
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

**Land east of Pines Hill,
Stansted Mountfitchet,
CM24 8EY**

for

Luxus Homes Limited

24 August 2021



Client

Luxus Homes Limited

**Landscape and Visual
Impact Assessment**

**Land east of Pines Hill,
Bishop's Stortford**

Planning authority

Uttlesford District
Council
Council Offices
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (“LVIA”) has been prepared in support of a planning application for residential development by Luxus Homes Limited, for a site at Pines Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex.
- The proposed development is approximately 0.90 hectares (“the site”). The proposed project is for up to 31 dwellings including detached, semidetached, terraced and apartment homes. The scheme will be set back from Pines Hill and accessed by a new spine road. The scheme will require a new access point to the centre of the western boundary with Pines Hill roadway.
- The proposed site is on the eastern edge of the B1383, Pines Hill. The site is currently accessed from Stoney Common Road on the northern edge along a tarmac, single lane track that accesses the neighbouring properties. There is an additional single lane track to the eastern edge accessing a small industrial yard to the south. The site is currently densely overgrown with brambles and saplings with maturing trees to all boundaries. To the east there is a wide band of mature conifer with an understorey of hawthorn plants. Beyond a tarmac track lies a railway line within a deep cutting; to the south, the site boundary is with the large property, **Ostra Brama (1)** and enclosed by trees; the western boundary is with Pines Hill carriageway and the access track from Stoney Common Road; and, to the north the boundary follows and route of Stoney Common Road. Also, Stansted Brook, a tributary of the River Stort, lies to the east beyond the railway line.
- The proposals are on the southern edge of the village of **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)**, bordered by medium density, built up areas to the north and to the east beyond the valley of Stansted Brook. Further to the west are pasture and arable fields linked to large properties and farmsteads. To the south lie larger dwellings and a network of roads and the route of the railway, the village extends to the southeast of the site. The surrounding landscape is rural although the village has had extensive 20th and 21st century development to the north and east. Stansted Airport lies 2km to the southeast and a junction with the motorway the M11 is 3km to the south.
- The topography within the site is of rising ground to the west from the shallow valley of Stansted Brook. The wider landscape is undulating plateau, with shallow valleys that follow the numerous water courses. The site lies to the east of the River Stort, a deeper river valley.

- The closest Public Right of Way (“PRoW”) lies 80m to the east that follows the course of Stansted Brook within a public open space (“POS”). There are numerous PRoWs within the surrounding landscape leading out of the village centre.
- Nationally, the site is part of the **National Character Area 86** (“NCA 86”), ‘**South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands**’. The landscape is described as ‘*an ancient landscape of wooded arable countryside with a distinct sense of enclosure. The overall character is of a gently undulating, chalky boulder clay plateau, the undulations being caused by the numerous small-scale river valleys that dissect the plateau*’ (NCA 86: 3).
- The agricultural land classification is Grade 3 ‘Good to moderate’ (Natural England Agricultural Land Classification website, date accessed July 2021).
- The nearest listed building is **Fairfield (3)**, a grade II listed dwelling 80m to the northwest and there is a scheduled monument at **Stansted windmill**, 260m to the north.
- The site is in the London Area green belt, Uttlesford District that extends to the east to the M11.
- The assessment of the effects of the proposals on the larger landscape character found that there would be a **slight/moderate** effect in the long-term due to the discreet nature of the proposals within the context of the Green Belt.
- For the site itself, the landscape effects on landscape receptors were found to be **moderate** due to the change of land use and some mature tree or ‘important woodland’ removal. Some important landscape elements such as the hedgerows and mature trees will be partially retained.
- With regard to the visual effects of the proposed development upon local receptors, the greatest effect is no further than 500m from the site boundaries.
- Mitigation planting is proposed as follows:
 - planting of hedgerows and trees within the interior development area;
 - replacement planting for tree losses on the western edge, and;
 - a replacement hedgerow on the western site boundary.
- Cumulative effects were assessed with respect to other developments in the study area. It is judged that there are **low** cumulative landscape effects and **no** cumulative visual effects with respect to the proposals.
- Two transport routes would experience a **slight/moderate** visual effect due to the development.
- Ten properties were judged to have a **slight to substantial/moderate** visual effect to the development.

- No PRoWs or open spaces were judged to experience a visual effect.
- Although the receiving landscape exhibits a positive character the site has strong vegetation on the site boundaries, which will be partially retained, that reduces the landscape and visual effects of the proposals. The proposals would introduce new landscape elements on a discreet site. The proposals have been specifically designed to maintain the building line on Pines Hill.
- The residential development will be medium density reflecting neighbouring estates whilst providing wide landscape buffers so that the openness of the Green Belt is maintained. There would also be new characteristic tree and hedgerow planting that would improve screening to all boundaries. In relation to the scheme's opportunities and constraints, it is considered that the visual and landscape effects of the proposal are acceptable.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Greenlight Environmental Consultancy Limited has been commissioned by Luxus Homes Ltd to carry out a LVIA for the development of land for residential use at Pines Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex.
- 1.2 The site is situated to the east of the B1383 Pines Hill, a single lane carriageway which links **Bishop's Stortford** in the south to the A11 in the north. The site is bounded to the east by a wide belt of conifer of Leyland cypress (*Cupressus × leylandii*) and Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*) and a single track lane, that is also one of the existing access points to the site; to the south are sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) that separate the well tree'd garden of **Ostra Brama (1)** from the site; the western edge is characterised by mature mix species trees including; beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Norway maple (*Acer platanus*), and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) that line Pines Hill; Norway spruce that line the access track to the cottages **Nos 1 and 2 Stoney Common Road (2)**; and the northern edge with Stoney Common Road is also lined by Lawson cypress, sycamore and Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) with an understorey of hawthorn (*Crataegus spp.*). The county town is Chelmsford, the centre of which is approximately 25km to the southeast. The site is rough pasture currently overgrown with bramble and tree saplings.
- 1.3 The proposals will utilise most of the interior of the larger enclosure to develop a small, medium density housing estate. The development will include an access road from Pines Hill that passes between the properties **Ostra Brama (1)** and No 2 Stoney Common Road. Dwellings will line either side of the access road that leads to a turning head on the northern edge. The layout retains mature trees to all boundaries. The creation of a new access off Pines Hill will require the removal of some trees and shrub understorey for visibility splays. Dwellings are set back from the highway.
- 1.4 This report provides a landscape and visual assessment of the site within the context of the surrounding area. It outlines the existing baseline situation for topography, vegetation cover and land uses, published landscape character studies, landscape and other relevant designations, and the current visibility of the site.
- 1.5 The existing baseline situation and the proposals for the development are then analysed against the assessed potential visual and landscape effects. The approach to the report is in accordance with current guidance (see Section 2.1 below).

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Relevant guidance

2.1.1 This appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with best practice as outlined in the following publications:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA3) – Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013.
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment October 2014 Christine Tudor, Natural England
- Landscape Character Assessment - Guidance for England and Scotland – Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002.
- The Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment - Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment 2004.
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals - Landscape Institute Technical Advice Note 06/19 – 2019.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The methodology used for this assessment is based on the guidance listed above.

2.2.2 A desktop review of published data, such as landscape character assessments, OS maps and landscape planning policies, has been carried out. This identified potential landscape and visual receptors that could be affected by the proposed hostel accommodation. Field survey visit was carried out on the 28 June 2021 to confirm the findings of the desktop review. Photographs taken at approximately 1.5m height, with a with a Nikon D7200 camera and Nikon DX AF-S NIKKOR 35mm 1:1.8G fixed lens except where stated otherwise. Please note that due to the enclosed nature of the site and restricted horizons, the lens was used at 18mm. For Type 3 visualisations please refer to the A3 Figures Volume Visualisations under separate cover.

2.2.3 The structure of the report is as follows:

- (i) In Section 3, the existing situation, i.e. the baseline condition of the landscape is reviewed. This includes the topography, vegetation cover and land uses, published

landscape character studies, landscape and other relevant designations, and the current visibility of the site.

- (ii) In Section 4 the proposals for the development are set out, including the proposed mitigation planting proposals.
- (iii) In Sections 5 and 6 respectively, the potential landscape and visual effects are assessed in detail (construction and operational phases) using the landscape and visual receptors identified in Section 3, by considering the interaction between them and the proposals for the development.
- (iv) Finally, in Section 7, conclusions are drawn.

2.2.4 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (“ZTV”) mapping has been used to identify the worst-case scenario for potential locations from which the proposed development might be visible. It is important to note that such modelling cannot represent accurately small-scale landscape elements in the terrain. The terrain data is based on landform and vertical structures but does not incorporate weather conditions or the orientation of receptor, and thus does not provide a definitive mapping of actual visibility. The ZTV information is used in conjunction with other desktop study to inform further the understanding of the development in the larger landscape, and to focus the field surveys and the selection of viewpoints (please refer to the A3 Figures Volume under separate cover).

2.3 **Assessment of significance**

2.3.1 In this report, in accordance with the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Guidelines, 3rd edition (2013) the significance of effects is ascertained by cross-referencing the sensitivity of the baseline landscape or visual receptor and the magnitude of change as a result of the development. Whilst the methodology is designed to be robust and transparent, professional judgement must be applied to determine the significance of each effect.

2.3.2 Please see [Appendix 2](#) which sets out the criteria used to aid determination of landscape or visual effect. Only where the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment forms part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”), will the term ‘significant’ be used.

2.3.3 In the case of this scheme, pre-application advice has not been sought from Uttlesford District Council however the site is within the Green Belt and on the boundary of the settlement edge. This report is a response to landscape implications. Viewpoints for photomontages were

selected based on site condition and the ZTV and is provided within the A3 Figures Volume under separate cover

2.4 **Limitations of the assessment**

2.4.1 This assessment is based on views from publicly accessible locations. Where impact to private views is noted, it has been estimated.

2.4.2 The viewpoints identified in this assessment are illustrative and represent the potential impact of the development from a range of receptors e.g. dwellings, commercial properties, rights of way, roads etc. This report does not necessarily identify all locations from where the site is potentially visible.

2.4.3 It is important to note that this assessment was carried out in summer, and therefore the 'in leaf' vegetation considerably contributes to the enclosure of the development, 'in leaf' vegetation will contribute to screening, as it will do for approximately seven months of the year between April and November.

