Technical Note

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Subject: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Technical Note
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1  Overview

This technical report addresses the likely significant effects of the proposed redevelopment of land at land at Lambs Business Park, Terra Cotta Road, South Godstone from a landscape and visual perspective. The Technical Note considers additional information from the evidence bases of the Surrey County Council emerging Waste Plan and the Tandridge District Council emerging Local Plan.

Lambs Business Park is identified for allocation in the emerging Tandridge District Local Plan. The proposed allocation (Policy SES003) primarily concerns employment generating uses, but there is also recognition that the western parcel is suitable for waste management uses. Tandridge District Council also consider that there are the exceptional circumstances to justify the sites release from the Metropolitan Green Belt. In addition, Surrey County Council are also proposing to allocate the north western portion of the site for waste management uses in their emerging Waste Local Plan (Policy 11a refers).

This document provides:

- A summary of the evidence base supporting the Surrey County Council emerging Waste Plan;
- A summary of the evidence base supporting the Tandridge District Council emerging Local Plan;
- Comparison of Arup’s high-level assessment and the various evidence bases; and
Summary of Evidence Bases

2.1 Surrey County Council Landscape Evidence Base

2.1.1 Surrey Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study of Potential Waste Sites

Surrey Council commissioned LUC to undertake a Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (2018) which compiled a list of 206 potential waste allocation sites. “The list was subject to further desktop analysis and several sieving processes including a review of proximity to landscape designations, as described in the Site Identification and Evaluation Report”. The sites were shortlisted to 9 potential options, Site 8 was the land at Lamb’s Business Park.

The report sets out the landscape and visual sensitivity assessment, provides a review of the different sites and the potential effects on the surrounding designated landscapes, and the ability for the sites to accommodate specific waste facilities, and highlights potential cumulative issues with other major developments, allocated or pending planning permission.

Methodology

The study’s methodology states there is no published method for evaluating the sensitivity of different types of landscape to development and builds on LUC’s methodology of similar studies conducted in addition to the guidance set out in:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA 3), (2013) The Landscape Institute, Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA); and

Landscape character

The landscape character was defined in two landscape character assessments; the National Character Area (NCA) 121: Low Weald, as defined in Arup’s high-level assessment, and the Landscape character assessment for Surrey; LCA WF3 – Horley to Swaynesland Low Weald Farmland.

“Key landscape characteristics (LCA WF3 – Horley to Swaynesland Low Weald Farmland):

- A low-lying, broadly undulating landscape falling towards winding water courses and wooded gills such as Putney Gill and Hookstile Gully;
- Landform rises to the north to meet the Greensand Hills and to the south to meet the High Weald;
- Predominantly medium to large arable fields with occasional pasture of a smaller scale;
- An intact field pattern defined by hedgerows and interspersed with blocks of woodland which are often ancient woodland;
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- A network of minor roads and rural lanes, often lined with hedgerows cross the character Area;
- Open views across the landscape, with longer distance views interrupted only by woodland;
- Sparsely settled landscape with scattered farmsteads and small inset villages; and
- A relatively peaceful landscape with limited settlement.

Key positive landscape attributes:

- Unsettled, peaceful, gently undulating and open farmland landscape;
- Rural views, often framed by tree cover, across the Wealden farmland and to wooded hill to the north;
- High density of hedgerows and small blocks of woodland;
- Dispersed blocks of ancient woodland connected by hedgerows;
- Small to medium sized fields, defined by an intact network of hedgerows;
- Network of rural lanes lined by hedgerows; and
- Attractive scattered settlement, churchyards and mills.

Landscape guidelines for built development:

- Conserve the rural, largely unsettled landscape;
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting to villages and edge of settlement;
- Any new development should conserve the enclosure and vegetated character of the surrounding landscape;
- Built form to be integrated by woodland edges, shaws, hedgerows and open areas linked to the existing network; and
- Ensure new development respects existing rural characteristics and conserves distinctive open areas, greens and commons.”
Potential visual receptors

The ZTV was calculated for a 30m building and for an 80m chimney in the centre of the site. Buildings from EMU Analytic are included, as well as vegetation from the Forestry Commission National Forestry Inventory at an assumed height of 15m.

