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# PROOF OF EVIDENCE

## Landscape and Visual Matters

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APPEAL REF: APP/J2210/W/25/3373183  
LPA REF: CA/23/00484

Client

**Gladman Developments Ltd**

Project

**Land at The Hill, Littlebourne**

Date

**January 2026**

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	FINAL	TJ/19/01/26	TJ/19/01/26

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 My name is Timothy Richard Jackson. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and a Senior Director in the long established, multi-disciplinary environmental design company FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR). The Practice is a member of the Landscape Institute, the Institute of Environmental Assessment and Management and The Urban Design Group. I have been a partner/ director of the practice for 25 years.
- 1.2 I have over 33 years' experience of landscape and development projects from initial conceptual design through to final completion and long-term aftercare. I am frequently involved in site selection, constraints analysis, environmental impact assessment and detailed landscape design. I have advised on landscape and visual impact issues on a wide range of residential, commercial and mixed use development schemes and have completed landscape character assessment work and landscape capacity studies for local authority and private sector clients.
- 1.3 I have also undertaken Green Belt, Settlement (and Strategic) 'Gap' and Green Wedge studies and presented evidence on these and landscape, visual and design matters at planning appeals and local plan examinations.
- 1.4 In the past year, I have been responsible for the co-ordination and production of a series of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, Landscape and Green Infrastructure Strategies, Landscape Masterplans and Design and Access Statements in support of various planning applications, together with accompanying Environmental Statements. I am currently leading the masterplanning, environmental impact assessment and landscape services on one of the first round of Garden Villages at Grantham in Lincolnshire.
- 1.5 My curriculum vitae is included at Appendix A.
- 1.6 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal reference is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions irrespective of by whom I am instructed.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 The planning application was validated by Canterbury City Council (CCC) on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The application was then subsequently refused by CCC on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025, despite the Officer's recommendation to grant approval.
- 2.2 CCC have since confirmed in the Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) (dated 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025) (CD6.04) that further to the meeting and vote of the Planning Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the Council should not defend any of the Reasons for Refusal (RfR) in the appeal. The SOCG (at 2.1.4) also confirms that CCC will not be calling any evidence at the appeal.
- 2.3 For reference, the earlier Decision Notice cited five RfRs. That relevant to landscape and visual matters is No, 5 and for ease of reference, is repeated below:
- "5. The landscape harm caused by the proposed development, given that the development is otherwise unsustainable, is unjustified and as such the development would harm the character and setting of the village contrary to NPPF para 135(c) and Local Plan policy LB4."*
- 2.4 CCC have confirmed that it no longer seeks to defend this or any of the RfRs and that they do not object to the grant of planning permission for the Appeal Scheme, subject to the provision of a suitable section 106 undertaking and the imposition of suitably worded conditions. However, I assume that third parties may continue to urge dismissal of the appeal, in part upon landscape and visual grounds, which is why I have been asked to provide evidence to the inquiry.
- 2.5 In my evidence I will focus on countryside, landscape and visual matters as they relate to the proposed development and planning application. My evidence will outline the approach which has been adopted by the appellant and I will address relevant policy and design criteria as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), the Development Plan and relevant Design Guidance. I will also consider and address the hierarchy of landscape designations, landscape character assessments and other landscape and design related documents or plans where relevant to this Site and its context.
- 2.6 I will show that the proposal will not be out of character with the existing settlement or its landscape context and setting and it will in fact represent an appropriate development scheme, in landscape and visual terms. The proposed scheme responds positively to the existing characteristics and features of its settlement edge location and the visual amenity of the area will not be harmed to any significant degree by the proposal.
- 2.7 I conclude that the Site can be developed in a way that will not result in any significant or unacceptable harm to the local landscape, settlement character or visual amenity. It is an appropriate and sustainable location for development and the appeal proposals will deliver a scheme that will sit well within and respect the character and pattern of the surrounding settlement and landscape. It will also encompass valuable new public open space, landscape, habitat and GI proposals and be supported by a commitment to its long term management.
- 2.8 Mr Tait gives evidence covering planning matters and Dr Mansfield gives evidence covering ecological matters.

### 3.0 THE PROPOSED SITE AND CONTEXT

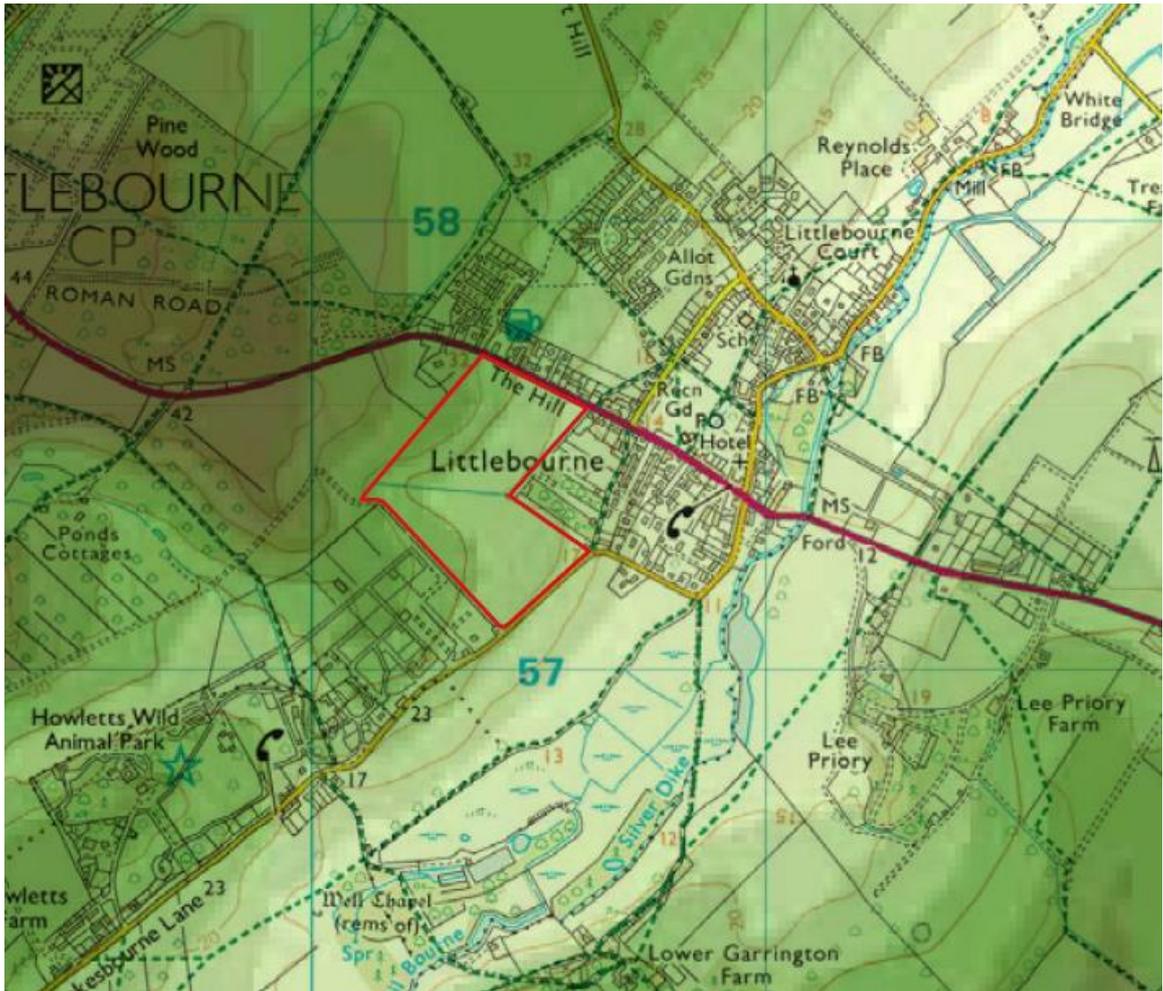
- 3.1 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (CD2.36) and Design and Access Statement (DAS) (CD2.18) submitted with the planning application describe the key characteristics and features of the Site and local area in terms of landscape, settlement and visual amenity. The key characteristics and features of the Site and local area can be summarised as follows:

#### **Context & Land Use (CD2.36 LVA; Figures 1 and 2)**

- 3.2 The Site lies adjoining the existing western edge of Littlebourne, with existing housing situated to the north east and east of the Site. The Hill (A257) lies along the north eastern boundary of the Site with residential development beyond. Further existing residential development lies to the east of the Site also on or via The Hill and Rose Acre Road. Bekesbourne Lane adjoins the south eastern edge of the Site. A combination of Howletts Wild Animal Park and arable farmland lie directly to the west and north west of the Site. More broadly, Canterbury lies circa 4.5km to the west and is connected via the A257.

