



Land at Shortland Farm, Guildford Road, Ash, Guildford

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Prepared by Mrs. Clare Brockhurst FLI, BSc (Hons), Dip LA of Leyton Place Limited

on behalf of

Gleeson Land Limited

R003c_2448 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 271025



Contents

Section 1: Introduction 1

 Credentials of assessor..... 1

 Scope of the Assessment 1

 Consequence of Development..... 2

 Context to the assessment..... 3

Section 2: Baseline situation 5

 Landscape character 5

 Visual character and views 10

Section 3: Evaluation of the Sensitivity of Resources and Receptors 13

 Landscape Value 13

 Valued Landscape Factors 13

 Landscape Susceptibility 14

 Landscape Sensitivity..... 15

 Visual sensitivity 15

Section 4: Design evolution and mitigation measures..... 17

 Initial recommendations – 17

 Policy requirements..... 17

 Published Guidance..... 17

 Professional advice 18

Section 5: Consideration of Landscape and Visual Magnitude of Change..... 19

 Magnitude of Landscape Change..... 19

 Magnitude of Visual Change 19

Section 6: Assessment of effects 24

Section 7: Summary and Conclusions 30

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Study Area..... 2

Figure 2.1: Extract from The Guildford Landscape Character Assessment 5

Figure 2.2a Aerial photography Ash urban fringe 2007 6

Figure 2.2b Aerial photography Ash urban fringe 2025 6

Figure 2.3: Local Plan housing and employment allocations..... 6

Figure 2.4: Aerial photography illustrating land use..... 7

Figure 2.5: Definitive Rights of Way Source surreycc.maps.arcgis.com 7

Figure 2.6: Topographic Mapping..... 9

Figure 2.7: Viewpoint locations – extract of plan..... 10

Figure 2.8 Zone of Theoretical Visibility mapping 12

Figure 3.1: 1898 OS Mapping overlain on current aerial photography 14

Figure 4.1: Landscape recommendations for masterplanning 18

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Visual Sensitivity Evaluation 16

Table 5.1: Magnitude of Landscape Change 20

Table 5.2: Magnitude of Visual Change..... 22

Table 6.1: Green Infrastructure Analysis..... 25

Table 6.2: Analysis of significance of landscape effects..... 27

Table 6.3: Analysis of significance of visual effects 29

Appendices

- Appendix 1:** Criteria and Glossary
- Appendix 2:** Bibliography
- Appendix 3:** Viewpoint Locations and Baseline Winter Photography

The contents of this report are valid at the time of writing. Leyton Place shall not be liable for any use of the report other than for the purposes for which it was produced. Owing to the dynamic nature of landscape resources, if more than 12 months have elapsed since the date of the report, further advice must be taken before you rely on the contents of the report. Notwithstanding any provision of the Leyton Place Limited terms and conditions, Leyton Place Ltd shall not be liable for any losses (howsoever incurred) arising incurred as a result of reliance by the client or any third party on the report more than 12 months after the date of the report.

Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by Leyton Place Limited (LPL) to accompany an application for outline planning permission for the development of Land at Shortland Farm, Guildford Road, Ash, Guildford. The application is submitted on behalf of Gleeson Land Limited.
- 1.2. Prior to preparing this LVIA, LPL prepared a baseline report which was shared with the applicant and wider team.
- 1.3. The initial baseline report provided an overview of the issues and identification and analysis of receptors. The baseline document:
 - 1.3.1. Set out the findings of the baseline analysis; and
 - 1.3.2. Summarised recommendations (on landscape and visual matters) to the scheme design.
- 1.4. The baseline report was shared with the client team and masterplanners. The scheme proposals have responded positively to the recommendations presented to the client team and masterplanners.

Credentials of assessor

- 1.5. The LVIA has been prepared by a Fellow of the Landscape Institute (FLI) with more than 30 years professional experience in the field of landscape planning. The assessor has a BSc (Hons) degree in Landscape Management from the University of Reading, a Post Graduate diploma in Landscape Architecture, she achieved chartered status with the LI in 1991.
- 1.6. The assessor has prepared more than 100 LVIA's in her career and has appeared at more than 100 planning inquiries as an expert witness on Landscape and Visual matters. Her approach to assessing landscape and visual effects has been subject to review and critique by her peers and the planning inspectorate.
- 1.7. The approach adopted in the preparation of the LVIA has been scrutinized by an independent chartered member of the Landscape Institute using the LI's Technical Guidance Note 1/20, 2020 and has been subject to review by landscape advisors in a number of planning authorities.

Scope of the Assessment

- 1.8. The methodology adopted in the LVIA is based on guidance published by the Landscape Institute and developed from extensive professional experience.
- 1.9. The published guidance 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', third edition (GLVIA 3) is not prescriptive, however the methodology adopted in the LVIA has been developed to systematically address each stage of the process as set out in the guidance; cognisant of changes in approach and technical guidance which has emerged over the past 10 years; and drawing on the 30+ years of experience of the author in the production of landscape and visual impact assessments prepared for planning applications and appeals.
- 1.10. The Landscape Institute has prepared a variety of other technical notes to support the assessment of valued landscapes, townscape and landscape character and green infrastructure. Those of relevance are listed in the bibliography.
- 1.11. As noted in Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, technical Guidance Note LITGN 2024/01, published August 2024:

"GLVIA3 is guidance aimed at experienced practitioners to ensure a degree of consistency in what is taken into account in reaching professional judgements and how those judgements are documented. It is not a textbook to teach the inexperienced, a detailed recipe for the perfect assessment, nor intended to describe exactly how assessments should be undertaken and presented. Overly restrictive guidance would prevent improvement and innovation, and variation and debate are to be expected rather than discouraged."

GLVIA3 provides a structured process for assessing effects on landscape and visual resources. The responsibility of the assessor is to tailor it to the place and project under consideration, supported by an explanation of the rationale behind the approach taken."

- 1.12. The purpose of the LVIA is to describe the landscape and visual baseline situation, inform the scheme design, set out the construction and operational impacts of the project, including mitigation measures and provide information regarding the likely effects on the landscape and visual resources arising from the impacts identified.

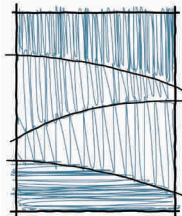
- 1.13. One of the objectives of the assessment process is to ensure that the analysis of the landscape and visual context (baseline situation) informs and guides the iterative design process.
- 1.14. As noted at paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 in GLVIA 3, the interrelated design and assessment process has strength, as it links the analysis of environmental issues with steps to improve the siting, layout, and design of the scheme.
- 1.15. Due to the outline nature of the scheme the assessment of effects is based on the parameter plans, which accompany the application. The assessment has assumed a development which comes forward in every respect at the maximum extent of the identified parameters (in particular area coverage; and building heights). The assessment is made cognisant, but not reliant on, of illustrative scheme drawings, images, and Landscape Framework Strategy, although it is acknowledged some elements of design will be the subject of detailed design.
- 1.16. A component of the submission material relevant to this assessment is the landscape strategy which has been prepared in collaborative manner with the wider team. This illustrates the distribution of multifunctional Green Infrastructure (mGI) and opportunities the proposed development can deliver within the scheme and the accompanying design intent as articulated in the DAS relating to specific aspects of the proposals, namely:

Land Use & Quantum - the building / Site use or uses proposed for the Proposed Scheme & the maximum amount of Development and relationship to open space and the wider landscape.

Scale of Development - the maximum and minimum height limits for the Proposed Scheme zone; and

Layout of Development - the way in which Development zones or building plots, routes and open spaces are provided, situated, and orientated in relation to each other.

- 1.17. The relevant parameters plans for which approval is sought are:
 - 1.17.1. Land Use Parameter Plan.
 - 1.17.2. Building Heights Parameter Plan.
 - 1.17.3. Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan.



- 1.18. The primary Study Area for the project is shown on **Figure 1.1** and has been informed by Zone of Theoretical Visibility mapping (ZTV, See **Figure 2.8**), consideration of the published landscape character assessments and fieldwork.
- 1.19. The Study Area is considered to be proportional and appropriate for the type and scale of development proposed. Due to landform, the settlement edge and vegetation the Study Area is focussed on the Application Site, and its immediate context. Potential views of development lie outside of the principal Study Area; however, consideration of the visual environment is not determinative of the Study Area. In this instance the Application Site exerts a limited influence upon the wider landscape and visual environment.
- 1.20. The assessment criteria and glossary of terms is set out in **Appendix 1**. **Appendix 2** contains the bibliography.
- 1.21. The Application Site is centred on National Grid Reference SU 90644 51022 and is within the administrative boundary of Guildford Borough Council (GBC). The Application Site area extends to approximately 10.18 ha.

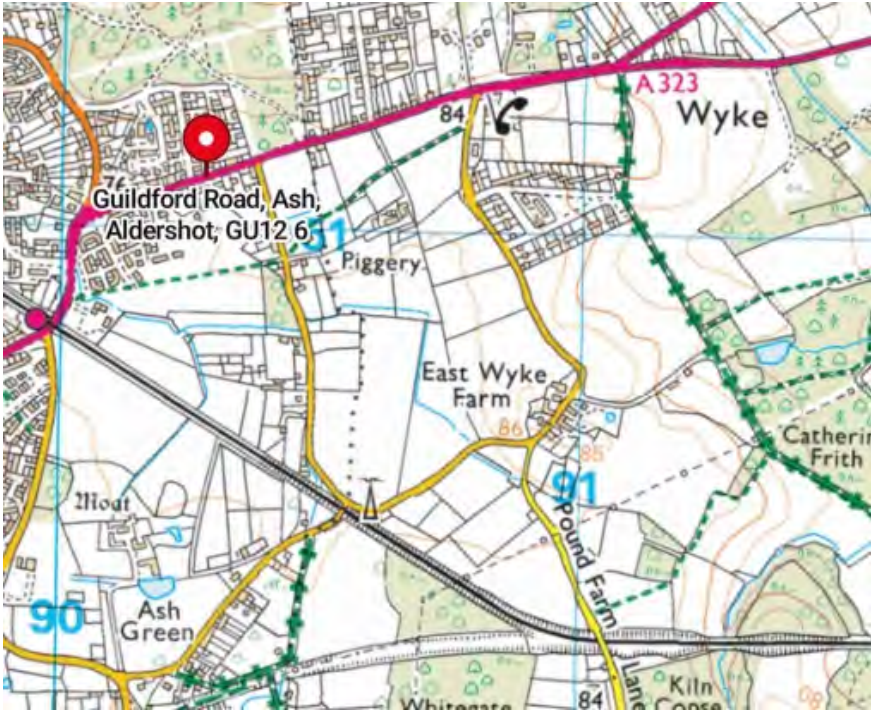


Figure 1.1: Study Area
Consequence of Development

- 1.22. It is important to acknowledge that GLVIA, paragraph 3.33, states:
- "It is not essential to establish a series of thresholds for different levels of significance of landscape and visual effects, provided that it is made clear whether or not they are considered significant."*
- 1.23. The simple point is to make clear judgements as to whether the effects are significant or not significant. Notably the word 'harm' is not contained in the GLVIA, any judgements on 'harm' are planning judgements and would be addressed in the appropriate forum.
- 1.24. In Notes and Clarification on Aspects of GLVIA the following is recorded:
- "In particular, the purpose is to explain which aspects of landscape and visual change are more important to the decision to be made (and why), and which are not (and why). Achieving this outcome is more fundamental to good LVIA than*

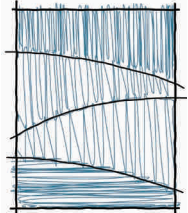
the detailed mechanics of specific assessment methodologies."

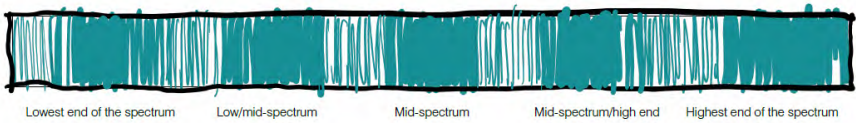
- 1.25. The assessment therefore comments on the nature of the changes and whether the changes will be significant in the determination of the application.
- 1.26. The author of this LVIA visited the Application Site in April 2025 and is familiar with the wider area having been involved with the planning application at Ash Manor over a number of years.
- 1.27. A professional photographer¹ visited the Application Site (daytime) in April 2025 to take accurate photography (**Appendix 3**) in accordance with 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals', Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19.
- 1.28. The LVIA considers the inter-related but distinct issues of the effects on the landscape, its character and resources and the views and visual amenity experienced by people.

Technical assessment methodology

- 1.29. The assessment is written on the basis that the primary audience will be the determining authority and the statutory and non-statutory consultees. It is therefore assumed that the publicly available and published documents referred to, such as the landscape character assessments, will be familiar and available to the reader. Footnotes are provided to assist.
- 1.30. Reflecting the guidance in GLVIA, throughout the assessment judgements, underpinned by the informed professional experience of the author, are made on where the value, susceptibility, sensitivity, magnitude lie on a spectrum ranging from low to high. To assist the reader the 'grading' relating to the spectrum will refer to:
- Lowest end of the spectrum.
 - Low/mid-spectrum.
 - Mid-spectrum.
 - Mid-spectrum/high end.
 - Highest end of the spectrum.

¹ LPL commissioned visualisation specialists THL to undertake the photography and collect the survey data to enable the preparation of visual material.





- 1.31. Given the multiple criteria which inform each judgement there is no single and fixed threshold between categories.
- 1.32. This 'threshold-free' approach to categorisation is adopted by LPL² because typically the definitions and criteria used in determining thresholds may either be limited to using the threshold to define itself, e.g. a High sensitivity relates to a high value and high quality and medium sensitivity is medium value and medium quality etc. which in turn needs definition as to what is high and how this is differentiated from medium; or the criteria are described in absolute terms such as change being large scale, with effects over a wide geographic area and total loss of contributory components, when in fact there may be a large scale change but only experienced locally with a moderate change to components.
- 1.33. Consistent with GLVIA, paragraph 5.56 the 'ends' of each spectrum used in the assessment are set out in **Appendix 1** which explains where the low and high points are, and the criteria applied in their determination. Professional judgement is then made as to the subtleties and variation in the combined factors.
- 1.34. The key stages to the assessment process are:
- Understanding the baseline situation.
 - Assigning sensitivity to the receptors (landscape and visual).
 - Consideration of the design and mitigation measures.
 - Evaluating the degree of change resulting from the Proposed Scheme.
 - Assessment of effects and identification of significant effects.

Baseline analysis

- 1.35. The starting point of the process is to understand the 'Baseline Situation' to

- Inform the scheme design so that it responds to the place it will become part of; and
- Identify the landscape and visual environment against which any changes will be assessed.

- 1.36. The contextual analysis considers the physical and perceptual aspect of the landscape and the views from where the changes are visible, and the people affected.
- 1.37. The description of the established context has been derived from:
- A review of published material, particularly in respect of Landscape Character Assessments (See **Appendix 2: Bibliography**).
 - Consideration of the planning policy context (as related to the assessment process³).
 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Mapping.
 - Review of historical maps and images available online.
 - Consideration of current mapping (plan and digital) and aerial photography; and
 - Observations made in the field.

- 1.38. The viewpoints which form the basis of the visual analysis in the assessment have been determined by reference to LiDAR based mapping of the height parameters shown on the ZTV mapping, and field verification undertaken by the author.

Sensitivity of resources and receptors

- 1.39. Having determined the baseline situation against which the effect of the Proposed Scheme is measured, the sensitivity of the landscape and visual resources to the change is considered and classified. This considers the value of the resource and the susceptibility to accommodate the proposed changes.

