

**St Albans City & District Council
Civic Centre
St Peters Street
St Albans
Hertfordshire**

Herts Landscape

Hertfordshire County Council

**CHN 215
County Hall
Pegs Lane
Hertford, Herts SG13 8DF**

TEL: 01992 555205
EMAIL: Landscape@hertfordshire.gov.uk
REF: PRE/2021/0181
DATE: 01 December 2021

Dear Ruth Ambrose,

REFERENCE: PRE/2021/0181 – LVA SCOPE
PROPOSAL: Landscape pre-application advice is sought in respect of residential-led scheme for up to 100 dwellings, including 40% affordable dwellings and 5% self-build dwellings, public open space, and associated infrastructure
ADDRESS: Land to West of Watling Street, Park Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire

Thank you for consulting the landscape planning advisory service on the above proposal. The following comments are given with regards to landscape matters in line with national and local policy requirements, British Standards, and industry accepted good practice guidance.

The following comments are given with regards to the submitted document 'Landscape and Visual Appraisal, 20-3775 V1 13/10/2020.'

At this pre-application stage comments are given with regards to the scope and methodology including the proposed views.

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL APPRAISAL

Comments are given in line with industry good practice 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition,' Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental management and Assessment (GLVIA3).'

BASELINE

Landscape Baseline

- There is reference to the correct county level landscape character area ‘St Stephens Plateau,’ however, there does not appear to be any reference to the evaluation and guidelines.

The evaluation of condition and robustness (*‘moderate’ and ‘weak’* respectively) should inform the judgement of landscape value.

The strategy (*‘improve and reinforce’*) and relevant guidelines for managing change should be identified and inform the landscape mitigation and enhancement strategy.

A plan to show the location of local landscape character areas is required.

- In assessing landscape value, in addition to GLVIA Box 5.1, landscape value should be considered in line with [‘Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations, May 2021’](#).

As discussed above – the landscape character area evaluation of condition and robustness (*‘moderate’ and ‘weak’* respectively) should inform the judgement of landscape value.

The sites’ location within the ‘Watling Chase Community Forest’ should inform the judgement of landscape value.

Visual Baseline

- The submitted Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is based on bare earth – this approach is supported.

Based on the ZTV, there is concern for the lack of representative viewpoints from within the settlement areas that surround the site, however, this may be because there are no actual views. In line with GLVIA 6.24 the baseline should confirm where, if any, views have been considered and consequently scoped out.

The location and number of represented viewpoints outside the settlement areas is supported.

- The methodology for the baseline photo viewpoints is provided. It is requested to clarify to what extent they accord with industry good practice such as the [Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual representation of Development Proposals](#).

The viewpoint photos state that they have been provided *‘to illustrate the existing landscape context only.’* It is also noted that the photos were taken during a time when the trees are in full leaf and therefore do not represent a maximum visibility scenario. In line with GLVIA 8.15 limitations such as this should be noted.

In line with GLVIA 8.16, viewpoint photos should be provided to illustrate the existing views and visual amenity for each viewpoint. These should be suitable for the provision of visualisations/photomontages from points to be agreed with the planning authority.

Visualisations should show the likely views at completion (Year 1), and establishment (Year 15).

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

Landscape Susceptibility / Sensitivity

- It appears that the assessment of landscape susceptibility has been provided within the baseline. This is not in line with GLVIA 5.42 that states that landscape susceptibility *“...should not be recorded as part of the landscape baseline but should be considered as part of the assessment of effects.”*

The assessment of susceptibility should clearly address the specific nature of the development proposals.

The assessment criteria (Appendix 2. Table 1) ‘Landscape susceptibility’ appears to consider ‘landscape value’, however this should be addressed separately within the baseline.

Visual Susceptibility / Value of Views / Sensitivity

- It appears the assessment of visual sensitivity has been provided within the baseline; however, in line with GLVIA 6.30 – 6.36 susceptibility, value attached to views, and sensitivity should be addressed separately within the assessment of visual effects.

Judgements with regards to the susceptibility of visual receptors, and the value of views, are not distinctly clear and clarification is required.

SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS

- The significance of landscape or visual effects does not appear to have been provided and is therefore required.

Yours sincerely,



Jennifer Owen
Landscape Team Leader
Herts LEADS (Landscape Ecology Archaeology Design Sustainability)