#### **Topography (CD2.36 LVA; Figure 5)**

- 3.3 The topography of the Site's wider context is principally shaped by the Nail Bourne valley which extends broadly south west to north east. Littlebourne sits on the lower and mid westerly valley slopes at 10 – 35m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The general aspect of the settlement is towards the east and south east. The Nail Bourne (watercourse) gently falls across the floor of the valley from south west to north east. The relatively higher slopes and land beyond the valley is typically gently rolling.
- 3.4 The Site lies at around 17 – 33m AOD, with the relatively higher ground within the Site on the north western and western boundary. The lowest lying land within the Site lies at its easterly extents, adjoining The Hill and also Bekesbourne Lane. The land typically falls towards the east and south east and towards the existing settlement. The existing drainage ditch crossing the Site lies at a gentle fold in the landform.
- 3.5 Higher ground lies beyond the Site to the north and west. Here, the land rise to around 42m AOD.



**The Site naturally slopes towards the settlement edge. It lies on the lower and mid valley slopes to the west of Nail Bourne, as is characteristic of the existing settlement. The levels and falls across the Site also reflect those already existing within the settlement.**

#### **Local Character, Appearance and Landscape Value**

- 3.6 An assessment of the character and appearance of the landscape has been undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) (GLVIA3) (CD8.02) and is included within the submitted LVA (CD2.36). Published Landscape Character Assessments covering the landscape context of both the Site and Littlebourne are included in the LVA and are referenced in the following Landscape Character section.
- 3.7 The Site comprises arable farmland which continues beyond the Site extents to the west. Existing mature hedgerows, trees and a woodland belt are located around the perimeter of the Site. To the north east, the Site is bound by a tall, mature hedgerow alongside The Hill and to the east by an unmade track and existing drainage ditch and other planting. The eastern, western and southern boundaries of the site are a combination of tree planting and hedgerows. The condition of planting to the boundaries is mixed.



**View (not publicly available) from within the Site looking east across the arable farmland. Existing houses on The Hill are visible as is the tall mature tree belt that stretches across the northern edge of the Site. From this location the foreground will encompass new planting and landscape proposals. The drainage ditch is visible part way across the field.**



**Views looking up The Hill. The right hand photo shows the view approaching the Site on the A257 from the east. The existing tall mature trees that sit immediately beyond the Site and contain it to the north west are visible in both views.**



**Approach into Littlebourne along the A257 from the west. The Site lies to the right beyond the road corner and the existing properties.**

- 3.8 A drainage ditch extends across the farmland within the Site and falls from west to east towards the settlement. There are no Public Rights of Way (PROW) within the Site and no other public access.
- 3.9 Littlebourne is generally situated to the east and north of the Site. Howletts Wild Animal Park, accessed off Bokesbourne Lane, is situated to the south west of the site. The closer sections of the animal park are utilised for car parking only and are not recreational areas.



**View northwards towards the Site from a PROW (footpath) south of Bokesbourne Lane. Existing houses on the southern edge of Littlebourne are open to views from the footpath. However, the Site lies beyond the mature hedgerow and trees (lining Bokesbourne Lane) towards the centre and left of the view.**

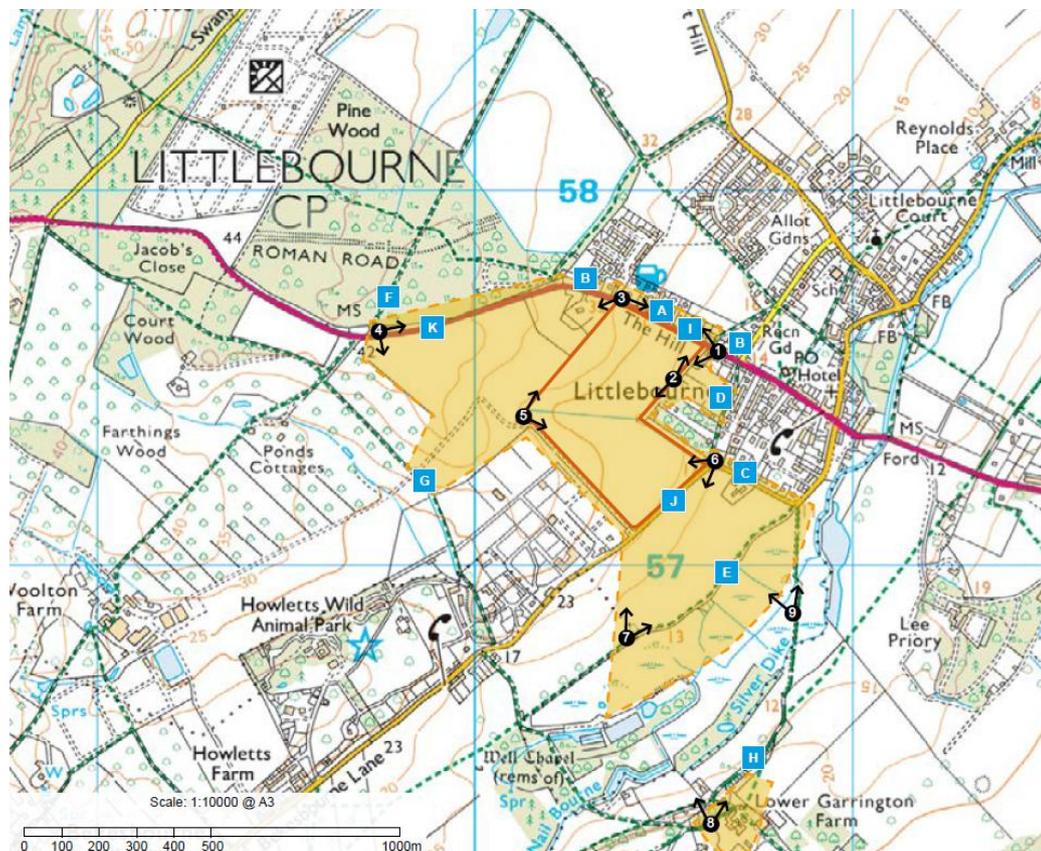
- 3.10 Within the wider landscape to the north and north-west are several areas of woodland on higher ground including Pine Wood and Court Wood. Nail Bourne (watercourse) lies to the south east of the Site beyond Bokesbourne Lane.
- 3.11 There are a small number of Public Rights of Way passing through the immediate context of the site. Footpath CB 156 follows the route of School Path linking The Hill / Jubilee Road junction with Bokesbourne Lane. CB 143 passes through development north of The Hill and exits onto The Hill east of Coach Cottages – views are limited for the length of the route by existing development. Other routes in the vicinity include Footpath CB 150 to the west and Footpath CB 157 to the south.
- 3.12 An assessment of the Landscape Value of the Site and its immediate context is included within the LVA at paragraphs 4.33 – 4.44. This has been undertaken in accordance with the recognised guidelines (Landscape Institute’s Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02-21, “Assessing landscape value outside national designations”). It concludes this landscape is of Medium Value.

## 4.0 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS AND CHARACTER

4.1 The LVA (CD2.36) includes an assessment of the baseline landscape designations and character by reference to statutory and non-statutory designations and to relevant published studies. This is summarised below.

### Landscape Designations

- 4.2 The Site and its immediate context is not situated within a landscape that is subject to any national, local or other statutory or non-statutory landscape designations. The Kent Downs National Landscape lies approximately 2.6km to the south west of the Site, at its closest point. There is no intervisibility between the Site and this National Landscape, due to the nature of the intervening landform.
- 4.3 In terms of other environmental designations, the Littlebourne Conservation Area lies directly to the north of the Site and encompasses much of the existing settlement area stretching up and down The Hill and within the lower lying land close to the Nail Bourne. The Site lies outside the Conservation Area.
- 4.4 Listed Buildings are situated across Littlebourne, with the greatest concentration on the relatively lower lying land in the east of the settlement, close to the Nail Bourne. Ickham and Wichhambreaux Conservation area lies to the north-east of Littlebourne. There is no discernible intervisibility between the Site and this CA. These Heritage based designations were considered and appraised within the Archaeological and Heritage Statement (CD1.11) that accompanied the planning application.