Within 5km of the site the following receptors were identified: scattered properties, residential properties in Oxted to the north-east, users of the public footpath (no 293 Bletchinley) 300m to the west, users of the Greensand Way 1.3km to the north, users of the public footpath (no 265 Godstone).

Over 5km away, the following receptors were identified: Users of the Tandridge Border Path long distance footpath 7km to the east, the Vanguard Way long distance footpath 7km to the east, the Eden Valley Path long distance footpath 7km to the east.
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Sensitivity rating

Landscape sensitivity was assessed in terms of landform, land cover pattern and valued features, perceptual character and openness/enclosure. The study assesses that the landscape receptors have a moderate sensitivity to waste infrastructure due to “its unremarkable character and the local influences of the quarry restoration, railway line and adjacent business park. Although the tree cover in and around the perimeter provides some enclosure, the site occupies a relatively elevated position in a predominantly rural landscape, which limits the degree to which larger scale elements could be screened.”

- Landform - “The site is situated on relatively elevated and gently sloping landform rising from 75m in the south up to 85m AOD in the north. The site’s natural topography has also been manipulated through its former use as a quarry resulting in large scale earthworks which are uncharacteristic.

- Landcover pattern and valued features - The site comprises a number of deep pools and earth mounds related to the quarry restoration, although these are man-made. A small area of woodland in the south of the site connects with a wider network of small blocks of woodland, some of which is ancient woodland off-site.

- Perceptual character - The site is largely influenced by its former use as a quarry and the proximity of Lambs Business Park adjacent. The woodland and tree planting along the boundaries do however contribute to a rural setting although the movement of heavy plant machinery within the site and the railway along the northern edge erode any sense of tranquillity.

- Openness/ enclosure - Despite its relatively elevated location, the site has a strong sense of enclosure as a result of woodland and tree planting containing the site to the north, south and west. Lambs Business Park also provides visual containment in the east.”

Effects on designations

The site is assessed to be unlikely to affect the Surrey Hills AONB and High Weald AONB due to the distance and intervening tree cover. The Surrey AGLV’s special qualities and perceptual character may be affected however, if the development is higher than the trees along the northern boundary of the site/ railway line.

Visual receptors are assessed to have an overall moderate-low sensitivity to waste infrastructure due to limited viewing opportunities in the surrounding area together with the abundance of tree cover. The visual receptors are limited to a number of public footpaths in close proximity to the site, with intervening linear belts of woodland and hedgerows shortening views towards the site. The site is said to not be visible from any key vantage points. Long distance views from nationally promoted routes such as the Tandridge Border Path, the Vanguard Way and the Eden Valley Walk over 7km to the east, have elevated views to the site over low hedgerows though mostly obscured by mature trees in field margins.

Assessment of site uses

The short list of sites was rated in their ability to accommodate development on a scale of High (impacts can be fully mitigated) to Low (impacts cannot be mitigated without a change to the landscape character, or significant changes in views from high sensitivity visual receptors).
The site’s development will result in the restoration of the former quarry and transforming the brownfield site into a functional space. “The site does occupy a relatively elevated position in the landscape and so tall structures that protrude above the wooded boundaries are likely to impact on long and short distance views from the High Weald and the Surrey AGLV respectively. Lower buildings and infrastructure are likely to assimilate into the existing landscape framework in the same way as the existing Business Park, although the retention of small woods in the south of the site and trees lining the boundary would be important in achieving this integration.”

Key findings

The site’s ability to accommodate most types of waste infrastructure was rated High or Medium-High, with a rating of Low for mass burn incineration and pyrolysis and gasification. This was based on a worst-case scenario of the size of the stack and buildings.

The following study is a follow-up with an investigation into the potential impacts of different types of waste infrastructure.

2.1.2 Landscape and Visual Options Study: Lambs Business Park

The study, conducted by LUC on behalf of Surrey County Council in 2018, is an addition to the above Sensitivity Study, which looks specifically at Lambs Business Park, into the different types of waste infrastructure. This was on the basis that the site was highlighted as a preferred option for allocation in the Submission Surrey Waste Local Plan.

“This report explores different development scenarios and assesses whether there are circumstances which would mean the site has a high to moderate ability to accommodate a pyrolysis/gasification plant or a mass burn incinerator.”

Building on the same methodology as the above Sensitivity Study, the study looks into building heights of up to 30m, and stack heights up to 80m. The landscape baseline is the same as the above study.

