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Proof of Evidence: Landscape Assessment Land off Sherbourne Rd, Dorchester Rd and Illminster Cl, Burbage, Hinckley



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Change History

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Report Author:

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Principal Consultant: David Hickie Associates

1.0 Introduction

1.1 I am Dr David Stewart Hickie, Principal Consultant of David Hickie Associates, a landscape design consultancy of Arlington House, 7 Hunters Walk, Witherley, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 3SU. David Hickie Associates is a registered Landscape Institute Practice.

1.2 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

1.3 I am a specialist in the field of landscape design, landscape planning and landscape ecology. My full qualifications and track record are set out in Appendix 1. I have over 30 years' experience providing expert landscape advice for a variety of complex projects, involving landscape characterisation, landscape assessment, visual impact assessment and landscape ecology. In 1995, I was a member of the Landscape Institute's Working Group that developed the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (First Edition)'.

Synopsis

1.4 In this case, Jelson Ltd is appealing against the decision made by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council to refuse the outline planning application for Residential Development: Land off Sherbourne Road, Dorchester Road and Illminster Close, Burbage, Hinckley. I am advising on behalf of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

Instructions

1.5 I have been instructed to provide expert opinion to help quantify the landscape impact of the development proposals.

Site Visits

1.6 I have visited the site on Thursday 24th September 2015 and Monday 28th September 2015 and have walked around the site and local area.

Disclosure of Interests

1.7 I have no connection with any of the parties or advisers involved in the case.

3.0 Site Location and Description

3.1 The site is located to the northwest of Burbage village in an area of pleasant countryside alongside the edge of the Winchester Drive housing estate. It is outside the settlement boundary as defined in the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan Proposals Map and is, therefore situated within the countryside.

3.2 The site is bounded to the west by the edge of the housing estate (cul-de-sacs: Sherbourne Road; Dorchester Road; and, Illminster Close) and to the east by the very high mature hedgerows with only the occasional gaps. The northern boundary has a high mature hedge and coniferous planting belt obscuring the housing behind. To the south, the site has an old wooden rustic gate in a mature hedgerow, with a fine view to the church in Burbage village centre. A tall mature hedge with a gate in the middle bisects the site in a general NW/SE orientation.

3.3 The current and historic use of the site is agricultural with the grass meadows grazed currently by cattle.

3.4 The site is easily and regularly accessed by local villagers and the wider public by means of the important 'Leicestershire Round' public footpath that leads into a network of other footpaths to the west. From the footpath there are excellent long views to the south of Burbage Church in what is otherwise a relatively enclosed site.

3.5 The topography of this area is relatively flat. The exception being a slight slope from the southern half of the site up to the higher ground on

the southern boundary. This slope leads the eye up to the pleasing view of the church framed in the gateway by the mature hedgerows.

3.6 The site is an important landscape transition zone between the open countryside to the east and the housing estate to the west. The high mature hedges enclosing the site mean that this site has the function of a green 'airlock' between the urban and countryside zones.

Figure 1: Aerial View of Location of Proposed Development in Relation to Hinckley



Figure 2 Aerial View of Location of Proposed Development on Edge of Burbage



Figure 3: General View of Site from southern end looking towards north-east



Proposed Development

Figure 4: Map of Proposed Site Layout (from Design and Access Statement)

