LAND AT SCHOOL LANE, HARPOLE

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 element 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 Harpole. There would be as a consequence no material change to the visual amenity of the surrounding countryside as it relates to Harpole. In terms of the visual relationship, between the village and surrounding countryside residential development would not extend development any further north then what currently exists associated with Harpole. Similarly there would be no further southward extension of Harpole then what currently exists. The development would extend the settlement westward into the countryside however this would not cause any coalescence with existing villages as there are none immediately to the west. Whilst there would be an extension westward it would be strongly framed in physical and visual terms by the existing field pattern, vegetation and topography at a broader scale. This would provide strong physical and visual containment. 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 western edge of the existing residential area of Harpole settlement.

3. **DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

3.1 Harpole itself is a village located to the west of Northampton. The site is bounded to the east by existing residential properties associated with a number of roads. School Lane is a residential road which leads up to the east boundary of the site. The majority of the eastern boundary is contiguous with residential properties associated with Chester Avenue and a few properties associated with Glassthorpe Lane. There is a mixture of house styles in terms of size and style associated with this residential area. The land that lies both to the north and to the west of the site is farmland, whilst the Glassthorpe Lane, a country lane forms the
southern boundary of the site. On the opposite and south side of this road is a former farmstead which has now been redeveloped to provide a number of residential properties. Further to the west of the site is a series of buildings associated with Riding Hill Farm.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGNATIONS

4.1 The site is washed over by a Special Landscape Area Designation associated with South Northamptonshire. This landscape designation also extends over much of the settlement of Harpole and is associated with residential areas lying to the north of Larkhall Lane and Glassthorpe Lane and primarily relates to northern residential areas associated with the settlement. The designation also extends over countryside lying to the north-east and west of the settlement and extends up to the western boundary of Duston/Dallington. Whilst this landscape designation seeks to protect the special aspects associated with the countryside, the residential development associated with village environment is a characteristic feature that assists in locally defining the landscape within this designation. Housing associated with the villages is not a feature which is excluded from this area of protection. Approx. 0.5 km to the north and 1km to the west of the site lies a further Special Landscape Area associated with the district of Daventry. Accommodation of residential development on the site would not materially affect the landscape characteristics and qualities associated with the Daventry Special Landscape Area. Whilst the introduction of residential development on the site would change the character of the site per se from agricultural land to residential development, this would not be out of keeping with the adjacent areas of the South Northamptonshire Special Landscape Area. Indeed, existing residential development which lies immediately east of the site is washed over with this designation and therefore it must be considered that village form residential development, of the kind that currently exists, is deemed to be an acceptable characteristic of the SLA.

5. TOPOGRAPHY

5.1 The site is located in gently undulating lowland environment. The site exhibits a slight gentle fall from the north towards the south with the land lying at approximately 85-90m AOD. The land which is currently accommodating residential development to the east and south-east of the site, both north and south of Glassthorpe Lane is located at a similar elevation and therefore there is topographic continuity between the adjacent existing residential area and the
site. Given that 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 immediately to the east of the site.

5.2 The land to the north of the site rises to local high ground and the land also rises to the west of the site. South of the site and Glassthorpe Lane the land is broadly level with a gentle easterly aspect slope. The rising ground both to the north and to the west provides good visual and physical containment for the site in terms of longer distance views from the wider countryside. Indeed the whole of the settlement of Harpole benefits from this situation as there is locally rising ground both the north and west of the settlement of Harpole. 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 site comprises one field, the eastern boundary of which shows some vegetation which is contiguous with the boundaries of individual residential curtilages and exhibits a combination of native hedgerow planting together with ornamental hedgerows and trees but this is sporadic as it abuts the existing settlement edge. Therefore in terms of views from the countryside to the west of the settlement views eastward towards the settlement reveal existing residential development clearly visible along the edge of the settlement. In overall terms the vegetation along the eastern boundary is currently quite limited.

6.2 The northern boundary of the site is demarcated by a low level mature hedgerow and occasional standard trees. This is also the case with respect to the western boundary of the site. Similarly the southern boundary of the site is demarcated by a low level hedgerow which lies along the north side of Glassthorpe Lane and is punctuated in several locations by mature standard trees. The boundary vegetation along the northern, western and southern boundaries is mature and well established. The hedgerows are managed in that they are faced and trimmed to maintain the height to a low level. However this hedgerow vegetation is mature and given that it is allowed to grow in height, this would have a growth rate approximately 1m per year and therefore within a short period of time these hedgerows together with standard trees would establish a high level and substantial screen for residential development within the site.
6.3 The northern, western and southern boundaries could be reinforced with further structural landscape planting to provide a stronger framework if necessary to provide greater physical and visual containment for residential development.

7. **LAND USE**

7.1 The site forms a single field and is currently managed as pasture for grazing and does not exhibit any arable element. There is a significant amount of grazing land in the immediate vicinity and wider area surrounding the settlement of Harpole 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 this area.

8. **VISUAL AMENITY OF HERITAGE ASSETS**

8.1 There are a number of Grade II buildings associated with the settlement 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 Scheduled Monument located approximately 1 km to the north of the settlement though there is a limited physical and visual relationship between the location of the scheduled monument and the village of Harpole. Residential development of the site would not materially change the relationship between this scheduled monument and the village.