**Extract of Figure 6 from the LVA (CD2.36) showing the approximate visible extents of the proposed development within the local landscape. The shaded area shows the area within which the proposed development is likely to be visible, even if only partially. It illustrates the limited wider visibility of the proposals, particularly in relation to the existing settlement and PROW in the surrounding landscape.**

## **Landscape Character**

### **National**

- 4.5 At this very broad scale, the Site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 113, *North Kent Plain*, as defined by Natural England. This area covers a very extensive landscape tract which stretches from Ramsgate and Margate on the east coast, to Bromley adjacent to the Inner London NCA to the west. The *North Kent Plain NCA* is described as;

*“The North Kent Plain National Character Area (NCA) is the strip of land between the Thames Estuary to the north and the chalk of the Kent Downs to the south. The area is open, low and gently undulating. It is a very productive agricultural area with predominantly high-quality, fertile loam soils characterised by arable use. Traditional orchards, soft fruits and other horticultural crops exist in central and eastern areas giving rise to the use of the title ‘Garden of England’. ..... it is generally an open landscape: characteristic shelterbelts occur within the fruit-growing areas, but the agricultural land is mostly devoid of hedgerows.”*

- 4.6 Key characteristics of the character area include the following:
- *‘An open, low and gently undulating landscape, characterised by high quality, fertile, loamy soils dominated by agricultural land uses.*
  - *Large arable/horticultural fields with regular patterns and rectangular shapes predominating, and a sparse hedgerow pattern*
  - *Large settlements and urban infrastructure (including lines of pylons) are often visually dominant in the landscape, with significant development around Greater London and the Medway Towns, as well as around towns further east and along the coast. Major rail and road links connect the towns with London.’*
- 4.7 This national scale study sets the very broad landscape context for the Site and Littlebourne. There is nothing within the study to indicate that new development on the edge of Littlebourne would be unacceptable or uncharacteristic in landscape terms.

### **County**

- 4.8 The Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004) was prepared for Kent County Council and is based on existing landscape character assessments of the county, updating them to conform with current guidance. It subdivides the landscape into 19 Character Areas, with the Site located within *The North Kent Fruit Belt* character area, which has the following Characteristic Features:

*“Well enclosed, medium scale field pattern. Rolling, quiet, picturesque. Traditional Kentish elements such as hops and orchards are characteristic. Well managed, simple form. The edge of the Canterbury urban area influences views, landuse and circulation. The views towards the Cathedral are very important. Outlying villages are quiet and rural, but with an increasing suburban influence.”*

- 4.9 In relation to *Condition* for the character area, the assessment states:
- "The landscape has a coherent pattern of elements: well enclosed and well managed fields with farmsteads and oasts over the rolling landscape. This pattern is interrupted by some large areas of arable cultivation and post and wire fencing, but there are few other visual detractors. The intensity of the fruit and arable farming weakens the ecological interest of the farmland, which has limited woodland, few hedges or any other opportunity for seminatural habitat. Culturally, there are areas which exhibit an intact framework of well maintained hedges and shelter belts around large farmsteads and oasts. The area is considered to be in moderate condition."*
- 4.10 In relation to *Sensitivity* for the character area, the assessment states:
- "Many of the key characteristics, such as single species shelter belts, large square oasts and dwarf root stock trees, are recent influences on the historic landscape. Woodlands and historic hedgerows are indistinct, some highways have also lost distinctive characteristics.*
- Visibility is high as views are open across the apparent landform. Sensitivity is considered to be moderate."*
- 4.11 The overall *Landscape Action* for the character area is to "Conserve and Create" and actions include:
- *"Conserve historic settlement patterns and isolated settlements on minor ridges in the landscape.*
  - *Conserve the enclosure and well-managed attributes of the medium scale field pattern.*
  - *Create small woodlands to link with existing copses."*
- 4.12 The *East Kent Horticultural Belt* character area lies to the east of the site and Littlebourne. There is very limited intervisibility between the Site and this Character Area due to the contained nature of the site and local intervening features and topography.
- 4.13 This County scale study provides relevant information and details covering the broad landscape context of the Site. There is nothing within the study to indicate that new development on the edge of Littlebourne would be unacceptable or uncharacteristic in landscape terms.

#### **District/ Borough/ City**

- 4.14 The Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (October 2020) (CD8.01) identifies 9 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and 42 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The site is located within "LCT H: Central Mixed Farmlands" and at a more detailed scale "LCA H6: Littlebourne Fruit Belt."
- 4.15 LCT H: Central Mixed Farmlands is described in the study as;
- 'distinguished by its agricultural land use and slightly sloping landform. The farmland is predominantly arable with some pasture and orchards. There is a contrast between open areas of large-scale fields due to agricultural intensification and hedgerow removal, and more enclosed historic parklands and small river valleys. There are small villages and hamlets linked by narrow rural roads, with some larger transport infrastructure'.*

- 4.16 The Littlebourne Fruit Belt LCA H6 is part of an extensive fruit belt area that covers a substantial part of East Kent. Key Characteristics of the area are:
- *“Gently rolling landform with deep loamy soils.*
  - *Agricultural land intensively farmed traditionally as orchards and hops but giving way to arable practices resulting in there being an overall limited biodiversity interest.*
  - *Small parcel of woodland and acid grassland forming the Swanton Aerial Site LWS*
  - *Strong field pattern created by windbreaks and crops.*
  - *Clumps and belts of trees including small isolated blocks of ancient woodland.*
  - *Encompassing most of the Littlebourne, Bekesbourne and Woolton Farm and Little Barton Farm Conservation Areas, providing some rural setting to their associated historic buildings (although influenced by the agricultural intensification that has occurred following changes from fruit production to arable).*
  - *Scattered clusters of historic buildings including traditional farm buildings, remnants of estate properties and oast houses.*
  - *Proximity to the urban edge of Canterbury City with localised urban fringe influences and some suburbanisation.”*
- 4.17 Key sensitivities and values of the LCA are stated as:
- *“Areas continuing with traditional agricultural practices that are under threat from arable conversion.*
  - *Hedgerows and remnant shelterbelts that provide a trace of the former structure and pattern of the landscape.*
  - *Limited areas of valuable habitats including woodland and acid grassland at Swanton Aerial Site LWS, and other hedgerow and woodland corridors.*
  - *Blocks of ancient woodlands contribute towards the historic setting of the landscape.*
  - *The historic village of Littlebourne and its distinctive local vernacular of weather board, half tile and brick – a Conservation Area – with many historic buildings including the Grade I listed Barn at Littlebourne Court and adjacent Church of St Vincent.*
  - *Rural setting to Littlebourne, Bekesbourne and Woolton Farm and Little Barton Farm Conservation Areas, which is evidently being influenced by agricultural intensification diminishing the sense of place.*
  - *Rural character of lanes lined with hedgerows (although heavily trafficked).*
  - *The role of the LCA in contributing towards the rural setting to the historic Canterbury City, in separating it with outlying villages to the east and the rural separation provided between Bekesbourne / Patrixbourne and Littlebourne.*
- 4.18 The Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities for the LCA include:
- *‘Conserve old orchards for their biodiversity value and to restore areas for the traditional farming practice of top fruit production.*

- *Conserve the traditional pattern and structure of the landscape by improving the continuity of hedgerow and shelterbelt features to enhance the rectilinear field pattern and to strengthen habitat connectivity.*
- *Restore and create wetland habitat, which contributes to the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA habitat network.*
- *Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.*
- *Conserve the local distinctiveness and strong vernacular of historic buildings, particularly within the Littlebourne Conservation Area.*
- *Avoid urban fringe uses which detract from the otherwise simple pattern of the landscape and rural setting to the historic Canterbury City, improving boundary treatments with the use of native hedgerows to help filter views of urban fringe uses.*
- *Any proposals for highway upgrading should retain the rural character of the lanes.'*

4.19 Area H5 *Nailbourne Parklands* lies south east of the site. The closer areas of this LCA occupy lower-lying land with restricted long distance views. The nature of the topography and features within the landscape limit intervisibility between the Site and this LCA.