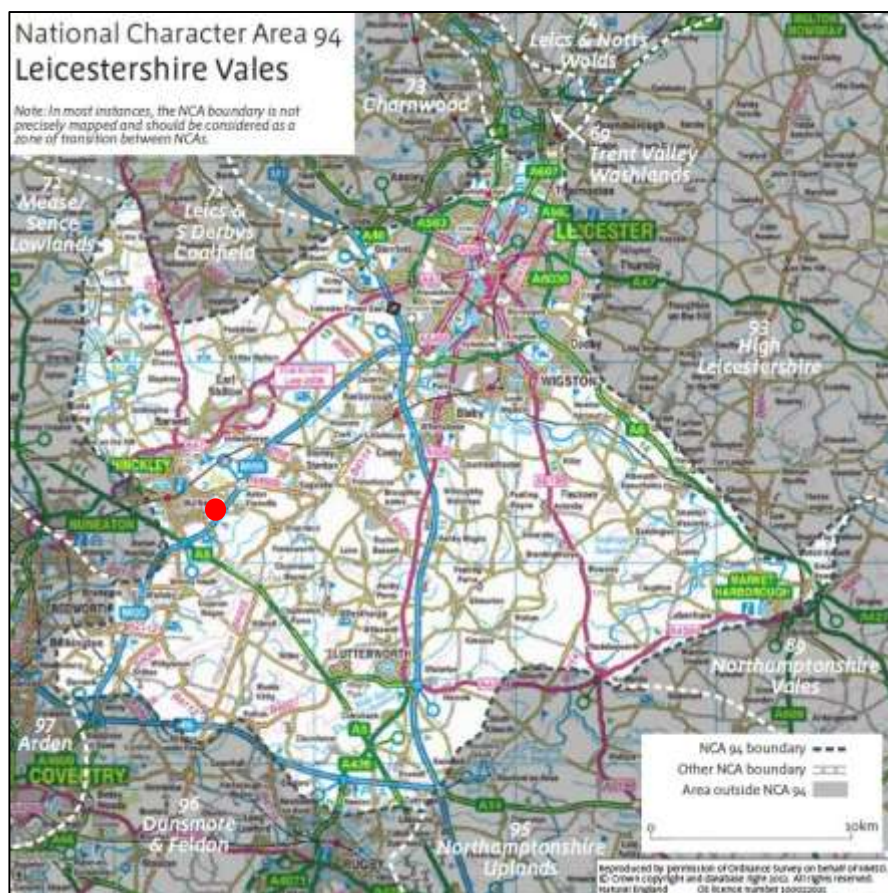


4.0 Description of Local Countryside Character

National Landscape Character Area

Leicestershire Vales NCA 94

Figure 5: Map of NCA 94



4.1 Whilst the National Landscape Character Area (NCA) 'Leicestershire Vales NCA 94' includes the Leicester urban conurbation and a number of small towns such as Hinckley as well as large areas of countryside and urban fringe. It describes the area as a whole as "predominately rural", as can be seen from the map of the NCA (see Figure 5).

4.2 The NCA also highlights the fact that cumulative fringe development has weakened the character of the area. The development site itself is generally typical of the rural countryside within NCA 94 and, as such, makes an important contribution to the remaining rural components of NCA 94.

Settlement and development

*There has been a relatively high rate of change from a rural character to urban character within this **predominantly rural area**. About 11 per cent of the area lies within green belt. Development is locally concentrated, such as around Lutterworth/Magna Park, at junctions along the M69, around the edges of the area in particular Market Harborough, Hinckley and Earl Shilton, as well as on the fringes of the city of Leicester, such as Oadby and Wigston. **These changes in settlement pattern...have served to weaken the character of the area.***

High-density residential development at the edges of villages and towns has often been intrusive and there has often been a lack of screening vegetation to help assimilate new development. Such development may also be out of keeping with local character in its layout, design and materials.

(P.28 NCA 94)

District Landscape Character

4.3 The Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment Study identifies the area as being part of the Hinckley, Barwell and Burbage Fringe Character Area and the key characteristics are provided below. The site is typical of the remnant countryside areas – “*Medium sized ... field pattern bounded by mixed hedgerows and few hedgerow trees*”

Key Characteristic of Area

- *Gently rolling landform with some areas of flat land such as Burbage Common.*
- *Mix of arable and pasture with isolated areas of woodland. Increasing industrial use around urban areas.*
- *Medium sized rectilinear field pattern bounded by mixed hedgerows and few hedgerow trees. Agricultural land provides open areas of separating landscape between Barwell, Earl Shilton and Hinckley.*
- *Landscape heavily influenced by established settlements, often situated on higher ground, with masts and poles prominent.*
- *Significant transport infrastructure subdivides area.*
- *Distinctive landscape features such as Burbage Common and Wood have local and national importance as ecological and recreational resources.*

- *Localised containment provided by woodland, but urban areas frequently visible on ridgelines.*

(p.48, Landscape Character Assessment, HBBC, 2006)

Landscape Character

5.58 *This character area covers land which abuts the urban areas of Hinckley, Burbage, Earl Shilton and Barwell. It therefore has strong urban associations.*

5.59 *The area is quite varied with different field sizes, landuses and vegetation types. Scale therefore varies from medium to large. Some areas are more uniform and open with wider views and large fields. Other parts have enclosure provided by woodland and landform.*

5.60 *The varied land-cover and vegetation encourages biodiversity and there is a wide range of different habitat types. Visibility varies, with some long distance and panoramic views being possible from the more open areas, especially looking out of the Borough. Elsewhere, views are limited by urban fabric or woodland.*

5.61 *The pattern is complex due to the wide range of field sizes, the framework being more rectilinear in the south. There is a mix of landuses, areas of different vegetation types and frequent urban influences.*

5.62 *The footpath network is comprehensive, especially around Burbage Common and Woods, which serves as an important recreation facility. The Leicestershire Round footpath passes through the woods and interconnects with a number of bridleways. The M69 and A5 result in traffic disturbance, especially at peak times. However, Burbage*

Common and Woods retain an impression of tranquillity despite their proximity to the town and major roads.

5.63 The general condition of the area is good with public areas being well maintained. Features such as Burbage Common are highly sensitive with little capacity to accommodate change. Other locations with less distinctive characteristics have the potential to absorb change more easily.