8.3 There are a number of Grade II Listed Buildings associated with the villages of Kislingbury, which is located to the south of Harpole as well as the settlement of Norbottle, which lies approximately 2 km to the north-west of Harpole. Upper Heyford lies approximately 2 km to the south-west of the site and Harpole and accommodates a number of Grade II Listed Buildings. None of the clusters of Listed Buildings associated with these villages would be materially affected by residential development of the site located on the western side of Harpole.
9. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

9.1 The site itself does not accommodate any public rights of way per se. No public right of way would be physically affected or materially harmed in visual amenity terms. The nearest route is use of Glassthorpe Lane as a public highway running along the site’s southern boundary. Opposite this road and lying to the south of the site is a bridleway which is orientated north-east, south-west linking Glassthorpe Lane with the A4500 approximately 1 km to the south-west and passes through a series of fields.

9.2 To the west of the site there are no public rights of way until approximately 1 km from the site in the vicinity of Glassthorpe Hill where a public bridleway forms an extension to Glassthorpe Lane. There are several bridleways which lie to the north of the site located several fields away. One of which is known as the Northamptonshire Round. These are orientated north-west to south-east linking the settlements of Harpole and Norbottle.

9.3 The public right of way which lies to the south of the site is generally low lying and follows field boundaries in the main and as such the opportunity to observe residential development associated with the site would be limited. Where views would be gained such views of housing would be seen in the context of existing residential development associated with the western side of Harpole. Further west in the vicinity of Glassthorpe Hill the bridleway follows field boundaries in the main which are demarcated by hedgerows and mature tree cover. Topography together with vegetation would limit the opportunity to observe residential development on the site.

9.4 The footpaths to the north of the site cut diagonally across existing field boundaries and those in close proximity to the site would have views of residential development however any development would be seen in the context of existing residential development associated with Harpole. Existing views southward from these bridleways include views of residential development of Harpole and therefore housing is a characteristic feature and element in such existing southward views. There are a number of bridleways which extend to the east and south of Harpole itself linking with Kislingbury however, as the majority of these follow field boundaries and are located at some distance and are on the far side of Harpole the opportunity to observe residential development associated with the site would be limited. The affect upon visual amenity associated with
these public rights of way would be limited and where views would be attained they would be in the context of existing views of residential properties associated with the village.

10. **PUBLIC HIGHWAYS**

10.1 The only significant public highway in the vicinity of the site is Glassthorpe Lane, which demarcates the site’s southern boundary. Approximately 1 km further west of the site this highway terminates.

10.2 There is a residential road known as School Lane, which while serving existing residential properties extends up to the eastern boundary of the site and is demarcated by a field gate and would, in landscape in visual terms, provide an acceptable vehicular access point into the site as it would not disturb or require the removal of any vegetation in terms of hedgerows and treecover.

10.3 The southern boundary of the site is bounded along its length by Glassthorpe Lane which exhibits a gated access point. In landscape terms this would provide a suitable vehicular access point into the site as there already is an existing gap in the hedgerow. Visibility splays associated with the access point would require some removal of hedgerows to accommodate appropriate visibility splays but there would be no loss of significant treecover associated with creating such an access arrangement. Accordingly vehicular access could be accommodated without significant loss of vegetation to service the development.

11. **LANDSCAPE CONDITION AND QUALITY**

11.1 The site itself is managed for pasture and it is evident that the boundary hedgerows are also managed. These are in the main, continuous in length and are not redundant in structure. The land is grazed currently and exhibits even use and none of the field appears neglected in landscape management 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. It is acknowledged that the site lies within a Special Landscape Area, however the designation also includes a wide range of landscape including the landscape associated with residential curtilages and farm complexes.

12. **FLOOD RISK**

12.1 The site and indeed the settlement lies outside the Environment Agency Flood Zone 2 area. This, at its nearest point, lies close to the southern part of Harpole
to the south of the A4500. The flood plain is associated with the River Nene and lies to the north of Kislingbury but lies south of the settlement of Harpole. The site is therefore located well outside the existing flood plain. Any residential development being located on the site would not materially affect the existing flood plain environment locally nor would the flood plains present a constraint to residential development on the site.

13. **ENCLOSURE**

13.1 The site is framed on its eastern 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 east of the site. Whilst there are short range views from the north, west and south of the site, 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 sides of the site reinforced with structural planting would provide a strong landscape framework for residential development such that this would substantially screen views of residential development from viewpoints to the north, west and south of the site. Furthermore, with the rising ground to the north and to the west of the site, this topography of local high ground provides further physical and visual containment to the site that the wider settlement of Harpole also benefits from. 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 which are attained from publically accessible areas such as public rights of way and public highways. Residential development located on the eastern 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 School Lane where the road abuts the site. Whilst there would be some views from public rights of way to the north, west and south of the site and the public highway, Glassthorpe 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 northern, western and southern 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 elements 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 Harpole 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 pasture land to a residential area similar to that located immediately to the east of the site. Indeed, the existing residential development of Harpole in this location is a defining characteristic of the Special Landscape Area. 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.
VIEWPOINT 1  View from Glassthorpe Lane looking north-west

VIEWPOINT 2  View from Glassthorpe Lane looking north-east across site
VIEWPOINT 3  View from nearby PRoW looking north-east towards Glassthorpe Lane and site

VIEWPOINT 4  View from PRoW to the north of site looking south-east