

LOCATION: Land North of Crown Road, Marnhull

APP REF: 2/2018/1124/OUT

PROPOSAL: Develop land by the erection of 72 No. dwellings and new community facilities. (Outline application to determine access and layout).

CASE OFFICER: Penny Canning

SITE VISIT: 16/11/2020

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT COMMENTS

SUPPORT	
SUPPORT SUBJECT TO CONDITION(S)	
UNABLE TO SUPPORT	X
NO OBJECTION	
REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION	
OTHER / PRE-APP	
NO COMMENT TO MAKE	

Proposed development

The application site currently consists of 3 pastoral fields crossed by footpaths N47/ 34 and 35.

The proposals consist of up to 72 detached and semi-detached 2 storey dwellings together with a community facility, pre-school and associated parking and infrastructure. An area of Public Open Space (POS) occupies part of the higher central sections of the application site. This will contain a LEAP (Locally Equipped Areas for Play), together with areas of open grassland, woodland blocks, individual deciduous trees and native hedges. Further smaller areas of POS accommodate the Rights of Way towards the southern and western site boundaries.

Much of the housing will front the main road access to the site. This road runs from the south-eastern corner of the site, at the junction of Crown Road and Tanzey Lane towards Sodom Lane to the north-west. However, the northern access point from Sodom Lane will be for emergency access only with drop bollards. The main access road is sinuous with four cul-de-sacs providing access to further areas of housing. It will have a pavement on both sides, and the proposed layout plan indicates that traffic calming measures will be incorporated.

The mature TPO trees on the site will be retained and incorporated into the Public Open Space (POS) on the site. The majority of the dense boundary hedges will also be retained and enhanced with new native planting if necessary. Small sections of hedgerow may need to be removed to accommodate sightlines and the access point on

Sodom Lane.

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) schemes are located in the north-west and north-east corners of the site. The drainage solution to the north-east corner sits within an area of open space.

Policy setting

NPPF

- Paragraph 127:

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

North Dorset Local Plan

- Policy 4 -The Natural Environment:

..... (preceded)

The landscape character of the District will be protected through retention of the features that characterise the area. Where significant impact is likely to arise as a result of a development proposal, developers will be required to clearly demonstrate that the impact on the landscape has been mitigated and that important landscape features have been incorporated in to the development scheme.

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Landscape setting

The historic village of Marnhull was first formally recorded in 1150 in the listings of the Abbot of Glastonbury. It is surrounded by undulating mixed pasture and arable farmland, characterised by hedgerow boundaries with many mature trees which integrate the settlement into the landscape. Despite its size, the village retains strong rural perceptual qualities with high levels of tranquillity. The surrounding network of minor rural lanes which have not been significantly altered by modern development also contributes to the rural character of the village

The pattern of settlement is predominantly historic ribbon development along the two main routes of the village (Musbury Lane/Burton Street/Pilwell/Sodom Lane and New Street/Crown Road/Salisbury Street) and the conservation area is split into two areas one on each of these routes. There is C20th infill housing between the two main routes predominantly to the east of the conservation areas between Crown Road and Sodom Lane. The two main routes converge at the eastern edge of the village and they form the northern and southern boundaries to the site.

The site is located on the upper ridge of the Blackmoor Vale. Due to the elevated and sloping nature of the application site, views are possible from the site to the wider landscape. These views are mostly long-reaching with wooded skylines. The tower of the grade I listed St Gregory's Church is a landmark feature on the skyline when looking towards the village and may be seen in conjunction with the site when viewed from a range of locations. As identified in 6.15 of the applicant's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, the individual mature trees within the site, together with the rolling ridgeline are distinctive and locally prominent features in the landscape.

A strong network of public rights of way surrounds the village, allowing appreciation of the landscape. These include parts of the Hardy Way and Stour Valley Way long distance recreational route.

The proposals are located in the setting of notable heritage assets including Grade II Listed Nash Court. During the C16, Nash Court (now divided into three properties known as Nash Court, Manor House and Nash Lodge) is believed to have been in the ownership of Glastonbury Abbey, but following the Dissolution it was given by Henry VIII to Catherine Parr, along with other Dorset properties. From her it was then passed to Edward VI and Elizabeth I. Between 1651 and 1884 Nash Court was owned by the Hussey family, and was the birthplace of the artist Giles Hussey in 1710. The Manor House is located in a strategic position on higher ground, and is oriented to take advantage of views across the landscape towards Marnhull. For this reason, it presents as a landmark building in the wider landscape.