Consideration of the Proposed Scheme

- 1.40. The assessment process then considers the Proposed Scheme and Inherent Mitigation Measures (Section 4) so that the magnitude of the change can be described and assigned.
- 1.41. Throughout the assessment a subjective judgement, underpinned by an informed professional opinion against the

criteria as to where the sensitivity of receptors or magnitude of changes lies on a spectrum from low to high. The narrative which supports the conclusion drawn is provided to explain the rationale of the assessor.

- 1.42. Of relevance to the judgements made, 'Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition,' LI Technical Guidance Note – 2024-01 records:

"LVIA is a skill to be learned and mastered. It should always be remembered that the purpose for undertaking LVIA (or LVA) is to express clearly to decision-makers the landscape professional's judgement about changes to the landscape and views. In particular, the purpose is to explain which aspects of landscape and visual change are more important to the decision to be made (and why). Achieving this outcome is more fundamental to good LVIA than the detailed mechanics of specific assessment methodologies.

Landscape and visual resources (and changes to them) are not easily measurable. Therefore, those undertaking LVIA have to proceed by a process of description, analysis, and reasoning, leading to assessment conclusions.

GLVIA3 is guidance aimed at experienced practitioners to ensure a degree of consistency in what is considered in reaching professional judgements and how those judgments are documented..."

- 1.43. In respect of this project the credentials of the author of the LVIA are set out in paragraphs 1.4 – 1.6 above.

Context to the assessment

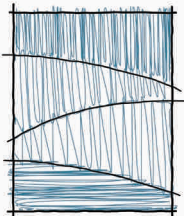
Planning context

- 1.44. GLVIA does not require that an assessment of legislation or planning policies be a component of the LVIA process. The assessment of landscape and visual effects is prepared independent of the planning considerations which are made based on merit, compliance, and balance by the determining

² This methodology has been tested through the Inquiry process, has been subject to peer review by a number of landscape consultancies and planning authorities and further scrutinised independently by the Welsh Planning Inspectorate for a major infrastructure project. This methodology was explored in respect of an appeal

for Development within the SDNP and its setting and was found by the inspector [APP/Z3825/W/22/3308455] to be "...a reliable basis for assessing the landscape impacts of the scheme the subject of these appeals."

³ IEMA – Impact Assessment Outlook Journal, Volume 11: October 2021 the relationship between planning policy and LVIA (Paul Macrae and Edward White) and Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, technical Guidance Note LITGN 2024/01, published August 2024



authority⁴. However, it is recognised that designations and policies may provide an indication of the ‘value’ of landscape and visual assets.

- 1.45. The Planning Statement, prepared by Lichfields, sets out the planning policy context (materiality and weight to be applied to the policies), and the rationale for the proposed development.

Collaboration in the design process

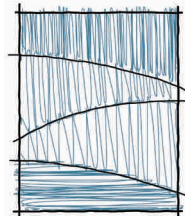
- 1.46. The author has engaged with the client team to address mitigation measures, including the spatial distribution of new homes within the redline area.
- 1.47. LPL collaborated with Cornus Landscape Planning and Design to develop the Landscape Strategy Plan.

Deficiencies or omissions

- 1.48. No private residential properties were visited during the site visit as part of the assessment.
- 1.49. The remainder of this LVIA is structured as follows:

- Section 2:** Baseline Situation
- Section 3:** Evaluation of Resources and Receptors
- Section 4:** Design Evolution and Mitigation Measures
- Section 5:** Magnitude of Change
- Section 6:** Consideration of effects of development
- Section 7:** Summary

⁴ Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of GLVIA 1(2)



Section 2: Baseline situation

- 2.1. The Application Site is described in the DAS, however, the baseline analysis for the LVIA seeks to explore specific aspects of the landscape of the Application Site and its context.
- 2.2. The *European Landscape Convention – A Framework for Implementation*, October 2007⁵, contains the short definition of ‘landscape’ and provides supporting text at paragraph 1.2. The ELC definition is short, yet comprehensive, namely:

“‘Landscape’ means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’ The definition applies to the whole territory of states including all urban and peri-urban landscapes, towns, villages and rural areas, the coast, and inland areas. It applies to ordinary or even degraded landscape as well as those areas that are outstanding or protected.”
- 2.3. This interpretation is embedded in GLVIA 3 (paragraph 2.3).
- 2.4. This report recognises that landscape and visual effects need to be considered separately, however the character of the landscape has aesthetic aspects which are typically experienced visually, this is acknowledged in this assessment, as appropriate.

Landscape character

- 2.5. Landscape Characterisation is the process whereby areas are identified and classified into distinct, recognisable, and consistent patterns of elements and features. This is a value-free process and does not provide for comparison of areas being ‘better’ than others. The determination of ‘value’ primarily comes through the process of determining and applying designations, policies, or local expressions of value.
- 2.6. Landscape Character Assessments typically classify and describe the countryside beyond settlement boundaries, sometimes referencing the presence of settlements. As a result, the descriptions do not consider or focus on the character of the peri-urban areas or specific townscapes.
- 2.7. Published characterisations cascade from the National Character Areas (NCA), prepared by Natural England, though to regional

- and local Landscape Character Areas (LCA) and Landscape Character Types (LCT) prepared by County and District Councils. Typically, the local scale assessments are typically most relevant to a project of this scale.
- 2.8. The following are the relevant character areas:

National scale – 114: Thames Basin Lowlands NCA.

County scale – Wanborough Wooded Clay Lowland.⁶

Local Scale – E1 Tongham Rural-Urban Fringe.⁷
- 2.9. As a result of the geographic extent of the classification, not all key characteristics identified in the published analysis apply to the Site. This is most notable for the national assessment which extends across an extensive geographic area.
- 2.10. The Surrey characterisation is based on an assessment of the landscapes beyond settlement boundaries. As a result, the descriptions do not account for the character of the peri-urban character of the urban fringe. The emphasis is therefore on the unsettled elements, which are not pertinent to this analysis, as exemplified by the characteristics which describes the landscape as being:

“A fairly sparse pattern of scattered farmsteads, manors and historic villages is overlaid by more recent dense clusters of mainly 20th century settlement centred on the railway line and spreading along roads.”
- 2.11. Despite the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment being the most recent classification and description of the landscape, the Guildford assessment is the more geographically relevant.
- 2.12. The Guildford Landscape Character Assessment was prepared in 2007. Paragraph 5.13 of GLVIA notes that:

“Existing assessments must be reviewed critically as their quality may vary, some may be dated, and some may not be suited to the task in hand. Before deciding to rely on information from an existing assessment a judgement should be made as to the degree to which it will be useful in informing the LVIA process.”

- 2.13. In this instance the local scale published character assessment is 18 years old. As illustrated the Tongham Rural-Urban Fringe abuts the southeastern quadrant of Ash and encompasses the Application Site (Figure 2.1).

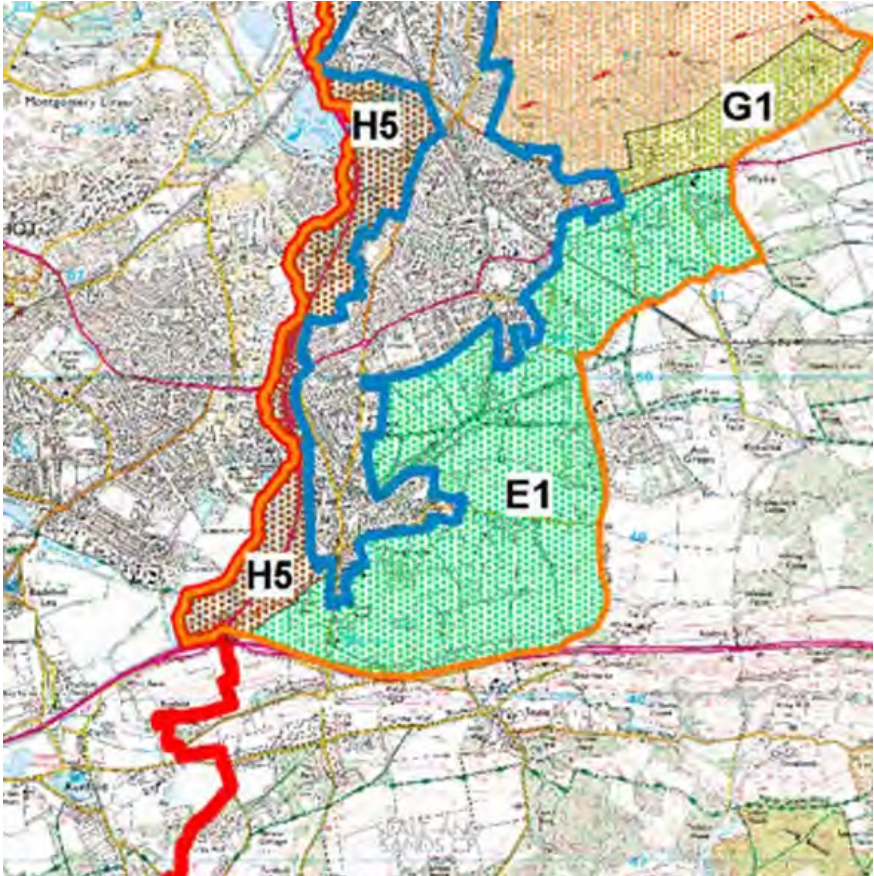


Figure 2.1: Extract from The Guildford Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.14. Notably since 2007, when the document was published, the landscape within LCA E1 Tongham Rural-Urban Fringe has undergone significant change (see Figures 2.2a and 2.2b), with further planned changes through delivery of Local Plan allocations (Figure 2.3).

⁵ Although the UK has left the EU the definitions are still valid and relevant to the LVIA process.

⁶ Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015

⁷ Guildford Landscape Character Assessment & Guidance Final Report January 2007, Volume 1: Rural Assessment

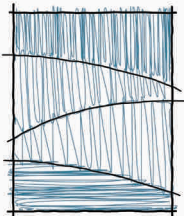




Figure 2.2a Aerial photography Ash urban fringe 2007



Figure 2.2b Aerial photography Ash urban fringe 2025

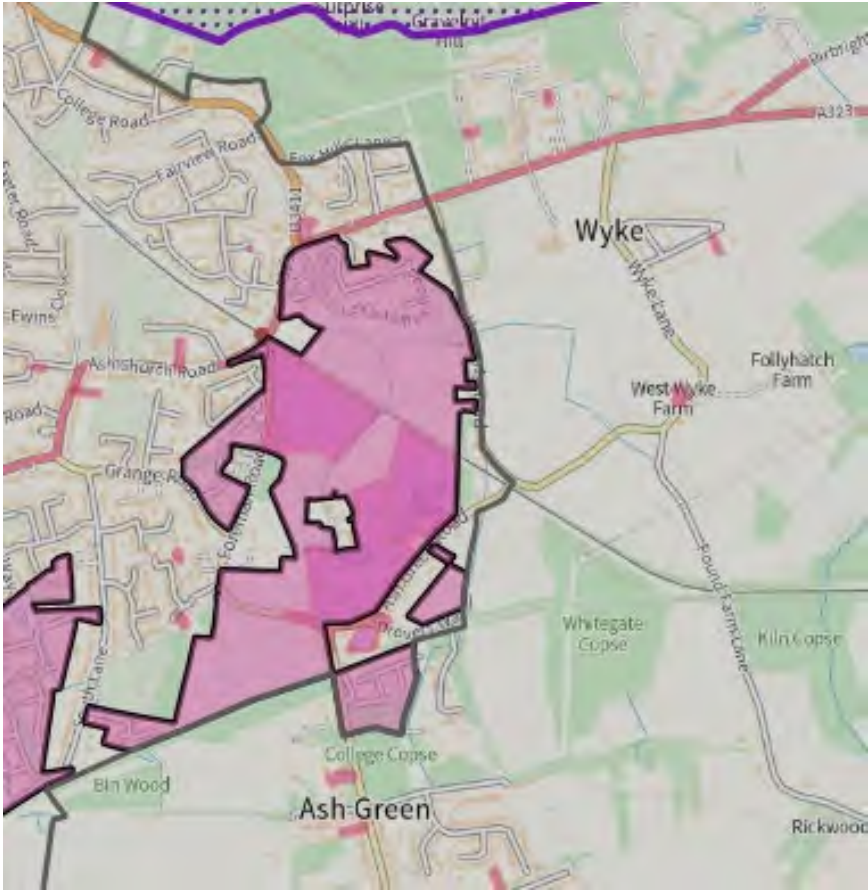


Figure 2.3: Local Plan housing and employment allocations

2.15. Key positive landscape attributes for this character area (in 2007) were recorded in the GBC's evidence base as being:

- Traditional farmsteads and associated structures (in particular medieval barns and shelters).
- Mature woodland blocks and belts - in particular ancient woodland at Bin Wood, plus hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Recreation grounds at urban edge providing green finger/connection between urban and more rural areas and containing development.
- Tracks and footpaths providing public access to open countryside.

2.16. The focuses of change are noted as:

"Much of this rural urban fringe area already appears to be in poor condition (Held by developers) with poor quality horse pastures, unmanaged agricultural land and regenerating scrub

creating a degraded landscape setting. The key sensitivities include:

- *Views from the Hog's Back.*
- *Woodland belts, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.*
- *The setting of historic farm buildings."*

Site specific landscape components

2.17. This sub section sets out the analysis of the local scale landscape prepared by LPL, based on desktop studies and field observations. This seeks to validate the GBC's analysis, identify where differences occur and add detail for the Site-specific issues which may not be consistent with the broader character area.

Landform

2.18. The Application Site occupies an area of low-lying land within the broad River Wey valley floor. The Application Site appears as a generally flat area of land, with localised undulations, in the context of relatively dramatic landforms to the north (Normandy Hill) and south (Week Wood) (**Figure 2.6**).

Land use, landcover and vegetation

2.19. The Application Site contains a number of land uses and respective landcover units and vegetation (**Figure 2.4**).

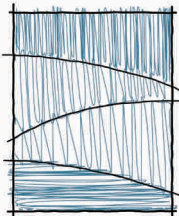




Figure 2.4: Aerial photography illustrating land use

- 2.20. Pony paddocks on the northern edge are set within mature and distinct vegetated boundaries, whereas to the south the agriculture is manged though timber fencing defining paddocks in the absence of internal field boundaries and comparatively large open fields.
- 2.21. The farm and farm buildings are set within areas of hard standing, with exercise menages provided to support the equine operations.
- 2.22. Boundary hedgerows are well-maintained through regular flailing to maintain height and shape. The east-west tree belt in the northern portion of the Application Site being the most notable and distinctive element in the landscape.

Hydrology

- 2.23. There are no distinctive water bodies associated with the Application Site which influence the character of the landscape.

Access

- 2.24. Footpaths are limited in the study area (Figure 2.5). Footpath 356 crosses the northern part of the Application Site (east-west). The experience from this footpath is influenced by the proximity to the

road and the connectivity between the settlement edge and outlying area of housing. It is not a distinctly rural footpath.

