Appendix 2: Site Concept Plans
Business and Industrial Zone (smaller occupier requirements)

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Introduction

1.1 This baseline Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) has been prepared by Turley VIA on behalf of IM Properties, to identify the baseline position in terms of landscape character and visual amenity matters for the land north of Towcester. It should be read in conjunction with the appended LVIA methodology and is supported by a series of figures.

1.2 The land at Towcester consists of two parcels of land to the eastern (Parcel 1) and western (Parcel 2) sides of Tiffield Road. Parcel 1 is defined by the A43 (Towcester Bypass) to the southeast and Tiffield Road to the west. Its northern boundary is irregular, following a woodland block and overgrown former railway cutting to the northeast and with no physical definition to the northwest. Parcel 2 is smaller in scale, defined by an irregular shaped field boundary and incorporating another former railway embankment. These features are illustrated in Figure 1 of this appraisal's Appendix 2 and supported by a series of photographs taken from within the site. For the purpose of this baseline appraisal the whole site is referred to as the ‘Appraisal Site’ and separate sides as ‘Parcel 1’ and ‘Parcel 2’.

1.3 This appraisal is arranged in five sections. The first section identifies the relevant national and local planning policy and the second, third and fourth sections discuss the baseline situation of the Appraisal Site and the surrounding area in terms of ‘landscape elements’, ‘landscape character areas’ and ‘visibility’. The final section sets outs the appraisal’s conclusions and proposes a series of design principles that could be considered to reduce the effect of any emerging scheme proposals on landscape character and visual amenity matters.

Study Area

1.4 The study area includes both the Appraisal Site and the surrounding wider context. The landscape character appraisal considers the Appraisal Site at a county level and its contribution to these characteristics within a 1.5 kilometre radius. The visual appraisal considers the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) at a 1.5 kilometre radius, with further long distant views being considered where identified and relevant.

Surveys

1.5 A preliminary desk study was undertaken to establish the physical components of the Appraisal Site and its surroundings along with potential visual receptors. Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and aerial photography were utilised to identify these features. A field study was undertaken by a landscape specialist from Turley on 12 May 2016, during which the visibility was moderate to good. The field study recorded the Appraisal Site and surrounding context’s landscape features and verified the visual receptors identified in the desk study. It involved travelling throughout the study area and producing a working photographic record.

Methodology

1.6 The appraisal is carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013); and An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014). The methodology for this report is set out in Appendix 1.
Planning Policy

2.1 At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. This is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (2014), which includes guidance on character and visual matters within its design category section.

Local Planning Policy

2.2 At a local level the Appraisal Site falls within the district administrative boundary of South Northamptonshire Council and under the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit which covers the administrative areas of Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire District. The Council are currently working on the South Northamptonshire Local Plan (Part 2A) which along with Part 2 Local Plans for the other administrative areas will follow on from the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) which was adopted in 2014.

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) 2014

2.3 Adopted planning policy for the district is set out in the ‘West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) adopted 2014’. The Appraisal Site is located on greenfield land to the north of Towcester, which is currently defined by the A43. Policies relevant to the landscape and visual situation include:

- BN1 Green Infrastructure Connections: the recognition of green infrastructure corridors for their contribution to sense of place. These corridors should be conserved, managed and enhanced within new development proposals.
- BN3 Woodland Enhancement and Creation: support of measures to enhance and manage existing woodlands and create new woodlands.

Saved policies from the South Northamptonshire Local Plan 1997

2.4 Until the new local plan is adopted, a number of saved policies from the 1997 South Northamptonshire Local Plan remain in force. The Appraisal Site is located outside of the ‘Built up areas’ as defined on the Proposals Map. Policies relevant to the Appraisal Site include:

- EV1 – The design of new development should pay particular attention to existing site characteristics; the relationship with adjoining land and buildings; and the scale, density, layout, height, massing, landscape and materials in relation to the site and its surroundings.
- EV2 – Guides against development in open countryside.
- EV11 – Planning permission will not be granted for development outside of a conservation area that adversely affects its setting or any views into or out of the area.
- EV21 – Development proposals should retain where possible or replace trees, hedgerows, ponds or other landscape features where they make an important contribution to the character of the area.
- EV25 – Gives protection to the nature conservation, landscape or wildlife value of dismantled railways or waterways and watercourses.
- EV29 – Provides guidance for appropriate landscape schemes in relation to development proposals that would have a significant visual impact.
Towcester Masterplan 2011

2.5 South Northamptonshire adopted the Towcester Masterplan in 2011 which provides aims for the future development of the market town. The plan identifies a boundary to avoid uncontrolled growth and identifies appropriate locations for development.

