LAND AT FURNACE LANE, NETHER HEYFORD

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 Nether Heyford. There would be as a consequence no material change to the visual amenity of the surrounding countryside as it relates to Nether Heyford.

1.2 In terms of the visual relationship, between the village and surrounding countryside residential development would not extend development any further east than what currently exists associated with the village. Similarly there would be no further westward extension of Nether Heyford than what currently exists. The development would extend the settlement southward into the countryside however but this would not cause any coalescence with existing villages as there are none immediately to the south. Whilst there would be a southward extension it would be strongly framed in landscape and visual terms by a new tree belt wrapping around the south-west, southern and south eastern boundary of the site. This would provide a strong physical and visual containment in the medium and longer term. Furthermore there are few rights-of-way to the south of the site and the settlement. The principal route being the Midshires Way along the northern side of the Grand Union canal and views of housing on the site would be limited by vegetation alongside the canal and in the intervening landscape as well as topography. Whilst there are some further public rights of way and highways to the south of the canal itself the opportunity to observe any southward extension of the settlement would be limited due to intervening vegetation and topography. Whilst Nether Heyford would extend slightly further southward with the proposed development of the site, there is other significant built infrastructure which lies in the countryside to the south of the settlement associated with the Grand Union canal, the main railway line and main A5 road. These all extend across the countryside and wrap around the southern and western side of Nether Heyford providing a wider development framework to the settlement.
1.3 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 southern edge of the existing residential area associated with Nether Heyford settlement.

3. **DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

3.1 Nether Heyford as a settlement is located in the countryside to the south of the M1 corridor. It is located in countryside which characteristically accommodates a number of small villages, such as Bugbrooke to the south-east, Upper Heyford to the north and Flore to the north-west of Nether Heyford. The land that lies immediately to the north of the site accommodates a residential development which reflects a number of types and styles of residential properties but they are principally two-storey properties in the main. The eastern part of the site wraps around the eastern part of this existing residential area. The north-eastern boundary of the site is defined by a tall hedgerow which is absent of any mature standard trees. In contrast south-eastern, southern and south-western boundaries of the site do not reflect any physical demarcation on the ground in respect of field boundaries. The north-western boundary of the site is bounded by Furnace Lane. As a consequence the site forms the northern part of two expansive rectilinear fields. Further to the south-west of the site straddling Furnace Lane are a number of buildings which include residential properties and small business premises in the vicinity of Heyford Wharf, at a point where Furnace Lane intersects the Grand Union Canal.

4. **ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGNATIONS**

4.1 The site itself and its immediate grounds are not subject to any environmental designations. The Grand Union Canal which lies to the west and to the south of the site accommodates a long distance footpath and bridleway and is known as the Midshires Way. South of the Union Canal, the landscape is designated as the south of Northamptonshire Special Landscape Area under Policy EV7, whilst to the west of the A5 the landscape is designated as the Daventry Special Landscape Area under Policy EN1, and therefore the site itself is located outside these Landscape Protection Designations. 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 The site is located in gentle undulating lowland environment. The site exhibits a gentle fall towards a small stream which follows a hedgerow and field boundary which is broadly orientated north-south through the middle of the site. The land gently falls from Furnace Lane eastward towards this small stream and in contrast the land on the eastern side of the site falls westward towards the same stream. The highest point of the site lies at approximately 90m AOD on the eastern side of the site falling to approximately 85m AOD at its lowest point in the vicinity of the brook. Given that this 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 immediately to the north of the site. Beyond the site and to its west the land gently falls to a small stream. The land rises southward and south-eastwards of the site to a high point of approximately 97m AOD, a short distance to the south-east of the site. Land falls gently to the east of the site towards unclassified country lane Bugbrooke Road. The whole of the settlement is situated within gently undulating lowland with the highest points of the settlement lying adjacent to the site at approximately 90m AOD. In this regard residential development on the site would be seen in a similar topographic profile as the existing residential areas which lie closest to the site.

6. **VEGETATION**

6.1 The western side of the site forms the northern part of a field, the western boundary of which is demarcated by a low hedge which runs along Furnace Lane with a few standard trees. The northern boundary of the west field is defined similarly by a low hedge and a few standard trees which also define the boundary to the curtilage of several properties. The west field has an eastern boundary which is orientated north-south through the site and follows the course of the small watercourse and is physically defined by a low hedgerow which separates and distinguishes the two fields. The eastern field which forms the site is bounded to the north by a number of native and ornamental hedgerows associated with the curtilages of residential properties, whereas the north-eastern boundary is demarcated by a high hedgerow of mature native shrubs. All this hedgerow vegetation is mature and will grow approximately 1m in height per annum and under such good growth rate would establish a mature vegetation boundary to physically and visually frame any residential development on the site. The southern boundaries of the site would need to be established through the formation of tree belts to be comprised of native shrubs and tree species.
This would have the advantage of establishing a new boundary. The use of a native and shrub species would ensure that the vegetation was characteristic of the species found locally which define the countryside and demarcate the field boundaries locally.

7. **LAND USE**

7.1 The site comprises the northern part of two adjacent fields which are currently managed as arable land. There is a significant amount of arable land in the immediate vicinity and the wider area surrounding the settlement of Nether Heyford 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 buildings associated with the settlement of Nether Heyford 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. Consequently residential development of the site would not have a material bearing upon the visual amenity associated with these heritage assets.