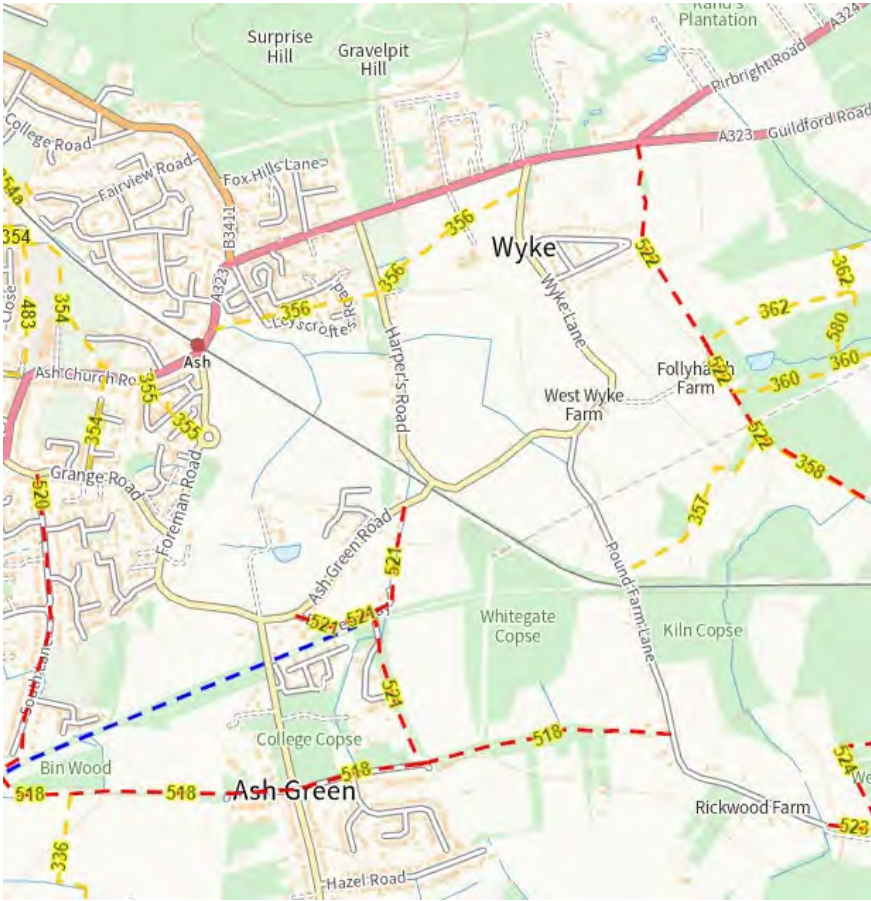


Figure 2.5: Definitive Rights of Way Source surreycc.maps.arcgis.com

Tranquility

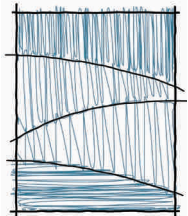
- 2.25. The urban context and associated peri-urban features have an impact on, and in comparison, to 2007, reduced the tranquility of the Application Site and its immediate context. There is aural disturbance arising from traffic on the highways network, with visual disruption resulting from the presence of urban elements and construction sites.
- 2.26. Street lighting, and lighting from the adjoining properties and wider townscape has a negative impact on the dark skies of this area. Distinctive lighting elements are visible within a general glow emanating from the urban area.

Townscape

- 2.27. The townscape⁸ of Ash is considered in Guildford Landscape Character Assessment Townscape Assessment, prepared by Land Use Consultants, January 2007.
- 2.28. Prior to the more recent expansion of the settlement the eastern edge of Ash comprised primarily post-war housing. The townscape is classified as 9L. Ash representing Post 1960's Residential Estates, characterised as:
- relating to large areas of post 1960s development in Guildford, Ash and Tongham.
 - having an intricate twisting pattern of short marked and unmarked roads and cul-de-sacs with major arterial roads at the edges of the areas.
 - a mix of narrow and wide streets with pavements and sometimes narrow grass verges plus some segregated pedestrian links and cut throughs.
 - dense layout of detached houses, short terraces and blocks of flats as well as a few large-scale commercial buildings and 1-2 storey schools set in playing fields.
 - few landmark features contributing to a lack of orientation.
 - predominantly built of red brick, concrete, render and clay tile with some recent buildings referring to historic and vernacular use of materials in their design.
 - enclosed small scale corridor views with some more distant views to vegetative backdrops.
 - garden treatments vary with some newer houses fronting directly onto the street while in other unbounded front gardens are a feature.
 - densely settled but with occasional open spaces in the form of sports or recreation grounds.
 - other landscape elements include small areas of woodland which contribute to the enclosed, rural character of some of the areas.

- 2.29. With the further expansion of the settlement which has occurred, the distinctiveness of this settlement edge character has been masked by the new housing.

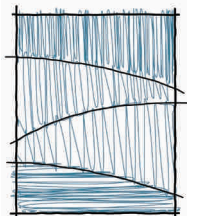
⁸ Landscape Institute Technical Information Note: Townscape Character Assessment, 05/2017, Revised April 2018



Landscape resources and receptors forming the basis of the assessment

2.30. From the baseline analysis the following landscape resources and receptors have been identified as relevant to the assessment of landscape effects and elements to be considered in the evolution of the scheme proposals:

- Recreation grounds at urban edge providing green finger/connection between urban and more rural areas and containing development.
- The consistent network of well-maintained hedges and dispersed blocks of woodland.
- The structure and pattern of the landscape derived from the road network and hedgerow alignments.
- Vegetative Cover - hedgerows, tree belts, and grassland.
- Relationship with and character of the emerging townscape of Ash.



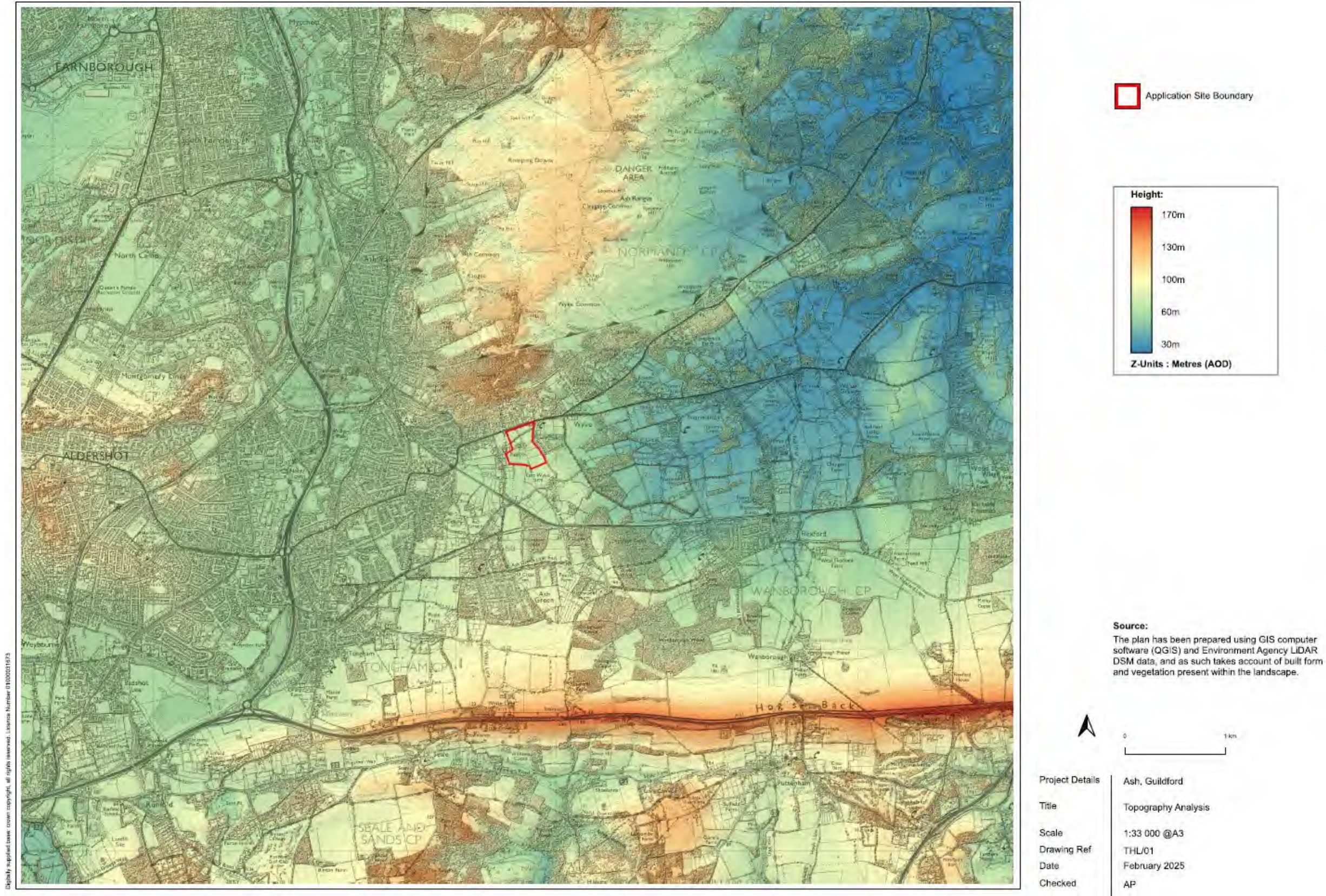
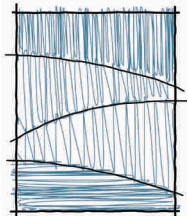


Figure 2.6: Topographic Mapping



Visual character and views

Extent of visual envelope

- 2.31. The analysis of views relates to more than what is visible and the appreciation of the apparent character of the landscape.
- 2.32. The **Appendix 3** contains professional photography (winter 2024/2025) taken in compliance with the Landscape Institutes guidance on photography (*Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Landscape Institute, September 2019*).
- 2.33. The viewpoints which will form the basis of the visual impact assessment are shown in **Appendix 3**, alongside the winter baseline photography.
- 2.34. To assist in determining the locations of representative viewpoints, the area from within which people are likely to experience a visual change has been digitally mapped using LiDAR data to create a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV, **Figure 2.8**). The mapped ZTV utilises data which includes buildings and vegetation. The LiDAR data takes account of new development present in the landscape at the time of mapping even if it is not shown on the OS map base.
- 2.35. The totality of those areas which are coloured on **Figure 2.8** are the locations from which 2-storey development will be visible. In effect this represents the Visual Envelope for the development. The different colouration represents the proportion of the development that will be visible from those locations within the Visual Envelope.
- 2.36. Those areas coloured red will experience >80% visibility of the development within the Site, the counter point is that the blue colouration indicates that <20% of the development will be visible (for example this may be the case from close views where only the properties in the foreground are visible or from distant views only some of the roofscape may be observed).
- 2.37. Fieldwork has enabled the assessor to:

- 2.37.1. Confirm that the ZTV is a fair representation of the extent of the Visual Envelope.

- 2.37.2. Identify locations within the ZTV, from which representative photographic viewpoints are recommended are included at **Appendix 3**, which forms the basis of this impact assessment.
- 2.38. The key elements in the landscape which limit the extent of the Visual Envelope are the:
- The valley floor landform which avoids prominence of fields within the landscape.
 - The presence of woodland blocks.
 - Development within and on the edge of Ash.

Current sources of lighting

- 2.39. LPL is not a lighting specialist, the following sets out general comments not specific measures of illumination.
- 2.40. The assessment does not attempt to describe all of the features which emit light relevant to the Application Site and its general location but summarise those key elements which affect the appreciation of night skies or are prominent at nighttime and are pertinent to the assessment of landscape and visual effects. The notable light sources are:
- Residential properties.
 - Street lighting within areas of housing.
 - Lighting on the principal roads, including the A323 on the northern edge of the Site.
 - ‘Sky Glow’ from Ash and the wider conurbation of the west.
- 2.41. Collectively these sources result in a noticeable level of illumination in the vicinity of the Site.
- 2.42. It is considered that the existing level of sky glow is consistent with the categorisation of Zone E3⁹: Suburban, medium district brightness, examples being summarised as:
- “Well inhabited rural and urban settlements, small town centres and suburban locations.”*
- 2.43. Given the existing situation the LVIA omits the assessment of lighting and night-time effects.

Representative viewpoints

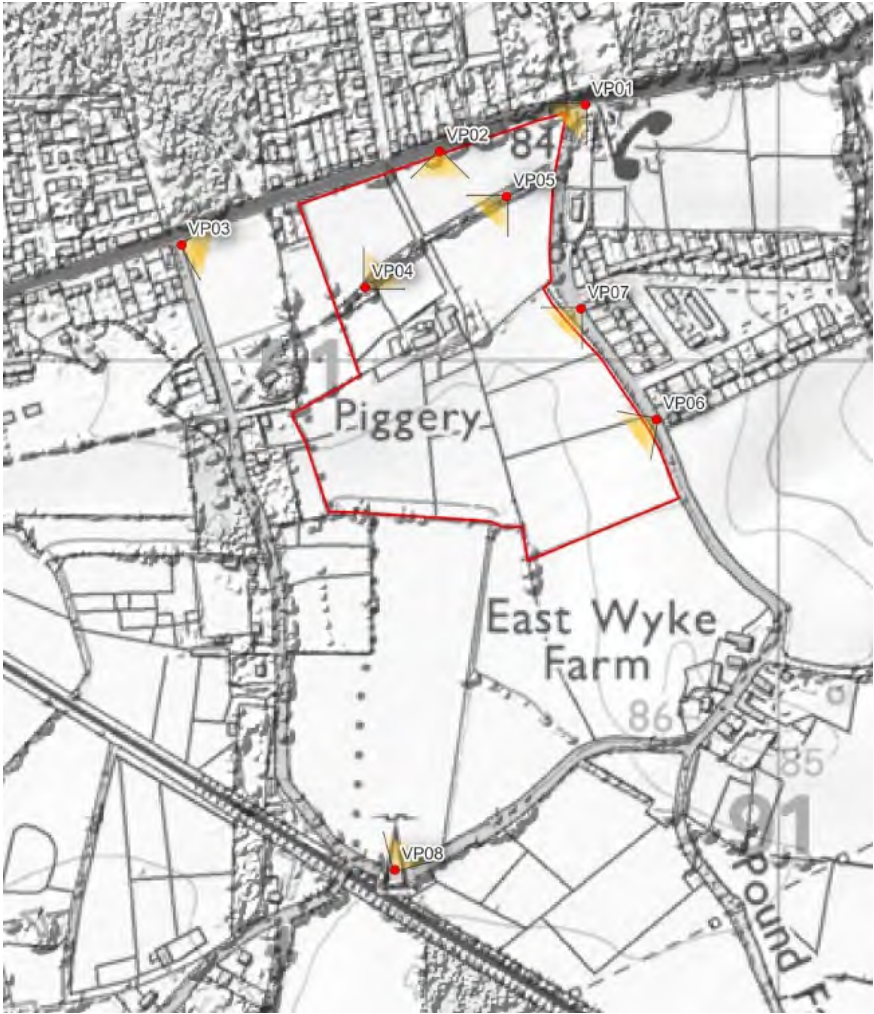
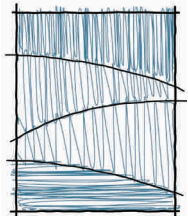


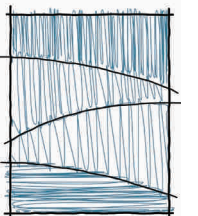
Figure 2.7: Viewpoint locations – extract of plan

- 2.44. The relevant local vantage points and the people (visual receptors) likely to experience the change can be summarised as:
- People using the local public rights of way network and permissive footpaths within the Application Site and on its boundaries.
 - People overlooking the Application Site from properties on Wyke Lane and Guildford Road.
 - People driving on the local roads (Wyke Lane, Harper’s Road and Guildford Road).