Landcover and Landform

5.64 The landform is gently rolling but generally falls away from the urban area with lower ground lying to the east.

5.65 Soils comprise of reddish fine loamy or silty clay soils which are prone to seasonal waterlogging. Mercia Mudstone with Quaternary clay sand and gravel with pockets of Oadby Till above. There is an area of Dunsmore gravel in the far southerly tip of the Borough.

5.66 Land-cover includes mainly large arable fields, but with some pasture. There is also a substantial area of public open land at Burbage Common.

Woodland/Tree Cover

5.67 Trees exist within hedgerows but there is also significant woodland at Burbage Wood and Sheepy Wood adjacent to Burbage Common, as well as small blocks of woodland in the southern part of the Borough south of Burbage.

Building and Settlement Pattern

5.68 There are a few scattered farms within the landscape but the main influences are from the adjacent urban areas of Hinckley, Burbage, Earl Shilton and Barwell.

(pp.48-49, Landscape Character Assessment, HBBC, 2006)

Capacity and Sensitivity

Sensitivity varies across the diverse urban fringe character area. Burbage Common is particularly distinctive and sensitive, with little capacity for change. Other areas are important due to their openness and consequent role in preventing urban coalescence.

Landscape Strategies

- *Preserve, protect, and enhance the green open land between Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton.*
- *Enhance the setting and management of Burbage Common and Woods as an important wildlife resource and recreational facility.*
- *Look for opportunities to further improve habitat diversity especially associated with Burbage Common and Burbage Woods.*
- *Improve landscape framework, particularly between Barwell and Hinckley to enhance the separate character of these urban areas.*
- *Protect and enhance developed skylines with an improved landscape setting.*
- *Increase woodland cover to improve landscape linkages and habitat connectivity.*

Summary

A landscape with varied sensitivity. Strategically significant landscapes of high sensitivity are located close to principal urban areas.

(p.49, Landscape Character Assessment, HBBC, 2006)

Burbage Urban Character

Capacity and Sensitivity

- *The village heart of Burbage is highly sensitive with little capacity to absorb change.*
- *The close relationship between the village and the open landscape to the east is of key importance, and this should be protected and preserved.*

Strategies

- *Protect and enhance the local distinctiveness of Burbage.*
- *Seek to enhance access and direct linkages to open countryside to the east.*
- *Retain and enhance urban greenspace across the village.*
- *Seek to enhance landscape structure which separates village from M69 corridor.*
- *Ensure that individual property ‘improvements’ respect style and character of building.*

(p.69)

Conclusion

6.140 The Urban Character of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough contains distinctive features with key characteristics found at a local level relating to the layout of settlements, the use of vernacular materials, built form and detailing.

6.141 Despite the individual character of each urban area, the treatment of the urban fringe is an issue relevant to every settlement. The integration of the built environment with the surrounding landscape varies throughout the borough. There are opportunities to improve the urban fringe environment by enhancing links to the surrounding landscape allowing open space to filter into the urban edge softening the built development and enabling ‘green fingers’ to enter the hard development edge. (p.94)

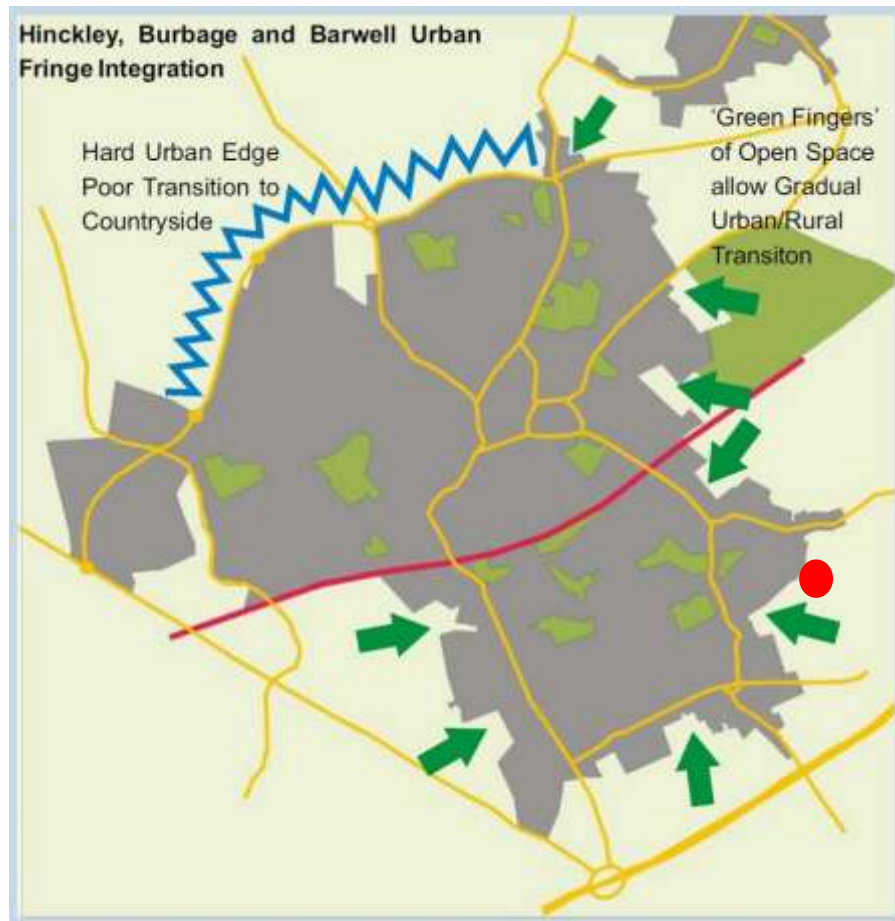
4.4 Hinckley and Bosworth Character Area Strategy clearly recognises importance of the countryside areas around the urban areas. In particular, it highlights the “Hard Urban Edge Poor Transition to Countryside” on the north-western boundary of Hinckley and the “Green Fingers of Open Space allow Gradual Urban/Rural Transition” (see Figure 6).

