within the TLVIA that the site falls within a LLCA identified as LLCA1 – Farmland.
- 4.1.6 At paragraph 4.30 of the TLVIA the key characteristics of LLCA1 are identified as:
- **Medium scale arable farmland with ditches and hedgerows with trees along field boundaries.**
 - **Gently undulating landform with little variation contributing to a strong sense of openness.**
 - **As result of restored mineral working, there is a lake and a small woodland on the north part of this LCA, which provides a wooded background to views looking north.**
 - **Numerous public footpaths cross the area, some are open while others enclosed in boundary vegetation.**
 - **Scattered built form edging the road.**
- 4.1.7 The site is well represented within the key characteristics of LLCA1-Farmland, in particular where they refer to the strong sense of openness, the numerous public footpaths that cross the area, the wooded background to views north, the hedgerow field boundaries and the scattered built form that edges the road (in this case High Street).
- 4.1.8 I particularly agree that LLCA1 exhibits a strong sense of openness to which the site contributes. The implications of this in terms of the impact of the proposal on the Green Belt will be dealt with by Mr Hughes in his evidence.

Landscape Receptors Sensitivity

4.1.9 The following landscape elements have been identified as landscape receptors and attributed a sensitivity in table 7.3: Summary of effects on landscape receptors of the TLVIA (reproduced below for ease of reference):

Table 1: Reproduction of Table 7.3 from TLVIA

Landscape Character Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude/Type of Effect Year 1	Magnitude/Type of Effect Year 15
LCA 30 – Colney Heath Farmland	Medium	Very Low/Neutral	Very Low/Neutral
LLCA1 – Farmland	Medium	Low/Adverse	Low/Neutral
LLCA2 – Common	Medium	Negligible/Neutral	Negligible/Neutral
LLCA3 – Colney Village	Low	Very Low/Neutral	Very Low/Neutral
Trees and Hedgerows	Medium-High	Low/Beneficial	Medium/Beneficial

4.1.10 The sensitivities provided for the landscape receptors seem to be at an appropriate level.

Landscape Assessment

4.1.11 For the main part the magnitude of effects that are provided within table 7.3 for LCA30, LLCA2, LLCA3 are as can be expected due to the site falling outside of LLCA2 and 3, and forming a small part of LCA30 meaning that inevitably there will be little change caused to their characteristics.

4.1.12 However, my view varies in relation to the receptor LLCA1 – Farmland. The impact on this receptor is important because this is the character area in which the site sits.

4.1.13 The TLVIA states that there would be a low magnitude of change upon the receptor LLCA1 that would be adverse.

4.1.14 It is my view that this understates the effect of the proposed development. The proposals would form a magnitude of effect that would be considered medium; identified within Table 8.3 Magnitude of Landscape Effects as:

Permanent partial loss or change to some of the key characteristics of a landscape receptor and/or addition of new elements which would be prominent features. Changes would result in a large change to the character of a small area or a noticeable change to a larger area.

4.1.15 This description appears to be describing the likely change as there will be a permanent change to a number of the key characteristics of LLCA1 and this change will be prominent. With a Medium sensitivity combined with a Medium magnitude of change that would provide a mid-level or moderate adverse change to the receptor.

4.1.16 At year 15 with the establishment of a mitigation strategy, it is stated that the change would become a Low/Neutral effect. I disagree with this conclusion. It is my view that the change is residential in nature and therefore permanent meaning that the effects on LLCA1 will continue

to be of a medium magnitude and therefore a moderate adverse change because it will continue to impact on the key characteristics of LLCA1, such as openness.

4.1.17As well as the adverse effects on the character areas identified above, I identify two other adverse impacts from the development on landscape character.