Landscape Character

Although this part of the Blackmore Vale is not in the AONB it is picturesque and has many cultural associations. The site is in the Blackmore Vale and Vale of Wardour National Character Area. The NCA Profile indicates that tranquillity is an important part of the character of the landscape (page 23 under Experiential Qualities – Tranquillity and page 44). Threats to character and tranquillity include housing allocations and employment sites (page 28 under Drivers of Change). Although the proposed development is not of a scale that would present a threat to the character of the landscape at this national scale, it is important to note the Profile draws attention to the specifically identifies housing allocations

In the North Dorset Landscape Character Assessment 2008 the site is identified as being in the North Dorset Limestone Ridges Landscape Character Area, with the landscape type being Limestone Hills. The assessment describes Marnhull in particular as having poorly integrated urban edges. The Dorset Landscape Character Assessment provides further detail on the key characteristics of the Limestone Hills Landscape Character Type, and is perhaps a more useful document to reference as it also provides key land management guidance intended to maintain and improve landscape character and inform development proposals:

Key characteristics

- varied landform due to the complex geological structure
- diverse scenery with mixed farmland, dense hedgerows, stonewalls, and some steep wooded slopes
- expansive generally open landscape but with some deep, enclosed and narrow valleys
- many scattered farmsteads and villages
- distinctive built environment patterns and building materials with the frequent use of the local limestones
- some key parkland landscapes and associated features

The Limestone Hills landscape is divided into three main areas; the hills around Melbury Park, the hills and ridges around Sherborne and the shallow north-south ridge between Sturminster Newton and Bourton. Each area has a distinct landform, which contrasts with and subdivides the adjacent Blackmore and Halstock vale landscape of pastures, arable fields, winding lanes and springs. The broken and varied relief is due to the complex geological structure across the area. The scenery is also varied with dense hedges, some steep open grassed slopes as well as wooded and scrub covered slopes and enclosed valleys. There are fewer trees on elevated areas and the mixed farmed fields are larger with more arable than those in the vales. There are open expansive

views from these elevated areas. The settlements are defined by the use of the distinctive local yellow limestone with the use of Forest Marble and Cornbrash common, contributing to the areas sense of place. The development pattern of villages either follows the ridgetops, as at Hinton St Mary, Marnhull and Bishops Caundle, in clusters in deep, narrow valley floors, for example at Poyntington and Nether Compton or on the sloping hillsides as at Stalbridge, Buckthorn Weston, Kington Magna and Stourton Caundle. These picturesque limestone villages and their church towers; the manor houses, stately homes and scattered farmsteads are all characteristic in this limestone scenery. Stone walls, using local limestone, are key features associated with the parkland landscapes.

Key land management guidance notes

- conserve the ancient pattern of small irregular pastoral fields and narrow lanes interspersed with irregular patches of woodland
- reinforce the wooded character of the limestone slopes
- enhance woodland management with small scale planting/natural regeneration of broadleaves along valley sides. Protect the character of important open skylines from future planting
- ensure conservation of low impact grassland and protection of associated wildlife and historic features
- encourage maintenance of species rich hedgerows, particularly along the valley floors and replant any gaps where necessary. Avoid use of post and wire
- conserve and enhance the varied settlement pattern of the different limestone villages and their relationship with the associated surrounding copses/woodlands
- promote the conservation and enhancement of existing local limestone stone walls and seek opportunities to link in with new walls to match the existing
- maintain the undeveloped character the area e.g. by resisting intrusive developments on sensitive and exposed hillside locations
- identify, protect and conserve existing parkland character and associated parkland features such as stonewalls e.g. via Parish Action Plans, Village Design Statements and other Settlement Appraisals

Landscape and heritage sensitivity

The Strategic Landscape and Heritage Study for North Dorset - Assessment of Land Surrounding the Larger Villages (report prepared for Dorset Council by LUC October 2019) includes the following observations regarding about Marnhull.