4.5 The importance and sensitivity of the site and the adjacent countryside to the east of Burbage is recognised in the Adopted Core Strategy 2009. Where Policy 4 (p.36):

“To ensure development contributes to Burbage’s character and sense of place and that the village’s infrastructure can accommodate the new development, the council will...

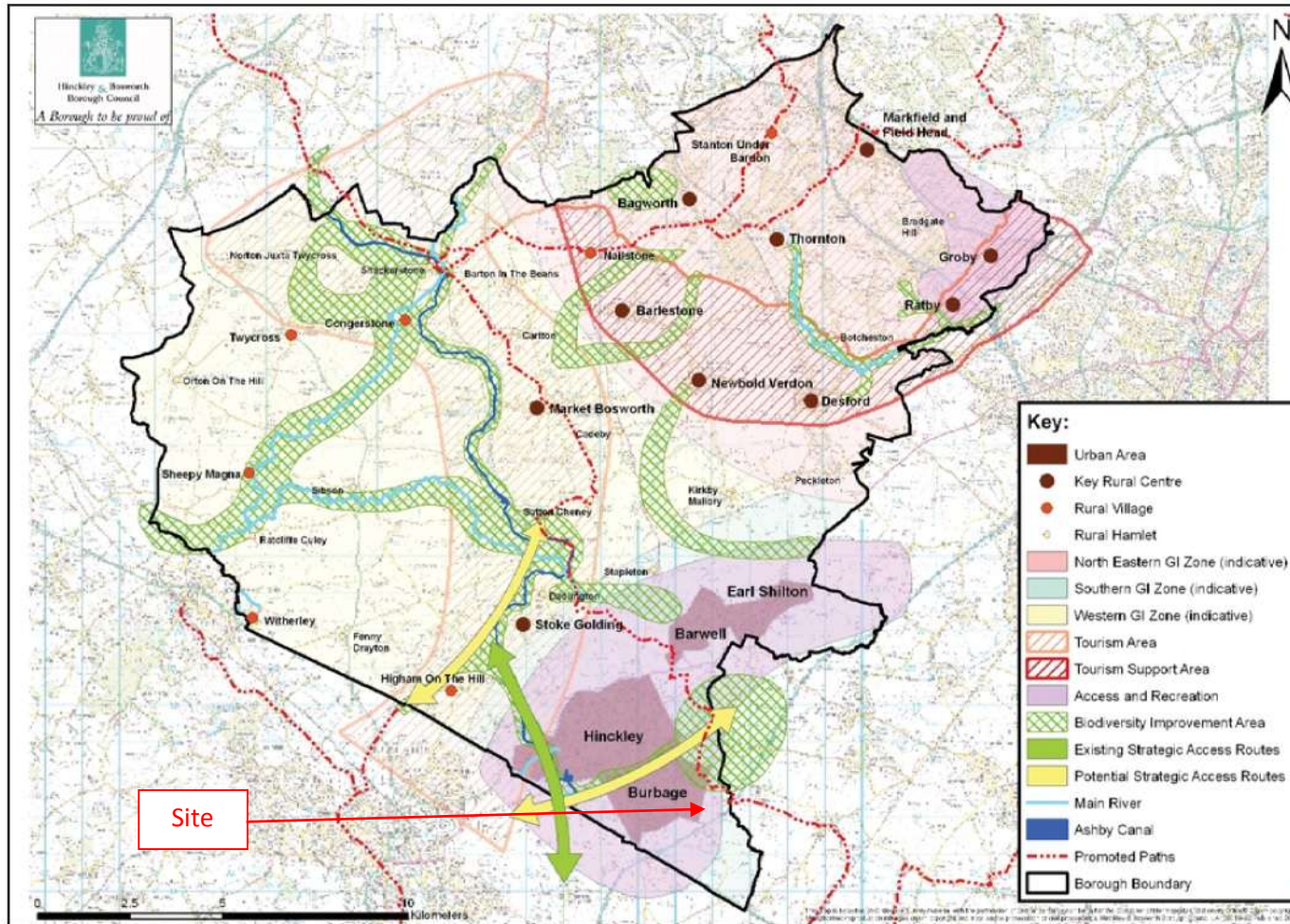
- Protect and preserve the open landscape to the east which provides an important setting for the village and seek to enhance the landscape structure which separates the village from the M69 corridor as supported by the Hinckley & Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment”