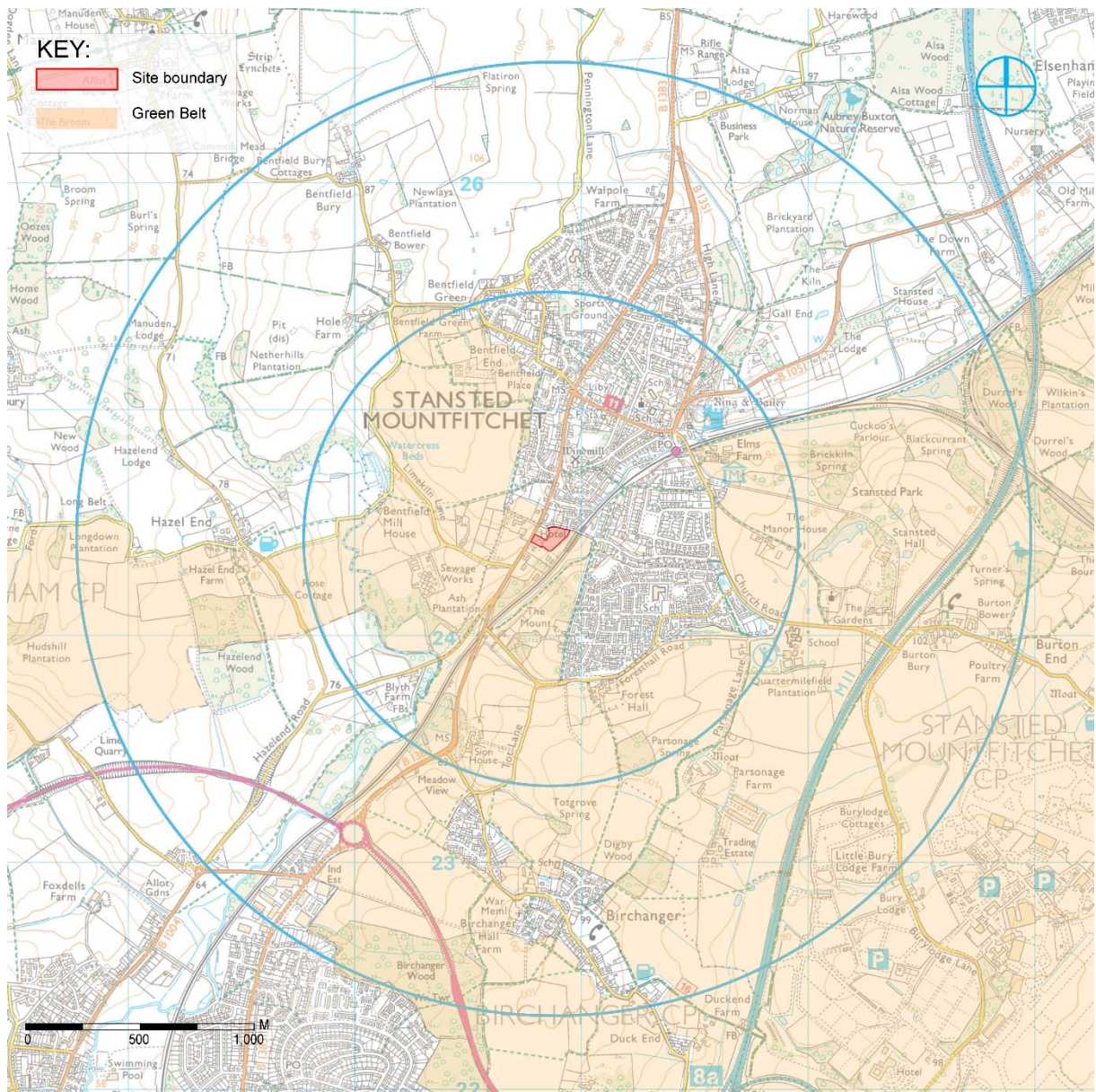


Figure 1: Map showing the location of the site and boundary of Green Belt. Site marked in red; and 1km and 2km from the centre of the site is indicated by the blue circles (OS Map provided by www.centremapslive.com at scale 1:25,000)



Figure 2: Satellite map showing the location of the site in red (based on Google map accessed July 2021)

3 SITE CONTEXT

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 This section sets out the context of the site within the surrounding area. It outlines the location, nearby settlements, topography, vegetation cover, existing rights of way, published landscape assessments, landscape and other relevant designations, and planning policy at national and local levels.

3.1.2 Annotated photographs are included throughout the report. The site context and location plan are included as Fig. 2 in section 3.2 'Location and Boundaries' below.

3.1.3 For all quoted distances from the site, unless otherwise stated, the measured distance is the approximate distance in kilometres from the closest boundary of the site to the closest boundary of the location being discussed, measured in a straight line.

3.2 Location and Boundaries

3.2.1 The site is located in Essex at Grid Reference TL 50885 24439 and the nearest postcode is CM24 8EY. The site is on the southern settlement edge of **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)** and the large town of Bishop's Stortford is 4km to the south. The site is reached via two routes from the north off Stoney Common Road. The landscape becomes increasingly urban to the north whilst it is rural in nature to the south and west as reflected in its status as Green Belt. Small to medium irregularly shaped fields are usual, however there are small pasture and wooded areas along the water courses. There are numerous woodland patches.

3.2.2 There is residential estates from the northern edge on Stoney Common Road north into the village centre. Although the village is on rising ground there is little intervisibility due to the built form. To the east, the ground falls to the shallow valley floor of Stansted Brook and into the manmade railway cutting. To the west, ground rises gradually before falling again into the valley of the River Stort. Land falls to the south along the valley of the River Stort where it meets Stansted Brook. There are numerous small settlements or large farmsteads around **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)** which is supported by a network of roads and lanes. Roadways are lined by mature tree lines and hedgerows, this and changing landform leads to an intimate landscape.

3.2.3 To the east, the site is enclosed by a deep tree belt of mainly conifer plantation including Lawson cypress and Norway spruce (**Viewpoint a**). The boundary is currently impenetrable due

to the hawthorn understorey and emerging bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). To the east of the tree belt is the tarmac surfaced lane that leads south from Stoney Common Road to the **Engineering works (8)**. To the east of this is a strong line of mature sycamore. Land falls to the east into the deep railway cutting the valley floor of Stansted Brook. There are regular trains along this route however no views are possible of the site. Views are not possible across the valley from the east due to the year round heavy tree cover which includes evergreens.

3.2.4 To the south the **Engineering works (8)** consists of several sheds on levelled ground below the site. The compound is bounded by trees including sycamore. The southern boundary of the site is marked by an unmade track that is currently overgrown (**Viewpoint b**). To the south of this is the large garden of **Ostra Brama (1)**. The large dwelling is set within a garden of mature trees and orchard trees. There is an access route from the lane accessed from Stoney Common Road that also provides access to **Nos 1 and 2 Stoney Common Road (2)**. The site extends along its southern boundary to Pines Hill, and the boundary is marked by metal posts and wire with some mature trees, mainly sycamore. There is little intervisibility however the site will be more open when vegetation is not in leaf (**Viewpoint c**). Further south are some large, detached properties enclosed by mature trees that are accessed from Pines Hill. The land falls to the south and there is little intervisibility beyond Ostra Brama.

3.2.5 The site extends to Pines Hill to the west and then doglegs around **Nos 1 and 2 Stoney Common Road (2)** to follow the access lane to the boundary with Stoney Common Road. Along the boundary with Pines Hill there are numerous mature trees including beech, ash, sycamore, Norway spruce, and Norway maple (*Acer platanus*) (**Viewpoint d**). Trees are clad in ivy (*Hedera helix*), with an understorey of bramble adding to an enclosed feeling along with a close board fence line. The tree belt extending along Pines Hill and extending along the southern boundary of Ostra Brama are 'important woodlands' within the current Uttlesford DC Local Plan. The trees along the boundary add to the street scene along Pines Hill (**Viewpoint e**). The route of Pines Hill lies on lower ground to the site and is enclosed on the western edge by mature sycamore on the boundary edge of the large estate, **Broome End Care Home (10)**. The landscape to the west contains several large properties with tree lined boundaries enclosing woodland pasture. Further north along the western edge are semi-detached cottages **Nos 1 and 2 Stoney Common Road (2)**. The properties overlook the site to the east with open frontages. However the western edge of the site is lined by Norway spruce (**Viewpoint f**), so views are limited to the east. The gardens of the cottages are enclosed by mature trees on Pine Hills which are 'important woodland' within the Local Plan.

- 3.2.6 To the north, Stoney Common Road is an enclosed lane with a strongly built edge to the north and tree lines on the northern boundary of the site (**Viewpoints g and h**). On the northern edge of Stoney Common Road is the public house **The Old Bell (4)** and the large commercial site and **telephone exchange (5)**. Five detached homes lie to the northeast, all overlooking the site. These include **Stoney House and Moulin (6)**, **Breffins House**, and **Birches and Mole House (7)**. This built edge limits views further north into the village of **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)**. The tree belt on the northern edge of the site consists of sycamore, Scots Pine, Norway spruce, Lawson cypress, and an understorey of hawthorn and ivy. The village extends to the north and the medieval core lies to the northeast around the ruins of a medieval castle. The village has a long history and has numerous Historic England listed structures.
- 3.2.7 Within the surrounding landscape there are irregularly shaped, small-to-medium arable fields with larger arable fields on higher ground. Most fields are enclosed with hedgerows and trees. The wider surrounding landscape is rural in nature, however settlements become more numerous and extensive along the M11 corridor to the east. To the north the landscape is urban or peri urban in nature within the large village of **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)**. The highway infrastructure around the route of the M11 to the east and the A120 to the south and airport infrastructure to the southeast around Stansted Airport have an influence on the wider landscape character. However the landscape supports numerous small woodlands, and the rolling land form leads to an intimate and rural feel to the surrounding countryside (Fig. 2). The quality of the landscape has led to local designation of Green Belt.
- 3.2.8 Historically the site has been in agricultural use, assumed to be pastoral, and the boundary has barely changed in the last 100 years however the village to the north has grown extensively. Due to the introduction of dwellings on the western edge and to the south, the field site itself has reduced in size (British History Online, accessed 01 July 2021). The land is Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' (Natural England Agricultural Land Classification website, date accessed July 2021).
- 3.2.9 The site falls within the National Character Area 86, South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands ("**NCA 86**"). The landscape has a '*character is of a gently undulating, chalky boulder clay plateau, the undulations being caused by the numerous small-scale river valleys that dissect the plateau*' (NCA 86: 3).
- 3.2.10 There is a network of Public Rights of Way ("PRoW") in the vicinity, and these are frequent. The closest PRoW **Footpath 1** lies 80m to the southeast at its closest point.