2.6 A key aim is ‘respect for the landscape’ which looks to retain the physical and visual connections between the rural landscape and the town. The Appraisal Site is located within an area identified as a ‘green edge to the town’ described as:

“A green edge will have been formed that contains the town, controls sprawl, gives the town a clear identity and minimises the visual impact of Towcester from the surrounding countryside. There will be physical and visual connections from the town to the surrounding countryside in order to retain rural and urban character and a range of quality of open spaces.”

2.7 The green edges are required to contain the town, rather than letting development bleed into the countryside. New development should create a new green edge in order to preserve the identity of the town with a distinct rural setting and minimise the visual impact of Towcester on the surrounding countryside. The Masterplan also promotes green corridors that create safe and well managed links between the countryside and town.

Towcester Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study 2009

2.8 The Appraisal Site falls within ‘Area 6’ of the Towcester Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study. The area extends beyond the Appraisal Site to Towcester Road to the west and includes Caldecote and Tiffield to the north. The study identifies elements of high sensitivity associated with the Appraisal Site including the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) along the disused railway line; the protected wildflower verges along the Towcester to Tiffield Road; public rights of way (PRoW); and, long distance views from elevated land. The sensitivity is described as:

“This area is of medium-high landscape sensitivity. The landscape is composed of small field patterns, creating a varied tapestry, together with elements of woodland and significant hedgerows with varied topography, rising to higher contours to the north and providing views to the south.”

2.9 It is considered that the contribution to this sensitivity is provided more strongly by the pasture and wildlife corridor associated with the disused railway line within Parcel 2.
Landscape Elements

3.1 The following features have been identified as contributing to both the landscape character of the Appraisal Site and its surrounding area. They also influence the surrounding area’s visibility to the Appraisal Site.

Designations

3.2 There are no designations relating to landscape ‘value’ and/or ‘sensitivity’ covering the Appraisal Site. Easton Neston Conservation Areas is located to the eastern side of Northampton Road with its closest points approximately 100 metres away from Parcel 1’s north eastern corner. Part of Easton Neston is also a Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest. Further conservations areas that fall within the 1.5 kilometre study area include Tiffield, Towcester and Hulcote.

Land Use

3.3 The land use within Parcel 1 is predominantly arable farmland. There is a small pocket of dense scrub and rough grass to the northwest occupying the site of a former gravel pit. Directly to the north is Williams Barns incorporating employment facilities, agricultural barns and residential property. Parcel 2 is occupied by an area of trees and shrubs that forms part of Tiffield Disused Railway (south) LWS and a grazed pasture. There is also potential evidence of ridge and furrow in this field. To the south of Parcel 2 is Brickyard Farm which includes a residential property and Brickyard Farm Kennels.

3.4 Beyond the Appraisal Site to the north and west is a mix of small scale interlocking pastures and larger scale arable fields. This area is crossed by narrow lanes and punctuated with small scale rural villages including Caldecote, Tiffield and Duncote. To the south of the Appraisal Site there is a linear band of residential development and commercial and employment premises surrounding the A5/A43 roundabout.

Topography and Drainage

3.5 The landform rises broadly to the northeast of the Appraisal Site with minor ridgelines and local undulations forming areas of containment. The elevated land within Parcel 1, to the northeast wing and east of Williams Barns, provides a vantage point for extended views across farmland to the southwest. A drainage channel crosses the southern corner of Parcel 1 and connects with a small pond located adjacent to the southern boundary of Parcel 2.

3.6 The sinuous path of the River Tove dissects the built form of Towcester and strongly influences the topography surrounding the Appraisal Site. Land rises to the southwest to the southern side of the river valley and to the northwest towards Astcote. A number of field ponds, springs and drainage channels form further undulations within the landscape.
Vegetation

3.7 The Appraisal Site’s vegetation is typically associated with field boundaries in a variable condition. Within Parcel 1, clipped hedgerows maintained to an approximate height of 1.5 metres and intermittent trees define the south western and part of the western boundary. Vegetation is fragmented to the southwest corner adjacent the A43/ Tiffield road junction allowing views onto the road. A band of shrubs follows the disused railway line to a woodland block extending to Old Soldier Spinney. Hedgerows in Parcel 2 have declined, leaving boundaries defined by post and wire fencing along with fragmented shrubs. There is a dense block of trees to the south of Parcel 2 associated with Brickyard Farm.