Figure 6: Hinckley and Bosworth Character Area: Map (p.94)



4.6 The Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Adopted Core Strategy 2009 shows the area of the site is identified as important for Access and Recreation.

Figure 7: Adopted Core Strategy 2009, p.26 - Strategic GI Plan



Burbage Village Design Statement

4.7 The Burbage Village Design Statement recognises the importance that the green countryside are to the east of the Winchester Drive Housing area. It specifically identified the importance of maintaining the existing settlement boundary.

To maintain the individual character of the village and to protect the rural vista to meet the leisure and recreational needs of the community, residents feel strongly that the existing settlement boundary should be maintained and the remaining green fields around the village should be retained to meet the leisure and recreational needs of the community. (p.5)

To the south, towards the M69, there are sloping fields that provide an attractive visual amenity. Residents would like to see these fields retained. (p.27)

Local Countryside Landscape Character

4.8 The development site is located adjacent to the northwest area of the settlement of Burbage. However, the site itself is typical pasture with high mature hedgerows with occasional mature trees and meadow grassland.

4.9 The localised Landscape Character is identified as:

- Relatively flat landform with slight land rise to the south of the site

- Predominately rural landscape with pasture, but not heavily influenced by urban features such M69 motorway which can be glimpsed from some locations, and the occasional pylons.
- Generally large scale field pattern, fields enclosed by hedgerows with scattered trees.
- Good public access and footpath network.
- To the west of the site -visually open due relatively flat topography, fairly large scale field pattern with low trimmed hedgerows and occasional trees, and copses.

5.0 Landscape Impact Assessment

Generally

5.1 The degree by which a landscape is assessed to be sensitive is reflected in its ability to accommodate changes in character and value which would be caused by the development.

Landscape Quality

5.2 Assessing receptor sensitivity can be a complex task as it requires a judgement to be made on the relative value (or importance to society) of the various aspects of the landscape. These aspects include:

- The inherent value of the landscape itself.
- Its amenity value (e.g., its importance for users of public rights of way).
- Its ecological value
- Its tranquillity.

5.3 Its value as a setting for components of the historic environment such as listed buildings, SAMs, Parks and Gardens and Battlefields

5.4 Predicted landscape effects are assessed in terms of their scale, duration, magnitude, level and nature on identified sensitive receptors. Methods used for evaluation follow published guidance and include a combination of objective and subjective judgements. To aid consistency and allow easier review of the results, checklists, tables and matrices have been used. The nature of an effect, whether adverse or beneficial is subjective based on professional judgement.

Key for Magnitude, Sensitivity & Significance:

O = None; N = Negligible; VL = Very Low; L = Low; ML = Medium-Low; M = Medium; MH = Medium-High; H = High; VH = Very High

Landscape and Visual Assessment Significance Matrix

		Significance								
		VH	H	MH	M	ML	L	VL	N	O
Magnitude	VH	O	N	M	MH	MH	H	H	VH	VH
	H	O	N	M	M	MH	MH	H	H	VH
	MH	O	N	ML	M	M	MH	MH	H	H
	M	O	N	ML	ML	M	M	MH	MH	H
	ML	O	N	L	ML	ML	M	M	MH	MH
	L	O	N	L	L	ML	ML	M	M	MH
	VL	O	N	VL	L	L	ML	ML	M	M
	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
		O	N	VL	L	ML	M	MH	H	VH
		Sensitivity								