8.2 There is a further Grade II Listed Building to the south of the site approximately 400m located on the canal itself and is associated with a bridge structure. Residential development of the site would not materially change the relationship between this asset and the village itself. In conclusion the development of the site for residential use would not materially affect the visual amenity of the heritage assets in the locality.

9. **PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

9.1 The site itself does not accommodate any public rights of way per se. No public rights of way would be physically affected or materially harmed in visual amenity terms.

9.2 The nearest route is the long distance Midshires Way which runs along the tow path of the Grand Union Canal which is also known as the Grand Union Canal walk. This canal route lies both to the south and west of the site and indeed the
village of Nether Heyford itself. Furnace Lane which forms the western boundary to the site not only accommodates traffic but is part of the long distance walkway route and is the unclassified lane between Nether Heyford and Bugbrooke which forms part of the Midshires Way. There are a whole host of long distance footpaths that converge upon the settlement of Nether Heyford and include the Nene Way, the Northamptonshire Round, the Midshires Way, and the Grand Union Canal Walk. A number of these footpaths whilst utilising tracks across farmland also utilise the canal tow path and the public highways both in the countryside and also those highways which pass through the village itself. Users of these public footpaths in the locality would have an expectation that they are going to arrive at and pass through a small village, namely Nether Heyford, where there is an expectation that residential areas would be observed in a context of a village environment. Therefore the sight of new residential development on the site would not materially harm the visually amenity associated with the use of these public rights of way locally given the context of Nether Heyford village which forms the confluence to these routes.

10. PUBLIC HIGHWAYS

10.1 The only significant public highway in the vicinity of the site is Furnace 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 of the site. These roads are namely Rolfe Crescent and South View. Rolfe Crescent has a cul-de-sac, road which extends southward as far as the north boundary of the site and indeed South View also has a southern cul-de-sac which terminates on the site’s northern boundary. These are two potential points of vehicle and pedestrian access which would facilitate good permeability between the proposed residential development and existing residential development in this locality. As the site abuts the Furnace Lane there would be the opportunity to provide a vehicular access. In landscape terms this would provide a suitable vehicle access point into the site as there is only a low hedgerow along this boundary. Visibility splays associated with the access point would require some hedgerows to accommodate appropriate visibility splays, but there would be no loss of significant tree cover associated with creating such an access arrangement. Accordingly vehicle 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 arable purposes and it is evident that the boundary hedgerows are managed where present. These are in the main, continuous in length and are not redundant in structure. The land is farmed and the field appears managed in agricultural terms. It is therefore in fair condition, though it is not 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 site and the southern part of the settlement lie outside the Environment Agency Flood Zone 2 area. The Flood Zone 2 is associated with a watercourse which lies to the north of Nether Heyford. The site is therefore located well outside the existing flood plain. Any residential development to be located on the site would not materially affect the existing flood plain environment locally, nor would the existing flood plain area present a constraint to residential development of the site.

13. ENCLOSURE

13.1 The site is framed on its northern side by existing residential development which provides physical and visual containment to the site and any proposed development in terms of public views from the village to the north of the site. Whilst there are short range views from the west, south and east, viewing opportunities are quite limited due to the screening effect of vegetation in the intervening distance. Future growth of the hedgerows and standard trees around the perimeter of the site associated with the existing hedgerows, together with tree planting on southern boundaries would provide a strong landscape framework for residential development such that it would substantially frame views of residential development from nearby viewpoints. Furthermore, with the ground rising slightly to the south-east of the site, this topography of local high ground would provide some further physical and visual containment to the site that the wider settlement of Nether Heyford also benefits. As a consequence of existing residential areas, treecover and hedgerows associated with the agricultural landscape 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 attained from publicly accessible areas such as public rights of way and public highways. Residential development located on the north side of the site would limit the opportunity for public views. Indeed this would be limited to views from the cul-de-sac end of South View and Rolfe Crescent where these two road abuts the northern boundary of the site. Whilst there would be some views from public rights of way associated with the Grand Union Canal to the south of the site, and from the footpath associated with Furnace Lane, any views of residential development on the site would be seen in the context of existing residential development associated with the settlement. As a consequence there would be no material harm to the visual amenity as experienced in the surrounding countryside and village.

15. LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

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

16. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

16.1 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 Nether Heyford 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 arable land to a residential area similar to that located immediately to the north of the site. Indeed, the existing residential development of Nether Heyford 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 change. The defining characteristics of the wider landscape would continue to remain and prevail with residential development in place on the site.
Furnace Lane, Nether Heyford

Site Location Plan

Drawing Ref: P.1072_01-A
Client: Persimmon Homes

1:25,000

Date: 14/04/15

Drawn by: TD
Checked by: SW
Furnace Lane, Nether Heyford
Environmental Constraints Plan

Drawing Ref: P.1072_02-A
Client: Persimmon Homes

1:20,000
Date: 14/04/15
Drawn by: TD
Checked by: SW

Key
- Site Boundary
- PROW
- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- EA Flood Zone 2
- South Northamptonshire Special Landscape Area (EV7)
- Daventry Special Landscape Area (EN1)

Revisions
A - First Issue
Date: 14/04/15
VIEWPOINT 1  View from Furnace Lane looking east

VIEWPOINT 2  View from bridge over Grand Union Canal looking north-east over site.