3.8 In the surrounding landscape, vegetation follows a similar pattern of variable hedgerows, scattered trees and woodland blocks. A robust band of trees forming the Northampton Road Belt lines the southern side of the A43 and visually encloses Easton Neston. The parkland at Easton Neston includes dense woodland cover and mature avenue trees.

Movement

3.10 Aside from farm access gates there is no vehicular access through the Appraisal Site. A bridleway crosses the southern corner of Parcel 1 leading from Northampton Road and crossing the A43. This connects with a footpath that crosses Parcel 2 and extends north to Caldecote connecting with further PRoW.

3.11 In the surrounding area, movement is defined by two main thoroughfares: the A5 connecting Milton Keynes in the south to the Midlands to the north; and, the A43 which provides a link between the M1 in the east and the M40 to the west. A number of minor roads and PRoW connect Towcester to the surrounding rural landscape and villages. The Grafton Way National Trail extends from Green Norton to Towcester and further across farmland to the southeast.

Built Form

3.9 The Appraisal Site does not contain any built form. The converted barns at Williams Barns to the north are a prominent feature in views from much of Parcel 1. To the south beyond the A43 is a late twentieth century residential development that is separated from the historic part of Towcester by the River Tove. Listed Buildings are clustered along the main street in Towcester and within Hulcote and Easton Neston. Distinctive features include grade II listed estate cottages at Hulcote and grade I listed Easton Neston House. The commercial and employment land to the north of Towcester includes 2-3 storey office blocks and warehouses.
Landscape Character Appraisal

4.1 A review has been undertaken of the national and county landscape character assessments and the associated character areas that the Appraisal Site falls within. Consideration has then been given to whether the Appraisal Site’s landscape elements reflect and contribute to the characteristics of the recognised areas at a county level.

National Landscape Character Assessment

4.2 At a national level the Appraisal Site is located within ‘89: Northamptonshire Vales’. The National Character Area profile for this area describes it as a series of low-lying clay vales and river valleys. The landscape possesses a diverse range in levels of tranquillity with busy urban areas ranging to some deeply rural parts. The national character area covers a large expanse and provides a high level overview of the landscape characteristics.

Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment (2010)

4.3 The Appraisal Site and surrounding area with the exception of the River Tove floodplain, fall within Landscape Character Type (LCT) ‘6: Undulating Claylands’ and Landscape Character Area (LCA) ‘6a The Tove Catchment’ in the Current Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment. The key characteristics identified for the LCT, relevant to the Appraisal Site include:

- Broad, elevated undulating landscape that is more elevated to the west shelving eastwards and drained by numerous broad, gentle convex sloped valleys;
- wide panoramic views across elevated areas, though the undulating landform creates more contained and intimate areas;
- a productive rural landscape with an equal balance of arable and pastoral farming with the former predominating on more elevated land and often larger in scale;
- improved and semi improved pastures located along narrow floodplains and sloping land bordering them, often more intricate and smaller in scale;
- large woodlands are not a characteristic feature, although woodland in surrounding landscape types, small deciduous copses and hedgerow trees can together create the sense of a well-wooded character;
- hedgerows are often low and well clipped emphasising the undulating character of the landscape with scattered hedgerow oak and ash trees;
- post and wire fencing frequently reinforces gappy hedgerows, in particular where pasture is the current land use;
- numerous villages located throughout the landscape with varying morphology; and
- historic parklands provide important landscape features along with remnants of the industrial age, including disused railways and canals.
4.4 The LCT is described as being of moderate scenic quality with local variations relating to condition.

4.5 The LCA description goes on to summarise characteristics of The Tove Catchment, of which the Appraisal Site is located to the north eastern side. The land cover is a mix of arable and pasture, with improved pastures prevailing around village settlements bordering the River Tove and its tributaries. A more intricate and intimate field pattern is observed where pastoral fields dominate. A significant feature of the LCA is woodland associated with estate parklands including the wooded landscape at Easton Neston. Woodland is not identified as a prominent feature across the LCA, but moderately sized woodland blocks contain views and create a more intimate landscape to parts.

