

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 S78

PROOF OF EVIDENCE SUMMARY

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 application (access sought) – Demolition of existing house and stables and the construction of up to 150 dwellings including affordable and custom build dwellings together with all ancillary works

at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath

PINS Ref: APP/B1930/W/23/3323099

LPA Ref: 25/2022/1988

LVIA Ltd Ref: STA1393lpoe SUMMARY

Date: August 2023



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Landscape Proof of Evidence Summary

Project:	Tollgate Road, Colney Heath
Status:	Final
Date:	August 2023
Author:	JPF
File Reference	STA1393lpoe
Revision	-

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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 the University of the West of England where I teach Environmental Impact Assessment to the undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
- 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 July 2023. 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.

2.0 Landscape Sensitivity and Effects

2.1.1 This section will present the summary of the results of my independent analysis of the assessed landscape outcomes of the site based on the methodology used in the CLVIA.

Section Conclusions

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

2.1.3 The extension of built form to the south from the existing 'ribbon' of dwellings along Tollgate Road will be clear and this will continue to be a noticeable element in the landscape even once the mitigation measures have established.

2.1.4 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. The proposals will harm and not improve or conserve the local landscape character.

3.0 Visual Sensitivity and Effects

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

Overall Section Conclusions

3.1.2 The process undertaken to assess the visual receptors appears reasonable and is in line with guidance.

3.1.3 It is my judgment that some of the receptors would be of a higher sensitivity to change as described due to the guidance provided within GLVIA. I consider residents within the area as having a high overall sensitivity as they have a high susceptibility to change and views from dwellings are highly valued, albeit only by the residents within.

3.1.4 I have identified some 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 remove them totally.

3.1.5 The proposal will introduce an awareness of built form of a residential nature that will appear to extend the existing settlement edge to the south to viewers from the local area.

4.0 Summary Proof and Conclusion

- 4.1.1 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.
- 4.1.2 I have considered the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) and take the view that the LVA process was undertaken in accordance with GLVIA.

Landscape Section Conclusions

- 4.1.3 The sensitivities of the landscape character and receptors appear to be reasonable, and I generally agree with the levels put forward.
- 4.1.4 The levels of change appear generally reasonable, and I only disagree with some of the effects, where there is a variation in judgement I have identified my analysis.
- 4.1.5 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. The proposals will harm and not improve or conserve the local landscape character.

Visual Section Conclusions

- 4.1.6 The process undertaken to assess the visual receptors appears reasonable and is in line with guidance.
- 4.1.7 I believe some of the receptors would be of a higher sensitivity to change as described due to the guidance within GLVIA.
- 4.1.8 I have identified some 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 not remove them totally.
- 4.1.9 The proposal will introduce an awareness of built form of a residential nature that will appear to extend the existing settlement edge to the south to viewers.

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August 2023



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