Impact on Settlement Pattern

4.1.18On page 32 of the TLVIA at paragraph 7.8 under the heading “Summary of changes to landscape features”, the effect on Settlement pattern and Built Form is considered. It is stated that:

7.8 Settlement pattern and Built Form– The developable area, as defined by the Building Heights and Density Parameters plan within the Design and Access Statement, is located at the centre and on the western side of the Application Site, closest to the existing development. The location of public open space to the eastern edge of the Site would create a positive settlement edge and transition to the surrounding countryside. The development would integrate with the existing settlement pattern creating a robust edge in line with existing residential areas.

7.9 Buildings would be of 2 and 2.5 storeys, the latter contained within the western side of the Site. The scale and density of development would reflect surrounding residential areas. Details of housing styles and elevation design would be confirmed at reserved matters but would be expected to respond positively to local context in accordance with Local Plan Policies 69 and 70.

4.1.19This text has been provided to the reader of the LVIA, but the change to the receptor has not been assessed to identify the potential change to the settlement pattern that will occur.



Image 2: Site boundary shown alongside the current settlement pattern on aerial photograph

4.1.20The site meets the current ribbon of development that follows the north of High Street at this location. This change in settlement pattern would be uncharacteristic, extending to the

northeast into the currently open agricultural field that constitutes the site as illustrated by Image 2 above.

4.1.21 Adding to this harm, there is no 2.5 storey development locally and to the south of High Street development is 1.5-2 storey which would not be reflective of the receiving High Street. The effects would be adverse.

Impact on the landscape character of the site and its immediate context

4.1.22 In addition, the landscape character of the site and its immediate context would be adversely affected by the development. The green field itself will be permanently removed as a result of the development of the site. This has not been considered or assessed as a receptor, but the effect would be significantly adverse and would not be reduced as a result of mitigation measures. These effects would include the addition of built form on the currently open field, the addition of the noise and movement associated with the residents and site users and by the lighting that would be required. These will clearly adversely affect the current baseline of the site.

Section Conclusions

4.1.23 As set out above, there are three main harms to landscape and character:

- LLCA1
- Settlement Pattern
- The landscape character of the site and its immediate context

4.1.24 In relation to LLCA1 it is my judgement that there will be an adverse effect on openness, and the key characteristics of the receptor will be clearly affected so resulting in a mid-level or moderate adverse change.

4.1.25 The extension of built form to the north from the existing 'ribbon' of dwellings along High Street will be clear and this will continue to be a noticeable element in the landscape even once any mitigation measures have established and will appear out of character with the current baseline.

4.1.26 The field that forms the site itself will be permanently removed as a result of the development of the site and the landscape character of the site and its immediate context will be adversely affected.

4.1.27 It has been accepted and is common ground that there will be a level of harm to the site and its immediate surroundings at a residual level. For the reasons set out above, I consider that the TLVIA understates these effects. Overall, the proposals will harm and not improve or conserve the local landscape character.

5.0 Visual Effects of the Proposed Development

- 5.1.1 This section will present my independent analysis of the assessed visual outcomes of the site.
- 5.1.2 As before, all following chapters, page numbers and paragraphs in this section refer to the TLVIA unless otherwise stated.
- 5.1.3 The locations chosen for photographic analysis seem reasonable for the proposals. However, it is my view that additional viewpoint locations, particularly from the north and east of the site along the extensive right of way network would be helpful to illustrate the potential change to the visual baseline that will be experienced.
- 5.1.4 Within the TLVIA, no zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) has been provided to aid the section of viewpoint with potential for visibility, but an approximate Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) has been provided on Figure 4.
- 5.1.5 This approach is in line with guidance, however at paragraph 6.7 of the GLVIA it states:
- 1. Manual approaches use map interpretation, cross sections through the site in relation to its surroundings and visual envelope mapping on site. This means standing at the location of the development and looking out to identify and map the land that is visible from that and other points within the site. This can establish the outer limit or visual envelope of the land that may be visually connected with the proposal. These methods are time consuming and involve a degree of subjectivity since they depend on judgements made by the surveyor and do not allow for the fact that the highest point of the development is likely to be well above the surveyor's eye line. Nevertheless, they can still be helpful in initial scoping and for smaller projects, including appraisal outside EIA.*
- 5.1.6 In relation to this potential for subjectivity, the TLVIA states at paragraph 5.2:
- An approximate zone of visual influence (ZVI) of the Application Site was identified which represents the extent of area clearly visible from within the site and from which development on the site is likely to be noticeable. Within this there are also areas where there is no intervisibility with the Application Site due to the localised screening effect of vegetation. There may also be more distant areas beyond this with some intervisibility with the Application Site, however, visual changes arising from development on the site in these areas are not considered likely to result in changes to visual amenity and have therefore not been considered further.*
- 5.1.7 This is relevant because during my site visit, I found that the site is visible from areas that sit outside the areas identified within the ZVI, such as along footpath 031 and footpath 045 where it meets 031. These viewpoints are in the short to mid range however rather than being more distant as is noted at sentence 3 of paragraph 5.2. These views are illustrated as viewpoints 3 and 9 in the images I provide in this document in Chapter 6.0 to help identify the effects of change.