Landscape Character Summary

4.6 Overall, the Appraisal Site has some degree of contribution to the identified characteristics within the ‘6: Undulating Claylands’ LCT and the ‘6a: The Tove Catchment’ LCA. The Appraisal Site reflects the undulating landform; the patterns of arable and pastoral land use; and, the presence of hedgerow field boundaries. It is also considered that the landscape elements identified in the Appraisal Site reflect the variable condition described within the Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment.

4.7 Elements of scenic quality include the intricate small scale pastures to within Parcel 1; the vantage points for open views across surrounding rural landscape; and, well maintained native hedgerows defining field boundaries to Parcel 1. Features within the Appraisal Site that reduce the rural quality and condition of the landscape include the electricity pylons prominent in views; the mast adjacent Old Soldier Spinney; fragmented hedgerows in the western field and post and wire fencing; and, noise intrusion from both the A43 and A5.

4.8 The Appraisal Site does not fall within any landscape designation. Heritage assets such as Easton Neston, referred to in the Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment are located outside of its boundary. The landscape character is therefore considered to be of moderate to minor value.
Visual Amenity Appraisal

5.1 The visibility of the Appraisal Site and extent of its zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) has been established through both a desktop analysis of the surrounding area and by confirming on site the localised screening effect of the landform, vegetation and built form. The visual appraisal has been undertaken in a two-staged process:

- Stage 1 established likely extent of the Appraisal Site’s ZTV as part of a field study as shown via the panoramas in Figures 4 and 5. The visual receptors that are visible from within the Appraisal Site were also established; and
- Stage 2 determined the visibility of the Appraisal Site within the previously identified receptors as illustrated in Figure 6. The receptors appraisal is supported by a series of photographs from representative viewpoints, as shown in Figures 7 and 8.

5.2 In order to identify the likely visibility from the visual receptors, private properties have not been visited, so an assumption has been made of the potential, relative visibility, of the Appraisal Site and surroundings, from adjoining publically accessible areas, such as roads or footpaths.

Stage 1

Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)

5.3 The visibility of the Appraisal Site is strongly influenced by the undulating topography. The existing visibility is illustrated by a series of panoramic photographs taken from within the Appraisal Site and summarised below:

Parcel 1

- To the northeast views are contained by the rising landform. The built form associated with Williams Barns and woodland at Old Soldier Spinney is seen on the horizon line.
- Breaks in vegetation to the west and south allow partial to glimpsed views to vehicles on Tiffinfield Road and the A43 (Towcester Bypass). The Northampton Road Belt and robust tree planting alongside the A43 prevents wider views to housing in Towcester and Easton Neston, although glimpsed views to adjacent facing properties to the north of Senna Drive may be possible in winter.
- Views from the northeast corner extend southwest across arable farmland with Costwell Farm glimpsed in the distance. Street lights and commercial premises associated with the A5/ A43 roundabout, including Bell Plantation Garden Centre, are glimpsed through roadside tree belts. Old Soldier Spinney prevents views to the north and an adjacent mast is a noticeable urbanising feature.
- From elevated land to the west of the disused railway line there are open views to Williams Barns. Mature trees to the north of Brickyard Farm prevent some longer distance views to the southwest. In wider views to the southwest, roofs and second storey windows of housing associated with Belle Baulk and
- Greenview Drive are glimpsed through bands of vegetation. A dense block of poplar trees alongside the River Tove is a noticeable feature on the horizon.
- The PRoW crossing the southern extent of Parcel 1 affords open views across the arable field.
Parcel 2

- To the northeast, there are partial to glimpsed views of neighbouring pastures and Tiffield Road. Electricity pylons are seen on the horizon line and long distance views are prevented by tree belts and the rising topography.

- There are open views to the west of adjacent arable fields where field boundary vegetation is lacking. Wider views of the surrounding landscape are largely prevented by the undulating topography and vegetation alongside the A5.

- Views south are contained by a robust belt of mature trees and riparian vegetation surrounding a pond to the north of Brickyard Farm.

Stage 2
Receptors

5.4 Stage 1 resulted in a number of ‘visual receptors’ being identified from where views are likely to possible of the Appraisal Site. Visual receptors are defined individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by development on the Appraisal Site. These include residential properties, public highways and PRoW, and commercial farms, and are listed below and referenced on the Visual Receptor Plan shown in Figure 6.