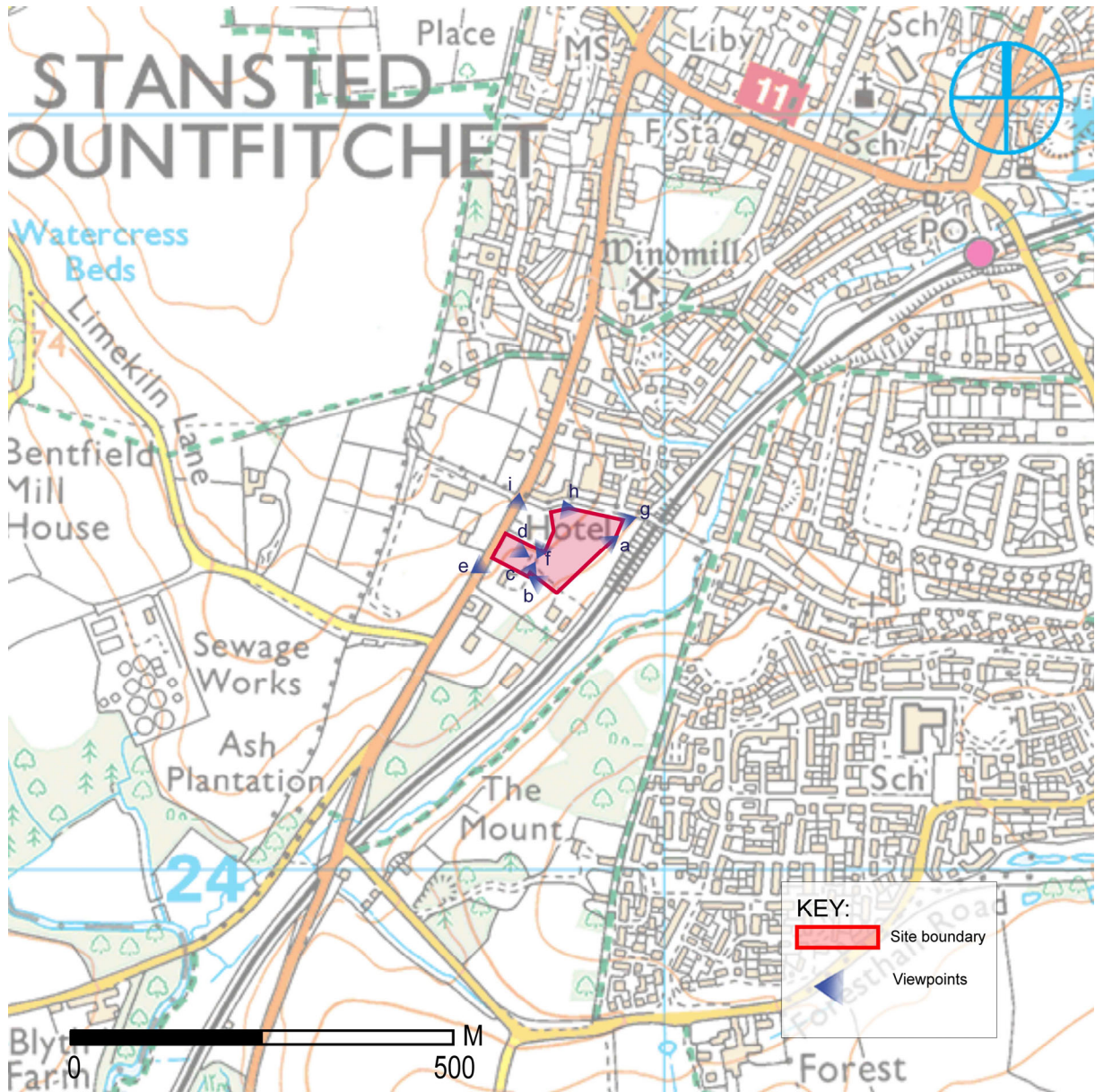


Figure 3: Map showing the location of viewpoints of photographs provided within the A3 Figures Volume under separate cover (Extract of OS Map provided by www.centremaps/live.com at scale 1:25,000)

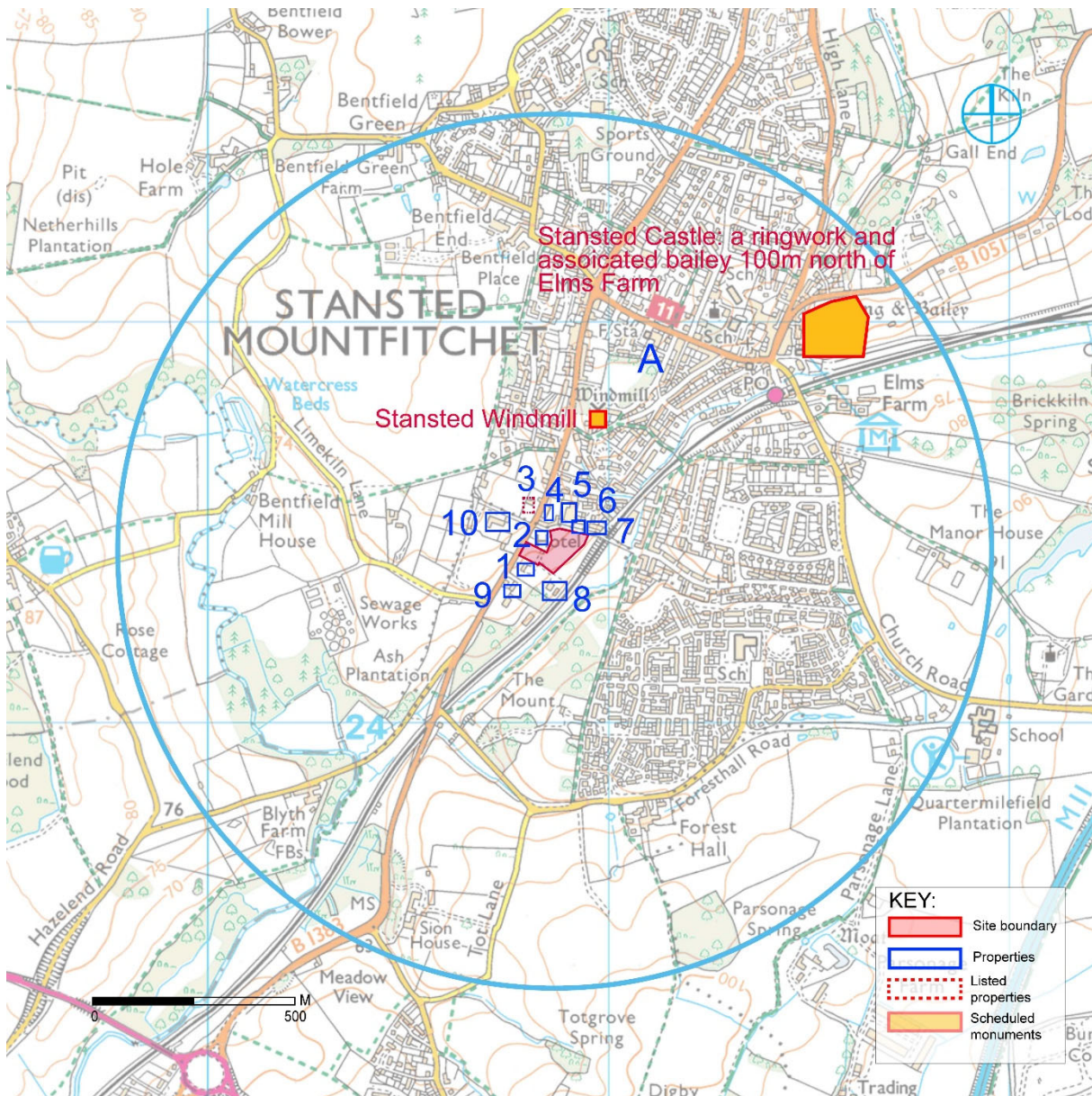


Figure 4: Map showing the location of settlements and properties. Blue circles indicate 1km from the centre of the site. Noted properties indicated in blue, each numbered. Settlements are denoted by letter. (OS Map provided by www.centremaps/live.com at scale 1:25,000)

3.3 Settlement

Distances in this section are approximate. Properties and settlements have been mapped and approximate distances measured from the closest boundary of the site to the closest development boundary of the village, town, group of properties or property in a straight line unless otherwise stated. The ZTV ‘with obstructions’ mapping analysis (please refer to the A3 Figures Volume under separate cover) has been used to select those properties within 1km of

the site. Site analysis and visit has been used to select those properties likely to have a visual relationship with the site, however these are limited because of the enclosed nature of the site. The main settlements around the site are marked for completeness. Figure 4 (above) shows the locations of the settlements (marked with letters), and the dwellings, other properties, or groups thereof (marked with numbers). Work spaces, dwellings, and settlements within the study area include:

- 3.3.1 **Ostra Brama (1)** is a large, detached dwelling to the southwest of the site, the building line of which is approximately 12m from the boundary (**Viewpoint c**). The house is orientated to the northwest however living areas are likely to be orientated to the southeast. The boundary of Ostra Brama is lined by trees and the garden area has mature orchard trees. The retention of these trees will reduce the visual effect on views from the detached dwelling. Access to Ostra Brama is currently via the lane along the north western edge of the site (**Viewpoint f**). The proposals include new access via the site's new access road from Pines Hill.
- 3.3.2 **Nos 1 and 2 Stoney Common Road (2)** are semi-detached cottages on the north western boundary of the site. The cottages are accessed from the single track lane road that currently leads to Ostra Brama. The building line of the cottages lies approximately 15m to the west of the site. The dwellings are orientated to the east and upper storey windows will have views to the interior of the site. From the ground floor the conifer tree line on the site's western boundary preclude views to the interior. The dwellings have relatively open frontages however the rear gardens to the west are enclosed by large mature trees.
- 3.3.3 **Fairfield (3)** lies 80m to the northwest on Pines Hill. The property is grade II listed and the nearest listed property. The house is set behind a high brick wall in a large garden.
- 3.3.4 **The Old Bell (4)** lies to the northwest on Stoney Common Road. The building line of the public house is approximately 10m from the site. Windows orientated towards the site are small although they do appear to house the main areas of accommodation. The boundary vegetation on site and along the northern edge of No. 1 Stoney Common Road consists of mature trees.
- 3.3.5 **Telephone exchange (5)** is a medium sized warehouse for commercial works to the north of the site accessed from Stoney Common Road. The warehouse is 20m from the site's boundary and set on lower ground. There are glazed windows and doors on the southern elevation of the warehouse however there is little intervisibility (**Viewpoint h**).