⁹ Institute of Lighting professional (ILP) Environmental Zones – Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light, ILP, 2021



- 2.45. In respect of distant vantage points, whilst the mapping identifies locations from which the proposals may be visible, from further afield the visual composition includes the wider settlement and intervening landscape and townscape elements so that the Application Site is not a discernible component of the view. An assessment of visual effects from these vantage points is scoped out of this LVIA.



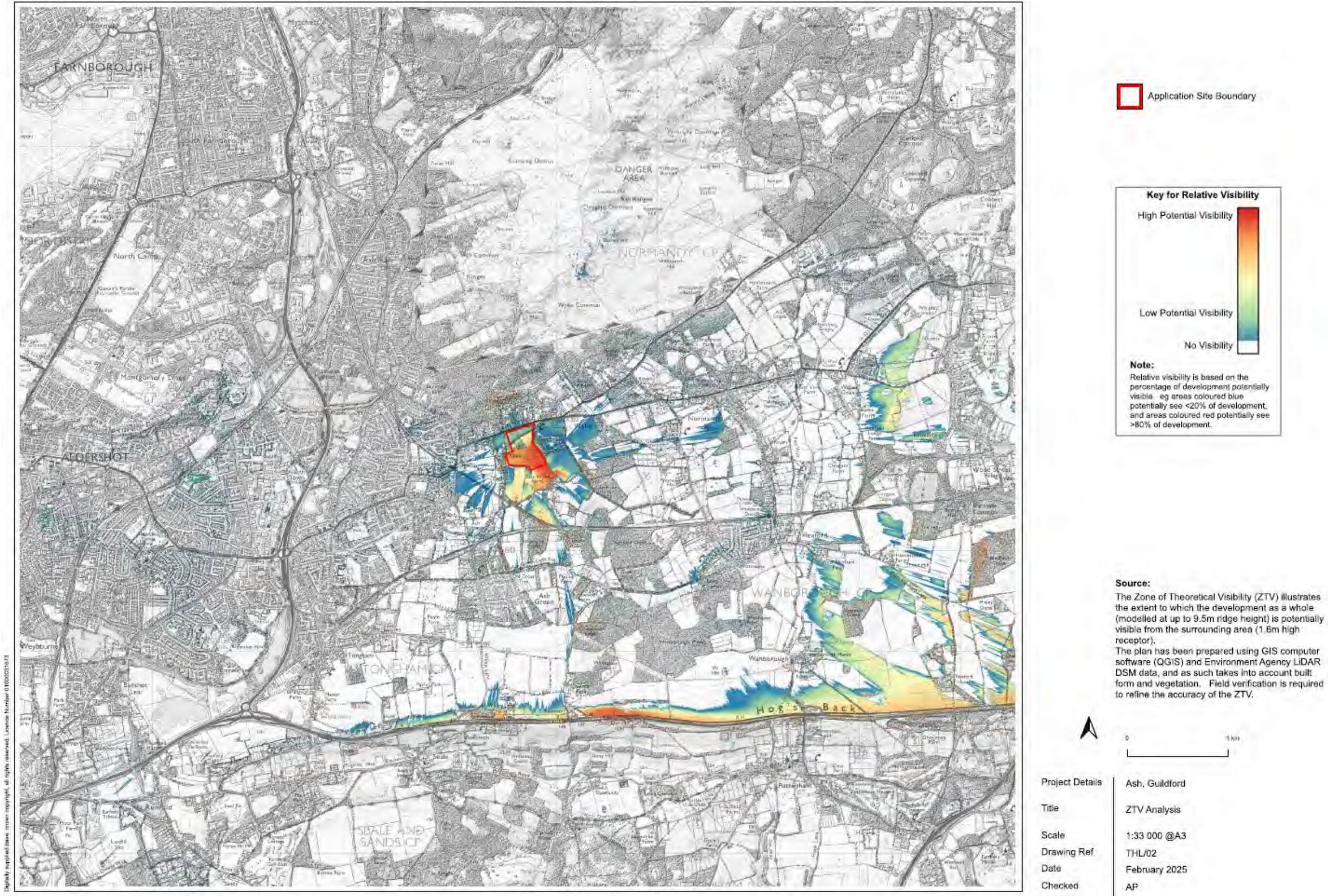
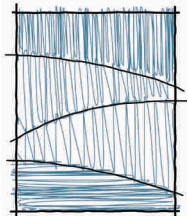


Figure 2.8 Zone of Theoretical Visibility mapping



Section 3: Evaluation of the Sensitivity of Resources and Receptors

3.1. The sensitivity of the landscape (in terms of the character area and individual elements – the landscape resources) and people experiencing the views (visual receptors) is established by considering both the value of the resource/view and the susceptibility of each to accommodate the proposed without undue¹⁰ negative consequences.

Landscape Value

- 3.2. A component of ‘sensitivity’ is “the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society” (GLVIA, 3 Box 5.1, Glossary) and is further explored in Assessing landscape value outside national designations, LI Technical Guidance Note 02/21).
- 3.3. In the High Court judgement¹¹ handed down on the 15th November 2023 the judge made clear the distinction in respect of the National Planning Policy Framework (now referenced as paragraph 187 and the sub paragraphs (a) and (b)). Valued Landscapes are to be ‘protected’ and ‘enhanced’ whereas other countryside is to be ‘recognised’ for its intrinsic character and beauty. ‘Recognising’ has some level of protection, however the level of protection afforded to valued landscapes is plainly higher.
- 3.4. All landscapes have some value to one or more communities for one or more of its assets, having value and being valued are different concepts. Local value is at the lower end of the spectrum, with National Parks and AONBs being at the highest end of the spectrum.
- 3.5. Landscape value is rated, for the purpose of the assessment on the following scale:
- National/International** – Designated landscapes which are nationally or internationally designated for their landscape value – including National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural

Beauty, World Heritage Sites, Heritage Coast and National Scenic Areas.

District– Locally or regionally designated landscapes (e.g., Area of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas); also, areas which local evidence (such as tourism guides, landscape character assessments or other documentary information) indicates as being more valued than the surrounding area.

Local – ‘everyday’ landscape which is appreciated by the local community but has little or no wider recognition of its value.

- 3.6. As noted above the landscape characterisation process does not assign ‘value’ to the landscape. Information which may contribute to the understanding of value may include:
- Areas recognised by statute.
 - Local Plans (extent of policies for local landscape designations).
 - Information regarding individual elements such as Conservation Areas, TPOs etc.
 - Art and literature.
 - Material on landscape or local of community interests, such as local green spaces, village greens or allotments.
- 3.7. In this instance the Application Site is not directly affected by designations or policies such as:
- SSSI.
 - Habitat Sites.
 - Local Green Space.
 - National Landscape.
 - National Park.
 - Heritage Coast.
 - Irreplaceable habitats.
 - Areas at risk of flooding or coastal change; and
 - Designated heritage assets¹².
- 3.8. The Application Site is not within the setting of any landscape designations.

- 3.9. There are no national or district indicators of value that would place the Application Site at the mid to upper end of the spectrum of value.
- 3.10. Furthermore, in allocating sites for development and determining planning applications local to the Application Site GBC has not identified or asserted that the landscape is a valued landscape.
- 3.11. The local value is explored in the following subsection, to determine whether there are sufficient factors to elevate the local value to an NPPF December 2024 ‘Valued Landscape’.

Valued Landscape Factors¹³

Natural Heritage

- 3.12. The Application Site is not subject to any ecological designations. Features such as the mature hedgerows have a functional and inherent value to wildlife through the provision of habitats and connectivity.
- 3.13. The trees and woodland within the Application Site are not the subject of designations such as ancient woodland. There are a number of Tree Preservation Orders. This is relatively typical of tree groups in the landscape, particularly near to settlements, so is not an indicator of wider value.

Cultural Heritage

- 3.14. The Site is not associated with any recognised or protected heritage assets. The time depth of the landscape within the Application Site is evident through the field pattern and mature hedgerow boundaries. However, this has been eroded by the manner in which the land has been sub-divided and managed.

Landscape condition

- 3.15. The landscape is generally intact, although the context and internal field structure have undergone notable change (See **Figure 3.1**). These changes combined with the grazing by horses and use of fencing reduce the condition of the landscape.

¹⁰ Undue being defined as - unwarranted or inappropriate because excessive or disproportionate.

¹¹ R (Bramley Solar Farm Residents Group) v Secretary of State LUHC [2023] EWHC 2842

¹² NPPF December 2024, paragraph 11 (d) (i), footnote 7

¹³ Source of factors: Assessing landscape value outside national designations, 2021 Table 1

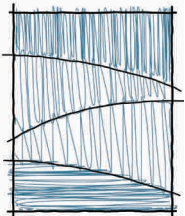




Figure 3.1: 1898 OS Mapping overlay on current aerial photography

Associations

3.16. There are no known cultural or artistic associations with the Site.

Distinctiveness

3.17. The rural character is diminished, and the Site is appreciated as a component of the widely settled and urban context.

Recreational

3.18. In its current state the recreational value is limited to the route of the PROW on the northern/eastern boundary. The value of the footpaths in part is the connectivity to the wider agricultural landscape. The nature and extent of access is not exceptional to elevate the value of the landscape.

Perceptual (scenic)

3.19. In respect of the Site and its immediate context the scenic qualities are substantially absent due to the land use and settlement expansion. Individual features are attractive in the view (such as the hedgerows), but these do not create a broader

scenic quality typically associated with distinctive views and appreciation of the wider landscape.

Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)

3.20. There is no evidence that the Site and local area have any qualities that indicate they possess 'wildness.' Wildness has been defined in professional guidance as:

"The presence of wild (or relatively wild) character in the landscape which makes a particular contribution to sense of place¹⁴."

3.21. The tranquility of the area is diminished through the presence of the settlement, disturbance by traffic and night-time lighting.

3.22. The landscape in the vicinity of the Site is neither wild nor tranquil.

Functional

3.23. In respect of 'functionality' in the determination of landscape value it is important to note that green belt is a spatial planning designation, the application of the green belt policy is not made in respect of any landscape character assessments, or landscape value judgements

3.24. Given the absence of any landscape evaluation in the designation of land as green belt, there is no evidential link between this spatial designation and the value of the landscape so designated. Any published 'landscape' evidence in respect of the green belt is retrospective and post-designation rationalisation of the decisions which were taken in 1955.

3.25. This conclusion is further supported by the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' when considering the 'functional' factor when assessing landscape value.

"Landscape function can influence value, but the presence of a spatial designation (e.g., Green Belt or Green Gap) is not in itself an indicator of high landscape value."

3.26. In that document the example indicators of a functional landscape are noted as being:

"Landscapes and landscape elements that contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape, e.g., natural hydrological systems/ floodplains, areas of undisturbed and healthy soils, areas that form carbon sinks such as peat bogs, woodlands and oceans, areas of diverse landcover (benefits pest regulation), pollinator-rich habitats such as wildflower meadows."

Areas that form an important part of a multifunctional Green Infrastructure network.

Landscapes and landscape elements that have strong physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation or are important to the appreciation of the designated landscape and its special qualities."

3.27. The land use and grazing of horses limits the functionality of the land. This is a matter explored in more detail later in this LVIA.

Summary of Local Value

3.28. There are no indicators that result in the Site meeting or exceeding the threshold to be considered to be a 'Valued Landscape'. However, it is clear that there are a number of elements (footpath and field boundaries) which are of value to the natural environment. The value of the Site is in the low to mid-range of the spectrum.

Landscape Susceptibility

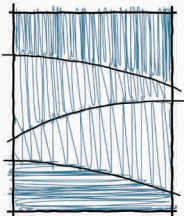
3.29. Susceptibility indicates the ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the proposed development:

"...without undue¹⁵ consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies." (GLVIA 3, paragraph 5.40).

3.30. At the highest end of the 'susceptibility spectrum' is a landscape wherein changes in terms of the proposed development would be entirely at odds with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale, and mass. The development would require extensive change to the topography, vegetative cover, or form of buildings.

¹⁴ Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, and the Countryside Agency, 2002. Paragraph 7.22

¹⁵ Unwarranted or inappropriate because excessive or disproportionate



- 3.31. Mid-way on the spectrum is a landscape wherein the proposed development has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation.
- 3.32. At the lower end of the spectrum the proposed development is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale, and mass.
- 3.33. Given the settled context to the north, east and west of the Site, the inclusion of housing and internal roads, open space and footpaths within the scheme of development the nature of the proposed development is consistent with the local environs in terms of use, scale and mass.
- 3.34. The retention of the wooded framework and key ecological connections will result in an area of settlement that reflects the pattern, massing and grain of the landscape and townscape interface. Whilst here will be change it will not be inappropriate or incongruent with the baseline context. The susceptibility of the landscape associated with the Application Site is at the lower end of the spectrum.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.35. At the lower end of the spectrum (low sensitivity) resources may be low value/undesigned landscapes, with no distinctive or sensitive features, with the potential to accommodate appropriately design development, and where adverse effects can be mitigated for.
- 3.36. At the higher end of the range are those highly valued/designated landscapes recognised in policy, may contain landscape features that cannot accommodate development of the type proposed, and where mitigation measures are unable to avoid, compensate or offset the undue consequences which would arise.
- 3.37. From the desktop studies and fieldwork as summarised in the narrative above, it is clear that the Application Site would be best classified as an area of low to mid-range sensitivity in the context of the landscape at the urban fringe of Ash.

Value attached to the views

- 3.38. Having scoped out the distant vantage points and views from National Routes; in respect of the remaining representative viewpoints, the value of views takes account of:

- Recognition of value attached to a particular view, associated to a heritage asset, or planning designation; and/or
- Indicators of the value through guidebooks, tourist maps, or historic references.

- 3.39. It is noted that none of the vantage points identified by the assessment are either acknowledged or protected in policy as an important or key view, nor are any views recorded in published material on maps as being of local value or associated with an important landmark.
- 3.40. Views are typically glimpsed and not experienced as panoramic, or wide, uninterrupted views. The value is as the lower end of the spectrum.

Susceptibility to visual change

- 3.41. For the purposes of the assessment, the susceptibility of people to changes in their views and visual experience is a function of the occupation of the people, the extent to which their attention or interest is focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at a particular location. Further the duration and frequency of the visual experience is a consideration as to susceptibility to change.
- 3.42. In respect of this project the relevant vantage points are localised to the application site and its immediate boundary. Many of the views from the road network, passing through Ash and settled areas, will be glimpsed through existing vegetation and development with people experiencing the views moving through a settled landscape. For those people over-looking the site, the presence of housing and development is a component of the view, and the views are experienced daily. The susceptibility of people to visual change ranges from low to mid/high range of the spectrum.

Visual sensitivity

- 3.43. At the lower end of spectrum may be those people engaged in an activity which is not focused on the landscape or context of the person/people, where the views are infrequent, the representative or specific viewpoints are not associated with a valued landscape or asset.
- 3.44. At the higher end of the spectrum people are engaged in an activity whereby the focus of the visual experience is linked to the landscape context, the views are associated with a valued

landscape or important assets/landmarks, and the number or people and frequency of the visual experience is high.