5.5 The residential and agricultural property visual receptors include:

- VR1 – Williams Barns
- VR2 – Brickyard Farm
- VR3 – Properties off Northampton Road to the north of Senna Drive
- VR4 – Properties off Northampton Road to the south of Senna Drive
- VR5 – Commercial premises associated with the A5/A43 roundabout
- VR6 – Lodge Cottages
- VR7 – Properties associated with Caldecote
- VR8 – Properties associated with Tiffield
- VR9 – St Johns Centre
- VR10 – Properties associated with Hulcote
- VR11 – Easton Neston House
- VR12 – Properties associated with the centre of Towcester
- VR13 – Properties associated with Belle Baulk and Greenview Drive
- VR14 – Costwell Farm
- VR15 – Mill Farm
- VR16 – Lodge Farm
- VR17 – Properties associated with Greens Norton
- VR18 – Properties associated with Duncote
- VR19 – Properties associated with Shutlanger
5.6 The public highway visual receptors include:

- A43
- A5
- Towcester Road
- Tiffield Road
- St Johns Road
- Northampton Road
- Mill Lane

5.7 The PRoW visual receptors include:

- PRoW crossing the Appraisal Site
- PRoW within 1.5 kilometres to the northeast of the Appraisal Site
- PRoW associated with Hulcote
- PRoW associated with Caldecote
- PRoW over 1.5 kilometres away to the southwest and west

Representative viewpoints

5.8 7 representative viewpoints have been identified to establish the visibility of the Appraisal Site from the surrounding area, as shown in Figure 7.

- Viewpoint 1 – from the PRoW to the southwest of the Parcel 1, adjacent A43 crossing point
- Viewpoint 2 – from the PRoW to the northwest of Parcel 2
- Viewpoint 3 – from Tiffield Road looking southwest
- Viewpoint 4 – from the PRoW to the north of Parcel 1 adjacent to Old Soldier Spinney
- Viewpoint 5 – from the PRoW to the east of Tiffield
- Viewpoint 6 – from the PRoW adjacent to Costwell Farm
- Viewpoint 7 – from walkway adjacent to Northampton Road (within residential area)

5.9 Should a planning application be progressed for the site these viewpoints will be agreed with officers at South Northamptonshire Council to ensure that an adequate spread of views has been identified. A summary of what can be seen from each viewpoint and the relationship with the Appraisal Site is provided below.
5.10 **Viewpoint 1** is taken from the bridleway to the southwest of the Appraisal Site, a short distance away. The PRoW extends from Old Tiffield Road adjacent to employment premises before crossing the A43 onto Tiffield Road.

5.11 The view illustrates the fragmented vegetation to the southern corner of Parcel 1 and the land rising towards Old Soldier Spinney. This allows views into the Appraisal Site from both the A43 and the PRoW. Parcel 2 is screened by trees associated with the A43 and to the north of Brickyard Farm.

5.12 The viewpoint is located along a PRoW but is adjacent to a busy highway which dominates the view and reduces the tranquillity levels experienced in other locations. Partial to glimpsed views are possible to the Appraisal Site’s features. The viewpoint has been identified as having a moderate to low value, due to being taken from a PRoW adjacent to a busy highway with no association with designated heritage assets or planning designation.

5.13 **Viewpoint 2** illustrates views from the footpath to the northwest of Parcel 2, looking southeast from approximately 350 metres, a short distance away.

5.14 The view demonstrates the undulating nature of the landscape which provides containment to parts of the Appraisal Site. The eastern extent of Parcel 2 and all of Parcel 1 is screened behind intervening vegetation and the raised landform of the neighbouring pasture. The western extent of Parcel 2 is seen in the middle distance of the view. The photograph illustrates the lack of vegetation to the western boundary allowing partial views of the Appraisal Site and shows the rural character of the landscape.

5.15 The viewpoint has been taken from a PRoW with no associated value to the view relating to heritage assets or planning designation. The viewpoint is considered to have a moderate value.

5.16 **Viewpoint 3** is situated a short distance away from the Appraisal Site on Tiffield Road, looking southwest.

5.17 The viewpoint is located alongside a pasture to the north of Parcel 2. The low clipped hedgerow to this stretch of Tiffield Road allows views across the pasture to the Appraisal Site. Vegetation associated with the disused railway line and LWS is seen to the centre of the view. To the right of this, fragmented vegetation allows views across Parcel 2’s pasture with the rising topography of the southwest corner seen in the background. The limited amount of built development glimpsed in the view emphasises the rural character of Tiffield Road and surrounding area.

5.18 The viewpoint is on a minor road connecting residential areas of Tiffield and Towcester. There are no heritage assets or planning designations attached to the particular view; therefore it has been identified as having a moderate to minor value.