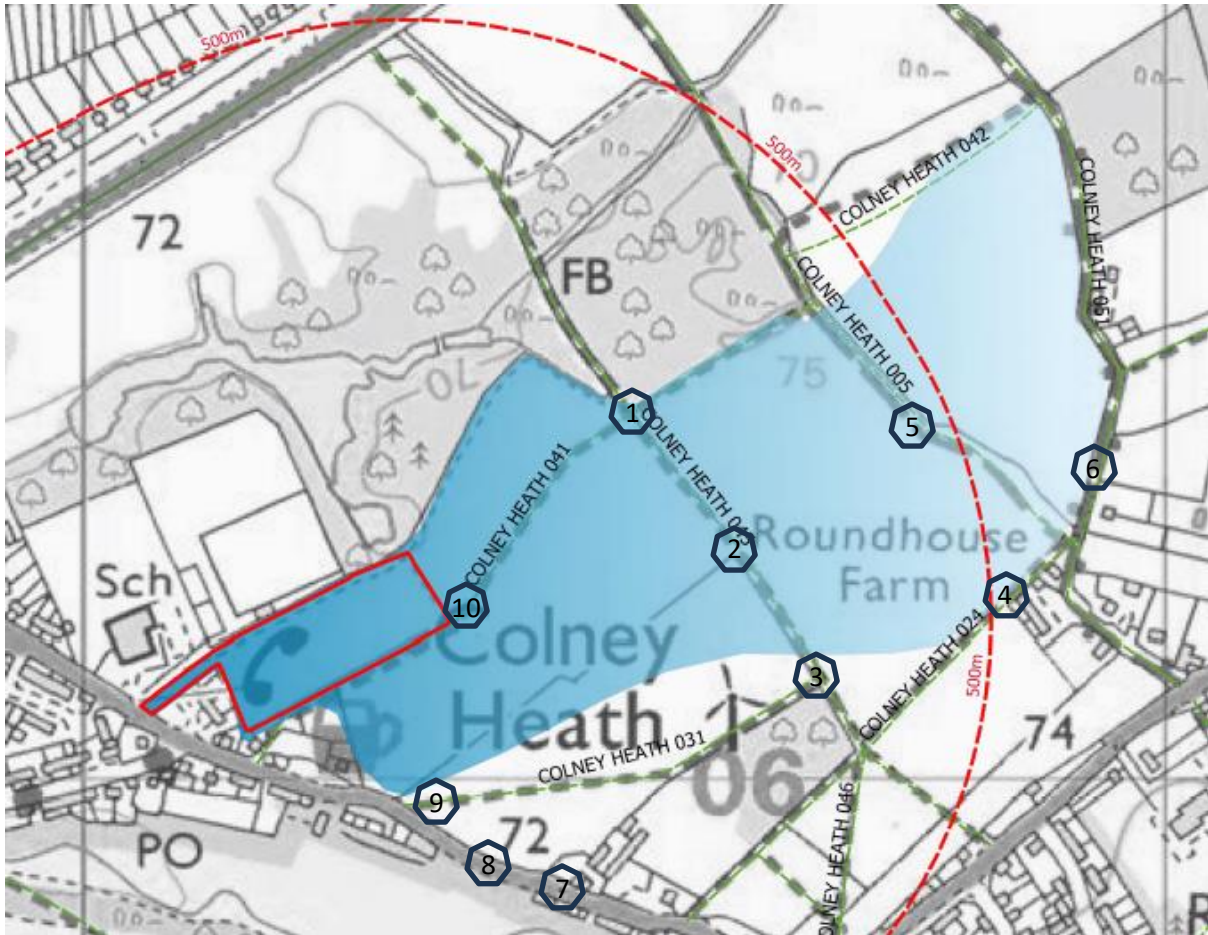


Image 3: Extract from Figure 4 – Zone of Visual Influence taken from TLVIA; showing locations of viewpoints outside of the area identified as having visual influence

- 5.1.8 As can be seen, viewpoints 3, 7, 8 and 9 sit outside of the area highlighted by the ZVI, along with the remainder that sit within the area identified as having intervisibility with the site.
- 5.1.9 There would of course also be a substantial effect on the residents that sit close to the site that should be acknowledged.

6.0 Visual Sensitivity and Effects

6.1.1 This section will present the results of my independent analysis of the assessed visual outcomes of the site based on the methodology used in the TLVIA.

6.1.2 As before, all following chapters, page numbers and paragraphs in this section refer to the TLVIA unless otherwise stated.

Visual Assessment

6.1.3 I have taken and provide below a number of photographs to illustrate the visual change from the local area. These viewpoints are situated across the local area to illustrate change as a result of the proposals taking place on site. I do not suggest that the selected viewpoints were not fit for purpose but seek to provide additional information regarding the likely change that will occur.

6.1.4 Appendix 2 Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal Methodology provides methodology that was used in the analysis provided within the TLVIA. This methodology will be used alongside photography taken from the local area of the site to provide additional illustrative viewpoints.

6.1.5 One disagreement I have with the interpretation of methodology is in regard to the interpretation of the sensitivity of users of the footpath network. Within GLVIA at paragraph 6.33 it states (emboldened text added for clarity):

