

Landscape and Visual Appraisal
Land at Nottingham Lane, Wey Valley,
WEYMOUTH

Prepared for:

CG Fry & Son Ltd
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Landscape and Visual Appraisal

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1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This study provides an appraisal of the landscape around a site located on the north western edge of Weymouth. The area is proposed for residential development in the emerging local plan. The study was commissioned on behalf of the prospective developer (CG Fry and Son Ltd) to identify any landscape or visual amenity issues that may influence the potential allocation. It is intended that this report would also help inform the master planning proposals for any development on the land, and may in time form the baseline section for a future landscape and visual impact assessment of a scheme.
- 1.1.2 A series of figures and photographs are provided in the accompanying Appendices. Figures 1 and 2 of Appendix 1 illustrate the site study area and immediate surroundings. The overall site area extends to some 15.6 ha.

Methodology and Scope of Assessment

- 1.1.3 Landscape assessment is a recognised process used to help identify the characteristics of an area for planning policy and management purposes and to provide the baseline for impact assessment studies. Landscape character assessments have been undertaken for policy and management purposes across the UK and are referred to within this study. For impact assessment purposes, there is best practice guidance as set out by the Landscape Institute and IEMA [1].

This guidance advocates the consideration of landscape and visual impacts as separate but related issues. This approach is helpful in separating out the physical features of a site, the landscape character of an area or, other aspects of interest that may be important irrespective of public views. This assessment takes a comprehensive view of the many ways in which landscapes may be used, viewed or otherwise valued. Landscape is more than just the appearance of the land, and while visual qualities are important, the character distinctive to a particular location may have much more influence on how an area may be perceived. Landscape character may rely on factors such as underlying geology, topography or past and present land uses.

- 1.1.4 Landscape may be valued for a variety of reasons. There may be specific physical features or elements in a landscape of particular value or interest. Landscapes may provide the important setting for the built environment or have ecological, historical or cultural associations. Landscapes can vary in quality or condition, and even areas of low quality landscape may form a valuable recreational resource, or simply an area of open green space in an otherwise impoverished location.
- 1.1.5 Most landscapes have some potential for enhancement. Where appropriate, assessments include future changes to the existing environment (baseline) that may be expected in the absence of a proposed development.
- 1.1.6 The baseline assessment includes a description of the physical landscape along with its character and quality, and analysis of views into and out of the site. The assessment is based on a combination of:



- Desktop review – including existing information such as; maps and plans, as well as background information relating to landscape classification and character assessments, development constraints (designations, public rights of way, etc), and landscape heritage (historic plans and maps).
- Site appraisal fieldwork – to establish landscape features and resources, the character, quality and visibility of the site (visual envelope and significant viewpoints into and out of the site)
- Evaluation – the final element in the landscape baseline is an assessment of the importance and/or 'sensitivity' of the site and its landscape resources. Factors such as the quality and fragility of the site's landscape resources and character are considered, and areas of high visual sensitivity identified. The importance or 'sensitivity' of each aspect of the landscape and, visual amenities of the area, would then be used to help define the significance of different impacts in the subsequent impact assessment stage of a project.

1.1.6 Sources of Information

- Local Plan
- LPA Conservation Area statement
- National England – Landscape Character Map
- LPA Landscape Character Assessment
- English Heritage – on line heritage list
- Arboricultural Assessment
- Ecological Assessment

1.2 Landscape Appraisal

General Landscape and Townscape Context

- 1.2.1 Weymouth is an extensive settlement sandwiched between spectacular rolling chalk downland hills to the north and the Isle of Portland and the sea to the south. The hills form part of the extensive Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. To the north of the original centre, the settlement pattern has built up around the transport links of road and railway, which head up in parallel over the hills towards Dorchester. These were built on one side of the Wey Valley to take advantage of rising ground, heading up to cross the ridgeline that forms the backdrop to the town. The old road into Weymouth passed over this ridge between two high points close to 150 m above sea level (the railway passes through the ridge top in a short tunnel very close to the old road). This settlement pattern is illustrated on the context map provided by Figure 3.
- 1.2.2 The pattern of development along the road consists of older clusters of buildings fronting on to the road, joined together by blocks of 20th century development. Most of the street frontage is contained by ribbon development with limited relief and in places little variation in the house types.