Key sensitivities

Landscape

- The topography to the north and west of Marnhull is steeply sloping and associated with the winding valley of the River Stour. To the south and east the landform is gently undulating, with some areas carved by the small valleys of minor watercourses.
- Pockets and copses of broadleaved woodland (including BAP priority habitat deciduous woodlands) located around the village providing an important landscape and ecological resource. A strong network of hedgerows with mature trees is also characteristic of the landscape surrounding Marnhull.
- Existing settlement is low density and is laid out in a distinctive and historic linear settlement pattern. There has been significant linear infilling between the two sections of the conservation area, new development may lead to further development along connecting lanes or the loss of the linear settlement pattern of the village.
- Views towards the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB to the east from elevated ground. Slopes adjacent to the valley of the River Stour are visually prominent from the opposing valley sides.
- Looking outward from the village are mostly undeveloped, wooded skylines with long-reaching views. The tower of the grade I listed St Gregory's Church is a landmark feature on the skyline when looking towards the village and is visible from most directions.
- Despite its size, the village retains strong rural perceptual qualities with high levels of tranquillity. The surrounding network of minor rural lanes which have not been significantly altered by modern development also contributes to the rural character of the village.
- A strong network of public rights of way surrounds the village, allowing appreciation of the landscape. These include parts of the Hardy Way and Stour Valley Way long distance recreational routes.

Heritage

- The HLC indicates a primarily agricultural landscape with field enclosures of possible medieval and post-medieval date. These have some time-depth and are likely to contain heritage assets susceptible to physical change. Parts of the historic landscape also have further value as they contribute to the setting of heritage assets, such as the conservation area.
- Marnhull has strong associations with Thomas Hardy, providing the inspiration for 'Marlott' in Tess of the d'Urbervilles with extant buildings within the conservation area appearing in the text (notably the Crown Inn), making a substantial contribution to associative heritage values.

- The assessment area adjoins to the remaining undeveloped boundaries of Marnhull Conservation Area and Marnhull Conservation Area Extension and overlaps them in some areas. Development within the conservation area, or its rural setting, could potentially affect its special interest by changing its character, historic layout, rural setting, or result in the loss of key views.
- Within Marnhull Conservation Area and wider settlement there is the grade I listed Church of St Gregory [1172545] and the grade II* listed Senior's Farmhouse and attached barn [1172057], as well as numerous grade II listed buildings and some non-designated built heritage assets⁶⁴. Not all of these buildings will have a meaningful relationship with the assessment area, but those that may (e.g. the grade I listed Church of St Gregory [1172545], the grade II* Senior's Farmhouse and attached Barn [1172057] and the grade II Pond Farmhouse [1110408], Street Farmhouse [1324542], Cross Tree Farmhouse [1110402], and Church Farmhouse [1110406] as well as, potentially, some of the cottages), could have their heritage significance affected by development.
- Heritage statements would be required for any proposals that may affect the significance of a heritage asset. Historic England would need to be consulted for any proposals with the potential to affect a grade I or II* listed building.
- Archaeological potential, and the potential for adverse effects, will need to be clarified via desk-based assessment and potentially field evaluation. The outputs of this process should be used to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy, agreed in advance with the local authority archaeological advisor. There are a number of grade II and grade II* listed buildings in the assessment area. In the event of development these would be susceptible to physical harm and/or setting change that affects their heritage significance.
- In the wider vicinity there are a number of listed buildings and conservation areas. It is unlikely that any of the listed buildings would experience meaningful setting change, but there is the potential for harm to views to, from and in conjunction with the nearby conservation areas that may affect the way in which their special interest is appreciated.
- The HER indicates a potential for prehistoric and Roman settlement, particularly to the north-east of Marnhull. There are also records relating to medieval/post-medieval agricultural and industrial activity. Being largely undeveloped, any archaeology is likely to survive well, bar truncation by plough action. Any archaeology would be highly susceptible to physical change.

Guidance and opportunities for mitigation

- Avoid siting development in visually prominent locations, including the upper valley slopes of the River Stour. Proposals should not detract from landmark views, including views to the church tower.
- Seek to retain BAP priority habitat deciduous woodlands and the strong network

of hedgerows with mature trees which forms an important link between areas of semi-natural habitats. Explore whether these can be enhanced as part of any development proposals.

