SHIRENEWTON, MONMOUTHSHIRE

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Prepared on behalf of

Powells Rural Property Professionals Ltd

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Placing development well

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Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	
Project:	Shirenewton, Monmouthshire
Status:	Final
Date:	January 2024
Author:	JPF
File Reference	AE1319lvia
Revision	-

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1.0 Non-technical Summary

1.1.1 The aim of this report is to provide a full assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of a proposed development upon the receiving landscape, in line with current legislation and guidance. It comprises two main assessments, the first for landscape and the second for visual effects. The assessment has been conducted in line with published best practice guidelines and includes a desk study (data trawl of local plan policies, published landscape character assessment and production of a computer generated Zone of Theoretical visibility) and onsite observations.

1.1.2 This report provides a landscape and visual impact assessment of a 25 unit residential scheme with associated landscaping proposals.

1.1.3 The site and its surrounding landscape were visited and assessed during January 2024.

1.1.4 The site has an overall assessed medium landscape sensitivity and will be subject to a medium magnitude of landscape impact. The significance of the landscape character impact is moderate adverse (i.e. not a material change) as a worst case.

1.1.5 The visual impact assessment identified that the visual baseline would be subject to material adverse visual effects during the construction and operation phases.

1.1.6 Following mitigation measures, vegetation growth and weathering, visual impacts would be ameliorated from the local landscape.

1.1.7 With the implementation of a successful mitigation strategy, the overall residual impacts on the landscape are considered to be a minor overall effect on the surrounding landscape character and moderate residual visual effects. It should be considered that this type of development is not out of character within the receiving landscape.

2.0 Introduction

2.1.1 The aim of this report is to provide a full assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of a proposed development upon the receiving landscape, in line with current legislation and guidance. It comprises two main assessments, the first for landscape and the second for visual effects. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. This may in turn affect the perceived value ascribed to the landscape. Due to the inherently dynamic nature of the landscape, change arising from a development may not necessarily be significant, or material.

2.1.2 Landscape and visual impact assessments can be defined as a mechanism by which the landscape can be assessed against its capacity to accommodate change.

2.1.3 Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects with the respect of visual amenity.

2.1.4 Landscape effects relate to understanding the changes that may affect the baseline. These changes to be considered include the way the character of the landscape varies spatially, the landscapes condition, history (which may include a separate specialist study), geographic extent of the change, the way the landscape is experienced and the value attached to it.

2.1.5 This report provides a landscape and visual assessment of a 25 unit residential scheme with associated landscaping proposals

2.1.6 This document includes an appraisal of the following:

Landscape Impacts, including:

- direct impacts upon specific landscape elements within and adjacent to the site;
- effects on the overall pattern of the landscape elements which give rise to the landscape character of the site and its surroundings; and
- impacts upon any special interests in and around the site.

Visual Impacts:

- direct impacts of the development upon views in the landscape; and
- overall impact on visual amenity.

3.0 Methodology

3.1.1 As a matter of best practice the assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the methods outlined in the following best practice guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition), published by the Landscape Institute and the IEMA (2013) (GLVIA);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, published by Natural England (2014); and
- Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Technical Guidance Note 02/21, published by the Landscape Institute.

3.1.2 In accordance with the GLVIA and other best practice guidance noted above, both the landscape and visual assessments will include baseline studies that describe, classify and evaluate the existing landscape and visual resources, focusing on their sensitivity and ability to accommodate change.

3.1.3 The assessment has been based on a desk-based review of relevant published guidance, including legislation and policy, baseline information production, and information followed by a number of detailed site appraisals.

3.1.4 The principal objectives of the LVIA are:

- to identify and classify the existing landscape likely to be affected by the construction and operation of the proposal and ancillary works;
- to identify the 'visual receptors' with views of the proposed development; and
- to assess the significance of effects on the prevailing landscape character and visual amenity, taking into account the measures proposed to mitigate any impacts identified.

4.0 Method of Assessment

4.1.1 The landscape and visual impact assessments have been based on an evaluation of the sensitivity of the receiving landscape and visual receptors, and the magnitude of change associated with the introduction of the proposed scheme into the landscape and visual context of the study area.

4.1.2 The assessment process is set out in further detail within this document, but involves the following steps:

- Baseline Appraisal
- Classification of resources
- Assessment of effects

4.1.3 This approach for assessing the importance of impacts will be based on the framework set out in the GLVIA3 and consists of the following steps which are applied to each assessment:

Criteria against which to assess

- The susceptibility of the receptor to the specific impacts of the proposals;
- The value of the receptor affected;
- The size or scale of the impact (i.e. how much of an effect it has);
- The geographical extent of the area that will be affected;

Stage 2: Combining the Judgements

- Combining the judgements about susceptibility to change and value to assess the sensitivity of receptor;
- Combining the judgements about the scale and extent of the impacts to assess the magnitude of the impact;
- Combining the assessments of sensitivity and magnitude to inform judgements about the relative importance of the impacts.

4.1.4 In accordance with Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd edition, rating the valency, or nature of change or effect can be further considered on the following basis:

- Adverse – a change that reduces the quality of the present environment
- Neutral – a change that is indistinct to the quality of the present environment
- Beneficial – a change that improves the quality of the present environment.

4.1.5 Beneficial impacts are highly likely where well designed development is located within areas of degraded or derelict land/townscape.

4.1.6 For the purposes of this chapter, predicted impacts of major/moderate significance or higher are considered to be substantial or material impacts. Effects that are noted towards the higher level of the scale (Major) are those judged to be most important, whilst those towards the bottom of the scale are of lesser concern.

5.0 Legislation and Policy Context

Landscape Planning Policies

5.1.1 Guidelines, legislation and planning policy documents provide the framework for the protection and conservation of landscape within the study area, the most relevant of which are outlined below.

5.1.2 Of these, statutes exist to ensure both direct and indirect protection of our most valued and important landscapes, their intrinsic visual qualities and the individual elements and components that constitute their appeal.

5.1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 (NPPF) outlines the Government's planning policies for England, setting out how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions and any development would need to accord with the following planning provisions.

5.1.4 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be considered through both plan-making and decision-taking. For plan making, this means that local planning authorities "*should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs for their area*" and be "*sufficiently flexibility to adapt to rapid change*" unless "*any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework (NPPF) taken as a whole*".

5.1.5 NPPF paragraph 8 defines three overarching objectives to sustainable development, economic, social and environmental. The environmental objective explained in the following terms:

"to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

5.1.6 Section 15 of the NPPF is concerned specifically with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 174 notes that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).

5.1.7 For decision-taking, development that accords with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay; and, where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies are out of date, permission should be granted unless the application of policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the proposal or if any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole.

Designations

5.1.8 The site sits within no areas of national designation related to landscape. The boundary of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) sits approximately 150m from the site's northern boundary at its closest point.

6.0 Baseline Study

6.1.1 Both the landscape and visual assessment include baseline studies that describe, classify and evaluate the existing landscape and visual resources, focusing on their sensitivity and ability to accommodate change. The initial study area was set to a radius of approximately 2.5km from the centre of the site (N51°38'28, W02°45'30) on the basis that, at this distance, this form of development, when seen by the human eye, would be hardly discernible or not legible.

6.1.2 Following an initial desk based assessment of aerial photography and Ordnance Survey mapping, a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was prepared.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

6.1.3 In order to assist in the assessment of the potential visual effects of any development, a computer-generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is normally modelled. The computer ZTV is used as a working tool to inform the assessment team of the extent of the zone within which the proposed development may have an influence or effect on landscape character and visual amenity and the areas within which the study area together with site survey work should be concentrated. It should be noted that this is a topographical information based exercise with no account being taken of the visual barrier effects of vegetation or buildings.

6.1.4 A computer generated ZTV was established and a study area together with a number of representative viewpoints determined. All these viewpoints are at various distances from the scheme and cover all main points of the compass.

6.1.5 The extent of study area and viewpoints were selected as being representative and having the potential to offer material landscape and visual effects.

7.0 Landscape Character Assessment Criteria

7.1.1 Description and classification of existing landscape character has involved a review of published regional and sub-regional landscape character assessment information.