3.3.6 **Stoney House and Moulin (6)** lie approximately 12m to the north of the site on Stoney Common Road. The two detached dwellings are orientated to the south and overlook the site (Viewpoint g)

3.3.7 **Breffins, Birches, and Mole Lodge (7)** lie approximately 15m to the northeast of the site. The three detached dwellings are orientated to the south and overlook the entrance to the access road on the eastern edge of the site. The retained tree belt along the eastern edge of the site will reduce any intervisibility (**Viewpoint g**).

3.3.8 **Engineering works (8)** site is situated to the southern edge of the site and accessed along the road to the east of the site boundary parallel to the railway cutting. The engineering works are on lower ground than site and surrounded by trees. The engineering works has a number of single storey sheds set around a central concrete apron.

3.3.9 **Pines Hill Cottage (9)**, lies approximately 55m to the south of the site, beyond Ostra Brama. The large dwelling is detached, orientated to the southeast and over two floors. The intervening boundary vegetation precludes views of the dwelling from the site

3.3.10 **Broome End Care Home (10)** lies 65m to the west of the proposed entrance. The care home is set within large grounds that are tree lined. The eastern boundary is with Pines Hill and consists of mature sycamore and beech trees.

3.3.11 **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)** development boundary lies on Stoney Common Road on the northern edge of the site. The village has expanding significantly over the last century and within the 21st century, development has taken place on the northern edge of the site and extensively to the southeast beyond Stansted Brook.

3.3.12 No other property is considered to have a landscape or visual relationship to the site.

3.4 **Topography**

3.4.1 The topography of the immediate area of the site is falling ground to the east and the water course of the Stansted Brook.

3.4.2 The geology of the site is recorded as mainly bedrock of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) – Chalk, the superficial deposit is Glaciofluvial Deposits, Mid Pleistocene – Sand and Gravel (British Geological Survey website, accessed 01 July 2021)

3.4.3 The application site lies at approximately 81m Above Ordnance Datum (“AOD”) on the western edge and falls to 73m AOD on the south eastern edge.

3.5 **Water and drainage**

3.5.1 The flood zone associated with Stansted Brook, approximately 60m to the southeast, is Flood Zone 2 (land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding; or land having between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of sea flooding) (Environment Agency website, date accessed 01 July 2021). There is no risk of surface flooding on the site itself.

Existing rights of way and access land

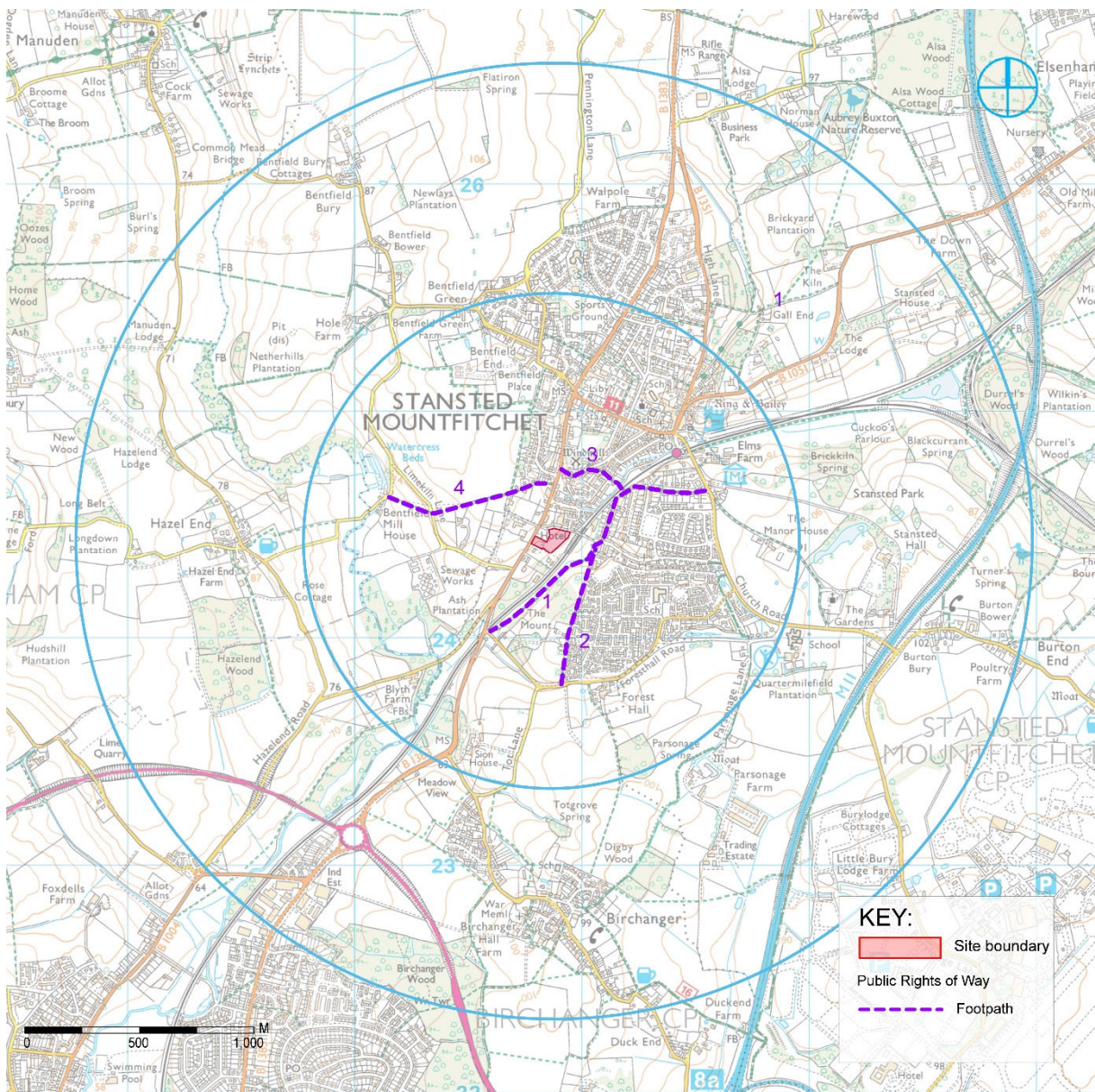


Figure 5: Map showing the locations of public rights of way of relevance to the site. (OS Map provided by www.centremapslive.com at scale 1:25,000)

3.5.2 Public Rights of Way (“PRoW”) have been mapped and approximate distances given within 1km and 2km of the site where relevant. Figure 5 shows the locations of PRoWs relevant to the site.

3.5.3 In general, the use of the PRoWs will vary according to their proximity to a settlement, and then according to the size of that settlement, such that the footpaths closest to the largest settlements will be those most frequently used. There are numerous PRoWs within 2km of the site.

3.5.4 **Footpath 1** is the closest PRoW and is 80m to the southeast at its closest point. The PRoW leaves Church Road northeast of the site and heads southwest towards the site within a housing estate before dropping down into the valley floor of Stansted Brook. The footpath follows the stream through a POS adjacent the railway line and emerges onto Forest Hall Road 450m south of the site.

3.5.5 **Footpath 2** is a PRoW that leaves Stoney Common Road at a junction with **Footpath 1** east of the site and heads south on high ground along the development edge of new estate housing 170m east of the site. The PRoW emerges onto Forest Hill Road, 585m south of the site. The parkland on the banks of Stansted Brook and the footpath route are tree lined.

3.5.6 **Footpath 3** starts at the footbridge over the railway to the northeast of the site on West Street. The PRoW heads west through residential areas before emerging onto the B1383, 255m north of the site.

3.5.7 **Footpath 4** starts on the B1383, 200m north of the site and heads west along a tree lined track reaching the course of the River Stort 680m west of the site on Windmill Lane.

3.5.8 Other PRoWs within 2km of the site are not considered to have a relationship with the site.

3.6 Landscape and other designations

The site is within the regional Green Belt landscape designation.

3.6.1 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (“SSSI”)

There are no SSSIs within 2km of the site.

3.6.2 National Nature Reserves (“NNR”)

There is no NNRs within 2km of the site.

3.6.3 County Wildlife Sites (“CWSs”)

There are numerous CWSs within 2km of the site:

- **The Mount**, made up of three locations, is 90m to the southeast of the site;
- **Parsonage Spring** is 890m to the southeast;
- **Digby Woods** is 1.4km to the southeast;
- **Birchanger Woods** is 1.7km to the south of the site;
- **Stansted Marsh** is 435m to the southwest of the site;
- **Hazelend wood** is 1.2km to the west of the site;
- **Gallend Meadows** is a potential CWS, 1km to the northeast of the site;
- **Aubrey Buxton Reserve** is 1.8km to the north of the site; and
- **Durrels Wood** is 1.9km to the northeast.

3.6.4 Green Belt

The site is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt. The development proposal is a small urban extension introduced into the landscape, with a minor change to the site’s enclosure by relocating the entrance. The openness of the Green Belt can be maintained due to the non-intrusive, low-rise built elements on a site that is so enclosed by mature trees, the changes to the interior will be barely perceptible. Views within the valley floor are generally enclosed and the views from higher ground are limited by built elements to the north.

3.6.5 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The site is not within an AONB.