- Ensure that new development is designed to be in keeping with the vernacular, form and density of the existing settlement. All development proposals should include adequate landscaping to screen the development into the landscape.
- New development should not result in the loss of public rights of way or detract from views experienced from these locations, particularly the long-distance footpaths of the Hardy Way and Stour Valley Way or views to the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. Development should not detract from the existing prominent skyline features such as the grade I listed St Gregory's Church.
- Retain the overall rural and tranquil character of the surrounding area. Ensure that any required upgrades to the rural road network are sensitively designed by avoiding excessive road widening, signage, lighting etc.
- Proposals affecting landscape that retains time-depth and heritage assets e.g. historic hedgerows, pathways, etc., should draw upon these features to help create a sense of place.
- Development should preserve or enhance the special interest of Marnhull Conservation Area and others nearby and any elements of their settings that contribute to their significance. Conservation Area Appraisals delineating their special interest should be prepared so that potential effects resulting from development may be fully understood and assessed.
- A Local List (and GIS shapefile) of non-designated heritage assets should be compiled to ensure that proposals for development fully assess any potential impact/enhancement to such assets.
- Listed Buildings and non-designated built heritage assets within the assessment area should be retained. Elements of their setting that contribute to their heritage significance should be preserved or enhanced.

Visual impact of the proposals

The applicant's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment identifies that highest degree of visual effect will be experienced by visual receptors located on the south-eastern site boundary (where the new access and associated built form in the south-eastern corner of the site will be prominent), and in the open countryside north of the site where the proposals 'have the potential to be a prominent change across the ridge east of Marnhull' (7.39). The visual impact of the proposals here is described as being **Moderate/Substantial**. As identified in section 11 of the applicant's LVIA it is considered these effects will be adverse.

The LVIA indicates that the proposals will be visible at close proximity from the B3092 Crown Road when looking toward the south-eastern corner of the site (7.40). In this

view, the buildings will rise above the hedgerows along Tanzey Lane and Crown Road. The visual effects here are described as being **Moderate** (adverse).

Moderate to Slight (adverse) visual effects have been identified from an elevated location 1km north-east along footpath N47/80, which forms part of the Hardy Way long distance footpath. From here, the assessment indicates that 'the majority of the site proposals will be visible bringing the built form of Marnhull forwards in the wide rural view, but at distance' (7.41).

Slight, slight to negligible and negligible effects have been identified elsewhere from vantage points on the Rights of Way and road network.

One important viewpoint that was not considered in the applicant's LVIA is from the Grade II Listed Manor House at Nash Court, where two Rights of Way (N47/86 and 87) can be accessed off Nash Lane. This viewpoint is approximately 552m from the northernmost boundary of the site. Views from here are elevated in relation to the site and are funnelled southward by the limestone ridge that Marnhull sits on the west, and the rolling Vales at the foot of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs to the east. Nash Court Manor House is an important feature of views to the north from here. The Manor House itself is oriented to take advantage of the views that open out over the landscape to the south. The application site is prominent in the middle distance of these views, with the conifers bordering the property known as The Pines (at the southern end of the site) being visible on the skyline - the photograph below illustrates this.

Conifers at the southern
end of the application site.

Shaston View Grade II Listed
Building (with The Stone Barn
in foreground)

Hambledon
Hill

Rear of properties fronting
Ashley Road

Westward Farm, Pillwell



Given its higher elevation, views from the Manor House itself are more extensive, with the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment forming the edge of the Dorset AONB and Hambledon Hill (Iron Age Fort and Scheduled Ancient Monument) being important features in/containing these views.

The application site is a prominent feature in views to the south east from these Rights of Way and from the Manor House because of its relatively exposed location and convex land form. There is some intervening vegetation which partially screens the lower portion of the site when viewed from the Public Rights of Way, but this screening will be less effective in the winter months when this deciduous vegetation will have shed its leaves. The screening effect of this existing vegetation is also likely to be less apparent in views from the more elevated position of the Manor House. The proposals include for the provision of open space in the central part of the site, which is to be planted up with individual and grouped trees. This will help to break the development up in these views, but built forms will still be evident. I also surmise that the development will need to be lit by street lighting at night. Lighting will be a Reserved Matter and the Council will therefore be able to control certain aspects of its design, including the requirement for shields and directional lighting, I do however have concerns that lighting could still be an intrusive aspect when viewed from this location.

On balance, and utilising the methodology identified in the applicant's LVIA, I consider that the visual effects of the proposals from this location will be **Moderate Adverse**.