7.1.2 The GLVIA3 identify, in Box 5.1 page 84, a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. These are as follows:

- Landscape quality (condition): The intactness of the landscape and the condition of the individual elements within it;
- Scenic Quality: The term used to describe landscapes that appeal to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses);
- Rarity: The presence of rare elements or a rare landscape character type;
- Representativeness: Whether the landscape contains features or elements that are considered important examples;
- Conservation interests: Specific interest of heritage, archaeological, geological, ecological, that adds value to the landscape;
- Recreational value: Where the landscape is valued for recreational activity, where experience of the landscape is important;
- Perceptual aspects: Notably wildness or tranquillity;
- Associations: With people, art, writers or events in history.

7.1.3 Local landscape character and landscape sensitivity has been defined by taking account of landform, hydrology, vegetation, settlement, land use pattern, and cultural and historic features and associations, consequently the landscape character has been categorised as follows.

Quality

7.1.4 Quality or condition relates to the physical state of the landscape and its intactness from the visual, functional and ecological perspectives, together with the state of repair of its constituent features or elements (e.g. hedgerows, woodlands, field pattern etc.). Local landscape quality within the study area has been considered based on the criteria described in the following table

Table 1: Landscape Quality (or Condition)

Landscape Quality (or Condition)	Typical Indicators
Very High	All landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Buildings are in local vernacular and materials. No detracting elements are evident
High	Most landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Most buildings are in local vernacular and materials. Few detracting elements are evident
Medium	Some landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Some buildings are in local vernacular and materials and some detracting elements are evident
Low	Few landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Few buildings are in local vernacular and materials. Many detracting or incongruous elements are evident
Very Low	No landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Buildings are not in local vernacular and materials. Detracting or incongruous elements are much in evidence

Value

8.5 The value attributed to an area of landscape reflects communal perception at a local, regional, national or, occasionally, international scale. It is informed by a number of factors including scenic beauty, wildness, tranquillity and particular cultural associations. Cultural associations may be widely held at a national scale or more local in nature. Landscapes considered to be of the highest value would generally be formally designated at the national level, whereas those considered of lowest value would generally be undesignated, degraded landscapes, perhaps identified as being in poor condition and requiring either restoration or re-creation. Although value is largely determined by reference to statutory and planning policy designations, an absence of such designation does not necessarily imply the absence of value, as other factors such as scarcity or cultural associations can establish an area of otherwise unremarkable landscape as a valued local resource. The value of landscape character areas and designations has been determined using the criteria described in the following table.

Table 2: Landscape Value

Landscape Value	Typical Indicators
Very High	Areas comprising a clear composition of valued landscape components in robust form and health, free of disruptive visual detractors and with a strong sense of place. Areas containing a strong, balanced structure with distinct features worthy of conservation. Such areas would generally be internationally or nationally recognised designations, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
High	Areas primarily containing valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition and lacking prominent disruptive visual detractors. Areas containing a strong structure with noteworthy features or elements, exhibiting a sense of place. Such areas would generally be national statutorily designated areas. Such areas may also relate to the setting of internationally or nationally statutory designated areas, such as AONB.
Medium	Areas primarily of valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition with low levels of disruptive visual detractors, exhibiting a recognisable landscape structure. Such areas would generally be non-statutory locally designated areas such as Areas of Great Landscape Value.
Low	Areas containing some features of landscape value but lacking a coherent and aesthetically pleasing composition with frequent detracting visual elements, exhibiting a distinguishable structure often concealed by mixed land uses or development. Such areas would be commonplace at the local level and would generally be undesignated, offering scope for improvement.
Very Low	Areas lacking valued landscape components or comprising degraded, disturbed or derelict features, lacking any aesthetically pleasing composition with a dominance of visually detracting elements, exhibiting mixed land uses which conceal the baseline structure. Such areas would generally be restricted to the local level and identified as requiring recovery.

Character sensitivity

7.1.5 Each landscape character area or designation is assessed for the sensitivity of its character to the introduction of the proposed development, taking into account its key characteristics, landscape elements, composition and cultural associations. Certain aspects of landscape character are particularly important indicators of the degree to which a landscape is likely to be able to successfully accommodate development. These include the general scale and complexity of its landforms and elements; the degree of enclosure or openness; the degree and nature of manmade influences upon it; and whether it offers particular experiences such as remoteness or tranquillity. The criteria used to determine the sensitivity of landscape character are set out in the following table.

Table 3: Character Sensitivity

Character Sensitivity	Typical Indicators
Very High	**Landscape elements:** Important elements of the landscape susceptible to change and of high quality and condition. **Scale and Enclosure:** Small-scale landform/land cover/ development, human scale indicators, fine grained, enclosed with narrow views, sheltered. **Manmade influence:** Absence of manmade elements, traditional or historic settlements, natural features and 'natural' forms of amenity parkland, perceived as natural 'wild land' lacking in man-made features, land use elements and detractors **Remoteness and Tranquillity:** Sense of peace, isolation or wildness, remote and empty, no evident movement.
High	**Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Very High criteria but exceed those for Medium**
Medium	**Landscape elements:** Important elements of the landscape of moderate susceptibility to change and of medium quality and condition. **Scale and Enclosure:** Medium-scale landform/land cover/ development, textured, semi-enclosed with middle distance views. **Manmade influence:** Some presence of man-made elements, which may be partially out of scale with the landscape and be of only partially consistent with vernacular styles. **Remoteness and Tranquillity:** some noise, evident, but not dominant human activity and development, noticeable movement.
Low	**Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Medium criteria but exceed those for Very Low.**
Very Low	**Landscape elements:** Important elements of the landscape insusceptible to change and of low quality and condition. **Scale and Enclosure:** Large-scale landform/land cover/ development, Featureless, coarse grained, open with broad views. **Manmade influence:** Frequent presence of utility, infrastructure or industrial elements, contemporary structures e.g. masts, pylons, cranes, silos, industrial sheds with vertical emphasis, functional man-made land-use patterns and engineered aspects. **Remoteness and Tranquillity:** Busy and noisy, human activity and development, prominent movement.

Visual Sensitivity of Landscape Areas:

7.1.6 The visual sensitivity of an area of landscape relates to its general level of openness, the nature and number of visual receptors present within a landscape, and the probability of change in visual amenity due to the development being visible. It should be noted that landscape visual sensitivity refers to the visual sensitivity of the entire landscape that is being assessed, rather than an assessment of the visual effects of a specific, individual development.

7.1.7 The following table provides an overview of the typical indicators of visual sensitivity, which can be used to give a transparent, reasoned judgement regarding landscape visual sensitivity.

Table 4: Landscape Visual Sensitivity

Landscape Visual Sensitivity	Typical Indicators
Very High	Visual interruption: Flat or gently undulating topography, few if any vegetative or built features. Nature of views: Densely populated, dispersed pattern of small settlements, outward looking settlement, landscape focused recreation routes and/or visitor facilities, distinctive settings, gateways or public viewpoints.
High	Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Very High criteria but exceed those for Medium.
Medium	Visual interruption: Undulating or gently rolling topography, some vegetative and built features. Nature of views: Moderate density of population, settlements of moderate size with some views outwards, routes with some degree of focus on the landscape.
Low	Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Medium criteria but exceed those for Very Low.
Very Low	Visual interruption: Rolling topography, frequent vegetative or built features. Nature of views: Unpopulated or sparsely populated, concentrated pattern of large settlements, introspective settlement, inaccessible, indistinctive or industrial settings.

7.1.8 The overall landscape sensitivity is derived by combining the assessed values attributed to landscape condition, landscape value, character sensitivity and effects on landscape elements and landscape visual sensitivity, to define an overall value within the range of Very High, High, Medium, Low and Very Low.

7.1.9 Since each criterion has a varying weight in its contribution to sensitivity the overall value is determined by professional judgement.

7.1.10 For the purposes of this assessment greater weight is attributed to Landscape Value and Landscape Character Sensitivity since these factors have greater defining criteria in the description of the landscape characterisation.

Magnitude of Change

7.1.11 Magnitude of change has been predicted by considering the anticipated loss or disruption to character forming landscape elements (e.g. tree planting, landform, buildings, and watercourses etc.), which would arise through introduction of the proposed scheme.