- 1.2.3 A major new road approach now serves Weymouth bypassing the Broadway area. This has left Dorchester Road as a quite empty large scale carriageway, running up through the long thin strip of townscape.
- 1.2.4 Set back from the linear development small villages or hamlets such as Upwey and Nottingham sit in the lower sheltered Wey Valley. These smaller satellites form interesting neighbourhoods of older character development and add to the attractive countryside around the town. Nottingham Village is contained within a Conservation Area, part of which overlaps with the site. Although the town has substantial areas of post war housing, the fragmented settlement pattern and topography break this down, and the big scale landscape assimilates some of the impact of the urban area. With the coast and surrounding countryside, the town has an excellent environmental setting.

Physical Description of the Site and Environs

- 1.2.5 The proposed allocation site area adjoins the existing edge of the built up area. The eastern boundary of the site being defined by a line of houses that front onto the Dorchester Road. The Nottingham Lane forms the northern site boundary. The site comprises some four large fields, and the main portion of the site is an enclosed bowl of landscape that was once the parkland setting to Nottingham House (now replaced with a modern apartment block Nottingham Court). Parts of the western boundary are defined by an estate wall and planted shelter belt.

Geology, Topography, Drainage and Soils

- 1.2.6 While the local landscape is dominated by the high rolling hills of the chalk downland, the geology of the lower areas around Broadway and Nottingham, is a mix of limestone ridges and small vales. Clay and alluvial deposits are found in the valley floors. The resultant soils are often deep clay based soils with some areas of poor drainage.
- 1.2.7 The local topography is illustrated on Figure 4. This illustrates the locally complex line of east west ridges that build up in height as they progress in land to the high ridge above Broadway. The Wey Valley has cut back north-south through this, creating a valley with several side shoots and several ridges, that end abruptly on the west side of the valley.
- 1.2.8 The site is located on the east side of the valley and is contained in a small bowl of landform. High ground on the west side of the site separates the site from the valley and Nottingham Village. Broadway Road runs along the spine of a ridge that encloses the area to the east. The site area ranges in height from the lowest point near Nottingham Lane at around 15 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to around 30 m AOD. The highest area within the site being the southern-most field corner.
- 1.2.9 The site area drains northwest; there are only small ditches on the site that collect in a hollow close to the entrance to Nottingham Court. A culvert extends from here under the lane to a ditch that connects to the river Wey. The site areas also include areas of poorly drained soils and several small ponds.

Land Use



- 1.2.10 The site area is mainly agricultural land with the fields being used predominantly for stock grazing. Two paddocks on the southern edge of the site are currently used for equestrian grazing and include a small stable block. The site also includes several areas of woodland as noted below. The wooded areas extend to some 2.3 ha (15% of the overall site area).

Existing Vegetation

- 1.2.11 The study site contains a number of significant mature trees, a shelter belt and woodlands. An arboricultural survey has been undertaken to confirm the condition of all the existing trees; this work is set out within a separate report [Aspect Tree Consultancy April 2013]. The hedgerows have been surveyed as part of the ecological assessment work, as set out within a further separate report [SLR Extended Phase 1 Habitat Report]. The majority of the trees and tree groups are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Within the shelter belt, the trees are mainly beech, sycamore and oak. The other woodland areas are wet woodlands, dominated by Ash, Willow, Elm and Hawthorne, with some native Oak and Holm Oak. An overgrown garden or orchard area, contains a mix of ornamental species such as Cedar and Purple Plum, along with natives such as Hawthorne and Willow along with Apple and Yew.
- 1.2.12 The site also includes a few large parkland trees. The most significant of these are two very large veteran oaks located close to the entrance to Nottingham Court. A number of more ornamental species are planted within the open field area and in the old orchard area. Some of these parkland specimens are in an advanced state of decline.
- 1.2.13 The fields are mostly subdivided by well-established and maintained native hedgerows.
- 1.2.14 The distribution of vegetation on site, and the wider pattern of trees and field boundaries in the area, are illustrated on figures 5 and 6. From this, the woodland areas can be seen in the context of the more open landscape to the west, and blocks of tree cover on the edges of the built up area to the south east.