4.20 Area G2 *Trenley Park Woodlands* lies north and north west of the Site. The wooded nature of the neighbouring LCA restricts intervisibility between the Site and *Trenley Park Woodlands* LCA.

4.21 This study provides a relatively more localised landscape character assessment than the county and national scale studies.

### **Visual Baseline**

4.22 A visual appraisal has been undertaken for the site in the LVA. This explored the nature of the existing visual amenity of the area and sought to establish the approximate visibility of the site from surrounding locations and receptors. A series of photo viewpoints were selected to support the analysis.

4.23 Photographs have been taken to illustrate a view from a specific vantage point, or to demonstrate a representative view for those receptors that are moving through the landscape, e.g. rights of way users. The viewpoints are included at Figures 7 – 17 of the LVA (CD2.36).

4.24 As the Inspector will visit the Site and its context, there is no need in this evidence to repeat the descriptions of the relevant viewpoints, which are set out in the LVA from paragraph 4.48 – 4.66.

4.25 In summary the visual analysis demonstrates that the Site is visually well contained (as also agreed by CCC SOCG Para 4.13.1 (CD6.04)). Figure 6 of the LVA illustrates the approximate Visual Envelope (also commonly referred to as 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' (ZTV)) and shows that there are relatively limited views towards the Site. Notably, existing views of the Site from properties or other receptors or positions within Littlebourne are confined to a relatively small number of properties, generally located close to the Site boundary. These principally include properties on The Hill to the north east.

- 4.26 Other views towards the Site are possible to varying extents from limited stretches of PROW to the south of the Site and from limited stretched of the A257 (The Hill) and Bekesbourne Lane adjoining the Site.
- 4.27 Overall, the Site is visually well contained, with a visual relationship generally back towards the existing settlement edge and less so towards the wider landscape to the north, west and south west. Where visible it is generally seen alongside or in conjunction with the existing settlement edge.

**Existing Landscape and Visual Summary:**

- **The Site is not subject to any national, local or other landscape designations.**
- **The Kent Downs National Landscape lies approximately 2.6km to the south west of the Site, at its closest point and there is no intervisibility between the Site and this National Landscape.**
- **The Site lies within the *North Kent Fruit Belt* character area, at the County scale assessment of landscape character and the *Littlebourne Fruit Belt* at the Canterbury City scale of assessment. These landscapes are characterised as gently rolling; largely farmed for orchard, hops and arable use; enclosed by a structure of tree belts and windbreaks; and including a number of settlements and localised urban fringe influences from Canterbury City.**
- **At a localised and Site specific scale, a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (CD2.36) has been undertaken (in accordance with the recognised guidelines (GLVIA3)) for the Site and its context and was submitted as part of the planning application.**
- **The Site lies adjoining the existing western edge of Littlebourne. It comprises arable farmland which continues beyond the Site extents to the west. Existing mature hedgerows, trees and a woodland belt are located around the perimeter of the Site. To the north east, the Site is bound by a tall, mature hedgerow alongside The Hill and to the east by an unmade track and existing drainage ditch and other planting. The eastern, western and southern boundaries of the site are a combination of tree planting and hedgerows.**
- **The Site includes no landscape features or characteristics of any particular distinctiveness, note or value.**
- **The Landscape Value of the Site and its immediate context has been assessed in accordance with recognised guidelines (Landscape Institute TGN 02-21) to be Medium.**
- **The Site is visually well contained (as agreed by CCC (SOCG; para 4.13.1), with a visual relationship generally back towards the existing settlement edge and less so towards the wider landscape to the north, west and south west. Where visible, it is generally seen alongside or in conjunction with the existing settlement edge.**

## 5.0 THE APPEAL PROPOSAL

- 5.1 The Appeal Proposal will provide up to 300 homes (with 30% affordable and older persons accommodation), together with new landscape and public open space proposals (with play/recreational areas); vehicular access and sustainable drainage measures.
- 5.2 The objective is to create a high quality and sustainable place to live which minimises potential environmental disruption and maximises benefits to the environment. The scheme has been designed to respond to and respect its settlement edge setting and context and the existing landscape features and characteristics, both within and surrounding the site.
- 5.3 In summary, the proposed development will comprise:
- Up to 300 homes at an average density of up to 35 dwellings per hectare (dph).
  - Vehicular access from The Hill (to the north east) and Bekesbourne Lane (to the south east) of the Site and with other surface cycle and pedestrian links onto these roads.
  - Proposed dwellings sited to include a swathe of landscape, habitat and public open space proposals to all sides of the development area; with a sustainable attenuation pond(s)/ feature(s) located on the lower lying land in the east of the Site.
  - Extensive woodland, tree and other planting and habitats, particularly on the relatively higher north western and south western sides of the Site – to provide an appropriately robust landscape setting and backdrop to the proposed development.
  - Native and characteristic planting and habitat proposals reflecting relevant guidance and good design practice. The planting and habitat proposals will also provide valuable biodiversity and arboricultural benefits and will be supported by appropriate management and maintenance.
  - Landscape and Green Infrastructure areas (including play facilities and potential allotments and community orchard) extending to approximately 45% of the total site area and comprising a mix of planting and habitats and furniture and other landscape features. This is likely to comprise in excess of 5,000 No. new native plants just within the outer landscape framework areas.
  - New native tree and hedgerow planting to The Hill and Bekesbourne Lane boundaries to replace those sections of hedgerows and trees to be lost to facilitate the future access proposals.



**Extract of Development Framework Plan (CD2.46) depicting the key features of the Appeal Scheme including the Green Infrastructure and landscape areas extending to approx. 45% of the Site and including broad planted 'buffers' and landscape areas to the outer and central parts of the scheme, with a mix of habitats and multi-functional uses and benefits.**

- 5.4 The Development Framework Plan (CD2.46) and Design and Access Statement (CD2.18) outline the proposed development parameters and design principles and features to be adopted by the Appeal Scheme.
- 5.5 All of the existing retained and proposed hedgerows and other new trees, shrubs and landscape areas will be managed and maintained, via the implementation of a comprehensive Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), to ensure the successful establishment and continued thriving of the conserved and new planting and habitats.
- 5.6 The development proposals as outlined will deliver a high quality and sustainable development. Importantly, the proposals have been carefully devised in response to a thorough understanding of the opportunities and constraints presented by the Site and its context. This includes consideration of the limits and edges of the built development areas and to the relationship of the proposed development to the surrounding landscape, including to the existing nearby properties and the adjoining roads.

## 6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

6.1 The landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development are described in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (CD2.36). The LVA was undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, third edition (GLVIA3) (CD8.02), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Further details of the methodology are included within the LVA.

6.2 There has been no criticism by the Council on the methodology adopted for the submitted LVA. The SOCG (CD6.04; para 4.13.2) further confirms '*The Appellant's Landscape and Visual Appraisal was prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact, third edition (GLVIA3) and is a fair representation of the impact of the proposals in landscape and visual terms*'.

### Landscape Effects

6.3 The Site and its landscape context are not recognised by any national, local or other landscape designations for reasons of quality or value.

6.4 At the broader scale and referencing the national and county based landscape assessment studies, the proposed development will have a limited effect upon the characteristics and features of the relevant broad landscape character types and areas. At this broad scale of assessment, the change from farmland to new residential development; with associated Green Infrastructure (GI) proposals will not discernibly alter or weaken the underlying characteristics and features of these wider landscape character types and areas. The Appeal Scheme will sit well related to the existing settlement and development.

6.5 At the relatively more detailed scale of the Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal (CD8.01), the proposed development will similarly not result in any notable landscape change or effects. The landscape effect of the proposed development upon the '*Littlebourne Fruit Belt*' Landscape Character Area (LCA) will be Minor Adverse upon completion. As relevant to the broader national and county scale landscape character types and areas, the Appeal Scheme will not result in any notable or marked changes to the underlying characteristics, features or qualities of this LCA. The loss of the arable farmland on the settlement edge and its replacement with new residential development set within a robust new landscape framework will inevitably result in some adverse change to the wider landscape character area yet this will be relatively localised and contained to the existing edge of Littlebourne.