3.6.6 Listed buildings

There are numerous listed buildings or structures within 2km of the site. These are concentrated in the medieval centre of **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)**. The closest grade II listed property is:

1. **Fairfield (3)**, which is approximately 70m north of the site, list entry no. 1322466, National Grid Reference TL 50815 24555.

3.6.7 Scheduled Monuments

There are two Scheduled Monuments within the 2km study area:

1. **Stansted Windmill** is approximately 260m north of the site, list entry no. 1002169, National Grid Reference TL 50976 24741;
2. **Stansted Castle: a ringwork and associated bailey 100m north of Elm Farm** is approximately 260m north of the site, list entry no. 1009311, National Grid Reference TL 51569 24988.

3.6.8 Conservation areas (“CAs”)

The **Stansted Mountfitchet** Conservation Area is 200m to the north of the site.

3.6.9 Registered Parks and Gardens

There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within 2km of the site.

3.6.10 Historical information

The surrounding area has changed in the last 100 years, due to the expansion of Stansted Mountfitchet settlement and the infill development. The road and rail routes were established however the surrounding landscape was less developed. The development of Stansted Airport has changed the nature of the landscape and historical road and rail routes (British History Online, website accessed 01 July 2021).

3.7 Published Landscape Character Assessments/ Landscape Effects

3.7.1 **National Character Areas**

- 3.7.2 The site is located within the **National Character Area Profile: 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands (‘NCA 86’)**. The landscape of NCA 86 is described as an ancient landscape of wooded arable countryside with a distinct sense of enclosure. The overall character is of a gently undulating, chalky boulder clay plateau, the undulations being caused by the numerous small-scale river valleys that dissect the plateau (NCA 86: 3). The character area is largely arable with pressure on hedgerows and water bodies. Key characteristics of local distinctiveness are ‘*chalky boulder clay plateau is dissected by numerous river valleys*’ and ‘*Field patterns are irregular despite rationalisation, with much ancient countryside surviving*’ (NCA 86: 7).

Identified environmental opportunities relevant to the site includes

- *‘Maintain and enhance the character of this gently undulating, rural landscape by maintaining agricultural productivity and encouraging sustainable land management practices that protect and enhance the landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity assets and benefit carbon storage and water quality, as well as the over-riding sense of place’*
- *‘Protect and enhance the area’s ancient woodland cover, parkland trees, river valley plantations and ancient hedgerows, through the management of existing woods and the planting of new woods, hedgerows and hedgerow trees to benefit landscape character, habitat connectivity and a range of ecosystem services’*
- *‘Enhance the slow-flowing, winding rivers and their pastoral valley flood plains that provide linkages through the landscape’ (NCA 86: 18-22).*

Key habitats:

3.7.3 Wood pasture, parkland, veteran trees, woodland, ancient and species rich hedgerow, wetland, lowland meadows, heath, and acid grassland (NCA 86: 32).

Settlement:

3.7.4 Settlement is described as within small hamlets, villages and scattered moated farmsteads; settlements are often clustered around village greens or ‘tyes’. There are numerous small market towns developed from medieval villages with licences to hold markets (NCA 83: 33).

Historic features:

3.7.5 Historically, settlement pattern was largely set during the 13th to 17th century wool trade except the more densely populated areas towards London. Woodland has been preserved in wetter areas, whilst pasture to valley floor and arable farming to valley sides has been preserved and shaped the landscape character; the area maintains a distinct wooded and rural feel (NCA 86: 12-15).

3.8 Published landscape Character Assessments/Landscape Effects

3.8.1 Landscape Character assessment (County level)

3.8.2 The Essex County Council’s Landscape Character Assessment (LCA 2003) and places the site in landscape character area ‘Stort Valley’.

3.8.3 The key characteristics are:

- *'Shallow and narrow valley with moderately sloping arable valleysides.*
- *Fairly enclosed character due to the frequency of hedgerows/hedgerow trees, small woods/copses and riverside trees.*
- *Small pastures and large floodplain meadows on the valley floor.*
- *Numerous small estates and parklands.*
- *Substantially undeveloped character' (LCA 2003: 75).*

3.8.4 The landscape condition is:

- *'There are localised areas of abandoned, or overgrazed pastures.*
- *Overall the condition of hedgerows and woodlands in the farmland is moderate to good.*
- *The condition of the settlements is moderate to good.*
- *A few villages show signs of poor quality modern development.*
- *Light industrial sheds on the valley floor at the northern edge of Harlow are visually intrusive' (LCA 2003: 78).*

3.8.5 The landscape sensitivity is overall 'high' with the landscape sensitive to 'small urban developments' is medium due to low intervisibility and 'May be capable of being absorbed. Developments to be considered on their individual merits' (LCA 2003: 79, also sensitivity matrix page 7). Proposals for the site are unlikely to be a visible extension to the village except where the new entrance to the site will be created from Pines Hill.

3.8.6 **Landscape Character Assessment (District level)**

3.8.7 The Uttlesford District Council's LCA (2006). The report places the site in the 'Stort River Valley' character area (LCA 2006: 278). The key characteristics are:

- *'Gently sloping, sometimes steep river valley slopes dominated by arable farmland.*
- *Small to medium scale field pattern defined by hedgerows, tree belts, woodland blocks in places.*
- *Location of River Stort well delineated by riverbank trees.*
- *Continuous views down the valley from higher ground, and at some bridging points.*

- *The large village of Stansted Mountfitchet, dispersed farmsteads and the smaller villages of Clavering and Maunden.*
- *Below Stansted Mountfitchet valley slopes still contain arable farmland but countryside character changes to one of busy roads and lanes and more dense settlements’ (LCA 2006: 278).*

3.8.8 Landscape sensitivity *‘include hedgerows, tree belts, woodland blocks and copses that frame several views across and out of the area. Potential new development, which may result in the loss of these features, would change the visual character and nature of views within and to the area. Within the valley floor, small linear fields of arable farmland, fringed by wet pasture and unimproved wet grassland are also sensitive to changes in land management. Sunken lanes and species-rich embanked verges are also key landscape features. Strong historic integrity is visible within the settlement pattern in the form of village greens and former commons, isolated farms, many moated sites, smaller hamlets and historic cores containing many vernacular buildings (for example Stansted Mountfitchet). The slopes of the valley are visually sensitive with long panoramic views across and along the floodplain. Views to the valley sides from adjacent Landscape Character Areas are also sensitive. Several important wildlife habitats are scattered throughout the area (including 18 sites of importance for nature conservation, comprising a mixture of wetland habitats, pasture and ancient woodland). Overall this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change’ (LCA 2006: 280).*

3.8.9 Suggested landscape planning guidelines:

- *‘Consider the landscape pattern and structure of large woodland areas and the role that they have in the composition of views to and from the area.*
- *Ensure that new riverside planting is designed to enhance landscape character and that species composition reflects local character.*
- *Ensure any new development on valley sides is small-scale and that it responds to historic settlement pattern, form and building materials.*
- *Seek to control and manage pesticide and fertilizer run-off from surrounding farmland.*
- *Ensure the scale and siting for any new settlement responds to local landscape character.*

- *Ensure any small-scale development in or on the edges of historic villages is of an appropriate scale, form, and design and uses materials which reflect the local vernacular.*
- *Develop sustainable local transport solutions to mitigate traffic congestion and reduce demand for new roads’ (LCA 2006: 281).*

3.8.10 Suggested land management guidelines:

- *‘Conserve the intimate character of the floodplain by appropriate planting of bankside trees.*
- *Conserve and manage areas of ancient woodland as historical landscape and nature conservation features.*
- *Consider the visual impact of new farm buildings on the valley slopes and encourage the planting of tree groups around visually intrusive buildings.*
- *Conserve and seek to restore marginal riverside habitat such as marshland and pasture, reed beds and off-stream wetlands.*
- *Conserve and restore historic hedgerow pattern and ditch system.*
- *Manage roadside rubbish behind Stansted Airport (service roads-east side)’ (LCA 2006: 281).*

3.9 National Planning Policy Framework updated July 2021 (NPPF 2021)

3.9.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) sets out a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development. The framework outlines three mutually dependent dimensions or roles for the planning system:

- Economic - building a strong economy and supporting growth
- Social - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities and creating a well-designed built environment
- Environmental - protecting and enhancing our natural, built, and historic environment (NPPF 2021: 5)

3.9.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment. Planning applications should consider:

- a) *‘the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*

- b) *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness’ (NPPF 2021:56).*

3.9.3 Achieving well-designed places’ policy decisions should ensure 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 users⁴⁹; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience (NPPF 2021: 38-9)*

3.9.4 The NPPF guidance of development within the Green Belt. *‘ the local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

- a) *‘buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- b) *the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds*

and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e) limited infilling in villages;*
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and 44*
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority’ (NPPF 2021: 43-44)**

3.10 Uttlesford District Council Local Plan (LP 2005)

3.10.1 The Uttlesford Local Plan currently informs planning decisions however a new local plan is in development. The new local plan will be delivered by December 2023.

3.10.2 Policy S1 - Development limits for the Main Urban Areas

‘The development limits of the existing main urban areas and proposed urban extensions for Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet are defined on the Proposals Map. The following development will be permitted within these boundaries:

- Major urban extensions, if in accordance with this Plan;*

- *Development within the existing built up areas, if compatible with the character of the settlement and, in addition, for sites on the edge of the built up area, its countryside setting' (LP 2005: 8)*

3.10.3 Policy S6 - Metropolitan Green Belt

'The area and boundaries of the Metropolitan Green Belt within Uttlesford are defined on the Proposals Map. Infilling, limited development or redevelopment compatible with the character of the settlement and its setting will be permitted within the following villages, which are excluded from the Green Belt:

- *Hatfield Heath*
- *Leaden Roding*
- *Little Hallingbury and*
- *White Roding.*

The boundaries of the Green Belt around these villages are defined on the Proposals Map. Four sites are identified as major developed sites within the Green Belt. A site at Mountfitchet School, Stansted Mountfitchet is defined on the Proposals Map as an area in which infilling development for educational or community uses will be permitted. A site at Parsonage Farm, Stansted Mountfitchet is defined on the Proposals Map as an area in which redevelopment for business uses will be permitted. Sewage Treatment works at Bishops Stortford and Stansted are defined on the Proposal Map as areas in which operational development will be permitted. Development compatible with the countryside setting and purposes of the Green Belt will be permitted within these boundaries' (LP 2005: 9)

3.10.4 Policy GEN2 – Design

'Development will not be permitted unless its design meets all the following criteria and has regard to adopted Supplementary Design Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents.