Built / Designed Environment

- 1.2.15 The Conservation Area coverage is illustrated on Figure 7. The designation covers the historic core of the village, and extends out along Nottingham Lane, to include an historic spa building to the edge of the site. The designated area encompasses parts of the woodland and shelter belt, together with the original location of the old Nottingham House. A modern apartment block, set within what would have been the entrance approach to the original house, is excluded from the designation.
- 1.2.16 Figures 8 and 9 are an extract of the 1903 historical map for Nottingham and the site area. This illustrates the location of Nottingham House which has since been lost. The parkland area is indicated on this map, as the two fields contained within the outline of the shelterbelt and woodlands. The location now occupied by Nottingham Court (the apartment block), is indicated as having a number of free standing parkland trees, some of which may still remain in the grounds or on the edge of the Court site. Only a few of the other parkland trees in the open field areas remain.



- 1.2.17 The shelter belt and an estate wall are the main remaining features of the landscape laid out around the original house. The positioning of the shelterbelt can clearly be seen to have been located to maximise the enclosure of the landscape; combined with the natural hollow landform, the feature is a significant element of the landscape as seen from both within and outside of the site. Much of the old stone estate wall is in a poor condition with some sections having collapsed. A tumulus is indicated on the 1903 map; this location has been built over as part of the adjoining housing.
- 1.2.18 There are no listed buildings in close proximity to the site. The Nottingham Spa building is a significant building in the village approximately 130 m from the site boundary.

Landscape Character

Background Regional & Local Character Assessments

- 1.2.19 The local landscape character is defined by the underlying geology and topography which has heavily influenced the local soils and land uses. These aspects have directed the history of Weymouth and Portland, and have also created the distinctive local landscapes that surround and extend through the town.
- 1.2.20 The landscape character has been assessed and mapped as part of the Countryside Commission National Character Map of England [1999] [2] and by Weymouth and Portland Council as part of the Dorset-wide Landscape Character Assessment [2013].
- 1.2.21 In the National Character map, the area falls within Character Area 138 - the Weymouth Lowlands. In this broad assessment, the following key characteristics are identified for the area;

Key Characteristics

- Varied area, united by underlying broad ridge and valley pattern and spectacular coastline.
- Open, largely treeless, ridge tops with large, commonly arable fields.
- Valleys with villages, mixed farming and valley-side woodlands.
- Exposed, windswept coastal grassland.
- Distinctive coastline of Chesil Beach enclosing the brackish lagoons of The Fleet.
- Dramatic wedge-shaped peninsula of the Isle of Portland with its distinctive untidy character and strong sense of history.
- Extensive urban and urban fringe land use around Weymouth.



1.2.22 The assessment also provides general descriptions that tie in well with the area around Broadway / Nottingham as follows;

“Much of the inland area is characterised by long, gently rounded, hogs-back ridges separated by broad, clay vales. The ridges are crossed by rectilinear fields, bounded by low, sparse hedges largely without hedgerow trees. The ridge tops are very open. Arable farming is the dominant land use. Where the gradients steepen, there is scrub and permanent grassland and the valley floors have a rather mixed farming pattern, although the landscape is still very open. The few villages are small and compact, except where they have been absorbed by the inland spread of Weymouth, but farmsteads are common along the valley sides. The older buildings are mainly built out of limestone and thatched roofs, once widespread, still survive. Locally, there are patches of dry stone walls.”

1.2.23 In the Borough Council’s assessment [3] the area around Nottingham is identified and described as part of the South Dorset Ridge and Vale Landscape. This landscape character assessment is set out in the box below. Figure 10 is a copy of the Council’s Landscape Character Map with the site identified.

3. SOUTH DORSET RIDGE AND VALE

Landscape Type: Ridge and vale

Overview

3.1 The South Dorset Ridge and Vale landscape is characterised by a series of small limestone ridges and clay vales running east to west, enclosed by the South Dorset chalk escarpment to the north. Towards Abbotsbury in the west of the area, the landscape becomes more intimate due to the undulating topography. Further east towards Weymouth, the landscape is broader in scale with urban fringe land uses encroaching into the open countryside. The shingle bank and saline lagoon of the Fleet has a particularly exposed and wild character with little evidence of development. There are sweeping views towards the smooth ridge tops, the fleet and coast.

