LAND AT GRAYS LANE, PAULERSPURY

LANDSCAPE STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF PERSIMMON HOMES
1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - SUITABILITY FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

1.1 In light of the landscape and visual analysis with respect to various parameters it is evident that residential development could be successfully accommodated on the site. In terms of the site itself, few landscape elements or features would be affected. Vehicular and pedestrian access could be introduced without any material harm to landscape features. Whilst the development would be visible it would only be visible locally and not in the wider area and where it would be seen such existing views already reveal views of residential development associated with the settlement of Paulerspury. As a consequence, there would be no material change to the visual amenity of the surrounding countryside as it relates to Paulerspury.

1.2 In terms of the visual relationship between the village and the surrounding countryside, new residential development would not extend development any further south than what currently exists associated with the village. Similarly there would be no further northward extension of Paulerspury than what currently exists. The development would extend the settlement eastward into the countryside however this would not cause any coalescence with existing villages as there are none nearby to the east. Whilst there would be eastward extension it would be strongly framed in landscape and visual terms by an existing mature hedge along its eastern boundary together with a petrol filling station site which lies immediately to the east. In addition there is also the A5 Watling Street which lies to the east of both the site and Paulerspury itself which itself is flanked by a variety of mature hedgerows and treecover. This would provide strong physical and visual containment for the site. Whilst Paulerspury would extend further eastward with the proposed development of the site, various other significant built infrastructure frames the settlement such as the petrol filling station and the A5 which cut across the countryside. In light of these facts it is considered that the site could successfully accommodate residential development of a similar nature to that nearby without material harm to the local environment in landscape and visual terms.

2. **SITE LOCATION**

2.1 The site is located on the eastern side of the village of Paulerspury, adjacent to some existing residential development.
3. DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

3.1 Paulerspury as a settlement lies between Milton Keynes to the south-east and Towcester to the north-west. It is located in the countryside which characteristically accommodates a number of small villages, such as Alderton to the north-east, Yardley Gobion to the east, Lillingstone Lovell to the south. The land that lies immediately to the north of the site on the opposite side of Grays Lane accommodates residential development fronting onto this road. Similarly there are a number of properties associated with the cul-de-sac of Plum Park Lane. The properties in the locality represent a variety of types and styles of two storey dwellings.

3.2 The north-western boundary of the site is demarcated by a hedge which runs along the side of Grays Lane. Along the north-eastern boundary of the site, the northern part of this boundary is defined by a security fence associated with a utility compound with the remaining perimeter length marked by a mature high hedge. Beyond this boundary to the north-east lies a petrol filling station site which fronts onto the A5 Watling Street. To the south-east of the site is countryside which is generally managed as pasture for grazing purposes. Immediately to the west of the site lies several small pastoral fields, beyond which lies some residential areas associated with the village. There is a degree of ribbon development through the village with the housing fronting onto a number of lanes associated with the settlement. Development of this site would be in keeping with the layout and character of the village.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGNATIONS

4.1 The site itself and its immediate surroundings are not subject to any environmental designations. Over a kilometre to the south of the site beyond Plum Park Farm lies a Special Landscape Area (SLA), within South Northamptonshire. This designation also extends over a considerable area of countryside to the east of the site. Accommodation of residential development on the site would not materially affect the landscape characteristics and qualities associated with either of these Special Landscape Areas.

5. TOPOGRAPHY

5.1 Both the site and the village are located in gentle undulating low-land environment. The site appears as a relatively level site which is situated at approximately 120 metres above ordnance datum. To the south-east of the site
the land shows a gentle fall in gradient with a south-east aspect towards a small valley which is orientated east-west between Paulerspury and Yardley Gobion. The site in terms of its level nature is well suited to accommodate residential development. Indeed the topography on which adjacent residential areas are located associated with Grays Lane and Plum Park Lane reflect a similar topographic profile to the site. Given the site were to accommodate residential development this would be perceived as being located at a similar height in the landscape as the existing residential development which lies near the site.

6. **VEGETATION**

6.1 The north-west boundary of the site fronts onto Grays Lane and is demarcated by a hedgerow which is managed. The north-eastern boundary is in part demarcated by a security fence, however the remaining southern section of this boundary is formed by a high hedgerow. The south-eastern boundary of the site is demarcated by a hedgerow, whilst the south-western boundary is demarcated by a combination of mature hedge and a few mature trees, some of which wrap around the boundary and curtilage of a residential property which fronts onto Grays Lane. All of this vegetation is mature and will grow approximately one metre in height per annum and under such growth rates would establish a mature vegetation boundary to physically and visually frame any residential development on the site.