ZTVs were generated for the different heights chosen, to a 10km study area, using OS Terrain 5 DTA, woodland and building height data, supplemented by National Tree Map data™. 10 viewpoints were selected to represent the local communities and recreational users of the footpaths (both long distance walking routes and local PRoWs). Visualisations were prepared from 5 of these representative viewpoints to test actual likely visibility of the scenarios, based on the development being at an assumed ground level of the lowest point of the site, 75 AOD.

Landscape effects

“It is considered that development scenarios with a building height up to 30m have the least effect on landscape character… This is because existing woodland and hedgerow trees around the site would allow built development to be accommodated with little to no perceived impact beyond the site.”

“Buildings up to 30m and stacks up to 50m are barely visible from the Surrey Hills AONB and unlikely affect the special qualities.”
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“A 15m building in Parcel A will have the least effect on the AGLV as Maple Wood provides a stronger degree of visual containment wrapping around the north west boundary. Buildings up to 30m will have minimal effects on the AGLV due to the visual containment provided by nearby woodland. Views of buildings up to 30m and stacks up to 40m anywhere on the site will be screened by Maple Wood and Furze Wood from the Greensand Way. It is not until stacks reach 50m that they will appear above the adjoining woodland in views from the Greensand Way, increasing in prominence with height”.

“The introduction of buildings up to 30m will integrate into the landscape and have minimal effect on the AGLV. However, chimneys of 50m or over could form uncharacteristic elements in the landscape.”

Visual effects

“Buildings with a height of up to 30m will affect the least number of visual receptors within 5km and a chimney stack of up to 40m will affect the least number of visual receptors within 10km.”

“Occasional views of stacks 40m and taller would be experienced from local villages such as Tandridge in the north and Lingfield in the south as well as from scattered dwellings along rural lanes”.

“Buildings 25m and above will be more visible from the local rights of way and will also be noticeable in views from short sections of Tandridge Border Path and local footpaths on the fringes of the High Weald AONB, 7km to the south east (Viewpoint 05 shows a typical long distance view towards the site). These views will be intermittent due to intervening vegetation around Dormansland and the large swathes of woodland occupying the higher slopes”.

Ability to accommodate development of different heights

Assuming a 75 AOD ground level, the site has a high ability to accommodate buildings up to 25m in height, and a medium-high ability to accommodate buildings of 30m in height.

Assuming a 75 AOD ground level, the site has a high ability to accommodate a stack of up to 30m in height, a medium-high ability for 40m high, medium ability for 50m, a medium-low ability for 60m, and a low ability to accommodate heights over 70m.

Mitigation and design scenarios

The study also conducted research into the styles of the development that could increase the ability of the site to accommodate a stack over 50m. Two designs were recommended, as shown in Options 1 and 2 below.
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**Sleek, light coloured chimney design**

*e.g. Waste to energy plant Munich North*

**Appropriateness to the site**

Use of a simple, modern and slender design combined with light coloured materials could help the stack recede in views.

Application of this design approach could minimise adverse impacts over long distances and increase the ability of the site to accommodate a chimney stack of over 50m.

**Design approach:**

- Sleek, modern design
- Light coloured materials
- Urban setting

Option 1: Slender, minimalist design

**New landmark design**

*e.g. Spittelau Waste Incineration Plant, Vienna*

**Appropriateness to the site**

Making a landmark feature of the chimney stack could be appropriate. It is more likely to be appropriate in an urban context because this design approach draws attention to the facility. Nevertheless, it is likely to be perceived more positively than standard concrete stack and could therefore increase the ability of the site to accommodate a chimney stack of over 50m.

**Design approach:**

- Artistic, innovative design creating a new landmark – drawing attention rather than trying to hide
- Inventive and colourful materials
- Urban setting

Option 2: Landmark design
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2.1.3 New Waste Plan

As part of the new Surrey Waste Plan the site is identified as a waste allocation under Policy 11a – Strategic Waste Allocations.

2.2 Tandridge District Council Landscape Evidence Base

2.2.1 Tandridge District Landscape and Visual Assessment – Concept Areas for new and extended settlements

The study, prepared by HDA in October 2016 concludes that further expansion, in the longer term, would be inappropriate in the surrounding landscape due to wholly rural character and the scale and sensitivity of the local landscape. Land to the north is elevated and exposed and provides the setting to the AONB. Limited expansion to the east could lead to coalescence between the new settlement and South Godstone. Overall the concept area has a low potential for the development of a new settlement.