Underlying geology and predominant land use

3.2 Limestone ridges and clay vales run from east to west. Landcover has remained largely pastoral on the higher ground with mixed arable and pastoral farming and small woodlands in the vales.

Settlement pattern and characteristics

3.3 Nucleated settlements with well defined edges are found along the vales. Common local building stones include Forest Marble sandstone plus Lower Purbeck, Portland and Forest Marble limestones. Other materials include some brick, flint and cob.

Landscape characteristic

3.4

- Smooth ridge tops, where the character is open and there are stunning views towards the Fleet and coast.
- Small limestone ridges with rocky outcrops running east to west
- Continuous patchwork of planned enclosures becoming larger and open at high elevations
- Remnant patches of acid grassland are found along the ridge tops. Mixed boundaries of stone wall and hedges and occasional hedgerow trees.
- Stunted and clipped hedgerows towards the coast due to exposure to the elements and intensive agricultural management regimes
- Tall and busy hedgerows towards the settlement edge of Weymouth and Chickerell due to less intensive management regimes associated with urban fringe uses such as hobby farming and horse/pony paddocks
- Along the vale floor and ridge slopes, small broadleaved woodlands of oak and ash and occasional hazel coppice add texture and diversity to the landscape
- Roads have an open, rural character with characteristic features such as fingerposts.

Detrimental features



3.5

- Pylons and masts are visually prominent creating visual clutter and detracting from the characteristic open views
- Some traditional barns and farm buildings are in a poor state of repair
- Historic loss of traditional orchards around settlements.
- Urban fringe land uses, including equine development, around the edges of Weymouth and Chickerell have an urbanising influence in this locality.
- Visual impact of caravan parks and other visitor based development.
- Visual impact of excessive road signage.
- Deterioration of some lengths of dry stone walling.
- Hedgerows are intensively managed with a lack of hedgerow trees in the clay vale.
- Towards the coast, rough grasslands are subject to scrub encroachment and a lack of management.

1.2.24 It is relevant to note that estate or parkland landscapes are not identified as a particular characteristic for this area within either character assessment. It is notable that when looking at the site in the wider landscape, the shelterbelt and estate wall (generally seen from the external face), are not features that are seen elsewhere in the local views.

1.2.25 Both assessments are primarily focused on the typical character of the countryside within the different areas (including some analysis of how the smaller villages contribute to this). While the site area exhibits characteristics of the wider rural landscape, the immediate proximity of the town also influences the character of the area. For the purposes of this assessment, it is useful to consider the specific character of the site and its immediate surrounds, and how the site relates to the character of the adjoining townscape.

Local Landscape Character and Relationship to Built up Area

1.2.26 Figure 11 illustrates how the area can be broken down into more localised areas of landscape and townscape character. The analysis of the more immediate character identifies the site as an area that is separated from much of the surrounding wider landscape. The enclosed sheltered pocket of land next to Nottingham Court, was intentionally enclosed from the open wider landscape. The remaining portions of the site are in turn also contained by the landform and existing development.

1.2.27 The internal character of the site area is a small scale agricultural landscape with a sheltered setting. The presence of development as a significant backdrop is evident within most of the site area. On the eastern side of the site, the row of rear elevations of the Dorchester Road houses are a dominant feature of the site. Within the western fields, the Nottingham Court apartment block is a major element in the views across the site areas. The Court building is located in a commanding position between woodland blocks (the initial impression is that this building must have replaced the original house, but reference to the



historic mapping on figures 8 and 9, confirms while close the modern building is set to one side).