Table 5: Definition of Magnitude of Landscape Impacts

Magnitude	Description
Large	Total loss of or major alteration to key valued elements, features, and characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements considered being prominent and totally uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Would be at a considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape. Would cause a high quality landscape to be permanently changed and its quality diminished.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements, features, characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Would be out of scale with the landscape, and at odds with the local pattern and landform. Will leave an adverse impact on a landscape of recognised quality.
Small	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features, characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. May not quite fit into the landform and scale of the landscape. Affect an area of recognised landscape character
Negligible	Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features, and characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Maintain existing landscape quality, and maybe slightly at odds to the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape.

Significance of Landscape Effects

7.1.12 The significance of the landscape character effects is determined by the assessment of landscape sensitivity set against the magnitude of change as indicated by the matrix in Table 6.

7.1.13 'Material' landscape effects would be those effects assessed to be major or major/moderate and are indicated by shading in the following table.

Table 6: Significance of Landscape Effects

Magnitude	Sensitivity				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Large	Major	Major	Major/ moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ minor
Medium	Major	Major/ moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ minor	Minor/ negligible
Small	Moderate	Moderate/ minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Minor/ moderate	Minor	Minor/ negligible	Negligible	Negligible

7.1.14 The prediction and extent of effect cannot always be absolute. It is for each assessment to determine the assessment criteria and the significance thresholds, using informed and well-reasoned professional judgement supported by thorough justification for their selection, and explanation as to how the conclusions about significance for each effect assessed have been derived, as noted in GLVIA 3rd edition para 2.23-2.26 and 3.32-36.

8.0 Establishment of Baseline Environment

8.1.1 This section describes in detail the site and its surroundings. The section also discusses in brief the issue of visual amenity from certain areas within the landscape.

8.2 Landscape Character Baseline

8.2.1 Natural England has published a study on its website entitled 'Countryside Character Initiative'. This initiative is concerned with the management of England's countryside through an understanding of its character. It aims to guide policy developments, national decision making, and give a context to local planning, action and development. This initiative is based on 'The Character of England: landscape, wildlife and natural features' map, first published in 1997, which divides England into National Character Areas (NCA's). These character areas were updated and republished in April 2014.

8.2.2 The site falls within Welsh National Character Area (NCA) 32 Wye Valley and Wentwood.

8.2.3 The NCA 32 key characteristics of relevance to the study area are reproduced below (points of relevance to the site and setting are shown highlighted in bold text):

- Geology – defines the area, with Devonian sandstones and Carboniferous Limestone; the latter forming the dramatic gorge.
- The deeply incised river gorge - meandering course of the Wye initially formed when the river flowed in an area of low relief, however, falling sea levels during the Quaternary period caused it's channel to become 'fossilised' and incised into a gorge.
- The Wye Valley woodlands - cover much of the valley sides are protected because of the diversity of native and rare tree species, making the area one of the most important sites for woodland nature conservation in Britain.
- Sheep and dairy pasture – is the main agricultural use, but with some cereal cropping on more fertile and better drained soils.
- Large conifer blocks - characterise the higher ground in the west (Wentwood).
- **Fields are mainly enclosed by hedgerows** - and are a combination of regular Parliamentary Enclosures on higher ground and earlier, irregular fields on slopes.
- This border area has a rich archaeological heritage - including prehistoric funerary and defensive sites, the 12th century Cistercian abbey at Tintern, and remains from 16th to 19th centuries iron smelting industries.
- Hamlets and villages are located in the valleys -along roads or the Wye. The principal settlements serving the area are the historic towns of Chepstow and Monmouth.
- The spectacular scenery of the Wye gorge - has long inspired visitors, artists and writers, including William Gilpin, the 18th century progenitor of the Picturesque movement.
- The area largely retains its rural and tranquil character - although town and settlement edge expansion detracts from this in places.

- **Long views are afforded from the higher ground, where possible** (due to woodland cover) and forested slopes act as a backcloth to the levels to the south.

The NCA 32 covers a relatively wide and diverse area. The site and its context exhibit very few of the key characteristics of the NCA, predominantly only where they relate to long views to the south that are afforded due to the relatively elevated position of the site and the enclosure of the field by hedgerows. This lack of close relation to the key characteristics is to be expected due to the relatively large scale of the national character area.

Sub-Regional Character

8.2.4 The Regional Landscape Character Area (Wales) area as defined by Landmap in their assessment of Wales provides an assessment of the landscape character. The assessment covers a number of criteria which are to be considered as a whole. These topics and their general characteristics are defined as:

- Geological Landscape - (Shirenewton) Lowland escarpment. Evaluation: Moderate
- Landscape Habitats – (S. central rural Monmouthshire) Improved Grassland. Evaluation: Moderate
- Visual and Sensory – (Chepstow Parkland) Open Hillside and Scarp Slopes. Evaluation: High
- Historic Landscape – (Newton Plateau) Irregular Fieldscapes. Evaluation: High
- Cultural Landscape – (Chepstow parkland) Open Hillside and Scarp Slopes.

8.2.5 The categories of the landscape in which the site and its context sit are given a mixture of high and moderate categories of evaluation. These areas are geographically larger than just the site, so not all of the landscape within the area will be of a similar level due to local influences.

9.0 Landscape Character of the Site and its Context

Landscape Susceptibility

9.1.1 Effects on landscape features may occur due to direct or indirect physical changes to the landscape baseline. Direct changes to the landscape fabric would only occur within the application boundary.

9.1.2 The following landscape features have been identified as receptors for the assessment of effects arising from the proposals, including an assessment of their value, susceptibility, and resultant sensitivity to development of the type proposed.

9.1.3 Vegetation Pattern: The site currently forms part of a larger field in agricultural use that is defined by a hedgerow with intermittent trees. This landscape feature does not have the capacity to accommodate development of the type proposed without fundamental or permanent alterations to part of the field and southern hedgerow which follows Earlswood Road will be broken to allow access. However, the site represents a smaller part of a larger field, so much of the receptor will be retained in other areas. Consequently, this receptor is judged to be of a medium susceptibility to change.

9.1.4 Overall Character of the Site and Context: The site and its immediate context sit within a generally agricultural fringe landscape which exhibits a relationship with the settlement edge. The site interior is not vegetated and there is strong potential for the improvement of the landscape through mitigation as part of the proposals. It has a simple, sparse landscape character, with existing energy infrastructure (particularly the telegraph poles which cross the landscape) also exerting somewhat urbanising influences. On balance, the receptor is considered likely to be able to accommodate the type of development proposed with moderate consequences upon its overall integrity. The overall receptor is judged to be of a medium susceptibility to the type of change proposed.

Landscape Value

9.1.5 With regard to the individual landscape receptors listed previously in this section, the relative value of each characteristic is judged to be as follows.

9.1.6 Vegetation Pattern: The field is not designated and the vegetation that forms field boundaries and the field itself are commonplace at the local level. The hedgerows are in generally good condition with any trees within the boundary vegetation to be retained. The receptor is judged to have a medium value.

9.1.7 Overall Character of the Site and Context: The character of the site and its context may be summarised as generally agricultural, but the telegraph poles that cross the landscape and nearby built form of Shirenewton have an effect on views. The temporary long-term change of use from its baseline to a scheme of this type would be similar to that of its immediate and wider context. The site falls within no areas of national designation, but approximately 150 metres from the boundary of the Wye Valley AONB, that sits to the north.

9.1.8 The site itself exhibits very few of the key characteristics or qualities outlined in the published national character area and within the more local studies. The site has some enclosure from its surroundings provided by mature boundary vegetation, but some longer range visibility exists, in particular to the south. The site does not exhibit characteristics one might consider to be rare or of value and has no features that could be considered as important examples of the type. There are no features of interest to conserve on site. The site offers no recreational value, with

a PRoW crossing the landscape to the north of the site. The sites context somewhat reduces the sense of tranquillity one may feel if the roads, residential dwellings, agricultural built form and telegraph poles were not so evident. The site has no associations to events, history or culture. The overall receptor is judged to have a medium value.