- 3.45. **Table 3.1** sets out the rationale to the classification of the value and susceptibility of each visual receptor for the purpose of the LVIA, and ultimately the sensitivity by way of reference to the spectrum

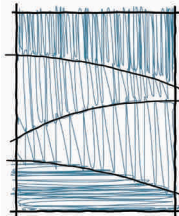
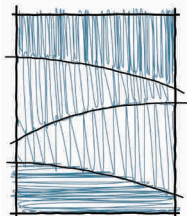


Table 3.1: Visual Sensitivity Evaluation

Visual Receptor – This refers to the people not the location	Value	Susceptibility – In respect of people being susceptible to the introduction of housing within the Application Site there is a low-medium susceptibility to the change. The current visual experience includes being able to see housing. The landform of the surrounding area dictates how much housing is visible and the manner in which it is revealed in the view.	Sensitivity
People using the local public rights of way network and permissive footpaths within the Application Site and on its boundaries. Representative viewpoints 4 and 5)	There is some local value to the routes around the settlement as they connect people to the wider countryside. However, immediate settlement edge routes are primarily within the urban edge. The visual qualities are limited by the existing context. The value is in the mid-range of the value spectrum.	Typically, people will be using the routes for recreational purposes as part of a daily route to work/local facilities. People are likely to be engaged with their visual environment. The visual susceptibility of these people lies at the mid-low range of the spectrum. Views are intermittent and the hedgerows and vegetative cover mean that the views are foreshortened and localised to the Site.	The sensitivity of people to visual change using these routes will be at the mid-to-high range of the spectrum.
People driving on the local roads (Wyke Lane, Harper's Road and Guildford Road). (Representative viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7))	The townscape creates a predominantly urban character to the visual experience; the value of these views is at the lowest end of the spectrum.	Views from these local roads are limited to breaks in the boundary planting and development. Views tend to be focused along the roads but may be experienced daily. The susceptibility of these people is within the mid to low range of the spectrum.	The sensitivity of these people to visual change is within the lower part of the spectrum.
People overlooking the Application Site from properties on Wyke Lane and Guildford Road. (Represented by viewpoints 2 and 7)	Properties typically benefit from an inward facing position on the edge of the settlement. There are a few properties which are orientated towards the Site. The existing trees and other buildings limit the depth of the field of view. For this receptor group the value of the view will be within the middle of the spectrum. Those properties which overlook the Application Site benefit from vegetative features such as the woodland belt which filter and screen views, the visual experience is one contained by vegetation and not open views across the countryside.	Residents experience their environment daily, particularly they will be susceptible to change viewed from those rooms occupied in daylight hours. The intervening vegetation will reduce the susceptibility of the residents to visual change.	The sensitivity of these people to visual change is at the mid to high range of the spectrum.



Section 4: Design evolution and mitigation measures

- 4.1. Mitigation measures are those measures, both incorporated into, or dismissed during the design process to:
- Prevent/avoid adverse effects;
 - Reduce effects; and, where possible; and
 - Offset or remedy (or compensate for) any significant adverse landscape and visual effects.
- 4.2. Enhancement measures are subtly different, as they seek to improve the landscape resource and the visual amenity of the area, over and above the baseline condition.
- 4.3. From a landscape and visual perspective, the following advice is provided on the approach to development of the Application Site to ensure a landscape-led proposal which minimised the landscape and visual effects and optimized landscape benefits.

Initial recommendations –

- 4.4. The advice provided draws upon:
- Policy requirements.
 - Published landscape and management guidelines.
 - Professional observations and experience.

Policy requirements¹⁶

- 4.5. Within the Local Plan, Policy D1 in respect of place shaping it is recorded that:

Distinct Local Character

“(4) All new development will be designed to reflect the distinct local character of the area and will respond and reinforce locally distinct patterns of development, including landscape setting. Proposals will take account of local design guidance contained within conservation area appraisals, DPD’s, neighbourhood plans and SPDs.

Network of green spaces and public places

(7) All new development will be designed to maximise the opportunity for linkages between green spaces and public places and include high quality landscaping that reflects the local distinctive character.”

Ash & Tongham

“(18) In order to avoid piecemeal development and to protect and enhance the existing character of Ash & Tongham and Ash Green proposals within the area will have particular regard to;

(a) The relationship and connectivity with the existing urban area

(b) The relationship and connectivity between allocated sites in different ownerships

(c) The existing character of Ash & Tongham and Ash Green

(d) The future urban edge and its relationship with the surrounding countryside at the allocated site’s boundaries.”

- 4.6. Matters (4) and (18) are primarily informed by the analysis undertaken in the baseline analysis above, subsequently incorporated into in the masterplan.
- 4.7. The GBC’s Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD (Policy ID4 of the Local Plan recognises that:

“A positive approach to the provision and maintenance of Green Infrastructure is crucial to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and wildlife in the borough, not least through the creation of new habitats and by providing connections between existing habitats. It can further assist in adaptation to climate change by providing pathways for species dispersal and migration, climate change adaptation through the cooling effects of tree cover, and in the natural management of fluvial flooding, for example, through floodplain

re-connection and restoration, which can also result in the creation of new wetland habitats.”¹⁷

- 4.8. The approach to the masterplan, informed by the landscape analysis ensures that the proposals are led by the landscape requirements to provide blue and green multifunctional Green Infrastructure.

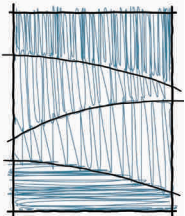
Published Guidance

Surrey Landscape Character Assessment: Guildford Borough

- 4.9. The guidance for accommodating new development within the Wooded Rolling Claylands character area includes the following, with those relevant to the project emboldened:
- Seek to conserve fragmented landscapes including the surviving areas of open farmland with scattered farmsteads.
 - Conserve the small roadside commons that form the rural setting for Wood Street Village.
 - Consider creating similar small semi-natural public open spaces to enhance the rural character of settlement elsewhere in the area (for instance at Willey Green or Ash Green) and to integrate it with the rural landscape.
 - Retain the individual settlements avoiding merging these through dense linear development along roads.
 - Retain gaps in linear development (for instance between Great Westwood and Flexford) particularly where these allow rural views over farmland.
 - Conserve built features associated with historic estates and seek to conserve historic designed landscape.
 - Encourage any new built development to respect local characteristics, including support of sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials. Refer to Surrey design guides; Surrey Design (Surrey Local Government Association).
 - Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to their form. and relationship to landscape and landscape elements.
 - Avoid the location of any new large mass of development or bulky structures where overly visually intrusive on this character area. Subject any development to rigorous

¹⁶ Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites 2015 – 2034 Adopted 25 April 2019

¹⁷ Paragraph 4.6.38 of ID4 supporting text.



landscape and visual impact assessment, site carefully, and design to minimise impact, and integrate with the area's rural context.

- Promote the use of appropriate plant species and boundary treatments at urban edges to better integrate development into the adjacent rural character.
- Improve the present understanding of the general pattern of settlements, with regard to their form and relationship to landscape and landscape elements.
- Resist further urbanisation of roads through encouraging appropriate surfacing of existing pavements, enhancing the immediate landscape setting and ensuring minimum clutter.
- Enhance the character of the settled roads through taking opportunities for rural planting of hedgerows and oak and ash trees.
- Ensure that lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' in the more rural unsettled sections of the area particularly to the south.
- Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials.
- Conserve the views south to the rural, unsettled ridge of the Hog's Back for instance from the south side of Flexford.

Guildford Rural Urban Fringe character assessment

4.10. The guidelines for accommodating built development are, the relevant guidelines emboldened :

- Conserve the character, built form and setting of historic farm buildings.
- Conserve existing woodland blocks and the hedgerow framework in relation to any new development.
- Consider opportunities to enhance the character of the urban edge, for example new woodland planting or the creation of new 'greens' and 'commons'.
- Maintain existing rights of way connecting the rural fringe into the urban area.
- Ensure appropriate siting of formal recreational facilities and good recreation management to conserve the informal, rural character of the urban edge.

Professional advice

4.11. Following completion of the analysis relating to the baseline situation, policy and published guidance the following advice has been provided to the team (Figure 4.1):

Prevent/avoid adverse effects

4.12. Strategically, the Application Site is positioned outside of any protected or valued landscapes. It is located within a landscape which has reduced rurality, tranquility, and wildness and is closely associated with the existing and expanding settlement of Ash.

4.13. In addition, the following avoidance measures are recommended:

- Retain the network of hedgerows to respect the pattern and grain for the landscape as a framework to the scheme of development, thus ensuring the development benefits from a high degree of enclosure.
- Retain the existing trees as local landmarks and aid legibility with the scheme and provide continuity of these features as part of the development framework.
- Retain long views through the Application Site towards the Hogs Back.
- Protection and enhancement of the Public Right of Way to ensure it becomes a positive element of the settlement grain and not subsumed by housing.

Reduce effects

4.14. The following measures are recommended to minimise adverse effects:

- Seek to accommodate changes arising from the built development by positioning this in proximity to the existing settlement edge.
- Include new vegetation as part of the masterplan to limit views.
- Avoid reflective and bright tone in the materials used in the elevational treatments, consider neutral and natural tones.

Enhancement Measures

4.15. The recommendations provided by LPL to the design team include:

- Retain and extend the positive qualities of this landscape (its character and form) and recreational asset.
- Provide opportunities to access open space within the development from the footpath to diversify the type of routes and connections on the settlement edge.
- Diversification of the age of vegetation within the Site.
- Diversification of habitats and amenity spaces to enhance the environment for nature and people.
- Provide for footpath connections to link with the public rights of way and enhance connectivity for the residents with the wider landscape.

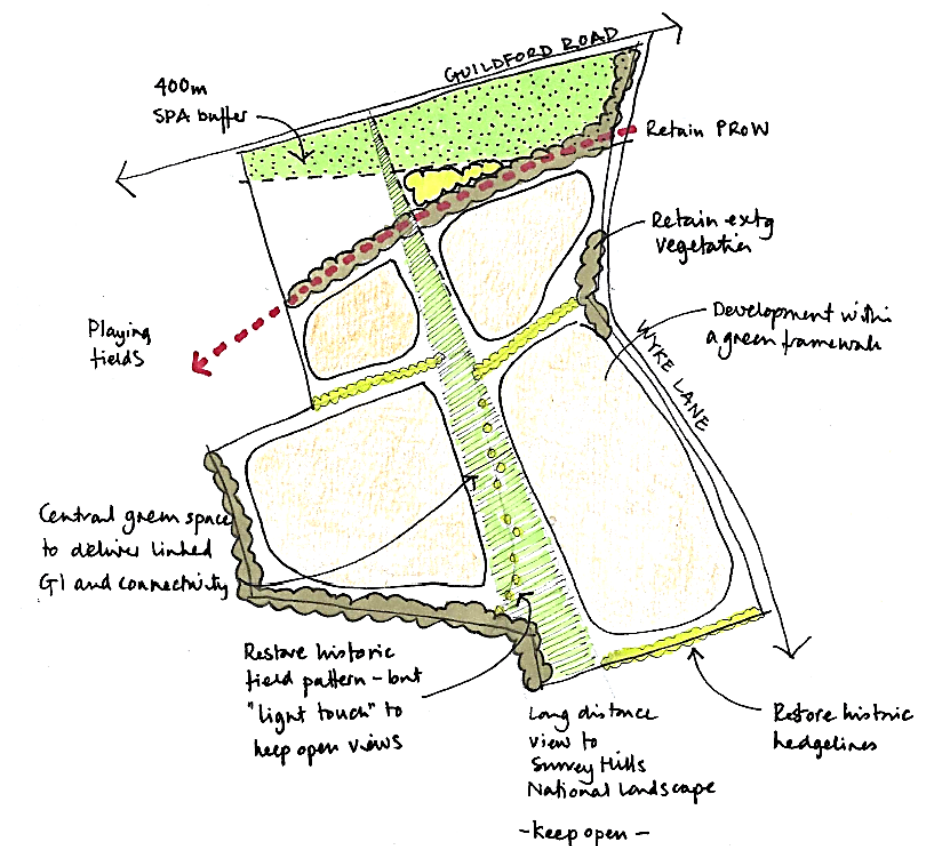
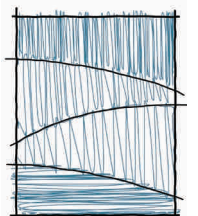


Figure 4.1: Landscape recommendations for masterplanning



Section 5: Consideration of Landscape and Visual Magnitude of Change

- 5.1. The GLVIA3 recognises the importance of professional judgement in undertaking the assessment of effects. To overcome the potential problems associated with the over-reliance on matrices and tabular summaries of effects, which have typically been used in the past, in the latest guidance there is a greater emphasis on the need for narrative text describing the landscape and visual effect and the judgements made on their significance.
- 5.2. The significance of the effect is a function of the sensitivity of the resource or receptor and the magnitude of the change. Having determined the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors in section 3 above, **Tables 5.1** and **5.2** set out the degree to which the landscape and visual environment is changed (magnitude of change) and how these changes are brought about.
- 5.3. GLVIA3 (paragraph 6.29) states:
- “...effects can be described as positive or negative (or in some cases neutral) in their consequences for views and visual amenity.”*
- 5.4. GLVIA3 does not, however, state how negative or positive effects should be assessed and therefore becomes a matter of subjective judgement rather than reasoned criteria.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

- 5.5. At the lower end of the spectrum the degree of change may be small, and the loss/addition of landscape features affecting only a limited proportion of the total extent to which the resource contributes to the character. The changes may be entirely consistent with the context, and the geographic extent over which the effects occur may be localised.
- 5.6. At the higher end of the spectrum the change may be over an extensive area with a high proportion of landscape elements which contribute the character of the area being lost or altered.

The change may be at odds and incongruent with the context within which it occurs.

- 5.7. As noted in ‘Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (GLVIA 3)’:

“For magnitude of effect, it is likely that the size/scale of effect will be the most important factor, with geographical extent and duration/reversibility considered as ‘modifiers’. When taking account of geographic extent and duration, care should be taken to ensure that the resulting magnitude of effect judgement is not understated. The focus should be on what would be affected and where, not restricted to the proportion of a landscape character area or designated area affected.”

Magnitude of Visual Change

- 5.8. At the lower end of the spectrum the visual change may be small scale with no notable loss or addition to the view, the change is consistent with the baseline context and will not give rise a contrast in elements, form, colour, and line, whilst the views are likely to be fleeting, glimpsed, or viewed infrequently.
- 5.9. At the higher end of the spectrum the changes will be large scale, with losses of key elements in the view and/or additional features which may be incongruent in the composition. There is likely to be contrast in scale, form, line and colour and the changes will affect a sizable proportion of the view, be fully visible. The duration of the view is likely to be prolonged and frequent.
- 5.10. Similarly, in the Notes and Clarification document it is noted that:

“Geographic extent should reflect the relevance of the location and spread of effects as a ‘modifier’ to the scale of effect so that it does not understate the magnitude of effects for extensive receptors such as people using long-distance footpaths.”

Lighting Effects

- 5.11. This is not a dark environment, changes to the lighting character will be consistent with the setting of the Site.
- 5.12. The analysis of the baseline situation and design response indicates that geographically the changes (landscape and visual) arising are likely to be experienced in respect of a limited area within the Visual Envelope.