The visual receptors who are most susceptible to change are generally likely to include:

- *residents at home;*
- ***people, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views;***
- *visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;*
- *communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area.*

Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category of moderate susceptibility to change. Where travel involves recognised scenic routes awareness of views is likely or be particularly high.

6.1.6 This guidance from GLVIA identifies users of a public right of way network as being of a higher susceptibility to change and therefore potentially sensitivity once combined with value.

6.1.7 The TLVIA does not give users of footpaths high sensitivity, but rather a medium sensitivity. The effect of raising susceptibility (in accordance with GLVIA), when combined with the value identified means that the sensitivity and therefore effects will be raised across the right of way network compared to those assessed in the TLVIA.

Table 2: Viewpoint Details

No	Location	Distance (km) and direction of view	Northing	Westing	Sensitivity of Visual Receptor
1	Footpath 045	0.27, SW	51°44'34	00°15'21	High - users of PRoW
2	Footpath 045	0.30, W	51°44'30	00°15'16	High - users of PRoW
3	Footpath 045	0.43, W	51°44'26	00°15'12	High - users of PRoW
4	Footpath 024	0.53, W	51°44'28	00°15'03	High - users of PRoW
5	Footpath 005	0.50, SW	51°44'33	00°15'07	High - users of PRoW
6	Footpath 051	0.65, W	51°44'31	00°14'59	High - users of PRoW
7	High Street	0.27, NW	51°44'19	00°15'26	Medium – Road users
8	High Street	0.21, NW	51°44'20	00°15'29	Medium – Road users
9	Footpath 031	0.14, NW	51°44'22	00°15'31	High - users of PRoW
10	Footpath 041	0.02, W	51°44'28	00°15'30	High - users of PRoW