6.6 The layout and design of the proposed development (as illustrated and detailed on the Development Framework and in the DAS) will respond positively to the relevant landscape guidelines for these broader landscape character types and areas; including through the inclusion of new green infrastructure and open space proposals. This will include new public access and recreation areas and new woodland, trees, shrubs and hedgerow planting of native and locally occurring species; to both soften and integrate the new development.

6.7 At these relatively broader scales, the resultant landscape effect of the proposed development upon the relevant landscape types and character areas will be no more than Minor Adverse. This principally reflects the extensive nature of these landscape types and areas.

6.8 To fully appraise the likely landscape effects of the proposed development, it is more appropriate to examine the changes on the area most affected, which is the Site itself and its

more immediate landscape context. In line with the method of assessment outlined in GLVIA3, assessing these likely effects requires judgements to be made on landscape value, susceptibility to change and factors influencing the magnitude of effect.

- 6.9 As assessed as part of the baseline and in accordance with the LI TGN 02-21 the Landscape Value of the Site and its immediate context has been assessed as Medium.
- 6.10 The 'Susceptibility to Change' of the landscape considers the ability of the landscape receptor(s) (whether overall character or individual features or particular perceptual aspects) to accommodate the type of change proposed (i.e. residential development). In this instance, the following factors are of particular relevance to the resultant judgement on 'Susceptibility to Change'.
- The Site includes no notable or distinctive features that will be lost or prejudiced by the nature of the proposed development. It is arable farmland with mature trees and hedgerows confined to the boundaries and a single straight ditch. Existing planting to be removed will be confined to only that needed to facilitate the proposed vehicular access arrangements.
  - The Site slopes and falls towards the existing settlement edge and relates more closely and directly to the settlement than to the surrounding landscape to the north, west or south west.
  - It is well contained with limited influence over the wider landscape.
  - The underlying landform and the conserved trees and hedgerows to the boundary of the Site will provide a suitably well-established landscape within which to accommodate new residential development, including extensive new planting and landscape proposals.
  - In terms of landscape character, the attribute most susceptible to change is its openness yet this is inevitable and commonplace for all new development on undeveloped sites.
- 6.11 These factors in particular moderate the Site's 'Susceptibility to Change' in landscape terms.
- 6.12 Overall, the 'Susceptibility to Change' of the Site and its immediate context to the type of development proposed has been assessed as Medium. This reflects the relatively higher susceptibility of the open and undeveloped nature of the Site landscape, with the relatively lower susceptibility arising from the ability to avoid impacting upon any landscape features of particular value or note; its enclosed/ contained nature and limited wider influence; and its relationship to the existing settlement edge.
- 6.13 The Landscape Sensitivity of the Site and its immediate context combines the judgements on Landscape Value (Medium) and Susceptibility to Change (Medium) and has been assessed as Medium.
- 6.14 In terms of the magnitude of landscape change that will arise from the proposed development, this will comprise both adverse and beneficial changes. The direct loss of the majority of the farmland to new built development will result in some adverse landscape change. In this regard however, the proposed development will sit well related to the existing settlement edge. It will also reflect the nature of development already present immediately to the east and north of the Site. In this setting, it will not be perceived at odds with or out of character with the existing settlement edge development. The existing and new woodland and tree planting will provide a suitably robust and appropriate landscape framework to the scheme.

- 6.15 The proposed development will include new planting, habitat creation and public open space stretching around the Site. This will include a mix of planting and habitats, utilising native and locally occurring species, consistent with the relevant landscape character studies and guidance. In addition, to assisting in integrating and filtering views towards the proposed development, the planting and green spaces will also offer other biodiversity and amenity benefits. New sustainable drainage ponds situated on the lower lying slopes in the east will also offer some localised landscape and biodiversity benefits.
- 6.16 Overall and upon completion of the proposed development, the magnitude of change upon the landscape character of the Site and its immediate context will be Medium. The resultant effect of the proposed development on the landscape of the Site and its immediate context will be Moderate Adverse, upon completion. This initial level of landscape effect is largely the inevitable consequence of new development on an undeveloped Site and is typical for the majority of new developments on settlement edge greenfield sites. As the existing and new woodland, tree and hedgerow planting establishes and matures, the proposed development will increasingly assimilate into its settlement edge setting. The landscape effect of the proposed development will consequently reduce in the medium and longer terms.

### **Visual Effects**

#### **Visual Receptors**

- 6.17 The visual receptors and the effects of the proposed development upon these receptors is described in the LVA (CD2.36). A relatively limited number of visual receptors will experience views towards the proposed development. These principally comprise:
- Residents of properties on The Hill (including a number of more recently developed properties to the north, off The Hill) and on Bekesbourne Lane;
  - Users of stretches of Public Rights of Way (PROW) principally to the south of the Site (refs: CB-157 and CB160); and
  - Users of The Hill (A257) and Bekesbourne Lane.

#### **'Visual Envelope' (or 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' (ZTV))**

- 6.18 The Visual Appraisal plan within the LVA (Figure 6) illustrates the potential visible extent of the proposed development by reference to the '*Approximate Extent of Visual Envelope*'. This shows the area within which views towards the proposed development are likely to be possible.
- 6.19 As described earlier in my evidence, this is a relatively contained and limited area within which the Appeal Scheme will be perceived and also includes a limited number of visual receptors.

#### **Photo Viewpoints and Photomontage**

- 6.20 A comprehensive range of Representative Photo Viewpoints are also included within the LVA (Figures 7 – 17). These support the visual appraisal and the description and assessment of the existing views and the resultant visual effects.
- 6.21 The Photo Viewpoints have been prepared in accordance with Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19 '*Visual Representation of Development Proposals*'. At no stage has the location, suitability or methodology for the selection and preparation of these representative Photo Viewpoints been questioned by CCC or any other party.

## Visual Effects

- 6.22 The following summarises the nature of the visual change and effects that will arise from the proposed development.

### Settlement and Residential Properties

- 6.23 Views towards the proposed development from areas of settlement and residential properties will be limited to principally those immediately adjoining and close to the south. This will principally comprise those properties on The Hill that lie opposite the Site, with others nearby and close to the east and south on the edge of Littlebourne.
- 6.24 The clearest views will be experienced by those properties on the Hill, opposite the Site (Ref Photo Viewpoint (PV) 3 in the LVA (CD2.36; Figure 9). From these properties the proposed development will be visible beyond the road, with the new dwellings set back beyond a landscape frontage towards The Hill. In places this frontage will include the existing roadside hedgerow on the southern (Site) side of the road with further landscaping and in other places where the existing roadside hedgerow has to be removed to facilitate the new access, new tree and hedgerow planting and other landscaping will occupy the space corridor closest to the road (as depicted on the Development Framework Plan (CD2.46)).
- 6.25 The proposed development will result in an initial Moderate/ Major Adverse visual effect for those properties on The Hill with the clearest view towards the proposals. From other properties on The Hill where the views are more restricted or oblique (Ref VP1) towards the proposed development, the visual effect will be Moderate or Minor/ Moderate Adverse.
- 6.26 More restricted views towards the proposed development will be possible from some properties on Bekesbourne Lane, Rose Acre Road and School Path, relatively close to the east and south of the Site. Where views are possible from any of these properties, they will be largely restricted by intervening planting and other dwellings and the proposals will be seen beyond and in the context of the existing settlement edge. The visual effects upon these properties will be up to Minor/ Moderate Adverse.
- 6.27 Notably, for the majority of the properties and other receptors within Littlebourne, the proposed development will not be visible (as demonstrated on Figure 6 of the LVA) and consequently there will be no resultant visual effects.

### Public Rights of Way (PROW)

- 6.28 Views towards the proposed development from PROW within and surrounding Littlebourne are similarly relatively limited and restricted. The main stretches of PROW that will have any views towards the proposals are situated to the south of the Site (Ref VPs 7,8 & 9).
- 6.29 From these stretches of PROW, the proposed development will be seen relatively more distantly and generally set beyond intervening trees and hedgerows. New planting and landscape proposals to the Bekesbourne Lane frontage will further filter views over time.
- 6.30 In the context of the views from these stretches of PROW, it is also relevant to note the visibility of the existing settlement edge, which is likely to remain equally or more apparent and open to users of the PROW (See VP7).
- 6.31 The visual effects of the proposed development upon users of those stretches of PROW that will have any views towards the proposals will be up to Minor/ Moderate Adverse.