2.2.2 The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment

The study, was prepared by HDA in 2015, on behalf of Surrey County Council and the Surrey Planning Officers Association (SPOA) as part of the Tandridge District Council Evidence base.

The site sits within WF3: Horley to Swaynesland Low Weald Farmland. The East Grinstead and Uckfield branches of the Oxted railway line, cross the character area, and the Redhill to Tonbridge railway line, including the Bletchingley tunnel, runs east-west through the northern part of the character area. Godstone and Lingfield railway stations are located adjacent to the character area.

As part of the evaluation and guidance of the WF3 LCA, these are the general principles:

“Past Change

- Intensification of farming resulting in loss of woodland, and boundary loss including hedgerows.
- Loss of hedgerow trees and over intensive clipping of hedgerows.
- Increased car and rail commuter activity. Along M23, A22 towards M25 and Crawley/Gatwick area.
- Commuting on rail line towards London. Pressure on rural lanes from vehicular use. Excavations for building materials – brick and tile works.
- Horse paddocks, and steeplechase and point-to-point racing industry.

Future potential forces for change

- Further loss/decline of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Potential for increased intensification of agriculture.
- Areas of search for urban extensions identified around the south/south west Reigate and around Horley.
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- Pressure for increase in around smaller settlements, including redevelopment of farmsteads, and agricultural buildings.
- Increasing traffic on the rural tracks and roads leading to urbanisation though kerbing, lighting and signage.
- Demand for horse paddocks.
- Gatwick and related pressures from development and noise.
- New agricultural buildings and activities from farm diversification.
- Energy schemes.

Built Development

- Conserve the rural, largely unsettled landscape.
- Conserve the pattern and character of existing settlements, resisting spread and coalescence of settlement.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting to villages and edge of settlement.
- Any new development should conserve the enclosure and vegetated character of the surrounding landscape.
- Built form to be integrated by woodland edges, shaws, hedgerows and open areas linked to the existing network.
- Ensure new development respects existing rural characteristics and conserves distinctive open areas, greens and commons.
- Encourage and new built development including sympathetic contemporary architecture to respect local characteristics, through high quality detailing and use of local pattern and building materials. Refer to Surrey design guidance; Surrey Design (Surrey Local Government Association).
- Ensure farmstead or other agricultural conversions are sensitive to surrounding landscape, with consideration given to design of new domestic curtilages and boundary treatments.
- New transport or other infrastructure to be integrated in to the landscape by careful siting and additional planting that respects the scale and pattern of the landscape.
- Ensure new development does not impact on the existing ‘dark skies’ within this sparsely settled area.
- Ensure design of lighting and signage respects rural location, biodiversity and dark skies area.
- Encourage the use of appropriate surfacing, materials and signage for public rights of way footpaths, and cycle ways to minimise the impact on the landscape and character of the open countryside.” (Tandridge.gov.uk, 2015 (2)).

2.2.3 Tandridge Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Study

This study, prepared by HDA in October 2016, concludes that the landscape capacity for employment development of the site has been determined by combining the sensitivity and value assessments and it is of medium/high landscape capacity. The Site SGOD008 / ENA12 is detached
from South Godstone and inconsistent with the existing settlement form which contributes to its moderate sensitivity. Overall however, the site is judged to have medium/high landscape capacity for employment development, provided considerations such as the scale of development is appropriate to the landscape mitigation provided by peripheral vegetation.

2.2.4 Green Belt Assessment

In 2015 Tandridge District Council (TDC) published the Green Belt Assessment (Part 1) (December 2015), the subsequent Green Belt Assessment (Part 2): Areas for Further Investigation, and more recently, the Green Belt Assessment (Part 3): Exceptional Circumstances and Insetting June 2018.

The Part 2 document concludes that the area number 032, mostly occupied by Lamb’s Business Park, does not serve many of the main purposes that The Green Belt serves, “given its siting, the scale of development and existing employment use.

The latest document (Part 3), lists Lambs Business Park as an employment site as meeting the exceptional circumstances for release from the Green Belt. It also mentions as part of the release of South Godstone settlement, that the business park contributes to local job opportunities.