Table 1: Landscape Impact Assessment

Landscape Assessment	Current	Changes	Impact	Timescale	Reversible	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
Inherent value of landscape itself								
General Character	Generally large scale field pattern, fields enclosed by hedgerows with scattered trees.	Creation of new enclosed urbanised extension to village – extend settlement into countryside.	Adverse	Permanent	No	M	H	H
- Landform	Relative flat – rising to south	No significant change	NA	NA	NA	O	O	O
- Landuse	Predominately agricultural	Urbanised area with some limited urban landscaped areas and new trees	Adverse	Permanent	No	H	H	H
- Landcover	Rural pastoral landscape	Houses, gardens, drives, footpaths, roads, signage, street lighting, play areas, formal SUDs areas, mown grass on area that was pasture	Adverse	Permanent	No	H	H	H
- Spatial enclosure	Relatively open grass field with clear sense of enclosure around the boundaries	Sense of openness within site will disappear with new houses reduce to many small spaces rather than one large one	Adverse	Permanent	No	H	H	H
- Views	Visually open views across field to mature hedgerows on three sides in relatively flat topography. Long views to church to south, middle/shorter ranging view to housing estate but with hedgerows and trees breaking up views of housing.	Views within area will now be enclosed with restricted open views	Adverse	Permanent	No	H	H	H
Amenity Value								
- Public access to Footpaths	Good physical access to footpath network.	No change physical access	No change	Permanent	NA	O	O	O
- Public experience of Footpaths	Views and experiences – countryside views and experience when walking eastwards through field. Views of housing when walking westwards.	Reduction in quality of countryside experience and views along this length of footpath. Views in all directions will include urbanised housing areas.	Adverse	Permanent	No	H	H	H
Ecological Value	Relatively wide biodiversity associated with historic meadows and mature hedgerows with trees and small watercourse	On balance the diversity will be similar – some habitats and species will remain similar and some will change. Loss of meadow flora and fauna diversity.	Some adverse change	Permanent	No	L	L	L
Heritage and Cultural Value	No listed heritage elements but historic hedgerow pattern and access route.	No significant change	No change	Permanent	NA	O	O	O
Tranquillity	Relatively tranquil – very faint background noise in field of M69 and associated with housing to west.	Reduction in actual and perceived tranquillity as site will have associated housing noise within it: cars, people, etc.	Adverse	Permanent	No	M	H	H

Key: Magnitude, Sensitivity & Significance

O = None; N = Negligible; VL = Very Low; L = Low; ML = Medium-Low; M = Medium; MH = Medium-High; H = High; VH = Very High

The inherent value of the landscape itself

5.5 The European Landscape Convention

Summary of the Treaty...

“The Convention aims to encourage public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning landscapes throughout Europe. It covers all landscapes, both outstanding and ordinary, that determine the quality of people’s living environment. The text provides for a flexible approach to landscapes whose specific features call for various types of action, ranging from strict conservation through protection, management and improvement to actual creation.”

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>

5.6 In transposing the requirements of the European Landscape Convention to ensure Member States protect both outstanding and ordinary landscapes into UK Planning Policy, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has a number of paragraphs that address this issue.

5.7 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF states that a core planning principle is to *“take account of the different roles and character of different areas...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it.”* Paragraph 109 states *“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;...”*

5.8 Discussions with members of the local community confirm that this site is valued by the local community as an important landscape. Whilst superficially ‘ordinary’ in nature, it has an attractive countryside feel with good views out to the wider countryside, and provides a recreation amenity for walkers, dog-walkers, joggers and other forms of informal outdoor recreation. It provides quick access from the village out into the countryside and links through to the footpaths beyond. The footpath is part of the ‘Leicestershire Round’ route which is an important recreation resource.

5.9 The loss of this site to housing would mean not only the site would be lost as a valued landscape, but the views which can be enjoyed from public footways within the village out to the wider countryside would also be lost as well.

5.19 As the site is a locally valued landscape, the NPPF requires the planning system to enhance and protect such a place.

6.0 Visual Impact Assessment

6.1 An inspection of the site and surrounding area showed that the key issue in planning terms was the potential impact upon users of the public footpath. Whilst it is clear that the new development will have an adverse impact on the view of many residences along the boundary with the new site and road users going to and from these properties and on views from Aston Flamville Road, the major impact will be on footpath users traversing the site and beyond. Therefore, a Visual Impact Assessment focusing on the visual impact of the proposed development on footpath users has been undertaken.

6.2 The sensitivity of individual receptors will be dependent upon two key factors: a) distance and b) whether the view is direct or indirect from their normal views out across the landscape in front of them.

6.3 A direct close view will normally have a higher sensitivity for a receptor than an indirect distant view.

6.4 Sensitivity for users of public rights of way is considered to be:

- Direct close views – High
- Direct distant view - Medium
- Indirect close view – Medium
- Indirect distant view - Low

Figure 8: Plan showing selected Receptor Viewpoints



Figure 9: Viewpoint R1 - view of site from Dorchester Road



Figure 10: Viewpoint R2 – View from Sherbourne Road stile along footpath to east



Figure 11: Viewpoint R3 – view back across site to Sherbourne Road Stile



Figure 12: Viewpoint R4 – view to southwest from easterly stile on site



Figure 13: Viewpoint R5 – view from south-east corner of site northwards



Figure 14: Viewpoint R6 – view from easterly site stile along footpath to south-east



Figure 15: Viewpoint R7 - view back along footpath to easterly site stile in hedgerow



Figure 16: Viewpoint R8 - view from eastern stile in field to east of site towards church