### Roads

- 6.32 The most notable visual effects for road users will arise along those short stretches of road adjoining the Site boundary. Along these stretches of The Hill (A257) and Bekesbourne Lane, the proposed development will be seen clearly, albeit relatively briefly for road users passing the Site. In relation to views of the proposed development for users of The Hill, the new dwellings will be seen set back into the Site from the roadside, beyond a landscape frontage. In terms of the nature of the visual change at this point it is also relevant to note that existing dwellings are also clearly visible on the opposite side of the road and other existing development and dwellings will have been passed within Littlebourne, before the proposed development is seen. As such, it will not be perceived as uncharacteristic at this point for road users.
- 6.33 The visual effect upon users of The Hill (A257) for this short stretch of road will be Minor/ Moderate Adverse, upon completion.
- 6.34 For users of Bekesbourne Lane, views towards the proposed development will arise alongside the Site. In a similar arrangement to the along The Hill, the new dwellings will be set back into the Site beyond a landscape frontage. This will comprise the conserved roadside hedgerow and trees, where this is not removed to facilitate the necessary access into the Site, and new tree and hedgerow planting and other landscape proposals.
- 6.35 A combination of filtered and clearer views of the proposed development for road users will be possible resulting in a Minor/ Moderate Adverse, upon completion.

### Overall Visual Effects Summary

- 6.36 The proposed development will result in adverse visual effects for a limited number of visual receptors and its visual influence will be well contained principally by a combination of the underlying landform and existing surrounding mature woodland, trees and hedgerows.
- 6.37 The visual effects arising will principally relate to a limited number of residential properties, and to limited stretches of PROW and the two roads adjoining the Site. Wider views towards the proposed development are limited and if visible, the proposed development will only be seen in part and alongside other existing development within the settlement. The landscape and planting proposals will be effective in visually filtering and softening the closer views, particularly as it matures.
- 6.38 Overall, the visual effects of the proposed development are considered to be localised and well contained and will not extend to a large number of visual receptors or locations.

## 7.0 OFFICER'S REPORT AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES

7.1 The Officer's Report (OR) (CD5.01), and consultation responses relating to matters of character, appearance and visual amenity have been carefully appraised.

### Officers Report (OR) (May 2025; CD5.01)

7.2 The OR has been appraised as part of my evidence.

7.3 At page 11, this notes the consultation response of the CCC Trees Officer. This advises or comments as follows;

- *'the Root Protection Area (RPA) of Tree T7 should be protected';*
- *'the hedgerow removals appear satisfactory';*
- *'The masterplan appears to show significant planting of trees around the periphery of the site in order to filter views – this is welcome and will also benefit biodiversity along with the green infrastructure linkages'*
- *'The pictured tree-lined avenues on the primary and secondary roads are more urban in feel and should be less regularly and more informally planted if implemented – although street planting in good densities is very welcome.'*

7.4 The Arboricultural Assessment (CD1.10) shows that the RPA of Tree T7 will be protected. The landscape character and planting design of the streets within the scheme will be agreed as part of reserved matters and this will consider and address the relative formality of the street trees and other landscape proposals.

7.5 Under the 'Assessment' of the application at Paragraph 34 (pg. 22), the Officer refers to the proposed buildings being set circa 15m back from The Hill and Bekesbourne Lane, as referenced in my earlier consideration of the landscape and visual effects of the scheme. Paragraph 35 confirms that the proposed approximate 35 dwellings per hectare (dph) density is appropriate for this rural service centre location.

7.6 At Paragraph 36, the Officer also confirms that the DAS and Development Framework Plan, *'demonstrate that any future proposals can be laid out such that they sensitively respond to surrounding built development'*.

7.7 At Paragraph 39, the Officer advises that the proposed development, if seen as an aerial view and in proportional terms to the village, would represent a significant extension. However, the Officer further notes that as views of the Site and the proposed development will be relatively visually contained at ground level, the proposed development will not be perceived in that way or to that extent in reality. This recognises the important difference between attempting to judge the likely nature and extent of landscape and visual effects from a 2D plan or from just a total development area or quantum of dwellings, and actually how a development will be seen and experienced on the ground.

7.8 At Paragraph 40, the Officer confirms that the proposed development will not result in any coalescence but that the loss of arable land *'would in part, dilute the quality of the Littlebourne Fruit Belt LCA'*. Albeit the Officer only considers that the loss of the arable land would *'in part'* dilute the quality of the LCA, I do not concur that any dilution would arise from this loss. As the landscape character assessment study notes; the traditional fruit and hops farming land within

the LCA is being replaced through arable conversion and intensification, resulting in reduced biodiversity interest and field fragmentation to the detriment of the landscape. The published study also refers to these traditional practices being under threat from arable conversion. Thus, I do not consider the loss of this parcel of arable land will reduce the quality of the LCA.

- 7.9 The Officer's Conclusion is at Paragraph 71 of the OR. This advises that '*there would be harm both to the landscape setting particularly in certain views from west as you enter the village*'. This details no particular level of harm and also does not reference any other landscape and visual matters. As detailed within the LVA and in my evidence and following recognised guidelines, the overall landscape and visual effects of the proposed development have been assessed and will be contained and limited, in these terms.

### **Consultation Responses**

- 7.10 I have reviewed the pre application and appeal consultation responses and having regard for the relevant concerns and issues raised, I consider the following matters warrant further evaluation to address the particular points raised:
- How has the size and scale of the proposed development been considered and assessed in character and appearance terms?
  - How will the proposed development effect the landscape 'setting' of the settlement and the entry into Littlebourne from the west?
  - How does the proposed development take account of the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (October 2020)?

- 7.11 I consider each of the above matters in turn.

#### **How has the size and scale of the proposed development been considered and assessed in character and appearance terms?**

- 7.12 The size and scale of the proposed development has been appropriately considered and assessed through the application of GLVIA3 and other good design practices in the assessment and design process. It can be the case that larger and more extensive developments result in greater levels of change and effects in landscape and visual terms. This is not however necessarily the case, as there are many factors influencing the level of landscape and visual change and effects that will arise from a proposal. Suitably considering and assessing size and scale in these terms is also not simply a 'numbers game' or one of proportions or percentage increases and it is also not a case of judging matters by looking at a 2D plan or aerial view of a proposed development (as also recognised by the Planning Officer (See OR (CD5.01); Para 39).
- 7.13 It starts by appraising the existing baseline conditions, in terms of the character, features and value of the landscape and its visibility and relationship to its surroundings. These are all important factors in initially informing and shaping a proposed development. This includes considering the size and scale of a scheme and whether and how it will sit and assimilate in the landscape.
- 7.14 In this instance, the scheme occupies a simple, medium to large sized parcel of arable farmland with existing trees and hedgerows, limited to its perimeter. The underlying landform falls towards the settlement edge and it is visually well enclosed from the wider landscape. An existing tree belt stretches across the higher ground to the north west, just beyond the Site.

- 7.15 In landscape terms, the Site forms a single cohesive area that extends a relatively modest distance from the settlement edge and is within its northerly limits. It also does not extend beyond or breach any natural landscape 'boundaries'. It is a Site that has the landscape and visual 'capacity' to successfully integrate new residential development of the size and scale proposed, alongside a comprehensive framework of new landscape, habitats and related GI proposals.
- 7.16 In landscape and visual terms, the proposed development will not be perceived or experienced as extending the edge of the existing settlement to any significant degree or in an incongruous or dominant way. Where visible, it will be seen well related to and as part of the existing settlement edge, with the new dwellings set within a framework of new planting and habitats. Its proposed size and scale has been suitably informed by the existing landscape and it has been suitably assessed in accordance with the recognised guidelines.

**How will the proposed development effect the landscape 'setting' of the settlement and the entry into Littlebourne from the west?**

- 7.17 This has similarly been suitably considered and assessed through the application of the guidelines (GLVIA3) and as detailed earlier in my evidence. The proposed development will sit well related to the existing western edge of the settlement in a relatively enclosed landscape setting. Where it is seen and experienced, it will be alongside other existing parts of the settlement edge and it will not extend the existing visual influence of the settlement edge to any notable extent.
- 7.18 Beyond the immediate landscape setting to this western edge of the settlement, the proposed development will have no discernible landscape or visual effects on the other immediate or wider landscape surrounds to Littlebourne. The landscape effect of the proposed development upon the Site and its immediate context has been assessed in the LVA as Moderate Adverse. This I consider addresses the effect of the proposed development on the immediate setting to this western edge of Littlebourne.