- 1.2.28 The parcels of woodland on site help to diminish the presence of the built development. The smaller areas are attractive features in the landscape, but with barbed wire fences and wet ground conditions, they are not particularly inviting or accessible to walk through. The larger shelter belt is open to stock grazing and can be accessed. The scale of the trees is enhanced by their position on the higher edge of the site, and the woodland area that can be explored is more extensive. At the outer edge, the stone wall and views out through its gaps, add visual interest. The parkland trees although declining, hint at the previous estate setting of the area around the Court. The two veteran oaks in the base of the valley are of majestic scale.
- 1.2.29 The southern-most field is again contained but with tall hedges on the north, south and west boundaries, and also by housing to the east. As such, the area has very limited connection to the surrounding landscape. This area is the highest part of the site and in the top corners, allows a view north to the downland ridge. The field is subdivided into paddocks for equine grazing, and with the fencing, stable block and adjacent housing, creates more of an urban fringe feel.
- 1.2.30 Outside of the site boundary, the landscape changes to a more open aspect and larger scale. From the fields to the west of the site, the landscape drops down into the Wey Valley, and is dominated by the views across to the various ridges. The village is also seen nestling in the valley bottom. The shelter belt and estate wall form notable features, in the otherwise very open landscape, looking back from the valley and ridges to the west.
- 1.2.31 Nottingham is a linear village in the base of the valley. The main street, which includes some characteristic Dorset cottages and other buildings, is built along one side of the Wey. The other road through the village Nottingham Lane, has fewer buildings fronting onto it, but does have Nottingham Spa - a dramatic three storey octagonal building that stands out as a landmark on the lane. The valley upstream of the village is wider with an area of low lying landscape between the Spa and the built up area of Broadwey. In this same area, the lane winds around two right angled bends in a way that adds to the intimacy and interest of this approach into the settlement. The Court is separated from this area around the Spa by the steeper hillside slope and the trees within the grounds.
- 1.2.32 The landscape to the north of Nottingham Lane between the village and Broadwey, is accessible via a footpath from the Spa, through the low lying area around the river. The edge of the built up area includes a collection of cottages fronting on to the river. The long views from this area look away from the site up to the backdrop of the chalk downlands to the north. This area is overlooked from gateways on Nottingham Lane which links the village to Dorchester Road. The road is a narrow country lane but its character is compromised by an extensive traffic calming installation of bollards, speed tables and street lighting. At the eastern end of the road the rural character gives way to suburban housing fronting onto the lane where it enters the edge of the town.
- 1.2.33 The section of Dorchester Road adjacent to the site, is an unusually wide section road for a residential street. This was once the main road into Weymouth, and remains as three lane



width, marked out with numerous reservations and crossing points. This is also a long section of street frontage, all dating from one era, with a limited tree-scape to relieve the impact of the continuous frontage.

Other Aspects of Landscape Function or Interest

Recreational Access, Historic Context and Wildlife

- 1.2.34 In its present form the site provides no recreational access or function. This also means there is minimal potential for public connection to any wildlife or cultural interest evident on the site.
- 1.2.35 Figures 12 and 13 illustrate the pattern of access and recreational landscape around the area. Generally Weymouth has a good range of recreational footpaths that connect out into the surrounding countryside and coast. Additionally, Nottingham Lane is one of the many local lanes that provide recreational access out of the town.
- 1.2.36 There are no rights of way within the site area. A single footpath adjoins the site western boundary. This links an area of housing at Redlands Farm to Nottingham Village. The site has no direct access to this path, although there is a gate in the wall from Nottingham Court, and a walled up gateway in the wall on the site boundary.
- 1.2.37 The site does not provide any other recreational access or social function.

Visual Appraisal

- 1.2.38 The visibility of the site from local public vantage points and existing residential properties has been assessed. This was undertaken as an initial desk top study to establish the extent of potential view points. Following this, the public locations within the area were visited during the winter months, and photographs taken of the site. The views are categorised in terms of their relative sensitivity based on the nature of the viewpoint, the condition of the existing view and, relative numbers of viewers. The location of the views considered and photographs provided in the appendices are indicated on Figure 14.
- 1.2.39 The position of the site in the bowl of landform and the enclosing development means the site is not extensively overlooked. There are very few public vantage points such as public open spaces, footpaths or open sections of road where a view over the site can be gained.
- 1.2.40 A glimpsed view is obtained from a gateway on Nottingham Lane and again through the entrance drive into Nottingham Court. From the adjacent footpath, glimpsed views are gained through the tumbled down wall and shelterbelt. As this same path crosses over the hilltop near Redlands Farm, there is a view to the site boundary, and existing houses on the main road.
- 1.2.41 From the paths further away across the Wey Valley to the west, the views are limited, as the more elevated paths on the ridges have good views north and south, however there is a more limited outlook east due to the landform. A short section of path on the first ridge to



the north of Nottingham provides a view down into the bowl of landscape (views 12 and 13).