- a) It is compatible with the scale, form, layout, appearance and materials of surrounding buildings;*
- b) It safeguards important environmental features in its setting, enabling their retention and helping to reduce the visual impact of new buildings or structures where appropriate; c) It provides an environment, which meets the reasonable needs of all potential users.*
- d) It helps to reduce the potential for crime;*

- e) *It helps to minimise water and energy consumption;*
- f) *It has regard to guidance on layout and design adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the development plan.*
- g) *It helps to reduce waste production and encourages recycling and reuse.*
- h) *It minimises the environmental impact on neighbouring properties by appropriate mitigating measures.*
- i) *It would not have a materially adverse effect on the reasonable occupation and enjoyment of a residential or other sensitive property, as a result of loss of privacy, loss of daylight, overbearing impact or overshadowing' (LP 2005: 13).*

3.10.5 Policy GEN7 – Nature Conservation

'Development that would have a harmful effect on wildlife or geological features will not be permitted unless the need for the development outweighs the importance of the feature to nature conservation. Where the site includes protected species or habitats suitable for protected species, a nature conservation survey will be required. Measures to mitigate and/or compensate for the potential impacts of development, secured by planning obligation or condition, will be required. The enhancement of biodiversity through the creation of appropriate new habitats will be sought' (LP 2005: 16).

3.10.6 Policy ENV3 – Open Spaces and Trees

The loss of traditional open spaces, other visually important spaces, groups of trees and fine individual tree specimens through development proposals will not be permitted unless the need for the development outweighs their amenity value' (LP 2005: 24).

3.11 Summary of site context

3.11.1 The proposals include for a small residential estate within the boundaries of an abandoned field site. The site is enclosed by mature trees of mixed species including conifer. There is little intervisibility to the site interior.

3.11.2 Site neighbours include **Ostra Brama (1)**, a detached dwelling that is currently accessed through the site; also **Nos 1 and 2 Stoney Common Road (2)** on the western boundary which overlook the site, however, views are screened by conifer; and properties **Stoney house and Moulin (6)** and **Breffins House, Birches and Mole House (7)** lie on the northern boundary overlooking the site but screened by conifer.

3.11.3 The topography within the site is a gradual slope to the east towards Stansted Brook valley.

3.11.4 The closest PRow is to the east along the bank of Stansted Brook.

3.11.5 There are numerous **Listed buildings** and two **Scheduled Monuments** in **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)** however none have a visual relationship to the site.

3.11.6 Published Landscape Character Assessments include the National Character Assessment by Natural England, which places the proposed site in **NCA 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands**. The character of the landscape of the study area was assessed in the Uttlesford District Council's 'Landscape Character Assessment' (2005), the site is located in the 'Stort River Valley' character area.

3.11.7 The site is within the Green Belt, and as such District Council policies will permit development only if the proposals meet local and national policies. The proposals would constitute a small urban extension, and considering the built nature of the sites to the north and east, and the discreet nature of the site, the proposals would not reduce the openness of the Green Belt.

4 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposed area of approximate 0.90 hectares will accommodate thirty one new dwellings. The initial proposals are for eight detached, fourteen semi-detached, three terraced, and six apartment dwellings. There will be a new access route from Pines Hill due to the narrow width of current access along Stoney Common Road. A tree belt along the eastern edge along with boundary trees will be retained.
- 4.2 The proposals are for eight detached dwellings with off street parking or garages. The semi-detached properties will also either have garages or off-street parking. The terraced dwellings have garages. The apartment and four semi-detached dwellings will be affordable housing with a parking court. Visitor parking will be provided by bays along the new spine road.
- 4.3 Access to the site will be from Pines Hill on the western edge. Improved visibility spays will be required and excavations to meet road level. This will require the removal of some trees and hedgerow shrubs. The new access route will head east into the site and head north to the northern boundary. There are turning heads proposed on the northern end of the spine road and to the southeast. Interior site levels should be retained to ensure the existing boundary trees are retained.
- 4.4 The proposed project will retain most of the boundary vegetation and provides opportunities for enhancement of the native hedgerows within the site.
- 4.5 **Mitigation**
- 4.5.1 Mitigation is defined as the ‘measures proposed to prevent, reduce, and where possible offset any significant adverse effects (or to avoid, reduce, and if possible, remedy identified effects), including landscape and visual effects’ (GLVIA3: 41).
- 4.6 **Proposals for new landscape planting:**
- 4.6.1 Where tree and hedge plant removals are required on the western edge to accommodate visibility splays, it is recommended that a new hedge line and trees are planted set back from the existing tree line and to merge with those sections of hedgerow that will remain.
- 4.6.2 Interior tree and shrub planting to reflect local native species and wildlife friendly planting.

4.6.3 The site will retain large numbers of boundary trees and hedgerow shrubs however where some removals are required to accommodate the development replacement boundary planting should include hedgerows of mainly hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), oak (*Quercus robur*), and dogrose (*Rosa canina*).

4.6.4 Proposed tree species within the hedge lines should include field maple (*Acer campestre*) and birch (*Betula pendula*) that will be accommodated within the dense areas of planting.

5 **ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS**

5.1 **Overview**

5.1.1 In an assessment of **landscape effects**, the effects of the development are assessed on the landscape as a resource in its own right (GLVIA3: 70). They consist of the key characteristics of the landscape which contribute to its character; any individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape (*Ibid.*: 86).

5.1.2 This section describes first the landscape effects on the wider landscape character (section 5.2), and then the effect any change the proposed development will have on the nature of the landscape of the site and its environs (section 5.3). By combining the understanding of the landscape baseline situation with the details of the proposed change, i.e. the development, the significance of the landscape effects can be assessed. In particular, the landscape is assessed according to its sensitivity to change, the proposed development is assessed according to the magnitude of change imposed on the landscape by it, and then the effects upon the landscape can be determined. Therefore, in the case of a development of temporary cabin accommodation, the **landscape effects** are the likely results the proposal might have on the existing fabric and character of the landscape.

5.2 **Assessment of Landscape Effects on Wider Landscape Character**

5.2.1 The proposals lie in in the **NCA 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands** as previously described. On the basis of the study area being representative of part the NCA albeit part of land that has lost some woodland and hedgerows on higher ground, it is still an intact landscape, therefore it is considered that the overall sensitivity of the landscape character type is **medium** (see Appendix 2). The area exhibits a positive character that should be preserved. It has a sense of enclosure due to the tree lines to the boundaries of settled residential properties and within the river valley. Arable fields to the higher ground are more open. There is very little inter-visibility between the proposals and adjacent landscapes. The 20th and 21st century residential expansion to the north and east also reduces openness.

5.2.2 The Uttlesford District Council LCA places the site within the 'Stort River Valley' landscape character area. The landscape sensitivity is 'relatively high'. The proposals are within a contained and discreet site. Retention of boundary trees where possible will retain the discreet nature of the site. The tree line on the western edge is classified as 'important woodland' in the

Uttlesford Local Plan constraints mapping (Uttlesford interactive map, accessed 02 July 2021). The removal of mature trees on the western edge on the boundary with Pines Hill will reduce the enclosure felt by vehicle users when travelling along the road.

5.2.3 The site is in the Green Belt and therefore inappropriate development will be avoided. The openness of the Green Belt is reduced in this location by the intensely enclosed nature of the site and the proposals will maintain this on most boundaries. The openness of the Green Belt is part described as a 'greenness as a visual quality' and remains the same due the enclosed nature of the site. The proposals are not visually intrusive from any locations other than the immediate site boundaries, maintaining the openness of the Green Belt. The site is enclosed by residential buildings to the north and beyond the railway and river to the east. Residences lie to the west and south and therefore the proposals are not encroaching into the countryside. Also, the scale of the proposals is in keeping with the existing residences and pattern of properties to the north. There is no coalescing of settlements brought about by changes on site. The proposals are an infilling site within the village context. The sensitivity of the landscape receptor is **medium** due to the Green Belt status

5.2.4 The only property that is considered historically sensitive is **Fairfield (3)** which has no landscape relationship with the site. The Conservation Area (CA) is within the village to the north, the site will not have a landscape effect on the setting of the CA due to distance and built edge. Approaching the village from the south along Pines Hill, only the entrance to the site will be visible.

5.2.5 The operational effect of the development is in keeping with the surrounding residential areas.

5.2.6 In addition, the landscape effects of the proposed development will be limited by the existing raised land to the west with strong screening vegetation. Additionally tree groups within the river valley to the east and the railway cutting reduce effects to the east.

5.2.7 In considering the magnitude of change brought about by the proposed development, there would be new elements introduced into the landscape, resulting in a change in land cover as well as change in land use. However, there is no substantial change in landform or overall pattern of the landscape, apart from bringing an overgrown, unused land parcel into residential use. The proposals are considered to be long-term in duration and will introduce structures on a relatively enclosed site. It is therefore judged that there would be an introduction of new

landscape elements and a moderate change to the receiving landscape. There would be a **low** magnitude of change to the receiving landscape character.

5.2.8 As a result of **medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of change there would be a long-term, **slight/moderate** effect on the local landscape character due to its Green Belt status.

5.3 **Assessment of Landscape Effects on the Site and its Environs: Operational Stage**

5.3.1 The individual elements which are found in the immediate surroundings of the site, and which are all judged to be intact, are:

- (i) River Stort landscape;
- (ii) Tree lines on all boundaries;
- (iii) Overgrown pasture field; and
- (iv) Important woodland on western boundary.

5.3.2 There are few landscape receptors upon which there would be **no landscape effect** caused by the proposed development at site scale:

- River valley.

5.3.3 The landscape receptors that would be affected by the proposed development at site scale are:

- The pasture field;
- Some trees on boundaries; and,
- Important woodland on western boundary.

5.3.4 These landscape receptors identified in 5.3.3 above relate to the site itself, and its immediate surroundings, and are within 1km radius of the site boundaries.

5.3.5 The landscape elements identified above (in sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2 and 5.3.3) are judged to be representative of the wider landscape character and type of the area; the wider landscape elements are in good condition with local designation of Green Belt land. On this basis, they are considered to be of **medium** sensitivity.