Views to the site

- 6.1.8 A photographic study of the site has been undertaken. The viewpoints are at varying distances from the site and have been selected to represent potential views seen by the most sensitive receptors from around the site.
- 6.1.9 The site visit has been undertaken during months when vegetation has lost its foliage and is acting as less dense visual barriers. In months when vegetation retains its foliage, it will act as denser visual barriers.
- 6.1.10 For the field assessment, a Canon EOS 500D camera with an 18-55mm lens was used, set at 35mm focal length. This is in line with best practice as shown in the Visual Representation of Development Proposals technical guidance note issued by the Landscape Institute (Technical Guidance Note 06/19).
- 6.1.11 The site was visited on the 20th of February 2024; the weather was overcast and clear.

Viewpoint 1: View from footpath 045 – 0.27km looking south west



Viewpoint 2: View from footpath 045 – 0.30km looking west



Viewpoint 3: View from footpath 045 – 0.43km looking west



Vps 1, 2 & 3		Panoramic Views
Baseline Description	These are views from footpath 045 looking towards the site. The PRow crosses fields in agricultural use that have open boundaries. Views of the existing dwellings that sit to the south west of the site boundary are available through the site along with other dwellings that form part of the ribbon of development along High Street set within a vegetated backcloth. Lighting columns associated with the nearby Colney Heath Football Club can be seen above mature vegetation to the north of the site.	
Predicted change	From these viewpoints, the proposals will sit to the north east of the dwellings that follow High Street. The change will be clearly noticeable in views, with the proposed dwellings clearly visible appearing to extend the existing built form closer to the viewer into the field that forms the site. The change will influence a large part of views along the route of the footpath.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	High – Users of PRow Medium
Significance of Effect		Major to moderate adverse

Viewpoint 4: View from footpath 024 – 0.53km looking west



Vp4	Panoramic View	
Baseline Description	This is a view from footpath 024 looking west towards the site. The PRow crosses fields in agricultural use that generally have open boundaries. Views of the existing dwellings that sit to the south west of the site boundary are partly available through the site along with other dwellings that form part of the ribbon of development along High Street set within a vegetated backcloth. Lighting columns associated with the nearby Colney Heath Football Club can be seen above mature vegetation to the north of the site along with a small turbine that sits to the east of the site. The footpath network is well used.	
Predicted change	From these viewpoints, the proposals will sit to the north east of the dwellings that follow High Street. The change will be clearly noticeable in views, with the proposed dwellings clearly visible appearing to extend the existing built form closer to the viewer into the field that forms the site. The change will influence a large part of views along the route of the footpath.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	High – Users of PRow
	Magnitude	Medium
Significance of Effect		Major to moderate adverse

Viewpoint 5: View from footpath 005 – 0.50km looking south west



Vp5	Panoramic View	
Baseline Description	This is a view from footpath 005 looking south west towards the site. The PRoW crosses fields in agricultural use that generally have open boundaries. Views of the existing dwellings that sit to the south west of the site boundary are partly available through the site along with other dwellings that form part of the ribbon of development along High Street set within a vegetated backcloth. Lighting columns associated with the nearby Colney Heath Football Club can be seen above mature vegetation to the north of the site along with a small turbine that sits to the east of the site. The footpath network is well used.	
Predicted change	From these viewpoints, the proposals will sit to the north east of the dwellings that follow High Street. The change will be clearly noticeable in views, with the proposed dwellings clearly visible appearing to extend the existing built form closer to the viewer into the field that forms the site. The change will influence a large part of views along the route of the footpath.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	High – Users of PRoW Medium
<i>Significance of Effect</i>		<i>Major to moderate adverse</i>