Landscape Sensitivity

9.1.9 Based upon the judgements of susceptibility and value as detailed earlier in this section, the overall sensitivity of the identified landscape receptors is judged to be as follows:

- Vegetation Pattern: Medium
- Overall Character of the Site and Context: Medium

Table 7: Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptor	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Landscape Sensitivity
Vegetation Pattern	Medium	Medium	Medium
Overall Character of Site and Context	Medium	Medium	Medium

10.0 Assessment of Landscape Effects

10.1.1 This section assesses the likely effects on the baseline landscape character for each of the identified landscape receptors and the site and its context. The effects of the proposed scheme will be defined, and the magnitude of change determined in line with table 5. This will be combined with the sensitivity of the site to give an overall assessment of the significance of landscape impact.

10.1.2 The relevant baseline characteristics of the site which form the landscape receptors for this assessment are as follows:

- Vegetation Pattern: Medium
- Overall Character of the Site and Context: Medium

Assessment of Effects on Identified Receptors

Vegetation Pattern

10.1.3 The baseline assessment has identified this receptor to be of medium sensitivity to change.

10.1.4 The proposed development would cause a minimal change to the sites boundary vegetation other than to manage, strengthen and maintain the current condition. There would be removal and replacement of a section of the southern field boundary hedgerow that follows Earlswood Road to facilitate access and part of the grassland of the field itself would be removed. The baseline characteristics of the receptor would not be substantially changed and the proposals would not be characteristic in the existing context.

10.1.5 The magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to be small.

10.1.6 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore assessed as minor adverse.

Overall Character of the Site and Context

10.1.7 The baseline assessment has identified this receptor to be of medium sensitivity to change.

10.1.8 The proposed development would introduce elements that are found nearby into the current village fringe setting, which would not change the nature of the context in which it sits. These elements would be prominent but would not be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the current landscape baseline.

10.1.9 The magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to be medium.

10.1.10 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore assessed as moderate adverse.

10.2 Summary of Landscape Impacts

10.2.1 The landscape impacts assessed to arise from the proposed scheme are summarised as follows in table 8.

Table 8: Landscape Impacts

Landscape Receptor	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Landscape Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect
Vegetation Pattern	Medium	Medium	Medium	Small	Minor adverse
Overall Character of Site and Context	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse

11.0 Visual Assessment Criteria

11.1.1 In conjunction with the landscape character impact assessment, a visual impact assessment has been undertaken in order to assess any potential visual impact arising as a result of the proposed development.

11.1.2 In order to evaluate what the visual impact of the development will be and, if appropriate, what can be done, to ameliorate the impact, it is necessary to describe the existing situation to provide a basis against which any change can be assessed. The assessment of visual impact from any one location takes into account the:

- Sensitivity of the views and viewers (visual receptor) affected;
- Nature, scale or magnitude and duration of the change;
- Extent of the proposed development that will be visible;
- Degree of visual intrusion or obstruction that will occur;
- Distance of the view;
- Change in character or quality of the view compared to the existing.

11.1.3 The locations from which the proposed development will be visible are known as 'visual receptors'. For the purposes of a visual assessment the visual receptors would be graded according to their sensitivity to change.

Visual Receptors

11.1.4 Visual impact assessment considers the sensitivity to change of visual receptors within the study area, and the magnitude of change associated with the introduction of the proposed development into the existing visual context.

11.1.5 A range of fixed visual receptors was initially considered, with emphasis placed on identification and selection of locations with a clear relationship to the proposed scheme where potential visual implications were deemed to be greatest. The key visual receptors normally include statutory and non-statutory designated or protected areas, cultural heritage resources, residential properties and farmsteads, recreational/tourist resources, panoramic hilltop views, focused or directed views, and cumulative views. Viewpoints were selected to be representative of these visual receptor types.

11.1.6 These preliminary viewpoints locations were assessed in terms of visibility during field investigation resulting in some preliminary viewpoints either being repositioned to locations offering improved visual representation or discounted as not offering any views. In addition, field investigation identified a number of other closer viewpoints.

11.1.7 For the field assessment, a Canon EOS 500D camera with an 18-55mm lens was used, set at 35mm focal length. This is in line with best practice as shown in the Technical Guidance Note 06/19; Visual Representation of Development Proposals issued by the Landscape Institute.

11.1.8 Field investigation from the preliminary viewpoints was used to assess the actual visibility of the proposed development within the study area, taking into account the visual barrier effect of vegetation and buildings.

Site Appraisal/ Photographic Studies

11.1.9 The initial photographic study was undertaken in May 2020. Viewpoints at varying close distance from the site were selected to represent the typical views of the site. Figure 4 shows the location of these viewpoints. In determining the viewpoints, whether in the immediate locality or further away, the main public highways, sections of public footpaths, and some of the publicly available spaces within the study area were visited. It is acknowledged that from public places, more viewers are likely to be affected thereby adding to the significance of the impact upon receptors in those locations.

11.1.10 The locations from which the proposed development will be visible are known as visual receptors. In accordance with the "Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition", for the purposes of the visual assessment the visual receptors have been graded according to their sensitivity to change.

11.1.11 From the results of the initial desk study and site appraisal it is clear that the proposed development will be visible from a limited number of locations, at varying distances, and from both public and private areas.

11.1.12 In order to evaluate what the visual impact of the development will be and, if appropriate, what can be done to ameliorate the impact, it is necessary to describe the existing situation to provide a basis against which any change can be assessed. Each assessment of visual impact has therefore been made taking into consideration the character and quality of the existing view. The assessment of the significance of effect is a result of the assessment of magnitude of the impact related to the assessment of sensitivity of the receptor.

Seasonal Change

11.1.13 Consideration must be given to the varying degree of filtering or visual barrier effect arising from deciduous vegetation that will apply in summer and winter months. During winter months the least leaf cover will be available so will act as less dense visual barriers to views and can be considered a worst case scenario in visual terms. In summer months when foliage is retained by vegetation, a fuller barrier will be created which acts as a denser visual barrier.

11.1.14 The site was visited on the 31st of January 2024, the weather was overcast with occasional light rain but generally clear.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

11.1.15 The locations from which the proposed development will be visible are known as visual receptors. The assessment of visual sensitivity considers both the category of visual receptor and the nature of their existing view. It takes account of the location of the receptor or viewpoint; the expectations, occupation or activity of the people present; the quality of the existing visual context; and the importance or value likely to be attributed by them to the available view. It is therefore the case that not all receptors within a given category are deemed to display equal sensitivity.

11.1.16 In accordance with the GLVIA, for the purposes of the visual assessment, the visual receptors have been graded according to their sensitivity to change against criteria set out in the table below.

Table 9: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor Sensitivity	Description
High	Occupiers of residential properties. (with due consideration given to paragraph 6.36 of the GLVIA). Users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape. Communities where the development results in changes in the landscape setting or valued views enjoyed by the community.
Medium	People travelling through or past the affected landscape in cars, on trains or other transport routes where higher speeds are involved and views sporadic and short-lived. People engaged in outdoor recreation where enjoyment of the landscape is incidental rather than the main interest.
Low	People at their place of work where their attention may be focused on their work or activity. People at their place of work, Industrial facilities.

11.1.17 The number of people likely to be present and the duration of time that a view is likely to be experienced may also influence the visual sensitivity of a particular location.

11.1.18 It is sometimes the case that different categories of visual receptor might be present at a selected representative viewpoint (e.g. a selected location may include both residential properties and workplaces suggesting different levels of sensitivity). In such cases the primary receptor category is identified (usually the more sensitive).

Visual Magnitude of Change

11.1.19 The visibility of the proposals and the magnitude of their change upon a view and the resulting significance of visual effect are dependent on the range of factors already outlined, together with, the angle of the sun, the time of year and weather conditions. Of equal importance will be whether the site is seen completely, or in part; whether the site appears on the skyline; whether it is viewed with a backcloth of land or vegetation; or with a complex foreground; and whether the site forms part of an expansive landscape or is visible within a restricted view. The aspect of dwellings and whether the view is from a main window or a secondary window, which may be used less frequently, is also a consideration. From highways, the direction and speed of travel are also a consideration. In the assessment magnitude of change is ranked in accordance with the following table.