2.2.5 New Local Plan

TDC is preparing a new Local Plan that will provide strategic direction to development in the District up to 2033.

“Over the Plan period, a net requirement of an employment space requirement of 15.3ha employment space has been identified. Opportunities for intensification on employment sites, both Strategic and Important sites amount to around 21ha and exceeds identified need by around 6ha (see Summary Table of Employment Allocations). However, given that the all sites, barring the Strategic Employment Sites, are within the Green Belt and schemes may not all be pursued or appropriate for intensification, the Council must remain pragmatic. Schemes may also be dependent on an element of sui generis uses, roads and parking which may mean that available space for employment uses could be less than the opportunities identified.” (Tandridge District Council, 2019, pp 152)

As part of the Employment Land Allocations, the following is the relevant information regarding Lambs Business Park:

“SES03 Lambs Business Park, South Godstone 8.00ha

Site Size: 12.8ha

Estimated additional provision: 8ha*

Site Description: Lambs Business Park is an industrial estate just outside South Godstone. The site is one of the larger employment locations in the District. The eastern half of the site comprises the existing business park which offers a range of units of medium size and the south western part is comprised of a disused clay quarry former claypit. It is accessed via Terra Cotta Road, close to the A22, Eastbourne Road. The area is predominantly screened from the surrounding area by tree lines and shrubbery and an active railway siding runs adjacent to and has been previously used by the site.
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Other evidence-based references: Economic Needs Assessment: ENA 12 (2015), ENA 08 (2017) and Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) SGOD 008

Site-specific Policy Requirements:

The exceptional circumstances to justify the release of this site from the Green Belt have been identified and the allocation of this site has resulted in an alteration to the Green Belt boundary.

In addition to complying according with all relevant policies within the development plan and material considerations, the Council will actively encourage and support applications for the regeneration, enhancement and development of Strategic Employment Sites which:

I. support high value business growth
II. facilitate the achievement of the Council's most up-to-date Economic Proposition
III. maximise opportunities for the intensification of B-Class use employment uses and supporting Sui Generis uses
IV. deliver data centre uses, technological innovation and any necessary supporting facilities.

Applications which result in the loss of employment uses will be resisted, as will any proposals for operational uses which unacceptably increase road-based transport movements. Proposals for the site must demonstrate how the opportunities presented by the direct access to the rail network have been maximised, as is appropriate. It is recognised that the Surrey Waste Planning Authority is currently considering Lambs Business Park for a potential waste allocation which could be associated with energy generation. In the event of the site accommodating a new Energy from Waste plant, this should be designed to enable the future use of surplus heat to serve the South Godstone Garden Community and the operations of Lambs Business Park.

Infrastructure

V. In accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), financial contributions to/onsite provision of the following infrastructure are relevant to the development of this site:

VI. A22/Tilburstow Hill Road Improvements on reflection of up to date transport assessment and relative to the size, type and nature of the scheme proposed.” (Tandridge District Council, 2019, pp 161)

2.3 Key findings

The key points from the above evidence base demonstrate that the site has been justified in removal from the green belt and is a local employment opportunity.

Under the basis that the buildings are under 30m high at a development of 75AOD, and the stack is 50m tall or under, there will be minimal landscape and visual effects due to the wooded character of the area.
3 Arup Baseline Information

3.1 Site context

3.1.1 Methodology

Study area

The study area for the assessment has been defined in accordance with current guidance GLVIA 3rd edition (LI/IEMA, 2013), which advises that the study area for a landscape assessment needs to cover, “the site itself and its wider landscape context, within which the proposed development may influence landscape character.”

Furthermore, the study area was determined by the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). This is generated by computer software which places a 26m high structure (approximate final height of some buildings/structures within proposed development on the highest point and one at each corner of the application site and then calculates the ZTV based on a 3D topographical terrain map (DTM data). The ZTV is based on topography alone and does not take into account trees, hedgerows and buildings which would provide additional screening.

The Actual Visual Envelope (AVE) (see Figure 1 in Appendix A) is then determined during a site visit by a qualified landscape professional, using the ZTV as guidance. The actual area from which the proposed development would be visible is determined by observation from several of the highest points on the application site and then by visiting receptors in the surrounding landscape. It is important to state that although the AVE is more reliable than the ZTV due to it taking account of existing screening elements and actual topography, it is an illustrative tool.