The impact of the proposals on the Rights of Way that cross the application site itself has not been considered as part of the assessment. It is clear that substantial changes will result as these RoW will be contained within what will be a housing estate rather than open fields adjacent to the settlement edge. Both the content and extent of views from these RoW will alter significantly, though the degree of change will fluctuate along the course of each path as it passes over pavements constructed alongside the main access road and through the central open space. Experiential qualities will also be altered significantly, and the reason for using the paths will alter from being principally recreational/experiencing being in open fields and appreciating the countryside beyond, to being functional – a route from A-B, passing through a residential area. I consider that the impact of the proposals on these RoW to be **Substantial Adverse**.

With the exception of the RoW's crossing the application site, I consider that the mitigation measures that are proposed will substantially reduce the visual impact of the development, especially in longer distance views where the site forms a smaller proportion of the overall view. This will however take time, as the full benefit of mitigation planting will not be achieved until the planting has grown up and matured. In the case of the tree planting, this could take (depending on the species selected) 15-20 years to be effective. I must also be understood that the screening capability of the majority of the planting will be less in the winter when the deciduous vegetation will lose its leaves. I do however consider that even in winter conditions, there will still be enough of a screening effect to break up the outline and mass of the development in these views to an acceptable degree.

I maintain reservations over the residual impact on views from Nash Court Manor House, and over visual amenity in relation to Laburnum Cottage. However as these are heritage assets, these aspects should be discussed further with Conservation colleagues.

Landscape impact of the proposals

The relevant landscape character assessments identify the key characteristics of the landscape that the application site sits within, and also give an indication that housing development may pose a threat to that character unless carefully sited and designed, to respect the pattern of existing settlement. The Blackmore Vale and Vale of Wardour National Character Area NCA Profile indicates that tranquillity is an important part of the character of the landscape, and that threats to character and tranquillity include housing allocations and employment sites. The Dorset Landscape Character Assessment identifies that a key characteristic of the settlements of the Limestone Hills Landscape Character Area is the distinctive built environment patterns and use of distinctive local

yellow limestone including Forest Marble and Cornbrash. It goes on to indicate that as the picturesque limestone villages and their church towers; the manor houses, stately homes and scattered farmsteads are all characteristic of the limestone scenery, new development should conserve and enhance the settlement pattern of the villages, and maintain the undeveloped character the area e.g. by resisting intrusive developments on sensitive and exposed hillside locations. The North Dorset Landscape Character Assessment identifies that a detracting factor of Marnhull is poorly integrated urban edges.

The sensitivity of this landscape to new housing development is therefore apparent, and the applicant's LVIA contains an assessment of the degree of sensitivity of the site and its local setting. I agree with the conclusion of this assessment which indicates that the local landscape has a moderate degree of sensitivity to housing development. This means that the landscape characteristics of the identified location are susceptible to change, and/or the intrinsic value of the landscape is moderate. The location can accommodate housing development in some situations without significant alteration of character or other significant adverse effects resulting, and the threshold for change is intermediate. It does however indicate that the landscape contains a number of features/characteristics that are sensitive to housing, so care must be taken in siting and designing housing and in planning the layout so that it does not dominate or detract from key characteristics of the landscape.

The LUC Landscape and Heritage Study defines the key sensitivities of the location in more detail. It draws particular attention to:

- the mostly undeveloped, wooded skylines of the long-reaching views out of the village including views towards the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB to the east from elevated ground;
- the presence of the tower of the grade I listed St Gregory's Church on the skyline in most views towards the village;
- the strong network of public rights of way (including the Hardy Way and Stour Valley Way long distance recreational routes) surrounding the village which allow appreciation of the landscape;
- the fact that despite its size, the village retains strong rural perceptual qualities with high levels of tranquillity;
- the surrounding network of minor rural lanes has not been significantly altered by modern development which helps to maintain this character;
- erosion of the original linear development pattern of the village by insensitive infilling between the two sections of the Conservation Area.

The applicant's LVIA identifies that as the application site is relatively small in scale in comparison to the larger National Character Area changes are unlikely to significantly alter the key landscape characteristics or elements that contribute to the integrity of the

wider NCA. It also notes that the site is located in a relatively prominent part of the North Dorset Limestone Ridges character area, and that the introduction of built form on the site has the potential to effect the identified characteristics of this LCA. I agree with the conclusions drawn in the Assessment that:

- the likely degree of effect as a result of the proposed development on the adjacent North Blackmore Rolling Vales Character Area is **Negligible**.
- the likely degree of effect as a result of the proposed development on the North Dorset Limestone Ridges (Limestone Hills LCT) is **Moderate to Slight** (adverse);
- the potential degree of effect as a result of the proposed development on the local landscape character and the site itself is **Moderate/Substantial** (adverse).