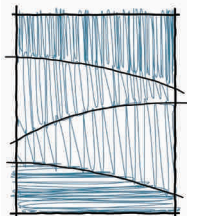
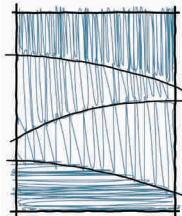


Table 5.1: Magnitude of Landscape Change

Landscape Receptor –	Sensitivity	Description of Change		Magnitude of Change
		Construction Phase	Completed Development	
Wooded Rolling Claylands character area (County Level)	As noted in Section 2, this landscape character area is extensive, but of greater relevance are the changes which have occurred since the evidence base was prepared and the lack of understanding of the urban elements now present in this landscape. No further analysis is provided in this LVIA as to effects on the county level character area.			
E1 Tongham Rural-Urban Fringe Character Area Key aspect is the relationship with and character of the emerging townscape of Ash.	The sensitivity of the landscape context to accommodate the Proposed Development is at the lower end of the spectrum. This is a landscape which, due to settlement growth and changes in agricultural management, is not intact and has peri-urban qualities.	During the construction phase the character and appearance of the Site will completely change (physically and perceptually). The dynamic activities in the Site clearance, preliminary works, presence of construction traffic and changes to the landform and components of the landscape will be incongruent to the baseline situation and nearby townscape and adjoining open landscapes. The impacts will diminish across the landscape from the Site. Beyond the area over which the Site has any influence there will be no change to the character of the landscape.	Following the completion of the development the character of the site, whilst altering from its current condition and character will complement and reflect the emerging and expanding settlement edge whilst delivering positive enhancements to the townscape in terms of increased and managed tree cover and provision of accessible open space (see below). The changes are consistent with the existing townscape context and deliver community and social benefits to the existing and future residents. 49% of the Site will remain undeveloped. In accordance with the published guidance the following matters will be facilitated through the parameter plans, refined and detailed through the RMA as part of the comprehensive scheme of development and the landscape strategy: • Creation of small semi-natural public open spaces to enhance the character of settlement in the area (particularly Ash) and to integrate it with the rural landscape. • Retain the individual settlements avoiding merging these through dense linear development along roads. • Provide for new built development to respect local characteristics, including support of sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials.	The changes during the construction phase within the Site and perceptually experienced in the immediate environs will be at the highest end of the spectrum (short-term) and adverse in nature. On completion the long-term effects will be at the mid-range of the spectrum. In both instances the effects will be experienced over a highly localised area and be neutral in nature. Whilst the change from farmland to housing is adverse, the provision of a new component to Ash which complements and reflects the townscape qualities, creating a new townscape character can be seen as a positive outcome of the design approach. The proposals have been developed in recognition of the key characteristics and respond positively to the guidelines for the character area.



Landscape Receptor –	Sensitivity	Description of Change		Magnitude of Change
		Construction Phase	Completed Development	
Vegetative Cover – Baseline situation (relevant landscape attributes) - The consistent network of well-maintained hedges and dispersed blocks of woodland. - The structure and pattern of the landscape derived from the road network and hedgerow alignments. - Vegetative Cover - hedgerows, tree belts, and grassland.	The sensitivity of the vegetation to the development proposed is at the mid-range on the spectrum. The vegetation makes a positive contribution to the local area.	During the construction phase (based on the adoption of appropriate construction management strategies) the retained vegetation will be contained within BS compliant protective fencing (see Tree Protection Plan). There will be limited tree removal (as shown in the Tree Survey and Report) to accommodate the new access arrangements.	The landscape strategy includes the provision of new tree planting, along with areas of scrub and hedgerows within the Site. There will be a net gain in respect of tree cover. The nature of tree growth means that it will be a number of years before the functionality of the new trees will be equivalent to those lost. It is considered that at year 15 the trees will be visually prominent and positively contributing to climate change mitigation, food production, biodiversity enhancement, and local distinctiveness functionality of the GI.	During the construction phase the impacts will be adverse, short-term, and localised. The magnitude of effect is within the lower range of the spectrum, due to the quality of the vegetation loss, the area over which the loss occurs, and the overall proportion of trees retained v. trees removed. The nature of the change is adverse. Post construction and with the maturation of the new planting, open space and tree belts and their on-going management would result in a mid-high, beneficial magnitude of change.
Access – Baseline situation (relevant landscape attributes) - Public Rights of Way (PROW). - Recreation grounds at urban edge providing green finger/connection between urban and more rural areas and containing development.	The susceptibility of the PROW to change is at the mid part of the spectrum. This is an asset used by the local community; however, it has limited connectivity to the wider area and is not a national or 'named' route which may draw tourists or a wider community to the area.	During the construction phase the existing footpath (No. 357, see Figure 2.5) will be retained within protective fencing for the safety of the users. During the construction phase a short section of the footpath will be directly impacted on as the access is created. A minor diversion will be needed to avoid conflict between users and construction vehicles. This will be the subject of a Construction Traffic Management Plan.	Footpath 357 will have a permanent breach in the alignment across the Site access. Whilst the route will continue people will need to cross the junction. Once completed the alignment of the footpath will be retained, with increased pedestrian routes provided within the green spaces within the new settlement edge to provide circular routes.	The changes during the construction phase will be highly localised, short-term and at the mid-to-high range of the spectrum. and adverse in nature. The magnitude of change once complete will be at the low to mid-range of the spectrum, in respect of the footpath the changes are adverse in nature due to the introduction of the access road and crossing point. However, the scheme includes extensive areas of connected and accessible open space, which is a positive outcome for the local community.

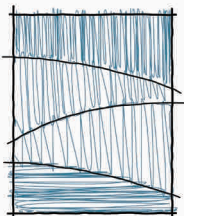
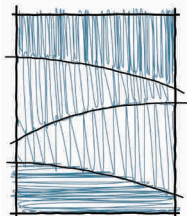
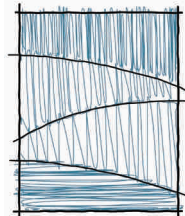


Table 5.2: Magnitude of Visual Change

Visual Receptor – This refers to the people not the location – the viewpoints which represent the groups of people are noted.	Sensitivity	Description of Change		Magnitude of Change
		Construction Phase	Completed Development	
People using the local public rights of way network and permissive footpaths within the Application Site and on its boundaries. (Representative viewpoints 4 and 5)	The sensitivity of people to visual change using these routes will be at the mid-to-high range of the spectrum.	During the construction phase the views from footpath 357 and the nearby pedestrian footpaths will be the subject of regular change, including seeing activities and elements which are incongruent with the baseline situation. Views will be subject to frequent disruptions and obstruction from the presence of machinery and fencing associated with the construction phase.	On completion housing will be visible, street trees have the potential to soften the appearance of the buildings. The views of new homes will be experienced in the context of the existing settlement edge as people move through the landscape. The Scheme Proposals have taken on board the design recommendations provided as part of the baseline reporting to ensure new areas of open space coincide with the provision and protection of vistas out of the settlement edge towards the Hogs Back to the south. Positive aspects of the view on completion include the increased presence of trees and vegetation. For some people new buildings will be a negative component of the visual composition, depending on the preference of individuals. No landmarks will be obscured, the depth of the field of view will be reduced, but the retained open space and north-south view corridor will enable long distance views. Over time the maturation of the new tree planting on-site will reduce the visibility of the new dwellings.	The magnitude of effect during the construction phase will be at the higher end of the spectrum, short-term and adverse in nature. On completion the magnitude of change will be at the mid-high range of the spectrum of a mixed nature
People driving on the local roads (Wyke Lane, Harper's Road and Guildford Road). (Representative viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7)	The sensitivity of these people to visual change is within the lower part of the spectrum.	During the construction phase the views from the nearby road network will be the subject of regular change, including seeing activities and elements which are incongruent with the baseline situation.	Once completed the development will read as a continuum of the existing visual composition, with housing interspersed with open and vegetated open spaces. From Guildford Road the prominence of the new housing will be balanced by the set back from the street frontage, behind open grassland and trees. For those travelling on Wyke Lane the presence of housing along the road is a component of the baseline situation. Views over the Application Site are limited by the existing vegetation, there will be no loss of views of landmarks or elements which assist legibility of the route.	Generally, the magnitude of effect during the construction phase will be at the higher end of the spectrum, short-term and adverse in nature. Following completion of the development, the magnitude of the change will be at the mid-range of the spectrum of magnitude, adverse in nature for the first 5 years then transitioning to neutral over time as the new townscape become



Visual Receptor – This refers to the people not the location – the viewpoints which represent the groups of people are noted.	Sensitivity	Description of Change		Magnitude of Change
		Construction Phase	Completed Development	
			New tree planting on the boundary of the Site will continue to filter and soften views of the housing from the road network.	assimilated into the settlement edge.
People overlooking the Application Site from properties on Wyke Lane and Guildford Road. (Represented by viewpoints 2 and 7)	The sensitivity of these people to visual change is at the mid to high range of the spectrum.	Construction activities, equipment, and the phasing of change will result in frequent changes in views. The change in view will be primarily experienced from first floor windows from those properties bordering the site.	For neighbouring residents, the visual change will be tempered by the orientation of the properties and the intervening vegetation, this is relevant to those residents north of Guildford Road. For those on Wyke Lane the front gardens are primarily used for parking cars. The properties are located between the Application Site and private views from the rear gardens/personal amenity space.	The magnitude of effect during the construction phase will be at the higher end of the spectrum, localised and adverse in nature. The duration of the effect will be short-term. On completion the magnitude of change will be adverse in nature for those residents directly overlooking the Site with the loss of openness and at the mid-high range of the spectrum.



Section 6: Assessment of effects

- 6.1. The determination of the significance of the effect is a function of the sensitivity of the landscape resource or visual receptor (section 3) and the magnitude of change that resource or receptor experiences.
- 6.2. These issues are combined to inform the judgement on the overall significance of effect. A summary of landscape and visual effects is set out in **Table 6.2** and **Table 6.3**.
- 6.3. Significant effects are emboldened, and the nature of the effects are coded

Adverse Effect
Neutral effect
Beneficial effect

- 6.4. GLVIA, para 4.37 does note that enhancement measures may include:
 - Provision of new local landscape character and local distinctiveness.
 - Assist in meeting landscape management objectives for the area.
 - Address specific issues and/or opportunities, for example habitat improvement.
- 6.5. In Notes and Clarification of Aspects of GLVIA 4(1) records:

“In considering whether design elements constitute enhancement, clear separation must be maintained between project design aims and LVIA. For instance, the provision of a sports pitch may be an enhancement to local recreation facilities but still have adverse effects on landscape character.”
- 6.6. This distinction is adopted in the assessment of the effects in **Tables 6.2** and **6.3**. To understand the benefits relating to the functionality of the Green Infrastructure and delivery of policy

objectives **Table 6.1** sets out the provision of landscape enhancements and achievement of multifunctional GI.

- 6.7. It is recognised within the landscape and wider planning profession that Green Infrastructure (GI) should be integral to the design and layout of new areas of housing. Green Infrastructure is explored in the Landscape Institute’s position papers (2009¹⁸, 2011¹⁹ and 2013²⁰) which the author of this LVIA contributed to.
- 6.8. The concept of GI is to provide multifunctional landscapes and landscape assets and is illustrated on the Landscape Strategy Plan. The following table summarised the positive aspects of the landscape and Green Infrastructure Strategy as shown on the Parameters Plan drawing.

¹⁸ Green Infrastructure: connected and multifunctional landscapes

¹⁹ Local Green Infrastructure Helping communities make the most of their landscape.

²⁰ Green Infrastructure – An integrated approach to land use

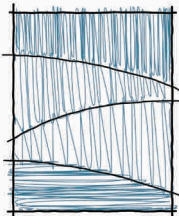
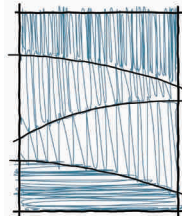


Table 6.1: Green Infrastructure Analysis

Landscape Institute's GI recognised functionality	Observations
Climate change adaption – Even a modest increase in tree canopy cover can significantly reduce the urban heat island effect via evapotranspiration and shading, as well as improving air quality, which often suffers because of higher temperatures	There will be limited tree loss as a result of the proposals. New tree planting will be distributed through the Application Site to deliver the following: - Reinforcement of the existing vegetive features to ensure their longevity as a feature in the townscape and provide shade within the residential area and associated open space. - Street trees to break up the appearance of the built form and provide shade within the development. - The scheme provides opportunities to accommodate a greater quantum of trees to be planted than removed.
Climate change mitigation , well-designed and managed GI can encourage people to travel in a more sustainable way, such as cycling and walking.	The geographic location of the site, in close proximity and adjacent to the existing network of rights of way, means occupants of the new development have the option to walk to the facilities within the settlement. The open space will provide safe and attractive links within landscaped areas and on tree-lined streets to make the cycling and walking routes an attractive and safe alternative to the car.
Water management GI is a good approach for managing flood risk. This can involve placing sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) in developments to attenuate surface water runoff and enhance biodiversity and recreation.	The development incorporates a drainage basin as part of the water management strategy. The approach to the design will be part of a Reserved Matters Application (RMA). However, sensitive, natural forms of ponds and swales are highly valued by engineers, ecologists and landscape architects which ensure a sensitive, attractive, and positive feature in the landscape. The profile of the basin can be designed to deliver a variety of new ecological habitats and incorporate different plants to enhance the visual amenity of the feature. Provision of seating within the open space will benefit the local community and make a positive contribution to the sense of well-being.
Food production Creating space for food production through allotments and community gardens and orchards, increases access to healthy food, provides educational opportunities, contributes to food security, and reconnects	The land is currently in horsi-cultural management and pasture, which makes only a limited contribution to food production, if the pasture is grazed by sheep or cattle. To counterbalance the loss of farmland, the open space should include the provision of fruit trees (nuts and fruits) for local people to harvest.

Landscape Institute's GI recognised functionality	Observations
communities with their local environment. Connecting local communities with these assets via footpaths and cycleways can encourage this reconnection further.	The open space is positioned in close proximity to the community it serves and is accessible to the wider residential population through the existing network of footpaths. Subject to approval by GBC, the scheme can be designed to incorporate fruiting species to enhance the type of local cropping available to the community.
Biodiversity enhancement , corridors, and linkages The role of GI in providing wildlife habitat in both urban and rural areas is well established but taking a landscape-scale approach to the planning, design and management of connected GI assets provides the framework within which species migration can more readily occur in response to environmental pressures such as climate change.	The PEA Report sets out the suite of ecological benefits which will be delivered as part of the development. From a GI perspective, the benefits can be summarised as: - Diversification of grassland sward through wildflower meadow creation. - Provision of new areas of shrub and tree planting (contribution to foraging and nesting habitat). - Retention of most existing hedgerows and planting of new native hedgerows to provide wildlife corridors. - Overall, the proposed development of the Site would lead to a net gain in biodiversity when including off-site habitat creation. - Further details of the BNG Assessment will be provided as part of a Biodiversity Net Gain report and already underway protected species surveys within an EcIA report.
Recreation and health , accessible GI provides important opportunities for informal and active recreation. Ensuring that these assets are provided in close proximity to people's homes, are maintained properly, and are designed with the needs of local communities in mind, is critical to their positive role in public health and wellbeing.	The Site is located on and in close proximity to the public rights of way network but currently there is no public access onto the land beyond the PROW. The provision of open space immediately accessible to the existing community on the edge of Ash means residents have a greater quantum of accessible land in close proximity to their homes. The character of housing around large open spaces is consistent with the emerging character of Ash to the west and Southwest, and the existing area of housing off Wyke Lane providing some mitigation for the more densely urban character of the settlement edge.
Economic values Quality green space can have a major positive impact on	The location of the Application Site and its accessibility to the local network of footpaths, being positioned near to existing sport facilities with properties fronting and framing the open space, a well-design



<i>Landscape Institute's GI recognised functionality</i>	<i>Observations</i>
<i>land and property markets, creating settings for investment and acting as a catalyst for wider regeneration.</i>	scheme is likely to have a positive effect on the profile and value of the development for those who occupy it.
<i>Local distinctiveness</i> Well-designed and managed GI assets, particularly those that engage local communities, and which relate to landscape character and heritage, can enhance local sense of place and foster community spirit.	The layout and use of materials reflecting the local vernacular can make a positive contribution to the character of Ash and create a distinctive sense of place on the edge of the settlement.
<i>Stronger communities</i> GI can help in meeting a wide range of community needs. The spirit of the GI approach means that social, environmental, and economic potential is considered and optimised.	With the assets noted above there are opportunities to build homes which can integrate with the existing community. The provision of new places to meet and recreate will be a benefit to the new residents and the existing community.