5.3.6 The long-term change to the fabric of the site is the alteration of an unused overgrown pasture field and the introduction of new landscape elements, namely residential units within the larger field enclosure. Although this affects the land cover and land use of the site, it does not change the landform or larger field pattern within the wider landscape. The development would introduce moderate new elements into the landscape at close scale and extend the settlement

edge of Stansted Mountfitchet to the south. However, this is in line with extensive development of the village to the southeast and the proposals are on a small scale. It is therefore judged that the proposal does introduce some new elements into the landscape, however these will be contained within boundary and proposed vegetative screening, therefore the overall magnitude of change for the site itself therefore is considered to be **medium**.

5.3.7 The **medium** magnitude nature of the operational effects on the **medium** sensitivity of the landscape elements, would therefore be a **moderate** effect on the immediate landscape.

5.4 **Assessment of Landscape Effects on the Site and its Environs: Construction Stage**

5.4.1 During construction of the development, expected to be of medium duration, the potential area from where the development would be visible would remain slightly greater to the existing and operational zone of visual influence. Given the existing context and the temporary nature of the construction phase, it is considered that the effect during construction would be **medium** for landscape receptors.

5.4.2 The landscape receptors that would be affected by the proposed development at site scale are the same as those discussed in para. 5.3.3 above, being the larger arable field and enclosure to the west.

5.4.3 Both the development and construction area fit within the field pattern and boundary hedgerows.

5.4.4 The locating of the proposed residential estate would take place within an overgrown pasture field, which is in landscape terms considered to have **medium** sensitivity to change. The impact of these changes would mean that the magnitude would be considered to be **medium**.

5.4.5 The nature of the construction effects of the proposed industrial unit on the fabric of the site's landscape would be **moderate**.

5.5 **Cumulative Landscape Effects**

5.5.1 Consideration has been given to the potential cumulative landscape effects of the proposed development. For the purposes of this assessment, this assessment has been limited to other major developments which could be considered as having cumulative effects within the 2km study area on the landscape character.

5.5.2 The effect of the construction of the proposed development on the landscape receptors will be affected by variables such as distance to site, however there would be no effect on the landscape elements and receptors identified in paras. 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 above.

5.5.3 There is little landscape relationship between the site and the rest of the settlement in the surrounding landscape due to its enclosed nature. There are no proposals with the planning system which will lead to cumulative landscape effects.

5.5.4 Given the limited connectivity, the cumulative effects on the character area would be considered **low**.

6 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 In this section, **visual effects** are considered by assessing both the views which specific receptors are likely to see and the general visual amenity experienced by people. These are then considered in conjunction with the baseline situation and the proposals for the development to enable the assessment of likely significant visual effects (GLVIA3: 98).

6.1.2 Thus, the section describes the visual effect of the development where there are views towards the site, and any factors that limit or prevent views. The desktop studies and field surveys have identified viewpoints regarded as representative of the range of views and receptors from around the site. The selected viewpoints are not intended to cover every possible view, but rather are representative of a range of receptor types e.g. residents, walkers and road users from various directions and distances from the site boundary. Some viewpoints were selected from which the ZTV indicated that there would be a view of the site, however, at a number of these locations, no views of the site were possible. This illustrates the conservative nature of the ZTV process, as it does not include the screening effects of smaller trees and hedgerows. Conversely, it is possible that some views which are not highlighted by the ZTV mapping analysis become clear during the field study, and these are discussed if relevant below. The ZTV analysis is located in the A3 Figures Volume submitted under separate cover.

6.1.3 A visual analysis from the representative viewpoints has been carried out to determine how the proposed development might influence the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape. The assessment was carried out as part of the site survey, with the photographic assessment recording the character of the view and the existing visibility of the site.

6.1.4 The site survey and photographic assessment were undertaken on a dull day, on 28 June 2021. The locations of the representative viewpoints are shown at Figure 3. Photographic viewpoints are located in the A3 Figures Volume submitted under separate cover.

Assessment of visual effects on the site and its environs: Operational stage

6.2 Transport routes

- 6.2.1 The site is located off Pines Hill, the B1383, a carriageway heading north from **Bishop's Stortford** to a junction with the A11 in the north. The road is relatively busy with commuter and residential traffic entering the village of **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)** from the south. The view travelling north of the existing site condition is screened (**Viewpoint e**). However, this will become initially more open due to the new access point. Travelling south from **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)**, the views are also enclosed and this will remain so if proposals are implemented due to the enclosure on the boundary of **Nos 1 and 2 Stoney Common Road (2) (Viewpoint i)**. The receptors using Pines Hill will be mainly residents and commuters and therefore have a **low** sensitivity to change. The magnitude of change is judged to be **medium** given the extent of the visibility of the site, however there will be a change to the character of the road's tree lined appearance. The visual effect is therefore considered **slight/moderate**. Mitigation in the form of hedgerow and tree replacement planting on the boundary of the site will reduce the magnitude of change to **low** over time, therefore over time the visual effect will be reduced to **slight**.
- 6.2.2 Stoney Common Road runs along the northern edge of the site. The site will remain relatively enclosed if the proposals are implemented. However, there will be some loss of trees and the interior of the site will be intermittently visible. V
- 6.2.3 Vehicles move slowly along the narrow road and the lane that accesses **Ostra Brama (1)** and **Nos 1 and 2 Stoney Common Road (2)**. The receptors using Stoney Common Road will be mainly residents therefore have a **low** sensitivity to change. The magnitude of change is judged to be **medium** given the extent of the visibility of the site, however there will be a change to the density of tree cover. The visual effect is therefore considered **slight/moderate**. Mitigation planting possibilities are limited so are unlikely to reduce the visual effect.
- 6.2.4 Views from West Anglia Rail line are not possible due to the sunken cutting and tree belt on the eastern edge of the site.
- 6.2.5 Views are not considered possible from other transport routes.

6.3 Settlements, residential and commercial properties

6.3.1 The numbers after the properties (in the text) refer to Figure 4 showing their locations in the study area. Please refer to Figure 3 for the locations of the viewpoints below.

6.3.2 **Ostra Brama (1)** is a large, detached dwelling to the southwest of the site (**Viewpoint c**). Living areas, and therefore primary views are orientated to the southeast. Views of the site will be oblique to the north. The boundary of Ostra Brama is lined by trees and the garden area has mature orchard trees. The retention of these trees will reduce the visual effect on views from the house. The proposals include new access via the site's new access road from Pines Hill therefore, the proposals will be part of the visual scene on entering the property. Visual receptors are considered to have a **medium** visual sensitivity due to secondary views and view on entering property being affected. The magnitude of changes on site is judged to be **high** given the extent of the visibility of the site and current views. The visual effect is therefore considered **substantial/moderate**. Mitigation in the form of hedgerow and tree planting on the shared boundary with the site will partially screen changes on site reducing the magnitude of change to **medium** overall therefore over time the visual effect will be reduced to **moderate**.

6.3.3 **Nos 1 and 2 Stoney Common Road (2)** are semi-detached cottages on the north western boundary of the site. Views are limited from the ground floor due to the strong boundary vegetation however there will be extensive removals, and this opens up views into the site. Visual receptors are considered to have a **high** visual sensitivity due to primary views from living areas and views on entering the access road are also being affected. The magnitude of changes on site is judged to be **medium** given the extent of the visibility of the site and current views. There may be some benefit in opening up the views around the dwellings and the interiors and gardens receiving more light. The visual effect is therefore considered **substantial/moderate**. Mitigation in the form of hedgerow and tree planting on the shared boundary with the site will partially screen changes on site reducing the magnitude of change to **low** overall therefore over time the visual effect will be reduced to **moderate/slight**.

6.3.4 **Fairfield (3)** is unaffected by the proposals.

6.3.5 **The Old Bell (4)** lies to the northwest on Stoney Common Road. Views are limited from the small external windows. The extensive mature trees on the boundary of No. 1 Stoney Common Road and retained hedgerows and trees will screen the interior of the site. Visual receptors are considered to have a **low** visual sensitivity due to limited views from rooms. The magnitude of changes on site is judged to be **low** given the extent of the visibility. The visual effect is therefore considered **slight**.

6.3.6 **Telephone exchange (5)** is a commercial warehouse. There are extremely limited views from the building (**Viewpoint h**). Visual receptors are considered to have a **low** visual sensitivity when they are engaged in work. The magnitude of changes on site is judged to be **low** given the extent of the visibility. The visual effect is therefore considered **slight**.

6.3.7 **Stoney House and Moulin (6)** are located on Stoney Common Road. The two detached dwellings are orientated to south and overlook the site (**Viewpoint g**). Most boundary vegetation on the northern edge is to be retained. Views will be limited from the ground floor. Some partial visibility is likely from the upper floors. Visual receptors are considered to have a **medium** visual sensitivity due to secondary views from non-living areas. The magnitude of changes on site is judged to be **low** given the extent of the visibility and partial views. The visual effect is therefore considered **slight/moderate**. Mitigation planting is unlikely to change the visual effect.

6.3.8 **Breffins, Birches and Mole Lodge (7)** are located on Stoney Common Road to the northeast. The three detached dwellings are orientated to the south and there is some overlooking of the site (**Viewpoint g**). Visual receptors are considered to have a **medium** visual sensitivity due to secondary views from non-living areas. The magnitude of changes on site is judged to be **low** given the extent of the visibility and partial views. The visual effect is therefore considered **slight/moderate**. Mitigation planting is unlikely to change the visual effect.

6.3.9 **Engineering works (8)** is situated to the southern edge of the site and not considered effected visually by the proposals if shared boundary trees and shrubs are retained.

6.3.10 **Pines Hill Cottage (9)** and **Broome End Care Home (10)** are enclosed by mature vegetation and not considered likely to be visually affected.

6.3.11 **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)** extends to the north with some residential estates to the east of the site. It is unlikely that there will be any change to views from the surrounding settlement.

6.3.12 No other views are considered possible from other properties and settlements in the wider landscape

Public Rights of Way, other paths, and public open spaces

6.3.13 There are numerous PRoWs within the study area. Views from a representative sample have been included in this and previous sections. Please refer to Figure 5 for the locations of the identified footpaths.