Table 10: Definition of Magnitude of Visual Impact

Magnitude	Description
Very Large	The development would result in a dramatic change in the existing view and/or would cause a dramatic change in the quality and/or character of the view. The development would appear large scale and/or form the dominant elements within the overall view and/or may be in full view of the observer or receptor. Commanding, controlling the view.
Large	The development would result in a prominent change in the existing view and/or would cause a prominent change in the quality and /or character of the view. The development would form prominent elements within the overall view and/or may be easily noticed by the observer or receptor. Standing out, striking, sharp, unmistakeable, easily seen.
Medium	The development would result in a noticeable change in the existing view and/or would cause a noticeable change in the quality and/or character of the view. The development would form a conspicuous element within the overall view and/or may be readily noticed by the observer or receptor. Noticeable, distinct, catching the eye or attention, clearly visible, well defined.
Small	The development would result in a perceptible change in the existing view, and/or without affecting the overall quality and/or character of the view. The development would form an apparent small element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor. Visible, evident, obvious.
Very Small	The development would result in a barely perceptible change in the existing view, and/or without affecting the overall quality and/or would form an inconspicuous minor element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor. Lacking sharpness of definition, not obvious, indistinct, not clear, obscure, blurred, indefinite.
Negligible	Only a small part of the development would be discernible and/or it is at such a distance that no change to the existing view can be appreciated. Weak, not legible, near limit of acuity of human eye.

Significance of Visual Effect

11.1.20 The significance of the visual effects is determined by the assessment of receptor sensitivity set against the magnitude of change as indicated by the matrix in Table 9.

11.1.21 For the purposes of this assessment 'Material' landscape effects would be those effects assessed to be major or major/moderate and are indicated by shading in the following table.

Table 11: Significance of Visual Effects

Magnitude	Sensitivity		
	High	Medium	Low
Very large	Major	Major	Major/moderate
Large	Major	Major/moderate	Moderate
Medium	Major/moderate	Moderate	Moderate/minor
Small	Moderate	Moderate/minor	Minor
Very Small	Minor	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

(Shaded areas show material effects)

Representative Viewpoint Assessment

11.1.22 Viewpoint selection has been chosen by a review of visual receptors within the vicinity of the site as well as the presence of landscape designations. The choice of representative viewpoints has been limited due to the location of the scheme and surrounding built form. The baseline description of each view is contained within the visual impact assessment.

11.1.23 The following viewpoints in Table 12 were selected as part of the scoping process as being representative of the potential visual issues associated with the proposed development.

Table 12: Viewpoint Details

No	Location	Distance (km) and direction of view	Northing	Westing	Rationale for selection
1	Footpath 380/42/1	0.18, SW	51°38'33	02°45'20	Users of PRoW
2	Footpath 380/42/1	0.11, S	51°38'33	02°45'26	Users of PRoW
3	Footpath 380/42/1	0.10, SE	51°38'29	02°45'38	Users of PRoW
4	Footpath 380/43/1	0.40, SE	51°38'36	02°45'50	Users of PRoW
5	Footpath 380/43/1	0.19, E	51°38'28	02°45'43	Users of PRoW
6	Earlswood Road	0.10, E	51°38'27	02°45'39	Road users
7	Private lane	0.11, NE	51°38'21	02°45'31	Road users
8	Earlswood Road	0.01, N	51°38'24	02°45'30	Road users

Limitations of Assessment

11.1.24 The initial field study and photographic appraisal was undertaken during January at a time when views do not have the benefit of vegetation in full leaf. In months when deciduous species retain their foliage, less views of the landscape will be available due to vegetation forming denser visual barriers. Photographs at each viewpoint indicate the general outlook for receptors.

11.1.25 In determining the viewpoints, whether in the immediate locality or further away, the main public highways, sections of public footpaths, and some of the publicly available spaces within the study area were visited. It is acknowledged that from public places, more viewers are likely to be affected, thereby adding to the significance of the impact upon receptors in those locations.

11.1.26 For the purposes of this report, the assessment has been based on the proposed development of a residential scheme. This assessment is based on the site before mitigation measures have been implemented, so represents worst case scenario.

12.0 Viewpoint Analysis

12.1.1 The viewpoints have been selected to be representative of the types of views experienced by a range of sensitive receptors such as those listed in the preceding Table 12 and should be read in conjunction with figure 4. The original fieldwork was undertaken during January 2024.

Table 13: Viewpoint Locations

No	Location	Direction of view	Distance to Site (km)	Receptor Sensitivity at Viewpoint
1	Footpath 380/42/1	SW	0.18	High – Users of PRoW
2	Footpath 380/42/1	S	0.11	High – Users of PRoW
3	Footpath 380/42/1	SE	0.10	High – Users of PRoW
4	Footpath 380/43/1	SE	0.40	High – Users of PRoW
5	Footpath 380/43/1	E	0.19	High – Users of PRoW
6	Earlswood Road	E	0.10	Medium - Road users
7	Private lane	NE	0.11	Medium - Road users
8	Earlswood Road	N	0.01	Medium - Road users

Viewpoint 1: View from footpath 380/42/1

Vp1	Panoramic View	***(Distance 0.18km looking south west)***
Baseline Description	This is a view from footpath 380/42/1 looking south west towards the site. This viewpoint sits close to Ditch Hill Lane. The PRoW crosses a field in agricultural use that is defined by a hedgerow with intermittent trees. The landform is undulating. Existing large detached dwellings that sit to the east and north east of the site can be seen, with views filtered by curtilages that are formed by vegetation. Telegraph poles cross the landscape forming manmade elements with a vertical emphasis on the view.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, it is likely that some of the proposed dwellings that are situated to the northern area of the site will be partly visible with views filtered by the intervening vegetation. The character of the view will not change, with development of a similar nature to that currently visible appearing to extend further to the west from the existing dwellings.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the type of development that sits in and crosses the local and wider landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The development would result in a perceptible change in the view that would be visible to an observer but that would not change the character of the view.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	High – Users of PRoW
	Magnitude	Small
	Valency	Adverse
Significance of Effect		*Moderate adverse – Not a material change*

Viewpoint 2: View from footpath 380/42/1 looking south 0.11km

Viewpoint 3: View from footpath 380/42/1 looking south east 0.10km

Vps 2 & 3	Panoramic Views	
Baseline Description	These are views from PRoW 380/42/1 where it crosses the field to the north of the site and illustrate the change from the footpath that crosses the agricultural field in which the site sits. The landscape is laid out as a field in agricultural use that is defined by hedgerows with intermittent trees. Pockets of woodland that sit around the settlement of Shirenewton can be seen in the wider landscape forming a generally wooded fabric to the views of the dwellings and built form that characterise the settlement. This undulating agricultural landscape fabric is crossed by telegraph poles that are related to the local settlement. Dwellings that are situated at Redd Landes sit to the east of the site with curtilages formed by vegetation.	
Predicted change	From these viewpoints, the proposals will sit in the field which this section of the PRoW crosses and will be clearly visible from these viewpoints. The proposals will have the effect of the existing settlement edge dwellings appearing to extend further towards the viewer within the field. Any change will be seen in the context of the existing settlement edge but will be noticeable in views due to its situation within the field in the foreground.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the type of development that crosses the local and wider landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The development would result in a noticeable change in the views from the PRoW that would be clearly visible to an observer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	High – Users of PRoW
	Magnitude	Medium
	Valency	Adverse
Significance of Effect		***Major/moderate** adverse – A material change*

Viewpoint 4: View from footpath 380/43/1 looking south east 0.40km

Viewpoint 5: View from footpath 380/43/1 looking east 0.19km

Vps 4 & 5	Panoramic Views	
Baseline Description	These are views from PRoW 380/43/1 which follows the boundary of a field and illustrate the change from the footpath network to the west of the site. The landscape is laid out as undulating fields in agricultural use that are defined by a combination of hedgerows with intermittent trees and fencing. From the higher landform, towards the position of viewpoint 4, longer range views towards Shirenewton are available of the buildings that form the settlement and by agricultural scale built form that sits in the agricultural fringe. Further towards viewpoint 5 views into the site are prevented by the intervening undulating landform, but the field boundary hedgerow that sits to the west of the site can be seen.	
Predicted change	From these viewpoints, the proposals will be partly visible set against the existing Shirenewton settlement with visibility reducing as an observer walks to the south along the PRoW. The change will be perceptible, but will not affect the current character of views with the proposals apparently blending into the current view of the built form of Shirenewton.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the type of development that crosses the local and wider landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The development would result in a perceptible change in the view that would be visible to an observer but that would not change the character of the view.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	High – Users of PRoW
	Magnitude	Small
	Valency	Adverse
Significance of Effect	*Moderate adverse – Not a material change*	