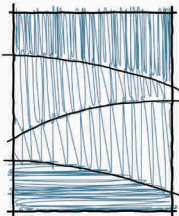
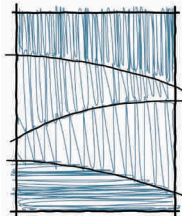


Table 6.2: Analysis of significance of landscape effects

Landscape Receptor –	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Nature and significance of effect – including commentary
E1 Tongham Rural-Urban Fringe Character Area Key aspect is the relationship with and character of the emerging townscape of Ash.	The sensitivity of the landscape context to accommodate the Proposed Development is at the lower end of the spectrum. This is a landscape which, due to settlement growth and changes in agricultural management, is not intact and has peri-urban qualities.	The changes during the construction phase within the Site and perceptually experienced in the immediate environs will be at the highest end of the spectrum (short-term) and adverse in nature. On completion the long-term effects will be at the mid-range of the spectrum. In both instances the effects will be experienced over a highly localised area and be neutral in nature. Whilst the change from farmland to housing is adverse, the provision of a new component to Ash which complements and reflects the townscape qualities, creating a new townscape character can be seen as a positive outcome of the design approach. The proposals have been developed in recognition of the key characteristics and respond positively to the guidelines for the character area.	Construction Phase For the construction phase the effects will be significant, adverse and of short-term duration limited to the Site and the area over which it exerts an influence.
			Development Phase Whilst there will be a change to the character of the landscape within the site, the localised effect coupled with the manner in which the development will be appreciated as being consistent with the emerging townscape. Given the extensive change occurring in this landscape the nature, scale and location of the proposed development is not significant. On completion the effects are relevant in the determination of the planning application but are not significant in the context of this assessment. The scale and geographic extent of the relevant LCA qualities moderates the potential effects on this landscape resource. The effects diminish across the landscape and will be negligible beyond the zone over which the Site exerts an influence.
Vegetative Cover – Baseline situation (relevant landscape attributes) The consistent network of well-maintained hedges and dispersed blocks of woodland.	The sensitivity of the vegetation to the development proposed is at the mid-range on the spectrum. The vegetation makes a positive contribution to the local area.	During the construction phase the impacts will be adverse, short-term, and localised. The magnitude of effect is within the lower range of the spectrum, due to the quality of the vegetation loss, the area over which the loss occurs, and the overall proportion of trees retained v. trees removed. The nature of the change is adverse.	Construction Phase During the construction phase the effects in respect of this resource are not significant. The vegetation removed as part of the construction phase is limited, localised, and will not notably impact on the vegetative aspect of the landscape. The scale of change is small in the context of the site, reducing in the wider landscape.



Landscape Receptor –	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Nature and significance of effect – including commentary
- The structure and pattern of the landscape derived from the road network and hedgerow alignments. - Vegetative Cover - hedgerows, tree belts, and grassland.		Post construction and with the maturation of the new planting, open space and tree belts and their on-going management would result in a mid-high , beneficial magnitude of change.	Development Phase On completion, and over time the effects of the proposals will increase tree cover and vegetative diversity, the effects in respect of this resource will be beneficial for the long-term and achieve the published objective for this characteristic feature of this landscape. The effect will be <u>significant</u> in the context of enhancing woodland cover consistent with the baseline situation.
Access – Baseline situation (relevant landscape attributes) - Public Rights of Way (PROW) - Recreation grounds at urban edge providing green finger/connection between urban and more rural areas and containing development.	The susceptibility of the PROW to change is at the mid part of the spectrum. This is an asset used by the local community; however, it has limited connectivity to the wider area and is not a national or 'named' route which may draw tourists or a wider community to the area.	The changes during the construction phase will be highly localised, short-term and at the mid-to-high range of the spectrum. and adverse in nature. The magnitude of change once complete will be at the low to mid-range of the spectrum, in respect of the footpath the changes are adverse in nature due to the introduction of the access road and crossing point. However, the scheme includes extensive areas of connected and accessible open space, which is a positive outcome for the local community.	Construction Phase During the construction phase the effects in respect of this resource will not be significant. The existing level of access is limited to footpath 357, the impact will be experienced for a short segment of the footpath. Development Phase On completion the effects in respect of this resource will be <u>significant</u> . There will be new areas of accessible space for the new residents and wider community. The quantum of accessible open space and associated facilities (5ha) in the proposed scheme will exceed the policy requirement of 1.29ha.

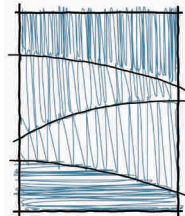
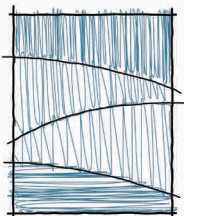


Table 6.3: Analysis of significance of visual effects

Visual Receptor – This refers to the people not the location – the viewpoints which represent the groups of people are noted.	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Nature and significance of effect – including commentary
People using the local public rights of way network and permissive footpaths within the Application Site and on its boundaries. (Representative viewpoints 4 and 5)	The sensitivity of people to visual change using these routes will be at the mid-to-high range of the spectrum.	The magnitude of effect during the construction phase will be at the higher end of the spectrum, short-term and adverse in nature. On completion the magnitude of change will be at the mid-high range of the spectrum of a mixed nature	Construction Phase During the construction phase the effects are significant and adverse, localised, and short-term. Development Phase On completion the changes will be determinative in the application process and significant in terms of the assessment. There is no loss of views towards or of landmark features. Aesthetically the provision of housing which complements and mirrors the townscape is a neutral change to views.
People driving on the local roads (Wyke Lane, Harper's Road and Guildford Road). (Representative viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7)	The sensitivity of these people to visual change is within the lower part of the spectrum.	Generally, the magnitude of effect during the construction phase will be at the higher end of the spectrum, short-term and adverse in nature. Following completion of the development, the magnitude of the change will be at the mid-range of the spectrum of magnitude, adverse in nature for the first 5 years then transitioning to neutral over time as the new townscape become assimilated into the settlement edge.	Construction Phase During the construction phase the effects are not significant but are relevant to the determination of the application. They are adverse in nature, localised, and short-term. Development Phase On completion the changes will not be significant.
People overlooking the Application Site from properties on Wyke Lane and Guildford Road. (Represented by viewpoints 2 and 7)	The sensitivity of these people to visual change is at the mid to high range of the spectrum.	The magnitude of effect during the construction phase will be at the higher end of the spectrum, localised and adverse in nature. The duration of the effect will be short-term. On completion the magnitude of change will be adverse in nature for those residents directly overlooking the Site with the loss of openness and at the mid-high range of the spectrum.	Construction Phase During the construction phase the effects are significant and adverse, localised, and short-term. Development Phase During the development phase the effects are significant and adverse, localised, and long-term, specifically in respect of those residents to the east of Wyke Lane.



Section 7: Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1. Following comprehensive baseline analysis, scheme iteration and testing of the emerging proposals, the applicant’s team has worked together to prepare a scheme of development, demonstrated by the defined parameters.
- 7.2. In respect of the natural environment, as a point of fact, the Site is not covered by specific policies listed in the NPPF December 2024, paragraph 11 (d) (i), footnote 7, including:
- Site of Special Scientific Interest;
 - Local Green Space;
 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - National Park;
 - Heritage Coast;
 - Irreplaceable habitats;
 - Areas at risk of flooding or coastal change; and
 - Designated heritage assets.
- 7.3. The Application Site is in the metropolitan green belt; this has been the subject of a separate assessment prepared by others on behalf of the applicant.
- 7.4. In respect of NPPF December 2024 Paragraph 187 b) the landscape character of the area has been recognised in the development of the proposals. This is not a valued landscape (NPPF 187 a).
- 7.5. The locational benefits of the Application Site can be summarised as:
- Located adjoining existing areas of housing and close to the emerging settlement edge of Ash, utilising the existing infrastructure and thereby minimising impacts arising from creating new infrastructure;
 - Out with any national statutorily designated landscape;
 - Out with any setting of a statutorily designated landscape;
 - Not within or near other designated landscapes, such as Ancient Woodland or Registered Historic Parks and Gardens;
 - Not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area; and
 - Not within an NPPF December 2024 ‘valued landscape’.

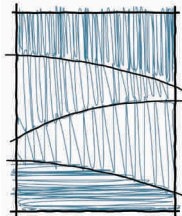
- 7.6. As a primary measure of mitigation, the proposed development of the Application Site avoids direct adverse effects on sensitive and valued landscapes.
- Approach to the design – Incorporating Mitigation*
- 7.7. In accordance with GLVIA 3, Chapter 4: The Proposed Development, Design and Mitigation’, and in particular paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6, the applicant has engaged with the technical team and the landscape advice provided at the outset of the design process.
- 7.8. The masterplan has been informed by comprehensive and detailed technical analysis. The team’s collaborative design approach has responded positively to the environmental requirements and objectives of the published character assessment.
- 7.9. The proposed development is permeable in terms of access and visibility, and delivers a variety of spaces, functions, and environmental benefits and multifunctional Green Infrastructure.
- 7.10. The Applicant’s team has taken a robust approach to the analysis of the locale its technical constraints and relationship with its context. The collaborative approach to the project is important as it has enabled a comprehensive solution to growth in a manner which responds to its context.
- 7.11. Mitigation measures are those measures, incorporated into the proposed development through the iterative design process to:
- Prevent/avoid adverse effects;
 - Reduce effects; and, where possible; and
 - Offset or remedy (or compensate for) any significant adverse landscape and visual effects.
- 7.12. The measures are detailed in Section 4 of this LVIA.
- 7.13. It is inevitable that there will be significant effects of developing new homes on a green field site. With changes occurring when measured against the existing baseline resources.
- 7.14. To some extent these effects cannot be mitigated for, for example, loss of open grazing land. However, further mitigation measures are recommended to contain the effects to the Application Site and minimise the disruption to the public, particularly those moving through the area. Such remedial measures, particularly relevant during the most disruptive phase

- (construction) which are likely to be controlled by planning conditions, including:
- Hoarding to site boundaries to minimise visual change and visual intrusion. This may reduce lower-level visual disturbance but not result in the avoidance of changes to the views;
 - Application of appropriate planning conditions to deliver a suitable landscape scheme in line with the material which accompanies the panning application;
 - Drafting and agreeing a Landscape Management Plan to ensure on-going management of the landscape and the features therein; and
 - Tree protection measures to be erected pre-commencement.
- 7.15. The provision of new areas of townscape character (GLVIA, paragraph 4.37) recognises that enhancement measures may include:
- Provision of new local landscape character and local distinctiveness.
 - Assist in meeting landscape management objectives for the area.
 - Address specific issues and/or opportunities, for example habitat improvement.
- 7.16. These are all positive outcomes of the Scheme Proposals.

Overall Effects

Significant Landscape Effects

- 7.17. The assessment process has concluded that the following significant and **adverse** effects, taking account of the mitigation measures adopted and embedded through the design evolution, will arise from the construction and operational phases of the development:
- Impacts on the suburban settlement edge during the construction phase resulting from the disruptive aspects of the development of new homes, which will be experienced over a local area, within the influence of the Site (short-term, localised).
 - Impacts on the character of the Application Site during the construction phase, and loss of the open rural character.



7.18. The following significant **beneficial** effects (long-term, and local to Ash not the wider borough) effects have been assessed to be a consequence of the proposed development:

- Increase in vegetative cover, particularly in respect of trees.
- Increased accessible space and connected routes.

Significant Visual Effects

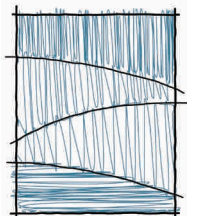
7.19. The assessment process has concluded that the following significant and **adverse** visual effects will arise during the construction phase:

- The views of people walking on footpath 357 and the pedestrian paths alongside Guildford Road.
- Impacts on views of residents in those properties which overlook the Application Site during the construction phase (short-term and localised).

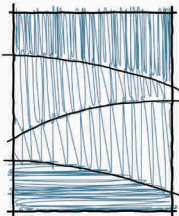
7.20. Significant adverse effects will remain for the residents oriented west on Wyke Lane.

7.21. Generally, the significant adverse effects (both landscape and visual) are associated with the construction phase will persist in the short-term only and are localised to the Application Site and its immediate environs.

7.22. The beneficial effects will persist in the long-term, with the positive effects increasing over time as the scheme matures and the habitats develop.



Appendix 1: Assessment Criteria and Glossary



Assessment Criteria and Spectrum ‘ends’

As an introduction at paragraph 3.26 of GLVIA the following criteria are noted as the principal components to the assessment process:

- i. Criteria for establishing sensitivity are:
 - The susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising.
 - Value of the receptor.
- ii. Criteria for establishing magnitude of change include:
 - Size and cale of the effect
 - Geographic extent
 - Duration and reversibility of the effect.

Within the LVIA the following criteria inform the professional judgements

'Landscape' criteria

Landscape Value

Landscape Value criteria (by reference to LI TGN 01/21)

- Natural heritage;
- Cultural heritage;
- Landscape condition;
- Associations;
- Distinctiveness;
- Recreational; and
- Perceptual Qualities.

These feed into the scale of classification of National/Internation, District and Local.

Landscape susceptibility

The susceptibility criteria are the degree to which the change fits with the character based on:

- Pattern;
- Grain;
- Use;
- Scale;
- Massing; and
- Ability to mitigate.

At the highest end of the ‘susceptibility spectrum’ is a landscape wherein changes in terms of the Proposed Scheme would be entirely at odds with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale, and mass. The Proposed Scheme would require extensive change to the topography, vegetative cover, or form of buildings.

Mid-way on the spectrum is a landscape wherein the Proposed Scheme has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation.

At the lower end of the spectrum the Proposed Scheme is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale, and mass.

Landscape sensitivity

In accordance with paragraph 3,26 of GLVIA, the criteria for assigning landscape sensitivity are the function of the susceptibility of the receptor and the value of the landscape.

At the lower end of the spectrum (low sensitivity) resources may be; low valued/undesigned landscapes, with no distinctive or sensitive features, with the potential to accommodate appropriately design development, and where adverse effects can be mitigated for.

At the higher end of the range are; those highly valued/designated landscapes recognised in policy, may contain landscape features that cannot accommodate development of the type proposed, and where mitigation measures are unable to avoid, compensate or offset the undue consequences which would arise.

Magnitude of landscape change

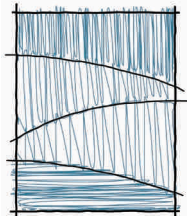
In line with the suggested criteria in GLVIA (paragraphs 5.49 to 5.52) the criteria which inform the professional judgement on the magnitude of change are:

- The scale and degree of change – measured by reference to consistency with the baseline situation.
- The degree to which the change relates to characteristic elements (proportion of characteristic elements affected).
- The geographic extent over which the change is experienced.

At the lower end of the spectrum the degree of change may be small, and the loss/addition of landscape features affecting only a limited

proportion of the total extent to which the resource contributes to the character. The changes may be entirely consistent with the context, and the geographic extent to which the effects occur may be localised.