6.2 The south-eastern boundary of the site would need to be reinforced through the formation of a tree belt to be comprised of native shrubs and tree species. The use of native and shrub species would ensure that the vegetation was characteristic of those found locally demarcating field boundaries.

7. **LAND USE**

7.1 The site comprises one field which is currently managed as pasture. There is a significant amount of pasture in the immediate vicinity and wider area surrounding the settlement of Paulerspury and as such it is a ubiquitous resource locally. The loss of this land in agricultural terms would not be significant and would not materially change the agricultural land resource in general terms across the area.

8. **VISUAL AMENITY OF HERITAGE ASSETS**

8.1 There are a number of Grade II Listed Buildings associated with the settlement of Paulerspury but these are located close to the historic roads in the village and its
historic core whilst the Village Church is a Grade II* Listed Building. All of these heritage assets are located some distance away from the site and a substantial amount of existing residential development lies in the intervening distance between these heritage assets and the site itself. Consequently residential development of the site would not have a material bearing upon the visual amenity associated with these heritage assets.

8.2 There are a number of Grade II Listed Buildings associated with the hamlet of Pury End, to the west of Paulerspury and also associated with the nearby villages of Heathen Cote, Alderton and the Rudolf Steiner School to the east. The development of the site for residential use would not materially affect the visual amenity of these heritage assets in the locality.

9. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

9.1 There is public right of way which enters the site half way along the north-western boundary off Grays Lane. This route cuts across the northern apex of the site to pick up its north-eastern boundary to the far eastern corner of the site. In this location the offsite public right of way is orientated east-west and links with the A5 Watling Street. This is part of an extended public right of way which passes across open countryside in an eastward direction towards Alderton to link up with another public right of way linking Alderton with the Rudolf Steiner School. It is likely that the point of pedestrian access into the site off Grays Lane could be accommodated within a vehicular access point off this road whilst the rest of the route across the site could be successfully accommodated within a residential design layout. This route currently terminates at Grays Lane where users of this route would find themselves situated on a road which is flanked by a residential development. There are a number of other public rights of way which pass through other residential areas particularly on the south side of Paulerspury.

9.2 No other public rights of way would be physically affected through residential development of the site as no off site works would be required.

9.3 The nearest off-site public rights of way are associated with routes linking the A5 Watling Street with Plumpton End and in the vicinity of Plum Park Farm, a few 100 metres to the south of the site. There are no long distance trails in the immediate vicinity of the site. The nearest one being Grafton Way which lies approximately 1 kilometre to the south of the site which is orientated east-west across the countryside. Users of these public rights of way in the locality would
have an expectation that they are going to arrive at and pass through small villages such as Paulerspury where there is an anticipation that residential development would be observed in the context of a village environment. Therefore the sight of new residential development on the site would not materially harm the visual amenity associated with the use of these public rights of way locally given the context of Paulerspury village which forms the confluence to a number of local routes.

10. PUBLIC HIGHWAYS

10.1 The only significant public highway in the vicinity of the site is Grays Lane which demarcates its north-western boundary.

10.2 There are a number of residential roads which are associated with the existing residential area immediately to the north and west of the site. These roads are namely, Grays Lane, Grays Close and Plum Park Lane. Grays Close is a cul-de-sac which extends northward to serve a number of garages in contrast to Plum Park Lane which serves a number of residential properties. As the site abuts Grays Lane there would be the opportunity to provide a vehicular access off this road. In landscape terms this would provide suitable vehicular access point to the site as there is only a hedgerow along this boundary. Visibility splays associated with the access point would require some hedgerows be removed and reinstated but there would be no loss of significant tree cover associated with creating such an access arrangement. Accordingly vehicular access could be accommodated without significant loss of vegetation to service the development site.

11. LANDSCAPE CONDITION AND QUALITY

11.1 The site itself is managed for pastoral purposes and it is evident that the boundary hedgerows are managed where present. These are in the main continuous in length and not redundant in nature. The land is farmed and the field appears managed in agricultural terms. It is therefore in fair condition though it is not of high quality and whilst attractive it is quite unremarkable in terms of its character and appearance and is consistent with the fact that it is not subject to any landscape protection at the local level.