Viewpoint 6: View from Earlswood Road

Vp6	Panoramic View	***(Distance 0.10km looking east)***
Baseline Description	This is a view from Earlswood Road looking east towards the site. The entrance sign at the edge of village can be seen alongside other signage. To the south of Earlswood Road can be seen the Shirenewton Recreational Hall. The built form of Shirenewton can be seen set within a generally well vegetated settlement fabric. Earlswood Road is bound to the north and south by hedgerows with intermittent trees. A hedgerow that forms the field in which the site sites western boundary creates a visual barrier to views.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, it is likely that some of the proposed dwellings that are situated to the south of the site will be visible set beyond the hedgerow that follows the road. The change will be noticeable but not prominent, with development of a similar nature to that currently visible appearing to extend further to the west from the existing dwellings.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the type of development that sits in and crosses the local and wider landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The development would result in a noticeable change in the view that would be clearly visible to an observer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	Medium – Road users
	Magnitude	Medium
	Valency	Adverse
Significance of Effect	*Moderate adverse – Not a material change*	

Viewpoint 7: View from private lane

Vp7	Panoramic View	***(Distance 0.11km looking north east)***
Baseline Description	This is a view from a private lane looking north east towards the site. This location represents the first location on this lane from which a view towards the site is available. The lane is bound by a mature hedgerow with trees along its eastern edge which forms the edge of the Shirenewton Recreation Association. To the west of the lane, views are more open of a field in agricultural use. The landform rises steadily to the north.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, it is likely that some of the proposed dwellings that are situated to the south of the site will be visible set beyond the hedgerow that follows the road. The change will be noticeable but not prominent, due to views being limited by the rising landform and vegetation. The change will be clearly visible.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the type of development that sits in and crosses the local and wider landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The development would result in a noticeable change in the view that would be clearly visible to an observer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	Medium – Road users
	Magnitude	Medium
	Valency	Adverse
Significance of Effect	*Moderate adverse – Not a material change*	

Viewpoint 8: View from Earlswood Road

Vp8	Panoramic View	***(Distance 0.01km looking north)***
Baseline Description	This is a view from Earlwood Lane looking north towards the site. The site boundary sits in the foreground and can be seen as a field in agricultural use that is defined by a combination of hedgerow with intermittent trees and residential curtilages to the east. Road signs can be seen along Earlswood Road, with dwellings that are situated at Redd Landes visible to the north east with curtilages formed by a combination of vegetation and walls.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the change will be easily seen due to the site sitting in the foreground. This location sits close to the proposed location for the site access. The change formed by the proposals will be prominent as they sit in the foreground but will be seen alongside the dwellings at Redd Landes.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the type of development that sits in and crosses the local and wider landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The development would result in a prominent change in the view that would be easily seen by an observer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	Medium – Road users
	Magnitude	Large
	Valency	Adverse
Significance of Effect		***Major/moderate** adverse –A material change*

Summary of Visual Impacts and Significance

Table 14: Summary of Visual Effects for Operational Phase

No	Viewpoint	Receptor Type	Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Scale of Visual Effect	Valency of Effect
1	Footpath 380/42/1	Users of PRoW	High	Small	Moderate	Adverse
2	Footpath 380/42/1	Users of PRoW	High	Medium	Major/ moderate	Adverse
3	Footpath 380/42/1					
4	Footpath 380/43/1	Users of PRoW	High	Small	Moderate	Adverse
5	Footpath 380/43/1					
6	Earlswood Road	Road users	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Adverse
7	Private lane	Road users	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Adverse
8	Earlswood Road	Road users	Medium	Large	Major/ moderate	Adverse

Scale of Visual Effects indicated in bold are considered 'material' in landscape terms.

13.0 Visual Impacts

13.1.1 The potential visual impact of the proposed development is assessed from the photographic viewpoints (See Figure 4: photo viewpoint locations).

13.1.2 Temporary visual effects will be caused as a result of construction vehicle movements to and from the site and for any general construction operations.

13.1.3 During any construction works, temporary lighting is unlikely to be required.

13.1.4 With the introduction of construction activities, it would result in a noticeable change in the existing view and would form a conspicuous element in the overall view. This would result in a medium magnitude of change.

13.1.5 The sensitivity of the large majority of visual receptors in closest proximity to the proposed construction activities can be classified as high or medium (users of publicly accessible routes and road users). Consequently, with a high receptor sensitivity set against a medium magnitude of visual change, the temporary visual effect during the construction period would, as a worst case, result in a significance of effect that can be assessed as major/moderate adverse (i.e. a material change).

Visual Effects

13.1.6 The introduction of development within the existing landscape framework would be considered similar to the nature of the current visual baseline. The visual effects have been considered in section 12.0 Viewpoint Analysis with representative images of viewpoints to demonstrate the current baseline.

13.1.7 The visual effects at the operational stage have been assessed as being subject to a moderate adverse change (i.e. not a material change) as a result of the proposed development.

14.0 Mitigation and Recommendations for Development

14.1.1 The following mitigation proposals have been included within the design rationale for the site, in order to allow development to relate sensitively to the existing landscape:

- The proposed built elements will be situated nearby existing built form of a similar nature that sits to the south east;
- Built form will be kept back from the site boundaries to allow for boundary planting and visual barrier elements to minimise the potential impact of the built form;
- Creation of accessible wildflower grassland and woodland area;
- Creation of a community orchard area with the use of local fruit species;
- Any external lighting to be designed in line with best practice to minimise potential for light spill;
- Additional trees should be planted along the local field boundary vegetation to strengthen the existing vegetation.

14.1.2 The mitigation measures proposed are of an appropriate level for their effect on mitigating development effects from the scheme.

14.1.3 An illustrative planting scheme has been provided on a Landscape Concept Plan that accompanies the application (reference POR1214-09) which outlines the location and type of mitigation planting that will complement the proposals.

15.0 Summary of Residual Impacts and Significance

15.1 Summary of Residual Landscape and Visual Effects

15.1.1 While the visual assessment has looked, where necessary, at both the construction stage and operational stage separately the residual impacts will only cover the operational stage since:

- The construction phase is temporary;
- Any planting mitigation will take some years to become effective.

15.1.2 The most successful mitigation will be the development of a substantial landscape framework to reinforce the existing retained hedges and trees. This additional visual barrier effect will reduce the visibility of the development to form either inconspicuous minor elements within the view or that no part of the development would be appreciated. The reassessment of visual impacts has been taken after this 15 year period following the start of the operational stage. In this time span any tree planting will have grown to over 8m high and any hedge planting, for example, will have now become a dense managed hedgerow.

Landscape Character

15.1.3 With the introduction of this proposal, the overall magnitude of landscape character impact is assessed as being moderate adverse (i.e. not a material change).

15.1.4 With the establishment of a robust mitigation strategy, it is reasonable to consider thata reduction in the effects will occur. With an overall medium sensitivity, and a magnitude of change assessed as small the significance of effect will reduce to a minor adverse effect at a residual stage(i.e. not a material change).

Visual Impact

15.1.5 Within a 15 year assessment period;

- New hedging and vegetation boundaries will be well established and will have been managed at heights that provide more effective visual barrier.
- Planting to reinforce the existing vegetation will provide denser effective winter visual barrier.
- The hedge trees and trees will also now be 8+ metres high.
- Materials that form the external envelope and roof of the buildings will have ‘weathered’ and have more subdued tones.

15.1.6 These mitigation measures would help limit views of the development and therefore alter and reduce some of the magnitudes of visual change from the established viewpoints.