Table 2: Predicted Visual Impacts with Mitigation

	Location	Receptor	Current	Change	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
R1	Dorchester Road – view to site	Walkers on public footway	Rural aspect eastwards of large meadow and high hedgerows with mature trees	Field will become a housing estate with clear views into this site with the road access.	H	M	H
R2	View from Sherbourne Road side of field	Walkers on public footpath	Rural aspect north through to south of relatively large enclosed meadow, high hedgerows with mature trees	Countryside views replaced by urbanisation of site – mown grass and play area and new housing to south of footpath	H	H	H
R3	View back along footpath towards Sherbourne Road	Walkers on public footpath	View across field to existing housing estate. Field edged by hedgerow.	View of field and housing in middle distance replaced by urbanisation of site – mown grass and play area and new housing to south of footpath	H	H	H
R4	View southwards up slope to church	Walkers on public footpath	Open view across fields to church on skyline.	View of field and church obscured by housing and new urbanised landscape	H	H	H
R5	View from southern end of site northwards	Informal walkers	View of transition from housing to rural countryside	Direct views into urbanised area of new housing site. No views of open field and hedgerows.	H	L	M
R6	View to south-east from eastern site stile – view away from site	Walkers on public footpath	View of field, hedgerows and trees	View of field, hedgerows and trees	0	H	0
R7	View to north-west towards eastern site stile	Walkers on public footpath	View of field, hedgerows and trees with glimpses of top of existing houses	View of field, hedgerows and trees with clear glimpses of top of new houses. In winter clearer views through hedge to housing	M	H	H
R8	View from field east of site towards church	Walkers on public footpath	View of field, hedgerows and trees with occasional glimpses of top of existing houses	View of field, hedgerows and trees with clear glimpses of houses and tops of houses. In winter clearer views through hedge to housing.	L	H	M

Key Magnitude, Sensitivity & Significance O = None; N = Negligible; VL = Very Low; L = Low; ML = Medium-Low; M = Medium; MH = Medium-High; H = High; VH = Very High

7. Summary of Landscape and Visual Impacts

Summary of Landscape Impact Assessment

The inherent value of the landscape itself

7.1 Paragraph 17 of the Framework states that a core planning principle is to *“take account of the different roles and character of different areas...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it.”* Paragraph 109 states *“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;...”*

7.2 Policy 4 of the Core Strategy “Development in Burbage” states, among other things:

To ensure development contributes to Burbage’s character and sense of place and that the village’s infrastructure can accommodate the new development, the council will.....Protect and preserve the open landscape to the east which provides an important setting for the village and seek to enhance the landscape structure which separates the village from the M69 corridor as supported by the Hinckley & Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment.”

7.3 Policy 4 of the Core Strategy clearly demonstrates the value placed on the open landscape to the east side of Burbage. These fields play an important role as a setting for the village and a clear edge to the urban settlement in this area.

7.4 The site is an important transition zone between the existing urbanised housing area of Burbage and open countryside. The development will lead to the loss of two open fields and their replacement with an urbanised setting. Whilst the housing site will have new trees and landscaping these cannot do anything other than accentuate the change from rural to urban landscape.

Amenity value

7.5 The current views and countryside experiences’ of footpath walkers, both within the site and those surrounding the site, will be diminished considerably. Within the site, the general visual amenity value of the landscape when viewed from north through east to south will be significantly adversely affected. The development will provide an urbanised and relatively highly manicured landscape with a plethora of urban features (buildings, roads, street lighting, signs and mown grass and landscape and play areas) around the site.

7.6 It is considered that the general impression of most villagers and walkers will be that this is an area of pleasant countryside which they have access to through an excellent network of public footpaths. The recreationally important Leicestershire Way runs through the site. The loss of these fields will diminish this countryside experience for such users. This harm can be assessed to be a direct major harm within the site and on the approaches to the site from the east, where for at least half the year, glimpses of the houses and associated urban features will be visible through the trees and over the top of the hedgerow.

Ecological value

7.7 There will be a change in the range and type of flora and fauna to be found on this site. The major adverse change will be the loss of meadow grassland habitat but this will be compensated somewhat by the new SUDS wetland area and new areas of woodland habitat.

Tranquillity

7.8 The tranquillity of the area is already affected by passing traffic on the housing estate and the M69 in the distance to the east but the presence of new houses and associated traffic within the development side will significantly reduce the tranquillity within the site and immediately surrounding areas.

Value as a setting for components of the historic environment

7.6 There are no listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments in the immediate vicinity of the site. The development will not lead to a change in the historic field pattern but will lead to the change in historic land-use. The pleasant views from the public footpath of the church will be obscured by the new housing.

The change from pasture and rural countryside character to one of urbanised housing estate will clearly be a major adverse change in the landscape character of the area and be an adverse loss of open countryside.

Summary Visual Impact Assessment

7.7 Once all the works have been completed and the mitigation landscape planting has been established it is assessed that the majority of the 8 selected receptor viewpoints will have an adverse visual impact.