At the higher end of the spectrum the change may be over an extensive area with a high proportion of landscape elements which contribute to the character of the area being lost or altered. The change may be at odds and incongruent with the context within which it occurs.



‘Visual’ criteria

Value attached to views

The criteria for establishing the value of views are:

- Status of footpaths and pedestrian routes.
- Value ascribed by designation.
- Documented viewpoints.

Susceptibility to visual change

The susceptibility criteria are set out in paragraphs 3.27 to 3.28 of the LVIA, these are considered with GLVIA 3 at paragraph 6.32, namely:

- Occupation of the people experiencing the view.
- The focus in the visual context.
- Duration and frequency of views.

Visual sensitivity

In accordance with paragraph 3.26 of GLVIA, the criteria for assigning visual sensitivity are the susceptibility of the receptor and the value of the view.

At the lower end of spectrum may be those people engaged in an activity which is not focused on the landscape or context of the person/people, where the views are infrequent, the representative or specific viewpoints are not associated with a valued landscape or asset.

At the higher end of the spectrum people are engaged in an activity whereby the focus of the visual experience is linked to the landscape context, the views are associated with a valued landscape or important assets/landmarks, and the number or people and frequency of the visual experience is high.

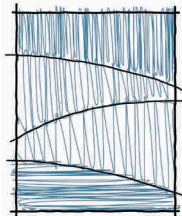
Magnitude of visual change

In line with GLVIA (paragraphs 6.38 to 6.41), the criteria which inform the professional judgement on the magnitude of change, are:

- Scale of change – proportion of view affected and components therein.
- Degree to which the change is consistent with the baseline composition.
- Duration of the visual change (as part of the journey

At the lower end of the spectrum the visual change may be small scale with no notable loss or addition to the view, the change is consistent with the baseline context and will not give rise to a contrast in elements, form, colour, and line, whilst the views are likely to be fleeting, glimpsed, or viewed infrequently.

At the higher end of the spectrum the changes will be large scale, with losses of key elements in the view and/or additional features which may be incongruent in the composition. There is likely to be a contrast in scale, form, line and colour and the changes will affect a sizable proportion of the view, be fully visible. The duration of the view is likely to be prolonged and frequent.

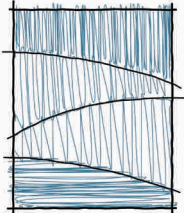


Glossary

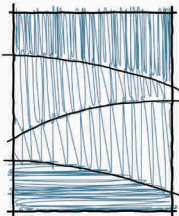
Character	A distinct, recognisable, and consistent pattern of elements, features and qualities in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.
Characteristics / elements	Features and qualities which make a particular contribution to distinctive character.
Characterisation	The process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying, and mapping them and describing their character.
Effects	These are the effects that result from the impacts (changes) of the Development. Direct effects are directly attributable to the Development, Indirect effects result indirectly from the proposed project but are because of the direct impacts, often occurring away from the Site, or because of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway. They may be separated by distance of in time from the source of the impacts.
Element	Individual component parts of the landscape such as field boundaries, woodlands, patches of similar vegetation, outbuildings, structures, and rock outcrops.
Feature	Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements e.g., wooded hilltop or chapel, or a particular aspect of this project.
Impacts	The changes occurring because of the Development, the causation of effects.
Land Cover	Combinations of natural and man-made elements including vegetation that cover the land surface.
Landscape	An area, as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

Landscape Character Areas	These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas if a particular landscape type.
Landscape effects	Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right.
Landscape quality (condition)	A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
Landscape Value	The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.
Magnitude (of effect)	A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.
Sense of Place	The unique experience that arises because of being in or walking through a particular locality, generally as a response to the specific characteristics and quality of the area.
Sensitivity (of Landscape)	The inherent sensitivity of the landscape itself, irrespective of the type of change that may occur. In this project, it is divided into cultural, ecological, and visual sensitivity. 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.
Significance	A measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect defined by significance criteria specific to the environmental topic.
Susceptibility	The ability of a defined landscape and visual receptor to accommodate the

	specific Development without undue negative consequences.
Visual Amenity	The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting, or travelling through an area.
Visual effects	Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.
Visual Envelope	An area validated by fieldwork from which the Proposals are visible from, typically informed by the ZTV (see below).
Visual receptors	Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal
Visualisation	A computer simulation, photomontage or other technique illustrating the predicted appearance of a Development.
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)	A map showing areas of land within which a Development is theoretically visible.



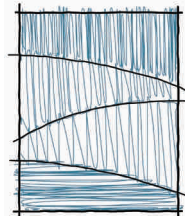
Appendix 2: Bibliography



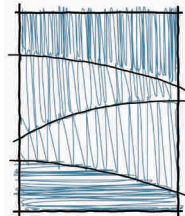
Bibliography

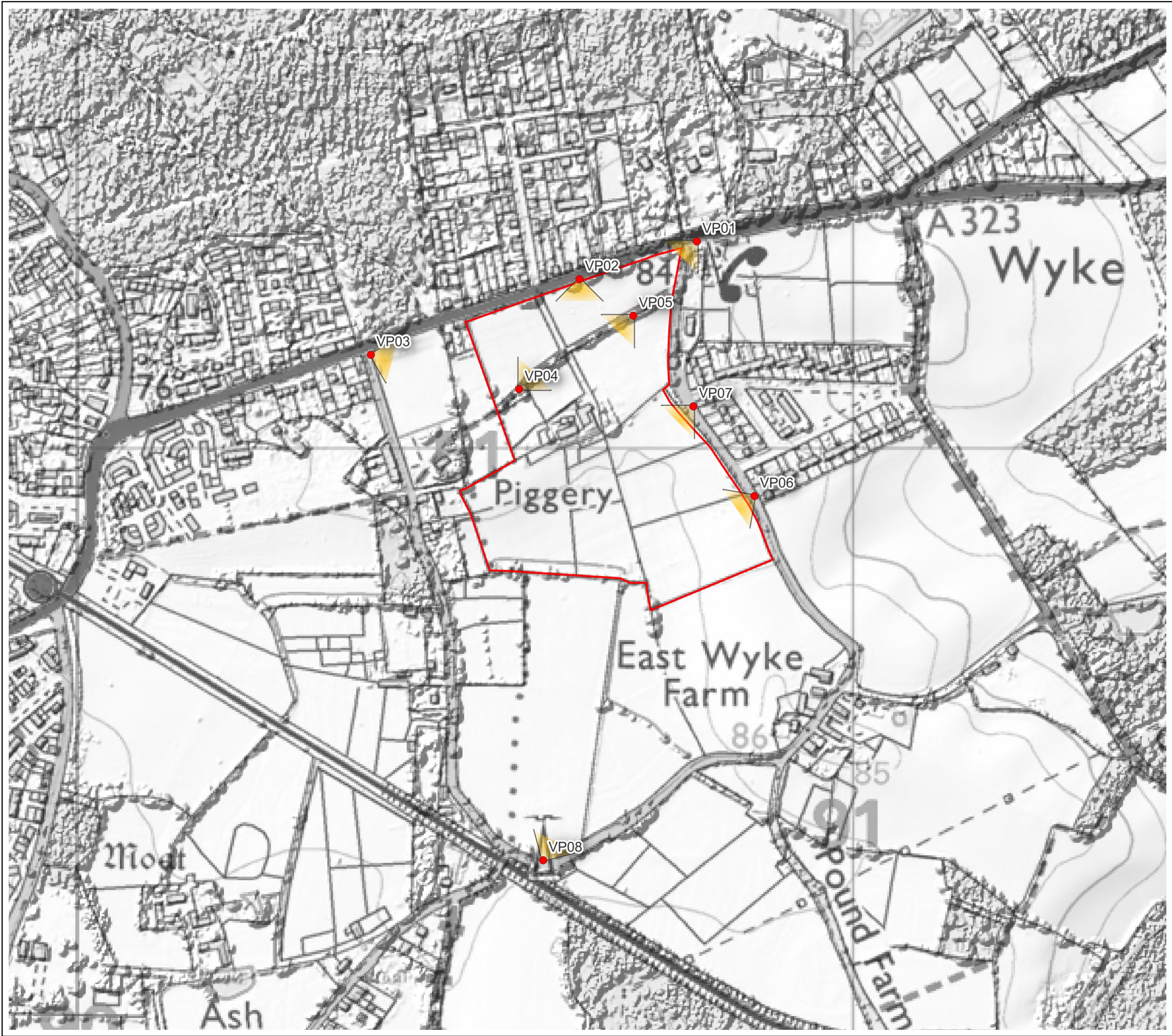
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, LI²¹ and IEMA, 2013. Third Edition
- Notes and clarifications on aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition, Landscape Institute LITGN-2024-01, published August 2024
- Landscape Institute Technical Information Note: Townscape Character Assessment, 05/2017, Revised April 2018
- Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs), Technical Guidance Note 1/20 (10 Jan 2020)
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Landscape Institute, September 2019.
- European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe, October 2000
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England (2014)
- Assessing landscape value outside national designations, LI, February 2021, Technical Guidance Note 02/21
- Green Infrastructure: connected and multifunctional landscapes. LI, 2009
- Green Infrastructure: An approach to land use. LI 2013
- Public Health and Landscape: Creating healthy places LI 2013
- European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe October 2000
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Natural England. 2014
- magic.defra.gov.uk
- Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England,' Natural England, 2011
- Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites 2015 – 2034 Adopted 25 April 2019
- Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015: Guildford Borough
- Guildford Landscape Character Assessment & Guidance Final Report January 2007 Volume 2: Rural-Urban Fringe Assessment

²¹ Landscape Institute (LI)

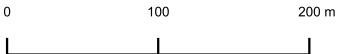


Appendix 3: Viewpoint Locations and Baseline
Winter Photography



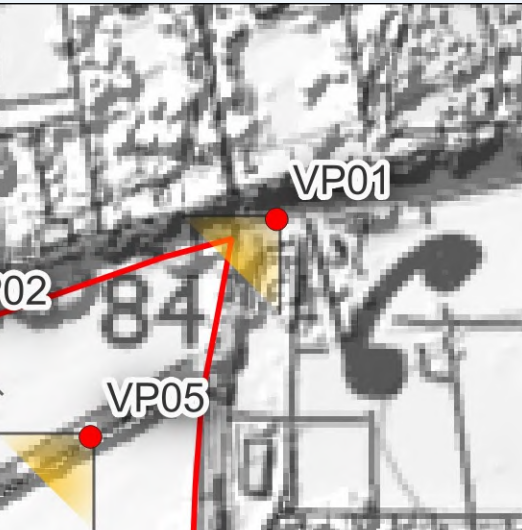


 Application Site Boundary

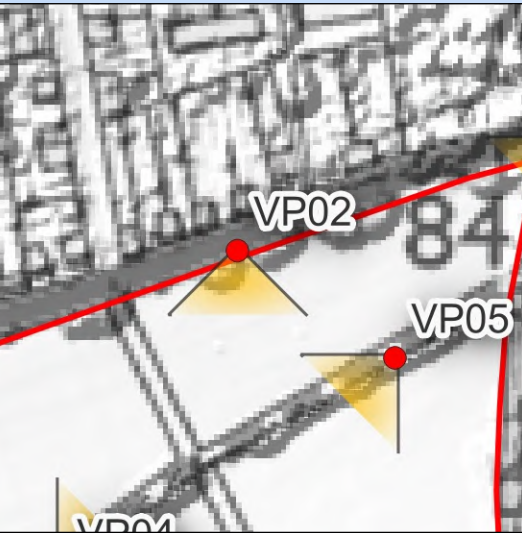


Project Details	Ash, Guildford
Title	Viewpoint Plan
Scale	1:5000 @A3
Drawing Ref	THL/03
Date	April 2025
Checked	AP

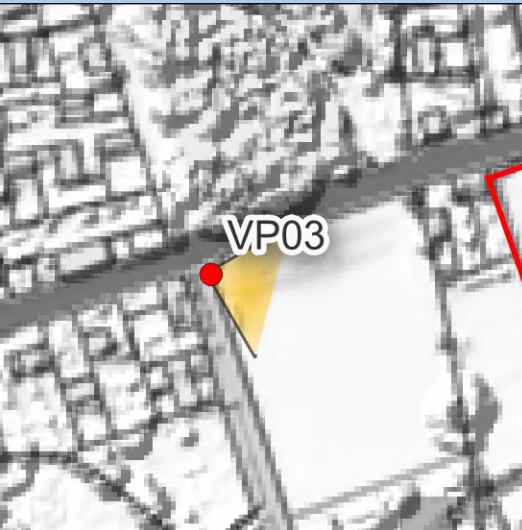
Baseline Viewpoint: 01



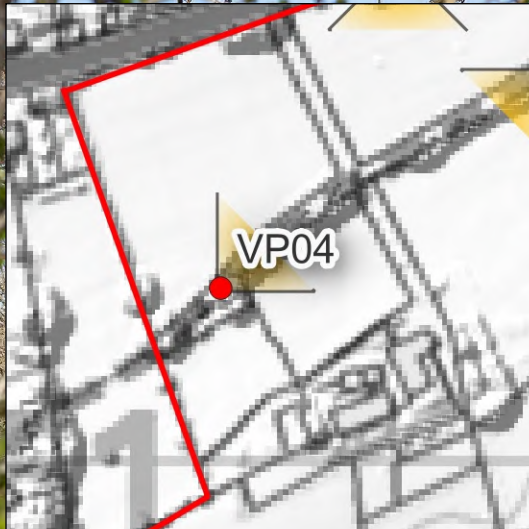
Baseline Viewpoint: 02



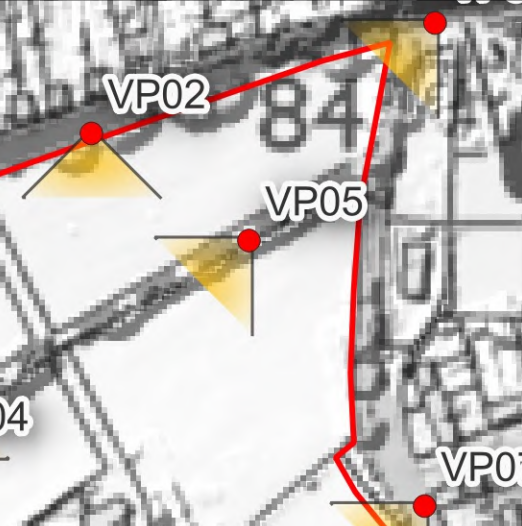
Baseline Viewpoint: 03



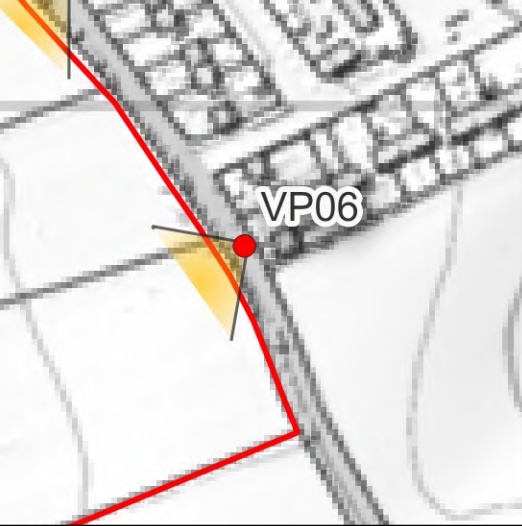
Baseline Viewpoint: 04



Baseline Viewpoint: 05



Baseline Viewpoint: 06



Baseline Viewpoint: 07



Baseline Viewpoint: 08