The Assessment goes on to indicate that with sensitive design and mitigation measures there is the potential to form a more sympathetic relationship between Marnhull and its local landscape setting to significantly reduce adverse effects on the landscape character. The proposed mitigation measures are outlined on plan ACLA/BIS 04, which forms an appendix to the Assessment, and include:

- retention of existing hedgerows, mature trees and the block of woodland to the south of the site;
- provision of open space on the central higher part of the site together with tree and native hedge planting and species rich meadow;
- provision of well proportioned gardens, native and ornamental tree planting, hedges and amenity planting elsewhere on the site;
- provision of a buffer of open space with tree and hedgerow planting around Laburnum Cottage Grade II Listed Building;
- semi-mature tree planting in key areas along the central access road through the development;
- maintaining the privacy and residential amenity of properties on Ashley Road by backing on to the boundary and internalising the access roads;
- potential provision of enhanced marginal/aquatic habitats in association with SUDS.

The assessment also indicates that the building layout, density, elevation and scale have been designed to mitigate impact, and I am aware that the number of units as been reduced significantly as a result of ongoing negotiation with the Council.

I agree that these are all useful measures which will reduce the impact of the development and provide a suitably high proportion of green infrastructure within which the development will sit. The question however remains as to whether the location and type of development is sympathetic to the setting.

The LUC Landscape and Heritage Study provides further guidance on this, indicating that to mitigate the impact of housing development on the village and its setting would also be important to:

- Avoid siting development in visually prominent locations, including the upper valley slopes of the River Stour. Proposals should not detract from landmark views, including views to the church tower.
- Ensure that new development is designed to be in keeping with the vernacular, form and density of the existing settlement. All development proposals should include adequate landscaping to screen the development into the landscape.
- New development should not result in the loss of public rights of way or detract from views experienced from these locations, particularly the long-distance footpaths of the Hardy Way and Stour Valley Way or views to the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. Development should not detract from the existing prominent skyline features such as the grade I listed St Gregory's Church.
- Retain the overall rural and tranquil character of the surrounding area.

As noted in the applicant's LVIA the site is located in a relatively prominent part of the North Dorset Limestone Ridges character area. There are also views from and across the site to the church tower which will be obscured by the development and by the mitigation planting associated with it. The form and density of the development do not respect the characteristic pattern of the settlement (excluding later 20th century estate development). The views experienced from the Rights of Way will alter significantly (see visual impact above). The suburban character of the development will have a negative impact on the rural character of the setting. Intensification of use along with incidental sounds of residential use will affect the tranquillity of the location – must particularly along Tanzey Lane which is a narrow and currently quiet rural lane. Light pollution emanating from the development will also impact on the tranquillity of this location.

In light of this, I consider that the modifications to the original scheme, and the proposed mitigation measures identified on plan ACLA/BIS 04 will have a marginal effect in terms of reducing the overall landscape effects of the development.

Conclusions

The visual impact of the proposed development in longer views towards the settlement from publicly accessible vantage points can be satisfactorily mitigated by the proposed planting, and the character of the wider landscape will be substantially unaffected. The proposals will however substantially alter the character of the existing Rights of Way that cross the application site, and reduce the characteristic extensive views out to the open countryside and towards the landmark tower of the Grade I Listed Church of St Gregory.

There is also the potential for the proposed development to have a negative impact on important views/residential amenity of heritage assets (to be discussed further with Conservation Team).

The prominent position of the site, uncharacteristic development pattern and suburban character of the development will result in moderate/substantial adverse impact on the character of the local landscape. Intensification of use, incidental sounds associated with residential use and potential light pollution from street lighting will also negatively impact on the characteristic tranquillity of the location.

I am therefore not able to support the proposed development as it does not comply with the requirements of Paragraph 127 of the NPPF (part c) or Policy 4 of the North Dorset Local Plan (Landscape Character).

OFFICER: Helen Lilley
TITLE: Senior Landscape Architect
DATE: 20/11/2020