**How does the proposed development take account of the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (October 2020)?**

- 7.19 At the outset of the project, the initial desk based evaluation of the Site and the wider landscape included consideration of the suite of relevant published landscape character assessments and other landscape related studies. This included the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal. At this stage, all of the studies were reviewed in order to gain a suitable understanding and appreciation of the landscape of the Site and more particularly, its broader landscape context. This was undertaken prior to more detailed field evaluation and site specific assessment work.
- 7.20 The Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal details the key landscape characteristics, sensitivities and values of the broader Landscape Character Area (namely; LCA H6: *Littlebourne Fruit Belt*) within which the Site, and Littlebourne are located. This LCA also stretches across a wider area to the north, west and south west of the settlement.
- 7.21 In considering the design and layout of the proposed development and in assessing the effect of the proposed development upon this LCA, the characteristics, sensitivities and values have all been appraised. The effects upon these have been mitigated and minimised where practicable, including through the proposed GI, landscape and planting proposals. The latter

have also sought to maximise any opportunities to enhance and strengthen these landscape attributes where possible. The inclusion of 45% of the Site as new green space, replacing arable farmland, will enable some of these identified opportunities to be delivered. This will include improving the continuity and connectivity of habitats, tree belts and ecological corridors around the Site and creating new wetland habitat and species rich grassland.

- 7.22 The study has thus informed the design and assessment process from the outset and in accordance with good practice and the recognised guidelines.

## 8.0 POLICY CONTEXT

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)

8.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policy and in combination these policies give the Government's vision of sustainable development. The NPPF emphasises the need for well-designed places, promoting healthy and safe communities and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

#### 12. Achieving well-designed places

8.2 Paragraph 135 advises that proposed developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area; be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; be sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; and create places that are welcoming, safe, inclusive and accessible.

8.3 The DAS summarises how the proposed development fulfils many of these objectives and will deliver a suitably high quality and site specific scheme. Landscape and visual considerations have been to the fore in informing the design and layout of the proposals. The landscaping proposals will be appropriate in character terms and effective in assimilating and mitigating the scheme. The landscape proposals will comprise significant new native, tree, hedgerow and scrub planting and will enhance and extend the existing boundary planting.

8.4 Paragraph 136 notes that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. It notes that decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined and, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments.

8.5 The proposed development will include a significant number of new native and locally occurring trees, shrubs and hedgerow plants, reflecting guidelines within the published landscape character assessment studies and providing a valuable site wide gain in the number of trees, hedgerows and other plants. New streets will be tree lined with species similarly selected that are appropriate to their location and the relevant guidelines.

#### 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

8.6 Regarding landscape and green infrastructure, the Natural Environment section of the NPPF provides a policy context for the countryside and green infrastructure. The key objectives include protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and, minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

8.7 Paragraph 187 states at part a) that "*planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes*" and goes on to clarify that this should be in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan. Part b) states that planning policies and decisions should recognise "*the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.*"

8.8 Paragraph 188 advises that:

*“Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries”.*

- 8.9 The Site is located within an undesignated landscape with no special protected status and is not in the setting of a nationally designated landscape. It is also not identified as being of any recognised or defined landscape quality or interest within the development plan or any other relevant landscape study. Notwithstanding this, I have suitably appraised whether the Site and its immediate context forms or lies within a ‘*valued landscape*’, as referenced at paragraph 187a. My consideration of this point draws upon the assessment of Landscape Value referenced within the baseline section of my evidence and detailed within the submitted LVA..
- 8.10 This confirms that the site and its immediate context is of Medium Landscape Value. In terms of whether the landscape of the Site and its immediate context constitutes a ‘*valued landscape*’ or part of a ‘*valued landscape*’, I believe that in the absence of any statutory status or identified quality in the development plan, there needs to be a weight of evidence to demonstrate that the landscape in question does include qualities to sufficiently elevate it above more ordinary and everyday landscapes.
- 8.11 In common with many settlement edge landscapes, I recognise that it will be ‘*valued*’ locally by some residents and users of the surrounding PROW. However, taking all of these matters into account, I do not consider the Site and its immediate context to constitute or lie within a ‘*valued landscape*’, in the terms of the NPPF para 187a.
- 8.12 The character of the Site and its immediate context has been appropriately considered and assessed and has informed decisions regarding “*the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.*”
- 8.13 The dedication of a notable proportion (approximately 45%) of the total site area for combined Green Infrastructure (GI), planting and other habitats and public access proposals, coupled with appropriately defined extents for the built development area are direct responses to the characteristics and features of the site and its immediate context.
- 8.14 New mixed and native tree, scrub, hedgerow and other planting species will be selected based upon the guidance contained within the Landscape Character Assessment or other landscape studies and also informed by the ecological and biodiversity site based work and recommendations.
- 8.15 In conclusion, the NPPF design and landscape aspirations have been taken into account by the Appeal Scheme.

### **Consultation Draft National planning Policy Framework**

- 8.16 The Government published a revised draft National Planning Policy Framework for Consultation in December 2025. Consultation of the Draft Framework runs until 10 March 2026. At the time of preparing my evidence, the current NPPF is the relevant policy framework for decision making.

### **National Design Guide**

- 8.17 The proposed development has been considered against the Government's National Design Guide (2019). This includes the characteristics that contribute towards good design as referenced in the NPPF. It is considered that the proposed development has positively addressed the relevant National Design Guide characteristics, including; Context; Nature; and Public Spaces; that are generally most relevant to landscape and visual matters.

### **Local Planning Policy**

#### **Canterbury District Local Plan (Adopted 2017)**

- 8.18 The following policies are of most relevance in landscape, visual and character and appearance terms.
- Policy LB4 Landscape Character Areas;
  - Policy LB10 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland; and
  - Policy OS12 Green Infrastructure.

#### Policy LB4 Landscape Character Areas

- 8.19 This policy ensures that consideration is given to landscape character. The proposed development responds positively to this policy. As detailed within my evidence, the scheme takes into account the character and sensitivities of the landscape and it has responded to these appropriately, including through the inclusion of a substantial proportion of the Site for new and enhanced landscape and planting proposals.
- 8.20 The design and layout of the proposed development has minimised its impact in landscape and visual terms and the resultant effects upon the landscape character of the area will not be significant.
- 8.21 The landscaping measures will enhance the site's planting and habitats and it will be supported by comprehensive landscape and ecological management plan(s).

#### Policy LB10 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

- 8.22 This policy highlights the importance of retaining trees, hedgerows and woodland that '*make an important contribution to the amenity of the site and the surrounding area*'. The policy also highlights the importance of maintaining and enhancing the character of woodland and hedgerow networks.
- 8.23 The proposed development will incorporate significant new native tree, hedgerow and other planting as an integral part of the proposed development and landscape. This planting and other habitats will be in keeping with the wider landscape character of the area and will adopt locally occurring and indigenous species.
- 8.24 It will also conserve the majority of existing trees and hedgerows within the Site and will protect Tree T7 (and its Root Protection Area) and other existing trees that do not need to be removed to facilitate safe access to the scheme, as sought by CCCs Tree Officer.
- 8.25 CCCs Tree Officer welcomes the proposed significant tree planting, hedgerows and tree lined streets, as reported in the OR (CD5.01; page 11)
- 8.26 The proposed development will also extend and create new woodland areas and hedgerows as sought by the policy.

Policy OS12 Green Infrastructure

- 8.27 The proposed development will establish an extensive green space framework across the Site, within which the new built development proposals will be integrated. This green infrastructure will include broad corridors within and surrounding the new dwellings that will act as landscape and wildlife corridors and include pedestrian and cycle links. These areas and corridors will also link into the existing settlement edge and wider landscape surroundings, as also sought by the policy.

**Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2045 (October 2022) (Regulation 19)**

- 8.28 The following policy in the emerging Local Plan addresses landscape character.

Policy DS22 – Landscape Character

- 8.29 Consistent with Policy LB4 in the current Local Plan, this emerging policy seeks to ensure that consideration is given to landscape character. The proposed development has appropriately considered and responded to landscape character matters as referred to for LB4 above.