5.19 **Viewpoint 4** is positioned on the bridleway to the north of Parcel 2, associated with the break in vegetation between Old Soldier Spinney and High Hey Spinney. The viewpoint is a short distance away at approximately 400 metres.

5.20 The photograph demonstrates the impact of topography on the visibility of the Appraisal Site. Much of Parcel 1 is obscured as a result of the landform dropping away to the south of the viewpoint. Built form associated with Williams Barns is seen to the middle ground of the view and vegetation associated with the A43 to Parcel 1’s southern boundary is glimpsed in the distance. Parcel 2 is not distinguishable due to intervening vegetation. Arable fields surrounding Costwell Farm are seen in the distance with the landform rising to the southern side of the River Tove. Residential properties associated Greenview Drive and Belle Baulk are also glimpsed in the distance.
5.21 The viewpoint has been taken from a PRoW and glimpsed to no views are possible to the Appraisal Site. It is identified as being of moderate value on account of no heritage assets or planning designations being attached to the view.

5.22 Viewpoint 5 is located on the footpath to the east of Tiffield, looking southwest from a long distance away at approximately 1.1 kilometres.

5.23 The photo illustrates elevated land to the northeast of the Appraisal Site providing a vantage point for panoramic views. The surrounding rolling landscape with a mix of grazed pasture and arable fields and limited built development occupies much of the view. Intervening landform and vegetation limits views of the Appraisal Site to glimpses of the northeast corner of Parcel 1. The rest of the Appraisal Site descends out of view and is contained by Old Soldier Spinney.

5.24 The viewpoint has been identified as having a moderate value, due to being from a PRoW but with no heritage asset of planning designation attached to the view.

5.25 Viewpoint 6 is positioned on the PRoW within a grazed pasture adjacent to Costwell Farm to the southwest of the Appraisal Site. The viewpoint is a long distance away at approximately 2.5 kilometres.

5.26 As with viewpoint 5 the photograph illustrates an elevated vantage point but in this location the view looks onto the southwest facing slope within the Appraisal Site on the opposite side of the River Tove valley. A mix of pasture and arable fields are seen in the foreground of the view defined by variable boundary features including maintained hedgerows, fragmented shrubs and intermittent hedgerow trees. The northeast wing of Parcel 1, currently occupied with rape crops, and Williams Barns are distinguishable features in the view, but the Appraisal Site is glimpsed due to the intervening distance. In this view, the Appraisal Site is seen in context with housing in Towcester and commercial premises associated with the A5/ A43 roundabout. A wooded horizon line is provided by Old Soldier Spinney and trees to the north of Brickyard Farm. The western extent of Parcel 2 is glimpsed behind the latter.

5.27 The viewpoint is located on a PRoW and the view is not associated with any heritage assets or planning designations, therefore it is of moderate value.

5.28 Viewpoint 7 is taken from a residential area associated with Northampton Road. The walkway in the view leads to Coulthard Close and the viewpoint is a short distance away from the south eastern boundary of Parcel 1, approximately 290 metres to the east.

5.29 The photo illustrates the robust planting belt alongside the A43 which is seen above the roofline of adjacent houses and contains the Appraisal Site. Views of the Appraisal Site from these residential properties are likely to be prevented by intervening built form and the Northampton Road Belt. Glimpsed views could potentially be possible in winter or from upper storey windows of houses set on higher ground. However, during the field study, houses were not visible from within the Appraisal Site.

5.30 The viewpoint does not fall on a PRoW but is from a residential footpath. There are no heritage assets or planning designations associated with the view which is considered of moderate to low value.
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<td>Visual receptors</td>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public rights of way</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRoW crossing the Appraisal Site</td>
<td>Open views</td>
<td>Adjacent</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRoW within 1.5 kilometres to the northeast of the Appraisal Site</td>
<td>Glimpsed to no views</td>
<td>Short to medium</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRoW associated with Hulcote</td>
<td>No views</td>
<td>Short to medium</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRoW associated with Caldecote</td>
<td>No views</td>
<td>Short to medium</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRoW over 1.5 kilometres away to the southwest and west</td>
<td>Glimpsed to no views</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Highways</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A43</td>
<td>Partial to no views</td>
<td>Adjacent to Short</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>No views</td>
<td>Short to medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Road</td>
<td>No views</td>
<td>Medium to long</td>
<td>Moderate to low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffield Road</td>
<td>Partial to no views</td>
<td>Adjacent to medium</td>
<td>Moderate to low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Johns Road</td>
<td>No views</td>
<td>Medium to long</td>
<td>Moderate to low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Road</td>
<td>Glimpsed to no views</td>
<td>Short to medium</td>
<td>Moderate to low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Lane</td>
<td>Glimpsed to no views</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>Moderate to low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Visual receptors baseline effects
The baseline LVIA has been founded on a thorough study of the Appraisal Site and its landscape setting. The Appraisal Site consists of a mix of arable and pastoral farmland and a vegetated disused railway embankment that is designated a LWS. The Appraisal Site is agricultural land located outside of the built up area of Towcester, as defined on the Local Plan Proposals Map (1997) and falls within the ‘green edge to the town’ as shown in the adopted Towcester Masterplan (2011). There are no designations relating to landscape ‘value’ or ‘sensitivity’ covering the Appraisal Site.