Table 15: Summary and Comparison of Residual Visual Significance of Effect

No	Viewpoint	Receptor Type	Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Scale of Visual Effect	Valency of effect	Magnitude of Change	Scale of Visual Effect	Valency of effect
				Operational Phase			Residual Phase (After 10 years)		
1	Footpath 380/42/1	Users of PRoW	High	Small	Moderate	Adverse	Very small	Minor	Adverse
2	Footpath 380/42/1	Users of PRoW	High	Medium	**Major/ moderate**	Adverse	Medium	Moderate	Adverse
3	Footpath 380/42/1								
4	Footpath 380/43/1	Users of PRoW	High	Small	Moderate	Adverse	Very small	Minor	Adverse
5	Footpath 380/43/1								
6	Earlswood Road	Road users	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Adverse	Small	Moderate/ minor	Adverse
7	Private lane	Road users	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Adverse	Small	Moderate/ minor	Adverse
8	Earlswood Road	Road users	Medium	Large	**Major/ moderate**	Adverse	Medium	Moderate	Adverse

Significance of Effects indicated in bold are considered 'material' in landscape terms.

16.0 Conclusion

16.1 Landscape Character

16.1.1 The landscape impact assessment concluded that the sites baseline character is influenced by its village fringe context that is formed by the existing built form and related infrastructure of Shirenewton.

16.1.2 The change, due to its residential related nature, will be permanent and irreversible.

16.1.3 The assessment of the local character area of the site and its context, on the whole is assessed as having a medium sensitivity to this form of development.

Construction Stage

16.1.4 For the proposed site itself during the construction stage and with the retention of the main important landscape features such as the mature boundary trees, it is assessed to be subject to a medium magnitude of change. Consequently, the significance of landscape effect for the construction of the proposal is assessed to be moderate adverse (i.e. not a material change)

Operational Stage

16.1.5 It has been assessed that a partial loss of key landscape elements and the introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not be considered substantially uncharacteristic will occur. Consequently, the significance of landscape effect for the operation of the proposal is assessed to be moderate adverse (i.e. not a material change).

Significance of Residual Landscape Effects

16.1.6 It has been assessed that after 15 years and with a successful mitigation strategy, a reduction in the magnitude of landscape effect will occur. Consequently, the significance of landscape effect for the construction of the proposal is assessed to be minor adverse (i.e. not a material change).

16.1.7 It is important to note that alongside any adverse change to landscape character, beneficial green infrastructure elements will be introduced.

16.2 Visual Effects

16.2.1 All viewpoints are from publicly accessible areas and have been specifically chosen to represent certain views or users of certain views. Viewpoints chosen include views from publicly accessible routes and roads that fall within the ZTV.

16.2.2 The visual impact assessment concluded that the site occupies a relatively small visual envelope on account of the surrounding built form, undulating landform and mature vegetation.

16.2.3 With regards to identified visual receptors, the assessment concluded that the road users of a relatively short section of Earlswood Road to the south of the site would experience a prominent change that would be seen in the context of the existing nearby residential development. It further concluded that users of PRoW 380/42/1 would be afforded clear views of the site from the section that crosses the field in which the site sits as can be imagined. From PRoW 380/43/1 to the west views would be evident, but any change would be seen in the context of the existing built form of the settlement.

16.2.4 Residential receptors are considered to be of high sensitivity but have no right to a view in planning terms. The change that they are subject to will be limited to their property and will not be publicly accessible so less people will experience the change. There is likely to be a limited visual change to a handful of residents from a single façade of their property at Redd Landes and the large detached dwellings that sit to the north.

Construction Stage

16.2.5 This stage of the proposal is relatively short lived. The introduction of construction features and facilities, construction lighting, together with general construction activities for projects of this scale would not represent uncommon features in the wider landscape.

16.2.6 With the introduction of all these construction activities, it would result in a medium magnitude of change.

16.2.7 The sensitivity of the large majority of visual receptors in closest proximity to the proposed construction activities can be classified as high or medium (users of publicly accessible routes and road users). Consequently, with a high receptor sensitivity set against a medium magnitude of visual change, the temporary visual effect during the construction period would, as a worst case, result in a significance of effect that can be assessed as major/moderate adverse (i.e. a material change).

Operational Stage

16.2.8 The visual effect would result in a significance of effect that can be assessed as major/moderate adverse (i.e. a material change) as a worst case. This is from viewpoints 2 and 3 and viewpoint 8 that sit close to the site's northern and southern boundaries. The grouped viewpoints that represent the right of way network to the west will be subject to moderate levels of change. The remainder of viewpoints will also not be subject to a material change. The wider change will generally be perceptible but will not change the character of views due to the receiving baseline of the landscape.

Significance of Residual Visual Effects

16.2.9 The residual impact assessment will be reduced from all viewpoints as a result of a successful mitigation strategy. As a worst case, viewpoints 2, 3 and 8 are assessed to be subject to a moderate adverse residual visual effect (i.e. not a material change). This is because once the mitigation measures have established, they will be better integrated with the existing baseline of the settlement fringe. The geographic extent of change is relatively small and change of note is localised and limited.

Overall Landscape and Visual Conclusion

16.2.10 It is the overall conclusion of this landscape and visual impact assessment that the proposed development is anticipated to result in no substantial adverse impacts to the visual or landscape baseline at a residual stage.

17.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Glossary of Terms

Appendix B – Sources of Information

Figure 1: Ordnance Survey Map

Figure 2: Aerial Photograph

Figure 3: Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Figure 4: Viewpoint Location Plan

Figure 5: Designation Plan

APPENDIX A - Glossary of terms

Analysis (landscape)	The process of breaking the landscape down into its component parts to understand how it is made up.
Assessment (landscape)	An umbrella term for description, classification and analysis of landscape.
Biodiversity	The concept of variety in all species of plants and animals through which nature finds its balance.
Classification	A process of sorting the landscape into different types using selected criteria, but without attaching relative values to the different kinds of landscape.
Compensation	The measures taken to offset or compensate for residual adverse effects that cannot be mitigated, or for which mitigation cannot entirely eliminate adverse effects.
Constraints map	Map showing the location of important resources and receptors that may form constraints to development.
Countryside	The rural environment and its associated communities (including the coast)
Cumulative Effects	The summation of effects that result from changes caused by a development in conjunctions with other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions.
Diversity	Where a variety of qualities or characteristics occurs.
“Do nothing situation”	Continued change/evolution of landscape or of the environment in the absence of the proposed development.
Element	A component part of the landscape (for example, roads, hedges, woods)
Enhancement	Landscape improvement through restoration, reconstruction or creation
Environment	Our physical surroundings including air, water and land.
Environmental appraisal	A generic term for the evaluation of the environmental implications of proposals (used by the UK Government in respect of policies and plans).
Environmental fit	The relationship of a development to identified environmental implications opportunities and constraints in setting.

Environmental Impact Assessment	The evaluation of the effects on the environment of particular development proposals
Field pattern	The pattern of hedges and walls that define fields in farmed landscapes.
Geographical Information System	Computerised database of geographical information that can easily be updated and manipulated.
Heritage	Historical or cultural associations.
Indirect impacts	Impacts on the environment, which are not a direct result of the development but are often produced away from it or as a result of a complex pathway. Sometimes referred to as secondary impacts.
Landcover	Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.
Landform	Combinations of slope and elevation of the land conditioned by knowledge and identity with a place.
Landscape capacity	The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.
Landscape character	The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.
Landscape character type	A landscape type will have broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern discernible in maps and field survey records.
Landscape effects	Change in the elements, characteristics, character and qualities of the landscape as a result of development. These effects can be positive or negative.
Landscape evaluation	The process of attaching value (non-monetary) to a particular landscape, usually by the application of previously agreed criteria, including consultation and third party documents, for a particular purpose (for example, designation or in the context of the assessment)
Landscape factor	A circumstance or influence contributing to the impression of a landscape (for example, scale, enclosure, elevation)

Landscape feature	A prominent eye-catching element, for example, wooded hilltop or church spire.
Landscape quality	(or condition) is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which makes up the character in any one place.
Landscape resource	The combination of elements that contribute to landscape context, character and value.
Landscape sensitivity	The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character.
Land use	The primary use of the land, including both rural and urban activities.
Landscape value	The relative value or importance attached to a landscape (often as a basis for designation or recognition), which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.
Magnitude	A combination of the scale, extent and duration of an effect.
Methodology	The specific approach and techniques used for a given study.
Mitigation	Measures, including any process, activity or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse landscape and visual effects of a development project.
Perception (of landscape)	The psychology of seeing and possibly attaching value and/or meaning to landscape.
Precautionary principle	Principle applied to err on the side of caution where significant environmental damage may occur, but where knowledge on the matter is incomplete, or when the prediction of environmental effects is uncertain.
Preference	The liking by people for one particular landscape element, characteristic or feature over another.
Quality	See Landscape quality
Receptor	Physical landscape resource, special interest or viewer group that will experience an effect.