Viewpoint 6: View from footpath 051 – 0.65km looking west



Vp6	Panoramic View	
Baseline Description	This is a view from footpath 051 looking south west towards the site. The PRow follows the edge of fields in agricultural use that have a combination of hedgerow with intermittent trees (of varying quality) to the south and open boundaries. Filtered views of the existing dwellings that sit to the south west of the site boundary are partly available through the site along with parts of other dwellings that form part of the ribbon of development along High Street set within a vegetated backcloth. Lighting columns associated with the nearby Colney Heath Football Club can be seen above mature vegetation to the north of the site along with a small turbine that sits to the east of the site. The footpath network is well used.	
Predicted change	From these viewpoints, the proposals will sit to the north east of the dwellings that follow High Street. The change will be noticeable in views, with the proposed dwellings visible appearing to extend the existing built form closer to the viewer into the field that forms the site. The change will be partly filtered by vegetation that sits in the intervening landscape.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	High – Users of PRow
	Magnitude	Small
Significance of Effect		Moderate adverse

Viewpoint 7: View from High Street – 0.27km looking north west



Viewpoint 8: View from High Street – 0.21km looking north west



Vps 7 & 8	Panoramic Views	
Baseline Description	These are views from High Street looking towards the site. These views illustrate the change from near a seating area of Colney Heath Common that can be seen in viewpoint 8. Existing dwellings are situated in a ribbon form to the south of High Street along with other related elements such as telegraph poles. To the north of High Street can be seen a hedgerow set on a short grass verge that limits most views to the north along this stretch of the road. Lighting columns associated with the nearby Colney Heath Football Club can be seen above hedgerow that sit to the north of the site.	
Predicted change	From these viewpoints, some taller parts of the proposals will be visible above the vegetation that follows High Street, introducing limited built elements in views to the north.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	Medium – Road users Low - Very Low
Significance of Effect		Minor adverse

Viewpoint 9: View from footpath 031 – 0.14km looking north west



Vp9	Panoramic View	
Baseline Description	This is a view from footpath 031 looking north west towards the site. The PRoW follows the edge of a field in agricultural use that is defined to the west by a gappy hedgerow with intermittent trees that allows views of a field in agricultural use beyond. Agricultural built form can be seen that sits to the east of The Crooked Billet Free House along with heavily filtered views of the dwellings that sit to the south east of the site along High Street. A hedgerow that crosses the landscape in a broadly north east direction forms the sites south eastern boundary. Lighting columns associated with the nearby Colney Heath Football Club and the roofline of the single storey pavilion can be seen above the mature vegetation that sits to the north of the site.	
Predicted change	From these viewpoints, the proposals will sit beyond the hedgerow that forms the sites eastern boundary. The change will be noticeable in views, with the proposed dwellings visible above the hedgerow and across the site area and appearing to extend development of between 2 and 2.5 storeys into the currently open field. Lower parts of the will be partly filtered by the hedgerow vegetation that sits in the intervening landscape but the dwellings will be clearly noticeable in the view.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	High – Users of PRoW Medium
Significance of Effect	Major to moderate adverse	

Viewpoint 10: View from footpath 041 – 0.02km looking west



Vp10	Panoramic View	
Baseline Description	This is a view from footpath 041 looking west towards the site. The site sits in the field in agricultural use that sits in the foreground. Partial views of the dwellings that sit to the south east of the site along High Street are available further to the west. Lighting columns associated with the nearby Colney Heath Football Club and the roofline of the single storey pavilion can be seen above the mature vegetation that sits to the north of the site.	
Predicted change	From these viewpoints, the proposals will sit in the foreground within the field. The change will be dominant in this view, with the proposed dwellings unmistakable across the site area and appearing to extend development of between 2 and 2.5 storeys into the currently open field towards the viewer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	High – Users of PRow
	Magnitude	High
<i>Significance of Effect</i>		<i>Major adverse</i>

Table 3: Visual Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Visual effect year 1	Visual effect year 15
Footpath 045 – Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3	High	Medium	Major to Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Footpath 024 – Viewpoint 4	High	Medium	Major to Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Footpath 005 – Viewpoint 5	High	Medium	Major to Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Footpath 051 – Viewpoint 6	High	Small	Moderate adverse	Minor adverse
High Street – Viewpoints 7 and 8	Medium	Low-Very Low	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
Footpath 031 – Viewpoint 9	High	Medium	Major to Moderate adverse	Major to Moderate adverse
Footpath 041 – Viewpoint 10	High	High	Major adverse	Major adverse

6.1.12 It is my judgement that views from footpaths 045, 024, 005, 031 and 041 that cross the landscape relatively close to the site boundary will allow clear views of the development on site as walkers use the routes.