In the Towcester Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study (2009) the Appraisal Site falls within wider Area 6 which is recognised as having high-moderate landscape sensitivity within the study. It is considered that the contribution to this sensitivity is provided more strongly within Parcel 2 by the pasture and area associated with the disused railway to the west of Tiffield Road.

The Appraisal Site broadly contributes to the identified characteristics within LCT ‘6: Undulating Claylands’ and LCA ‘6a: The Tove Catchment’ described in the Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment. It reflects the undulating landform; the patterns of arable and pastoral land use; and, the presence of hedgerow field boundaries. The Appraisal Site also possesses the variable condition described within the Current Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment. Elements of scenic quality include the intricate small scale pastures within Parcel 1; the vantage points for open views across the surrounding rural landscape; and, well maintained native hedgerows defining field boundaries to Parcel 1. Features within the Appraisal Site that reduce the rural quality and condition of the landscape include the electricity pylons prominent in views; the mast adjacent Old Soldier Spinney; fragmented hedgerows in the western field and post and wire fencing; and, noise intrusion from the A43/A5. Overall, the landscape character is considered to be of moderate to minor value.

The visibility of the Appraisal Site from the identified visual receptors is generally well contained in the wider landscape by the undulating topography and robust belts of tree planting associated with the A43 and A5. There are open views across both Parcels from the PRoW that cross them and open views from Williams Barns (VR: 1) across Parcel 1. From Tiffield Road and the A43, there are open to partial views dependant on breaks in roadside vegetation. There are likely to be glimpsed views in winter from facing properties to the north Senna Drive and the commercial premises associated with the A43/A5 roundabout. In the wider landscape glimpsed views can be gained of the Appraisal Site from restricted stretches of PRoW to the southwest and northeast and from Costwell Farm (Ref 14) and properties associated with Belle Baulk and Greenview Drive. From the remaining visual receptors, views are obscured by intervening minor ridgelines, roadside vegetation and small blocks of woodland including Old Soldier Spinney and High Hey Spinney.

In landscape and visual terms it is considered that Parcel 2 is of a higher sensitivity on account of its small scale, intimate character; the wildlife value associated with the disused railway line; and, the lack of vegetation enclosing its boundaries. Parcel 1 has stronger physical and visual connections to the town. In Parcel 1, Short and medium distance views can be reduced onto the emerging scheme proposal with appropriate mitigation planting along the Appraisal Site’s boundaries. Proposed development within the Appraisal Site should incorporate significant boundary planting and green corridors to be in line with the green edge guidelines and green infrastructure objectives set out in the Towcester masterplan. Further details are described in the following design principles.
Design Principles

6.6 A series of design principles have been proposed to help reduce the ‘impact of change’ on the Appraisal Site and surrounding areas landscape character and visual amenity from any emerging Proposed Development. They include the following:

- Accommodate PRoW within layout by creating associated green corridors and diverting away from built form to preserve amenity value.

- Incorporate ‘green fingers’ (approx. 5-10 metres) and additional tree planting between built development on the southwest facing slope in order to reduce the massing built development in wider views from the southwest and to correspond with Green Infrastructure policies for the area.

- Provide 10-15 metre buffer to boundary with A5 and Tiffield Road in order to accommodate root protection areas of existing trees and provide space for meaningful planting belt.

- Provide minimum 15 metre tree belt to the northern boundary to screen wider views from the northeast, connect with existing woodland and to provide a ‘green edge’ to development consistent with the Towcester Concept Masterplan.