- 1.2.42 The site is visible from the high ridge to the north within the AONB, but at a distance of 2.5 km, it is barely discernible in the overall panoramic view over the urban area (see view 14).
- 1.2.43 There are private views from properties on the eastern edge of the site and from Nottingham Court. Most of these have open rear gardens and views from ground and first floor living accommodation. Most of these views would be noted as sensitive to change (a few have well established garden vegetation or a more restricted view).
- 1.2.44 Overall, the visibility of the site area is limited, with only the first ridge to the north having an open view into the main site area. The general sensitivity of the views is also assessed as moderate. There are views from sensitive recreational locations (in such locations it is anticipated the view is most likely to be of prime importance), yet with the established context of built development in the area, new development need not be inherently intrusive. Figure 15 illustrates the varying sensitivity of the view points around the site. The views from further afield, are considered to be generally low sensitivity, as the site is only ever viewed in the context of the existing urban development.

Landscape Policy Framework

- 1.2.45 The study site is located outside of the nationally important Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation (approximately 1 km away). The wooded edges of the site fall within the Nottingham Conservation Area, the extent of this overlaps with a TPO designation. With the dual protection over these areas, it is assumed they would be excluded from any allocation or significant built development area. With appropriate planning and design, the designations would not preclude development from the rest of the site area.
- 1.2.46 The potential allocation area is not protected by any other specific landscape designation, other than it is countryside which has been conventionally protected from development. The latest government guidance on development (the National Planning Policy Framework) contains two limited general references to countryside;
- 1.2.47 Firstly, in the Core planning principles - under paragraph 17, it notes 'Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking'. Within these 12 principles include the point that planning should:

"take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;"

- 1.2.48 Secondly, under paragraph 55 it is noted that 'to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in



one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances’.



1.3 Conclusion and Evaluation

- 1.3.1 This is an area of 'greenfield' land on the edge of an extensive town. The landscape fabric of the site includes areas of woodland, and a number of important trees (most protected by TPO's); these are generally around the site perimeter or widely distributed within the potential development area. Such development could be accommodated without significant loss. The small ponds and ditches are incidental features that would be of site level significance. The remains of the estate wall are important in the external views of the site but are in a poor condition. There are no other features of intrinsic value.
- 1.3.2 As undeveloped farmland within the 'ridge and vale' typology, the character of the landscape is subtly different from much of the wider area. As an area that abuts the dominant built edge, the landscape character is also heavily influenced by its developed setting. The existing landscape character and setting of the town does not present any aspect that would preclude development.
- 1.3.3 The site is separated from the village of Nottingham. The attractive and historic character of the valley, village and setting of the listed Spa House, are all insulated from the site by the topography and wooded perimeter of the Court. The section of lane bordering the site has been urbanised by highway safety measures.
- 1.3.4 With no public access on to the land the site provides no recreational function. As a consequence of the lack of access, the site does not provide a public connection to the other potential aspects of landscape interest, such as, ecology or cultural heritage.
- 1.3.5 The site area is not extensively overlooked from publicly accessible vantage points. There are a few low and moderately sensitive views to the site. On the basis of the limited visibility of the site and the nature of the local vantage points in general terms the site is not a highly sensitive part of the local visual amenities. There are views over the site areas from private properties which will be sensitive to change. These views do not preclude development of the open land, but where possible, avoiding substantial impact on such views often helps to integrate new proposals more effectively. The context of the existing town suggests the location is not particularly sensitive to new residential development that respects the existing landscape and townscape context.
- 1.3.6 Overall, the landscape and existing visual amenities of the locality have the capacity to absorb new development, which respects the evident landscape constraints of the site; a green-field area development would inevitably have some adverse landscape or visual effects. At the construction stage, the loss of the open area of existing fields would be a clearly evident adverse change. Some hedgerow and tree loss may be required to accommodate either development or infrastructure. The construction stage is also likely to cause the most evident visual impact on both public and private views. Post construction, the extent of open land lost will remain as a permanent effect however, other aspects of the landscape and visual change can be more fluid. The actual number of trees on the site, the extent of public recreational access, opportunities for new areas of biodiversity, and heritage interest, will change over time and may offer potential net gains or beneficial effects.