Assessment of effects

The detailed methodology for the assessment of the receptors is set out in Appendix A. The methodology determines the degree of significance of the effect, the definitions for which are tabulated in Appendix A at Table A.5.

Any effect assessed as having a level of moderate or greater is considered to be significant. Any effect assessed to have a level of moderate/minor or less is considered not to be significant.

It is not straightforward to predict how the proposed facilities would be visually perceived in the countryside and so, for the purposes of this assessment, a ‘worst case’ approach has been adopted and it is assumed that the buildings, if visible, would be regarded as intrusive structures within the landscape.

3.1.2 Location / Accessibility

The site is located approximately 1km to the west of South Godstone, the closest village to the site. Located 3km to the north of the site is the A25 at Godstone. Central London is located approximately 30km north, with access to Central London provided by the M25 which is located approximately 4.3km north.
To the south and west of the site is largely Greenfield areas, with limited transport infrastructure. The A22 runs to the east of the site, this runs through South Godstone and connects directly to the M25 at junction 6. It also provides further connections to the south east of England running directly to Eastbourne.

Site access is provided to the east via Terra Cotta road. This is a private road, subject to a 20mph speed restriction and accessed from Tilburstow Hill road which runs adjacent to the A22, up to Godstone where it meets the B22365 and A25. Terra Cotta road is approximately 600 metres in length, a small residential area is present for the first half of this from Tilburstow Hill road.

Directly north of Terra Cotta road site access, signals are present on Tilburstow Hill Road, this allows for traffic contraflow as the road narrows to pass underneath the railway bridge. Tilburstow Hill road is subject to a 40mph speed limit and displays characteristics of a rural area. A bridleway known as Water Lane is located approximately 630m south east of the site, this connects the A22 and Tilburstow Hill Road. The southern extent of Tilburstow Hill Road is a junction leading onto the A22, this is a priority junction with both left and right turning ability. This leads to a 3 lane carriageway, but the middle lane is designated for vehicles turning right off the A22 onto Tilburstow Hill Road.

Godstone train station is located at the south of South Godstone and the track runs directly adjacent to the north boundary of the site, this includes a siding under the ownership of W.T. Lamb.

3.1.3 Existing Uses

The site benefits from a number of extant permissions which allow for continued operations.

The eastern extent of the Lambs Business Park is currently allocated as a strategic employment site as part of the adopted Local Plan, located within the green belt. This portion of the site contains a range of established employment generating uses (B1, B2 and B8 Use Classes).

The western extent, the former quarry area, also wholly located in the green belt, is not included in this allocation. Despite this, work continues in this area of the site in order to restore the site following previous quarrying activities.

Where necessary, reference has been made to previous studies on the site including the submission document prepared as part of the LPAs Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

3.2 Baseline/Context

A high-level landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken by Arup which has fed into the design process. It has assessed a number of key views and concludes that the site is visually contained due to the existing topography and surrounding vegetation. As a result, the site is well screened and based on the given parameters the proposed development will be screened from the most important viewpoints within a 10km radius study area.

The existing landscape character and the visual environment have been separately surveyed and assessed. The landscape assessment identifies characteristics, features and elements which constitute this particular landscape and its character. The visual baseline identifies existing views to,
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across or from the application site, and identifies the visual receptors, such as nearby residents or users of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) who might be affected by the proposed development.

3.2.1 Landscape planning context

There are no international landscape designations relating to the site or its immediate surroundings. Information of national designations are listed below, and local designations can be found in the council’s evidence bases above in Section 2.2 of this document.

The Green Belt Designation

The site lies within a Metropolitan Green Belt designation which is referred to in both National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Tandridge District Council Local Plan 2033. NPPF paragraph 134 describes the 5 purposes which the Green Belt serves. The details of this can be viewed in the TDC evidence base in Section 2.2 of this document.

Landscape Designations

The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located 5 km to the north.

Two Registered Parks and Gardens of importance are located within the study area. Titsey Park is located 7km to the northeast and Gatton Park 7km to the northwest of the site.

Various Conservation Areas, Grade II listed buildings and scheduled monuments are spotted around the study area. Lagham Manor a Grade II* building lies to the east of the study area surrounded by a 13th century moat (scheduled monument). Other listed buildings are located along Tilburstow Hill Road. Please refer to Figure 2 in Appendix A for the exact location of these designations, none of which have a significant visual connection with the site.