**Policy Context Conclusion**

- 8.30 In my opinion, the proposed development addresses and responds positively to the relevant policy context and any effects upon landscape character and features or visual amenity are at most moderate, localised and not unacceptable in these terms.

## 9.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The Site lies on the western edge of Littlebourne, with existing residential development situated to the north and east. The Hill (A257) and Bekesbourne Lane also adjoin the Site to the north east and south east respectively. The Site occupies land that falls towards the settlement edge and is contained from the wider landscape beyond by a combination of higher ground, tall mature tree belt and the Howletts Wild Animal Park.
- 9.2 It is a landscape that is very well related to the existing settlement due to;
- its underlying landform and aspect (namely, back towards the settlement and with levels and slopes also characteristic of the existing settlement);
  - its visual containment from the wider landscape (as agreed by CCC at para 4.13.1 of the SOCG(CD6.04)); and
  - its configuration (extending only relatively modestly in an 'L' shaped arrangement around the existing settlement edge).
- 9.3 It forms a suitably well contained area on the western edge of Littlebourne and it relates more directly and closely to the settlement edge than to the wider landscape beyond the site to the north, west and south west.
- 9.4 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (CD2.36) undertaken for the proposed development was prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact, third edition (GLVIA3). There has been no criticism of the methodology for the LVA and CCC agree that the submitted LVA provides 'a fair representation of the impact of the proposals in landscape and visual terms.' (para 4.13.2 of the SOCG).
- 9.5 The Site itself is a simple landscape comprising a medium to large sized parcel or arable land, with minimal constraints and it is not subject to any statutory landscape designation. Similarly, the Site's immediate surroundings are not subject to any statutory landscape designations.
- 9.6 The LVA and my evidence assess the Landscape Value of the Site and its immediate context to be Medium and that it does not constitute or form part of a 'Valued Landscape' in the terms of NPPF para 187a.
- 9.7 In respect of published landscape character assessment studies, the Site lies within the *North Kent Fruit Belt* character area (at the county scale of assessment) and the *Littlebourne Fruit Belt* landscape character area (at the Canterbury City/ District scale of assessment). These published studies have informed the design and assessment process.
- 9.8 Landscape and visual matters have been important considerations in the design and layout of the Proposed Development. The Appeal Scheme will include a notable proportion of the Site (amounting to approximately 45%), dedicated to new landscape and related Green Infrastructure (GI) and BNG proposals. This will include broad landscape corridors and areas, within and to all sides of the development area. These will include outer woodland tree belts; more open grassland habitats and a multi-functional mix of other potential spaces and features (e.g. play facility; community orchard etc).
- 9.9 New characteristic native tree and scrub planting, alongside other conservation/ meadow grassland will extend across the north western and south western Site perimeters, extending in width up to circa 50m. These will provide valuable wildlife and landscape corridors, with

- improved connectivity to and between the surrounding mature woodland, trees and hedgerows. Existing fragmented hedgerows within the Site will also be enhanced.
- 9.10 Overall, it is likely that the new tree, scrub and hedgerow planting in these outer landscape corridors and areas will comprise in excess of 5,000 No. new native and characteristic plants. This new and enhanced landscape framework will assist in assimilating and mitigating the adverse effects of the proposed development. It will also be underpinned by a long term management plan that will ensure the successful establishment and maturing of all the planting and habitats.
- 9.11 The proposed development will inevitably result in some adverse landscape and visual effects. However, when these are properly appraised and considered in the context of both the local and wider landscape, it is evident that these are not extensive or major. At a localised scale and assessing the landscape effect upon the Site and its immediate context, this will be Moderate Adverse, upon completion, reducing to Minor/ Moderate Adverse over time.
- 9.12 In respect of the visual effects, these will principally relate to a limited number of residential properties, and to limited stretches of PROW and the two roads adjoining the Site. Wider views towards the proposed development are limited and if visible, the proposed development will only be seen in part and alongside other existing development within the settlement. The landscape and planting proposals will be effective in visually filtering and softening closer views, particularly as it matures.
- 9.13 Overall, the visual effects of the proposed development are considered to be localised and well contained and will not extend to a large number of visual receptors or locations.
- 9.14 I conclude that the proposals will result in a limited and localised level of harm to a simple settlement edge landscape. The existing landscape characteristics and features of the Site and its immediate context have been carefully appraised and drawn upon in devising the resultant scheme and the associated landscape and GI proposals. The resultant effects have been effectively mitigated and minimised and will reduce further over time. As a result, the Appeal Scheme will establish an appropriate development and landscape solution and will not lead to or cause significant or demonstrable harm in landscape and visual terms.
- 9.15 CCC agree that the proposals constitute, '*a well-designed and considerate development which would not have any unacceptable landscape and visual effects*' (para 4.13.1 SOCG (CD6.04)).
- 9.16 I conclude on landscape and visual grounds that there are no justifiable or valid reasons to withhold planning permission for this proposed development.

# **APPENDIX A:**

## **Curriculum Vitae**

# CURRICULUM VITAE

## SYNOPSIS

Tim is responsible for leading a wide range of major environmental, infrastructure and development projects. He has over 30 years experience on complex masterplanning, urban and landscape projects from initial feasibility and conceptual studies to environmental impact assessments (EIA), detail design, project management and implementation. Areas of particular expertise include the masterplanning of sustainable urban extensions (including Garden Villages), housing, employment and mixed use developments, public realm schemes and innovative design projects. His recent work encompasses a number of successful Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges (SRFIs) and logistics schemes, a Garden Village, a series of housing led developments and a high profile public realm and university campus project.

Tim is proven in leading project teams in delivering against often challenging and complex requirements and timescales. Masterplanning and associated landscape and visual impact assessment services constitute a significant proportion of his work and he has presented expert evidence at over 40 planning appeals in recent years. Many of these have been for residential and employment developments and have included residential schemes at Kirton, Boston (215 dwellings), Meppershall and Silsoe, Central Bedfordshire (145 and 105 dwellings), Walmer, Kent (85 dwellings) and Clehonger, Herefordshire (90 dwellings) and employment schemes in Maidenhead, Northampton and North West Leicestershire

His work on employment and commercial schemes include major rail freight schemes, notably; East Midlands Gateway, DIRFT III, West Midlands Interchange, Northampton Gateway and SIFE. These include Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) requiring Development Consent Orders (DCOs). He has presented landscape and visual evidence at appeal and at Examination Hearings into these major projects. Other premium employment and technology parks have been undertaken in Nottingham and Dudley.

For the past fifteen years at Spitalgate Heath, Grantham, he has led the masterplanning, EIA and landscape services for a new 'Garden Village'. Other major mixed use and urban extension schemes include The Bridge (alongside the QEII Bridge Crossing at Dartford) and the Glasshoughton Regeneration project in Wakefield. Both developments are now substantially built out and recognised as exemplar schemes.

Urban design and public realm commissions have ranged from; the University of Leicester Main Campus; to the Parquesur retail, leisure

## Tim Jackson

BA (Hons), DipLA, CMLI



### position

- Senior Director

### professional

- Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute
- Member of Urban Design Group

### education

- BA (Hons), DipLA, CMLI

### expertise

- Masterplanning and Urban Design
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Green Infrastructure
- EIA and ES Co-ordination
- Housing and Mixed Use
- Employment and Technology Parks
- Rail Freight and Transport
- Public Realm and Parks

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and plaza development project in Madrid; to the regeneration of Burslem Market Place in Stoke on Trent. City Centre public realm schemes have also been led in Leicester and Lichfield city centres.

Tim has been responsible for the production of many Masterplan documents, Development Briefs, Urban Design Frameworks, Design Codes and Design and Access Statements to assist in the delivery of many varied developments. He was also responsible for the production of the Residential Design Guide (SPD) for Rushcliffe Borough Council and other Masterplan SPDs.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) projects and Environmental Statements have been led and co-ordinated for mixed use, highway, housing, employment and mineral developments. He is experienced at detailed landscape and visual analyses, incorporating comprehensive visualisation and photomontage techniques. Tim led the environmental team on the EIA of the £9 million Snowdon Summit redevelopment.

Tim's work has also included the £11 million Sports Lottery funded Preston Sports Arena for UCLAN and the £3.5 million Heritage Lottery funded Matlock Parks Restoration Project. He is a former British Association of Landscape Industries Award Winner.