6.1.13 These effects are understated in the TLVIA. Within the TLVIA (at Table 7.4) the visual effects for the right of way network (which is considered as a group) is defined as being between a medium adverse change and a very low neutral at year 1, which would reduce to between a low adverse to negligible level at year 15. However, it is difficult to see how the visual change would reduce to a very low level at year 15 from rights of way close to the site. A very low level of change is described in Appendix 2 of the TLVIA as:

Small scale changes to common characteristics and/or small scale additions of new elements to the view. Changes would not noticeably alter the character of the view. Also includes temporary and/or reversible changes of small or medium scale and extent.

The magnitude of change will be greater than this and overall there will be significant adverse effects ranging from moderate adverse to major adverse on this footpath network.

6.1.14 Views from High Street will be limited but this change will remain visible at a residual stage due to its relative height.

6.1.15 Overall it is clear that the development will be obvious from the surrounding footpath network. This change will be experienced from 5 footpaths (041, 045, 031, 005 and 024) that link to the wider network with effects that would be significant.

6.1.16 The visual envelope is larger than the area shown on the provided ZVI. The change will reduce the apparent openness of views by preventing the current views that exist through the site. Additionally, mitigation measures proposed that would likely lead to a level of reduction in visual amenity effect at a residual stage would create further enclosure to views.

Overall Section Conclusions

- 6.1.17I have identified locations where I judge that there will be greater visual effects as a result of the scheme. It is agreed that the mitigation measures that are outlined on the Illustrative Masterplan will have the effect of reducing some visual effects from the wider landscape but will not reduce them to a level below Major to Moderate from 5 or 6 footpaths that connect to the wider network and the mitigation measures will reduce openness of the current views.
- 6.1.18The proposal will introduce an awareness of built form of a residential nature that will appear to extend the existing settlement edge to the north to viewers from the footpath network in particular and appear incongruous.

7.0 Summary Proof and Conclusion

7.1.1 I am John-Paul Friend, I am the Director of LVIA Ltd and I specialise in landscape and visual planning issues associated with development and change. I am a Chartered member of the Landscape Institute.

7.1.2 I have considered the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TLVIA) and take the view that the appraisal process was undertaken in accordance with GLVIA.

Landscape Section Conclusions

7.1.3 The sensitivities of the landscape character and receptors appear to be reasonable, and I generally agree with the levels put forward.

7.1.4 I disagree with some of the effects stated in the TLVIA. Where there is a variation in judgement I have identified my analysis. In particular the change to LLCA1 would be prominent in my view. There would also be a change to the current form of development in the area which is currently laid out as a 'ribbon' along this section of High Street. It has also been accepted and is common ground that there will be a level of harm to the site and its immediate surroundings at a residual level.

7.1.5 Overall, the proposals will harm and not improve or conserve the local landscape character.

Visual Section Conclusions

7.1.6 I believe some of the receptors would be of a higher sensitivity to change as described due to the guidance within GLVIA.

7.1.7 I have identified locations where I judge that there will be higher visual effects as a result of the scheme. It is agreed that the mitigation measures that are outlined on the Illustrative Masterplan will have the effect of reducing some visual effects from the wider landscape but the residual effects from a number of public rights of way will still be significant after mitigation.

7.1.8 It is also worth noting that the mitigation measures that will be used to reduce the effect on amenity of views would have the effect of reducing openness by forming additional visual barriers to the view across the site that currently exists.

7.1.9 The proposal will introduce an awareness of built form of a residential nature that will appear to extend the existing settlement edge to the north east to viewers, in particular from the footpath network.

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