There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) crossing or adjacent to the site. Various PRoW are featured less than 1km away from the site and beyond in various directions.

North Downs Way is a Long Distance Footpath that runs west to east at approximate 5 km north of the site. Equally designated the Vanguard Way runs in a south-north direction at approximate 7-8 km east of the site. Long Distance Footpath ‘Greensand Way’ runs in a west-east direction along the bottom of Tilburstow Hill at approximately 2 km north of the site.

National Cycle Route 21 runs 5km to the west and north of the site and the Surrey Cycleway is featured at 2-6 km around the site.

3.2.2 Landscape Receptors

These are individual elements of the landscape fabric and the area’s landscape character that may be affected by the proposed development.

Topography and Landscape Features

The site significantly slopes from the northwest towards the south with level changes and earthworks on the western section as a result of abandoned quarrying works. Within the western section there are 2 bodies of standing water again related to the abandoned quarry and the drainage of the site, with a wetland pond on the south-western corner. Further west the Tonbridge to Reigate railway line runs into a tunnel allowing the landscape to spread out along low farmland.
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To the north and north-west a dense mature mixed woodland populates the railway embankment and extends 200m beyond to form a larger area designated as Site of Nature Conservation (Maple Wood). The site’s south boundary is also formed by a dense mature mixed woodland which evolves into a tree belt along the south-eastern section. Further west and south, open countryside is largely used for agricultural purposes with scattered properties and large states related to the farming history of the area. Here the landscape is not designated and with an open aspect. A mature tree belt continues to be present along the site’s east boundary with open fields and residences at the end of Terra Cotta Road and Rushton Avenue. The north eastern section of the site does not feature a tree belt and therefore it is bounded by the existing railway.

Beyond the site area and in the local context there is a network of roadside hedgerows, scattered woodlands and tree groups. Mature tree belts and mixed hedgerows also tend to form strong boundaries to define large open fields within the setting of an undulating topography.

The landscape is divided by the Tonbridge to Reigate railway line with a designated AGLV and AONB to the north. The wooded railway corridor is a prominent feature in the landscape. The topography is more gentle and the landscape shows a mix of agriculture and woodland with an overall semi-enclosed aspect.

Landscape Character

Landscape character is defined as:

"A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements, be it natural (soil, landform) and/or human (for example settlement and development) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse." (Natural England).

The site and its immediate area of visual envelope lies within National Character Area (NCA) 121 ‘Low Weald’ which is described as follows:

‘The Low Weald National Character Area (NCA) is a broad, low-lying clay vale which largely wraps around the northern, western and southern edges of the High Weald. It is predominantly agricultural, supporting mainly pastoral farming owing to heavy clay soils, with horticulture and some arable on lighter soils in the east, and has many densely wooded areas with a high proportion of ancient woodland. Around 9 per cent of it falls within the adjacent designated landscapes of the Surrey Hills, Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the South Downs National Park. Around 23 per cent of the area is identified as greenbelt land.’

‘The area is generally wet and woody. It is dissected by flood plains and its impermeable clay soil and low-lying nature make many areas prone to localised flooding. Ponds are common, often a legacy of iron and brick-making industries. Gill woodland is a particular feature and a valuable habitat, scarce elsewhere in the south-east of England. Despite its proximity to London and continuing pressure for development, the Low Weald remains essentially rural in character with small-scale villages nestled in woodland and many traditional farm buildings, including oast houses, which are typical in the east.’

3.2.3 Visual Receptors

The site is very well contained within the topography and landscape features described above. Only limited filtered views can be afforded to adjacent farmland to the south.
The site is visually disconnected from nearby settlements such as South Godstone, Lagham Manor and Anglefield Corner.

Visual receptors are those locations from which it is possible to obtain views of the application site. These views may be partial or full, glimpsed or direct. Impacts on the visual amenity of a particular location may arise where features intrude into or obstruct views, or where there is some other qualitative change to the view.

Views from such receptors are illustrated by photographs taken from key representative viewpoints, which have been located on a plan presented in Figure 3 in Appendix A. Receptors may be private viewpoints, such as views from domestic residences, or public viewpoints like highways, footpaths or other places with public access. For the purpose of this assessment only public accessible viewpoints have been included.