12. FLOOD RISK

12.1 The Flood Zone 2 area is associated with a small watercourse which lies to the north of Paulerspury and the River Tove. The site is therefore located well outside
the existing flood plain. Any residential development located on the site would not materially affect the existing flood plain environment locally nor would the existing flood plain present a constraint to residential development of the site.

13. ENCLOSURE

13.1 The site is framed on its north-western side by the Grays Lane and residential development fronting onto this highway. There is also residential development along the western side of the site and set slightly further back from the site to the west associated with Plum Park Lane, whilst the utility compound lies to the north-east of the site along with a petrol filling station fronting onto the A5. All of these elements of built infrastructure provide physical and visual containment to both the site and any proposed development in terms of public views from the village. Whilst there would be short range views from the east and south, viewing opportunities would be quite limited due to the screening effect of vegetation in the intervening distance.

13.2 Future growth of the hedgerows and standard trees around the perimeter of the site together with tree planting along the south-eastern boundary of the site would provide a strong landscape framework for residential development such that it would frame views of residential development from nearby viewpoints. As a consequence of the existing residential areas associated with the settlement of Paulerspury, treecover and hedgerows associated with the field boundaries and local topography the opportunity to observe residential development on the site from the wider surrounding countryside would be limited and therefore the site does benefit from some sense of physical and visual enclosure. This would substantially assist in effectively assimilating residential development within the site and in the context of the wider landscape.

14. VISUAL AMENITY

14.1 General visual amenity relates to views from public vantage points that are obtained from publicly accessible areas such as public rights of way and public highways. Existing residential development located on the north side of the site would limit the opportunity for public views. Indeed this would be limited to views primarily from Grays Lane. Whilst there would be some views from public rights of way associated with the farmland to the south of the site a number of these routes are associated with lower lying land associated with a small valley and as such the opportunity to observe any housing on the site would be limited due to local topography. Whilst the public right of way to the east of the site on
the far side of the A5 Watling Street would afford the opportunity to gain views this would be limited given the utility compound and petrol filling station. Moreover there is a significant degree of traffic passing along the A5 whilst existing residential development would be seen as a backdrop to any housing associated with the site associated with Paulerspury. As a consequence there would be no material harm to the visual amenity as experienced from the surrounding countryside and village itself.

15. **LANDSCAPE AND VILLAGE CHARACTER**

15.1 To accommodate residential development on the site would not require any development located off-site and as such the physical fabric of the character of the landscape and the settlement of Paulerspury beyond the site would remain physically unchanged. Clearly the character of the site itself would change given that it would accommodate residential development. In this regard it would specifically change from pastoral land to a residential area similar to that located to the west of the site. Indeed the existing residential development of Paulerspury in this location is a defining characteristic of the local landscape. The only way in which the character of the surrounding landscape would be affected by residential development on the site would be through views as a visual component of landscape character. As the proposed development would result in a limited change in views locally the character of the surrounding landscape would not materially alter the defining characteristics of the wider landscape which would continue to remain and prevail with new residential development in place on the site.

15.2 Residential development of the site would be materially different to the 14 dwelling scheme on the adjacent site that was dismissed at appeal (ref APP/22830/A/14/2216712). Detail landscape and urban design could protect the intrinsic character of the countryside and rural character of the village. Careful design of the buildings and the landscape could ensure that careful regard is given to the local vernacular design and the adopted Paulerspury Village Design Statement. Furthermore detail design could result in environmental improvements on the site itself. Extension of the village eastward would reinforce the characteristic linearity of the village’s urban form. Detail landscape and urban design could avoid harm to the character and appearance of the village. Any new residential development of the village of Paulerspury would encroach into existing
open land however, the southern boundary of the site could be designed to ensure it appears as a historic rather than artificial arbitrary boundary.

15.3 An earlier scheme for 14 dwellings (application reference number S/2010/0401/MAF) dates back to October 2010 and appeal dated August 2011 (APP/Z 2830/A/10/2141571), which related to a smaller area of land. However this decision and related analysis predates the March 2012 NPPF and therefore little weight can be attached to the associated analysis.

16. **LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS**

16.1 The principal landscape elements associated with the site are the hedgerows and a few standard trees which demarcate the boundaries of the western side of the site. The majority of these features would continue to remain and prevail with residential development in place as the loss of landscape features would be limited. There would be no material harm to landscape elements on the site given that these features are ubiquitous locally.