Regulatory authority	The planning or other authority responsible for planning consents or project authorisation (synonymous with determining authority).
Scenario	A picture of a possible future.
Scoping	The process of identifying the likely significant effects of a development of the environment.
Sense of place (genius loci)	The essential character and spirit of an area; genius loci literally means 'spirit of the place'.
Sensitive/sensitivity	See landscape sensitivity
Sieve mapping	Technique for mapping environmental constraints, working from a series of overlays, sieving out less important factors.
Sustainability	The principle that the environment should be protected in such a condition and to such a degree that ensures new development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Technique	Specific working process
Threshold	A specified level in grading effects, for example, of magnitude, sensitivity or significance.
Visual amenity	The value of a particular area or view in terms of what is seen.
Visual effect	Change in the appearance of the landscape as a result of development. This can be positive (i.e. beneficial or an improvement) or negative (i.e. adverse or a detraction)
Visual envelope	Extent of potential visibility to or from a specific area or feature.
Visualisation	Computer simulation, photomontage or other technique to illustrate the appearance of a development.
Worst-case situation	Principle applied where the environmental effects may vary, for example, seasonally to ensure the most severe potential effect is assessed.
Zone of visual influence	Area within which a proposed development may have an influence or effect on visual amenity.

APPENDIX B - Sources of Information

The following sources of information were obtained or consulted during the course of the assessment:

- Consultations with the client regarding the development proposals;
- Natural England and local authority published landscape character descriptions;
- MapInfo Professional Geographic Information systems surface model produced using terrain 5 data purchased from Emapsite.com. This data is then interrogated to produce a zone of theoretical visibility based on a number of representative points centred on the location of development;
- Aerial photography;
- Ordnance Survey Mapping at 1:10,000, 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 scale;
- Site visits and fieldwork to confirm data derived from available mapping and to identify and assess potential impacts.

LEGEND

Site boundary

N

For ordnance survey map legend, refer to:
https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/legends/25k-raster-legend.pdf

Client: Powells Rural Ltd		
Scheme: Shirenewton, Monmouthshire		
Drawing: Ordnance Survey Plan		Figure No: 1
LVIA ltd Ref: POR1214		
Scale: NTS@A3	Drawn: SC	Checked: JPF

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LEGEND

Site boundary

N

Image supplied by Google Maps
https://maps.google.co.uk/
Accessed 30/01/24

Client: Powells Rural Ltd		
Scheme: Shirenewton, Monmouthshire		
Drawing: Aerial Photograph		Figure No: 2
LVIA ltd Ref: POR1214		
Scale: NTS@A3	Drawn: SC	Checked: JPF

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LEGEND

Site boundary

Zone of theoretical visibility

Yellow wash - Potential view

Grey wash - No potential view

NB: Viewshed analysis run with 1.6m viewer height and buildings at a 8m height with mapinfo and represents surface topography, without taking into account potential visual barriers in the form of trees, hedgerows, woodland, buildings and other manmade elements.

N

Client: Powells Rural Ltd		
Scheme: Shirenewton, Monmouthshire		
Drawing: Zone of Theoretical Visibility		Figure No: 3
LVIA ltd Ref: POR1214		
Scale: NTS@A3	Drawn: SC	Checked: JPF

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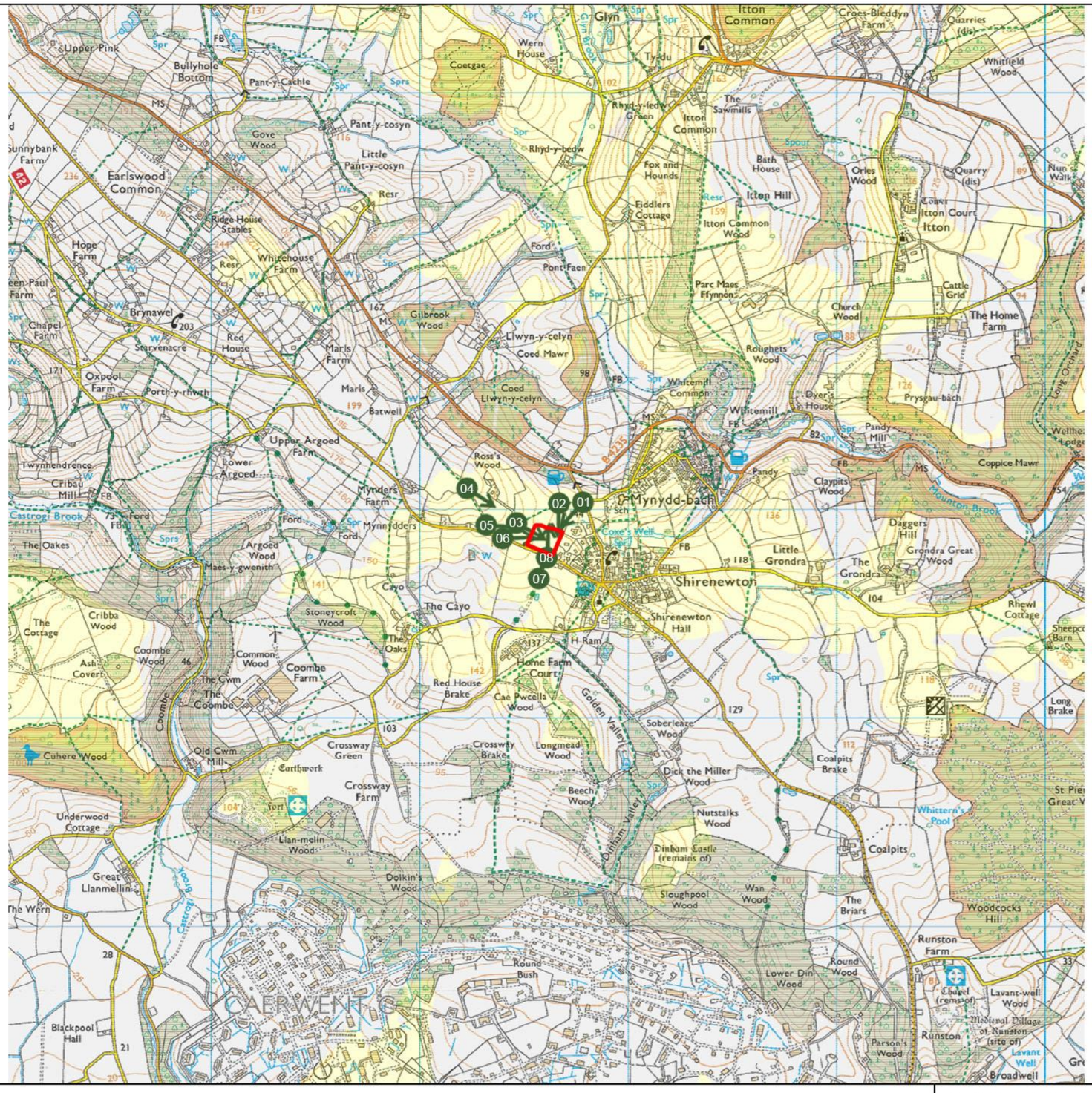

LEGEND

Site boundary

00 Viewpoint location

Zone of theoretical visibility

Yellow wash - Potential view

Grey wash - No potential view

NB: Viewshed analysis run with 1.6m viewer height and buildings at a 8m height with mapinfo and represents surface topography, without taking into account potential visual barriers in the form of trees, hedgerows, woodland, buildings and other manmade elements.

N

Client: Powells Rural Ltd		
Scheme: Shirenewton, Monmouthshire		
Drawing: Viewpoint Location Plan		Figure No: 4
LVIA ltd Ref: POR1214		
Scale: NTS@A3	Drawn: SC	Checked: JPF

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Site Boundary

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England)

N

Client: Powells Rural Ltd		
Scheme: Shirenewton, Monmouthshire		
Drawing: Designations Plan		Figure No: 5
LVIA ltd Ref: POR1214		
Scale: NTS@A3	Drawn: SC	Checked: JPF

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Placing development well

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