Assessment Conclusion and Masterplanning Recommendations

- 1.3.7 Overall in landscape terms the site is not identified as particularly important or sensitive in such a way that would suggest it cannot accommodate appropriate development. There are some aspects which are easily recognised as important to respect in the master planning. These include the woodlands and shelter belt areas, the significant mature Oaks and other remaining healthy parkland trees, the hedgerows, ditches and small ponds.
- 1.3.8 As part of appropriate master planning, the contribution that these features make and the opportunities to open up the recreational access, the natural and cultural heritage value of the locality offer significant advantages to the creation of a high quality extension to the town. The local landscape character assessments, the existing townscape, specific characteristics of the site and, existing development edge, should also inform the urban design for the site. With these considerations in mind, the study area offers good potential in landscape terms for sustainable extension to the urban area.

Masterplanning Opportunities

- 1.3.9 The creation of a successful extension needs to draw on more than the landscape assessment set out above. While some aspects of the site are noted as features which would be protected for their own sake, such as the TPO trees, many would also be valuable additions important in the creation of an attractive new neighbourhood. The existing form and character of nearby development offers a range of cues which may be relevant to a new master plan. The following points highlight some of the opportunities presented by the site and its setting;-
- Nottingham Lane provides a direct highway access into the site and is assumed that the access would branch off this close to the Broadway end of the lane. The existing trees on the site boundary are a mix of Ash and young Oak with regenerating Elm. The character of this route has been compromised by the traffic calming, clearly needed to slow traffic leaving the built up area heading for the village. There is scope to use a development frontage to create the sense of a residential setting continuing out from the main road end, in so that the section of road is seen as a continuation of the neighbourhood. This may allow the highway to be calmed by urban design rather than engineering. At the same time the development offers the potential to be seen as a way to soften the strong linear settlement form of Broadway.
 - At present the existing housing on the urban edge stands out as an abrupt line with properties openly backing on to the landscape. Development of the adjoining land creates an opportunity to enclose the existing development, absorb the backs, and potentially create a development pattern that is contained and defined by the site landscape.
 - The woodlands and shelter belts of the site provide an attractive resource for both existing and new residents. Within the master planning, the creation of through routes that link these from Broadway will open up access. The adjoining footpath offers a potential connection beyond the site down to Nottingham Village.



- The presence of the overgrown garden / orchard area indicates there may be scope to link such areas with the history of the site. New orchard plantings would allow connection with this history and other sustainable objectives such as biodiversity opportunities and local food.

1.3.10 As part of the design development and application process for a site of this scale, a landscape and visual impact assessment would normally be provided. This report would provide the basis for the 'Baseline' section of such an assessment. The subsequent impact assessment would quantify the extent of the inevitable 'greenfield' landscape effects and any more transitory changes to the location. At the same time there is scope to replace and create new areas of valued landscape. With consideration of these, through the impact assessment process and incorporation of positive design opportunities outlined above, these effects can be reduced or offset, at least in part.

1.3.11 To complete the baseline study, the various aspects of both landscape and visual sensitivity are set out in tabular form in the Appendix document (Table 1). This includes reference to the opportunities associated with each element as noted above. As with this report the table would be extended at the impact assessment stage to cover the predicted effects of a development proposal in a full LVIA report. Alongside an impact assessment, a successful master plan would be best supported by a comprehensive landscape, open space and public realm strategy. Such a strategy would encompass any essential landscape mitigation which in turn would be taken into account as part of the LVIA.



- [1] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition – Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment - 2013
- [2] Countryside Character; The character of England's natural and man made landscape - Volume 8 South West – Countryside Agency 1999 CA14.
- [3] Weymouth and Portland Landscape Character Assessment February 2013.