7.8 Receptors viewpoints R1, R2, R3 R4, and R7 will be high adverse significance and R5 and R8 will have a medium adverse significance.

7.9 The overall visual impact will be adverse and highly adverse in the key receptor locations.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The countryside area alongside edge of the existing Winchester Drive Housing estate to the east of the settlement boundary is of considerable landscape importance and visual amenity for both the community of Burbage and the wider general public. The proposed development of this area of open countryside will mean that it irreversibly changes the landscape character of this site to one of an urbanised settlement. This will have a highly detrimental adverse impact on the landscape character of the area and an associated detrimental adverse impact on the visual amenity.

8.2 The loss of this site to housing would mean not only the site would be lost as a valued landscape, but the views which can be enjoyed from public footways within the village out to the wider countryside would also be lost as well.

8.3 The area of land can superficially be described as ‘ordinary countryside’ – but as such it does have an intrinsic value for the community and wider public. Core Strategy Policy 4 also clearly demonstrates the value placed on the open landscape to the east side of Burbage by Planning Policy.

8.4 It is noted that in the recent Ratby Planning Inquiry decision notice, the Inspector stated:

“9. One of the Framework’s core planning principles is to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The appeal site is ordinary countryside, but it has visual value and provides space for walking, jogging and other forms of informal recreation. I conclude that the development into open countryside would amount to a substantial extension of built

development into open countryside, harmful to the character and appearance of the landscape, and would conflict with the ‘saved’ policies RES5 and NE5 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2001.”

8.5 As the site is a valued landscape, the NPPF requires the planning system to enhance and protect such a place. The harmful change of landscape character and adverse visual impacts leads to the conclusion that the development will have an adverse and harmful effect on the appearance and character of the landscape; and therefore be contrary to Local Plan Policy NE5.

Appendix 1:

CV Dr David Hickie

Professional Qualifications:

Chartered Landscape Architect and Member of Landscape Institute (CMLI)

Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv)

Member of the Institute Environmental Management and Assessment (MIEMA)

Member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)

Academic Qualifications:

BSc(Hons) Civil Engineering, University of Birmingham (1978)

MA Landscape Architecture, University of Sheffield (1981)

PhD Environmental Impact Assessment, University of Loughborough (1998)

Professional Experience:

2008 to date Managing Director and Principal Consultant: David Hickie Associates – environmental planning and landscape architecture consultants

2005 to 2008 Chief Executive: Society for the Environment

1998 to 2005 Assistant Regional Director (and Head of Profession - Landscape Architects): English Heritage - responsible for managing team of specialists providing expert advice for the Secretary of State DCMS and DCLG on a wide range of heritage environment matters.

1993 to 1998 Regional EIA Manager and Chief Landscape Architect: Environment Agency - member of the Landscape Institute's Working Group that developed the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (First Edition)'

1989 to 1993 Regional Conservation, Recreation and Navigation manager and Chief Landscape Architect: National Rivers Authority – developed national methodology for River Corridor Landscape Character Assessment. Developed and lectured on landscape and ecological guidelines for river and coastal habitat restoration.

1985 to 1989 Senior Landscape Architect: Severn Trent Water Authority

1983 to 1985 Senior Landscape Architect: Warwickshire County Council

Appendix 2:

European Landscape Convention

European Landscape Convention

[\(ETS No. 176\)](#)

Open for signature by the member States of the Council of Europe, in Florence, on 20 October 2000.

Entry into force: 1 March 2004.

Summary of the treaty

The Convention aims to encourage public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning landscapes throughout Europe. It covers all landscapes, both outstanding and ordinary, that determine the quality of people's living environment. The text provides for a flexible approach to landscapes whose specific features call for various types of action, ranging from strict conservation through protection, management and improvement to actual creation.

The Convention proposes legal and financial measures at the national and international levels, aimed at shaping

"landscape policies" and promoting interaction between local and central authorities as well as transfrontier cooperation in protecting landscapes. It sets out a range of different solutions which States can apply, according to their specific needs.

The Council of Europe intergovernmental committees will be supervising the convention's implementation. The text also provides for a Council of Europe Landscape award, to be given to local or regional authorities or an NGO which introduced exemplary and long-lasting policies or measures to protect, manage and plan landscapes.

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>

Appendix: 3

Leicestershire Round Public Footpath

“The Leicestershire Round is a 100 mile circular walk around the county connecting many places of historical and geographical interest.

The route was devised by the Leicestershire Footpath Association to celebrate the centenary of their founding in 1887 and published in sections between 1980 and 1983.

Treasured by local walkers, the route forms the common thread for everything from charity marathons, to innumerable shorter walks. It is the county’s main long-distance footpath and a flagship for the local rights of way network. The route mostly follows public rights of way, though there are some sections on quiet roads, unsurfaced tracks and canal towpath.”

Website Accessed on 20th Oct 2015

http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/environment/countryside/paths/maps_of_paths/pathsmap.htm