- Taller buildings should be located to lower lying land to the southwest of Parcel 1 to limit the visibility from the surrounding landscape. In this location, proposed buildings would also be seen in context with commercial and employment land uses associated with the A43/A5 roundabout.
Appendix 1: Full Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal Baseline Methodology

The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) states that this type of appraisal provides a tool for identifying and assessing the “the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity” (Para. 1.1). It goes on to emphasise that the appraisal has two interlinked elements of: landscape, as a resource; and visual amenity, including views. The effects of both must be addressed in the appraisal.

Baseline Landscape Appraisal

The baseline landscape appraisal for the Appraisal Site has included a mixture of desk study and field work to identify and record the character of the landscape. This has included a summary of associated elements, features and aesthetic and perceptual factors which contribute to the landscape. Once these factors were established the landscape character areas (landscape receptors) and their associated key characteristics were identified. The value attached to the landscape receptor has then been considered along with their associated condition.

Landscape Value

The value of the identified landscape character areas has been assessed using the criteria set out in Table 1. The consideration of value is initially based on, and takes into account, whether it is covered by a landscape designation at a national, regional or local level. This is also informed by designated heritage assets. Good practice guidance states that undesignated landscapes do, under certain circumstances, have value and should be judged drawing upon such factors as landscape, or townscape, quality and scenic quality and/or associations, with people or events that contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Typical Criteria</th>
<th>Typical Scale of Importance/ Rarity</th>
<th>Typical Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>High importance and rarity. No or limited potential for substitution</td>
<td>International, National</td>
<td>World Heritage site, National Park, AONB, and/or typically Grade I Grade II listed buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>High importance and rarity. Limited potential for substitution</td>
<td>National, Regional, Local</td>
<td>AONB, Scheduled Monuments, Conversation Area, typically Grade II listed buildings, and/or Register Park and Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate importance and rarity. Limited potential for substitution</td>
<td>Regional, Local</td>
<td>Undesignated but value perhaps expressed through non-official publications or demonstrable use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Minor importance and rarity. Considerable potential for substitution</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Areas identified as having some redeeming feature or features and possibly identified for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Minor importance and rarity</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Areas identified for recovery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Landscape value
Baseline Visual Appraisal

The baseline visual effects appraisal has established the area in which the Appraisal Site may be visible; the different groups of people who may experience the views of the development; the viewpoints where they will be affected; and the nature of these views at those points. These factors interrelate, but for the purpose of the appraisal are dealt with in that order.

The baseline visual appraisal takes into account the following:

- type and relative numbers of people, and their occupation or activity
- location, nature and characteristics
- nature, composition and characteristics of the views (including directions)
- elements which may interrupt, filter or otherwise influence the views

Elements of these evaluations are discussed below.

Extent and proportion of visibility

The extent of existing visibility of the Appraisal Site from the identified visual receptors is identified as either being the following:

- No view - the Appraisal Site is not visible (or difficult to perceive)
- Glimpse - the Appraisal Site has an obscured view (by intervening vegetation or built form) or distant view of part of the Appraisal Site
- Partial - a clear view of part of the Appraisal Site; a partial view of most of it; or a distant view in which the Appraisal Site forms a significant proportion of it
- Open - a panoramic view of most of the Appraisal Site, occupying most of the field of vision

Distance of visibility

The distance of the Appraisal Site from the identified visual receptors or viewpoints is defined as being the following:

- Adjacent - within, or adjacent to the Appraisal Site
- Short - one to 500 metres away from the Appraisal Site
- Medium - 500 metres to 1 kilometres away from the Appraisal Site
- Long - 1 kilometres and beyond away from the Appraisal Site

Value attached to the view

The value attached to the identified visual receptors view follows the broad criteria set out in Table 2. It considers whether the views experienced are one, or both, of the following:

- Recognition of the value attached to a particular view (i.e. in relation to a heritage asset or a planning designation); or
- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors (i.e. is it referenced in a guide book, or tourist map, or in literature and art).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>The view from the identified visual receptor is: related to a designated heritage assets, or a planning designation; and/or mentioned in a number of guidebooks or on tourist maps; and/or referenced in art and literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>The view from the identified visual receptor is: related to a non-designated heritage assets; and/or of local visual amenity importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The view from the identified visual receptor is not related to designated, or non-designated, heritage assets, or a planning designation; and/or mentioned in a guidebooks or on tourist maps; and/or referenced in art and literature; and/or of little visual amenity importance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Value of the identified visual receptors view