6.3.14 **Footpath 1** is the closest PRoW and lies to the east. It is unlikely that **Footpath 1** and **Footpath 2** users will perceive the changes on site due to the retained tree belt to the eastern of the site.

6.3.15 **Footpath 3** and **Footpath 4** have no visual relationship to the site.

6.3.16 There are no views from other PRoWs due to intervening vegetation and land form.

6.4 **Other Visual Receptors**

6.4.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for views to occur from heritage-related locations toward the site, including listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments. The site has no visual relationship with any heritage locations in the vicinity.

6.4.2 The development will have no impact on the conservation areas.

6.5 **Summary of Identified Visual Issues**

6.5.1 The extent of visibility of the proposed site is limited principally to:

Transport routes

Slight/moderate:

- Pines Hill and Stoney Common Road, **slight/moderate**, reducing to **slight** with mitigation planting;

Settlements, residential and commercial properties

Slight to Substantial/moderate:

- Ostra Brama (1) and Nos 1 and 2 Stoney Common Road (2), **substantial/moderate** reducing to **slight/moderate** or **moderate** with mitigation planting;
- Stoney House, Moulin (6), Breffin House, Birches, Mole Lodge (7), **slight/moderate**;
- The Old Bell (4) and Telephone Exchange (5), **slight**.

Public Rights of Way

None

6.6 **Conclusions: Visual Effects – Operational phase**

- 6.6.1 The greatest effect on visual amenity is likely to be experienced by properties directly on the boundary and by users of Pines Hill heading south for a brief distance. Further views are limited by vegetation and the built aspects of **Stansted Mountfitchet (A)**.
- 6.6.2 Transport route receptors are subject to a **slight/moderate** visual effect.
- 6.6.3 The neighbouring properties **Ostra Brama (1)** and the cottages on the western edge are judged as experiencing visual effects which are **substantial/moderate**. Strong hedge line and tree planting will be effective in reducing the effect to **moderate** and **slight/moderate**, and this is only three dwellings. Other properties were judged to have a **slight** or **slight/moderate** visual effect.
- 6.6.4 No footpaths will be affected.
- 6.6.5 Beyond these receptors, the site is shielded from views by the strong boundary vegetation however some trees and hedgerow plants will be removed to accommodate the development opening up the site however beyond those described there are no further notable effects to transport routes, residential, or Public Rights of Way receptors.

Assessment and Conclusions of Visual Effects on the Site: Construction Stage

- 6.6.6 The construction of the development would take place on an arable field site off Station Drive. The visual effects of construction activity during this phase would be temporary, however activity may be visible, however this is likely to affect only properties and train users already noted. Transport lorries and equipment may be visible above the boundaries.
- 6.6.7 Vehicular movement to and from the site would be confined to Thorley Street.
- 6.6.8 Given the existing context and the temporary nature of the effects, it is considered that the visual effect of the construction stage of the proposed development would produce **slight** visual effects.

6.7 Cumulative Visual Effects

- 6.7.1 Consideration has been given to the potential cumulative visual effects of the proposed residential development. There are site allocations for development within the vicinity of the proposals. The proposals, if given permission, would only have a cumulative effect in relation possible planning applications.

6.7.2 Cumulative visual effect according to the GLVIA guidance requires two tests. The first is whether there is static combined visibility, either in combination (visible in the same view) or in succession (visible by turning the head), and the second whether there is sequential visibility (views in motion), either frequently (appearing regularly and in short time lapses) or occasionally sequential (longer time lapses, greater distances or slow moving receptors) [GLVIA: 131].

6.7.3 With respect to cumulative visual effect, there are so few public locations that the site can be seen, and private views are also not likely to experience a cumulative effect as these are static views that are partially enclosed. There are no further planning applications that are likely to lead to further extension to the settlement edge. There are **no** cumulative visual effects.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Based on an assessment of the landscape character area of the application site and its surroundings, and using the Uttlesford District Council's 'Landscape Character Assessment' and field study, the area is judged as able to accommodate the proposed change. The area is judged as having **medium** sensitivity to change, due to its positive landscape condition and Green Belt status.
- 7.2 The landscape effects of the proposed development on the wider character area are limited by the strong tree lines along property boundaries. These factors limit the effects of the proposals, helping to maintain the character of the area. However, there would be some change and the proposals would introduce new elements at a discreet location into the landscape, resulting in a change in land cover and land use.
- 7.3 It is therefore judged that there would be a **medium** magnitude of change to the receiving landscape character under a 1km radius from the site boundaries. This judgement is based on the change in land use and the boundary vegetation that will be retained and enhanced. The introduction of notable elements into the landscape will not change balance of the wider landscape character, the magnitude of change will be **low**. The result is therefore considered to be a **slight/moderate** effect on the landscape character in the long-term.
- 7.4 Many of the landscape elements and receptors identified in Section 5.3 are considered to be unaffected by the proposals.
- 7.5 The landscape elements identified at site scale and its immediate environs, and considered affected by the proposed development, are limited to the change in land cover and use from pasture field to medium scale-built elements. Given the condition of the landscape elements identified, these landscape receptors are judged as having a **medium** sensitivity to change. The overall magnitude of change as a result of the development at the site scale is considered to be **medium**. Therefore, for these landscape receptors the effect is **moderate**.
- 7.6 Currently there are no other proposals within the vicinity of the site awaiting permission therefore it is judged that there would be **low** cumulative landscape effects caused by the proposal.
- 7.7 The greatest effect on visual amenity is likely to be experienced immediately adjacent to the site. Any more distant views of the proposals beyond this are likely to be limited, and if

experienced would be assimilated into the wider landscape. It is therefore considered that there is little potential for the development to result in any significant effects on visual receptors at distances of over 500m from the site of the surrounding area.

7.8 The proposed mitigation planting is designed to mitigate the visual effects of the proposals. The proposals will lead to a contained development with boundary landscape buffers and interior landscaping that encloses the site. The proposals are as follows:

- To plant a hedge and tree lines within the housing estate interior;
- Reinforce the western boundary where removals are necessary for visibility splays;
- Plant a replacement native species hedgerow on the western where possible.

7.9 The extent of sensitivity of visual receptors is **low to high** and the magnitude of change is **low to high**, and are limited to the immediate area of the proposed site:

Transport routes

Slight/moderate: two transport routes fall into this category.

Settlements, residential and commercial properties

Slight to substantial/moderate: ten identified properties or groups thereof fall into this category, the effect reduced with mitigation planting.

Public Rights of Way and open public spaces

None.

7.10 The cumulative visual effects were assessed in relation to the proposals and planning applications. Generally, due to isolation of the proposals that there will be **no cumulative visual effect**.

7.11 The new and existing landscape features within the site will benefit from an agreed programme of management, which would help to ensure their long-term viability within the landscape. The proposed tree belt and hedgerow planting will provide a beneficial effect for biodiversity and wildlife.

7.12 The openness of the Green Belt can be maintained due to the medium density of the proposals that are discreetly placed in a well enclosed site. A landscape buffer on all edges of

the site will provide additional planting to maintain the enclosed landscape character. The proposals do not lead to the coalescence of settlements or intrusion into the countryside due to existing residential properties.

- 7.13 The site is within a landscape that exerts a positive character and that is in moderate landscape condition. Mitigation in the form of hedgerow and tree planting reinforcement will mitigate changes to visual amenity externally, as well as ensuring a contained scheme within landscape buffers with good quality landscaping internally. The site provides an opportunity to create good quality housing adjacent the settlement, without having an impact on the wider rural landscape.

Appendix 1

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 For Construction & Fabrication Purposes - Do not scale from this drawing, use only the illustrated dimensions herein. Additional dimensions are to be requested and checked directly.
 Illustrated information from 3rd party consultants/specialists is shown as indicatively only. See other consultants / specialist drawings for full information and detail.

Scale: 0 10 30 50m



PROPOSED SITE PLAN

Rev	Date	Note	Amended	Checked
P1	28.06.21	Tree layout added	JR	SM
P2	10.08.21	Amendment to plot 6 and gates added to	RH	SM
P3	20.08.21	Gates & tabletop removed	JR	SM

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Project Title
**STONEY COMMON ROAD
 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**
 Client Details
LUXUS HOMES

Drawing Title
**PROPOSED_SITE_PLAN
 OPTION_2**

Scale	Date	Drawn	Checked
1:500@A1	25.06.21	JR	SM

Drawing Status
DRAFT

Project No.	Drawing No.	Status	Revision
002.21	SK08	P	P3

Appendix 2

Assessment Criteria

In accordance with the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Guidelines, 3rd edition (2013) the significance of effects is ascertained with the aid of cross-referencing the sensitivity of the baseline landscape or visual receptor and the magnitude of change as a result of the development.

Sensitivity of Landscape Character

The sensitivity of landscape character is a measure of a landscape's capacity to accommodate change. It varies depending on factors such as the scale and form of the landscape, landscape pattern, sense of enclosure, sense of tranquillity and remoteness, the settlement pattern and transport network etc. We used our professional judgement to determine the sensitivity of the character areas, based on relevant regional and local landscape character studies.

Table 1 Levels of sensitivity for landscape character

Low	Areas that exhibit a neutral or negative character. May have a strong sense of enclosure that reduces visual sensitivity, are likely to be already affected by man-made elements, have reduced tranquillity, are likely to have little inter-visibility with adjacent landscapes and exhibit a low density of sensitive landscape elements. Includes detractors such as power-lines, industrial derelict or inappropriate built forms with no aesthetic value or evidence of strategic planning. There is a lack of mature vegetation cover, and no landscape designations apply.
Medium	Areas that exhibit a positive character. May have some sense of enclosure, or be affected by some man-made elements, or have little inter-visibility with adjacent landscapes and exhibit a moderate density of sensitive landscape elements. There is a reasonable distribution of semi-natural vegetation, trees and shrub cover and the overall view of the area is pleasant. Local landscape designations of cultural and historic value may be present.

High	Areas that exhibit a strong positive, character. May be open or exposed with a remote character and an absence of man-made elements. They are often highly visible from adjacent landscapes and exhibit a high density of sensitive landscape elements. Includes landscapes highly valued for their scenic quality, e.g. nationally designated areas such as National Parks, AONB.
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Sensitivity of landscape elements

The sensitivity of an individual landscape element reflects factors such as its quality, value, contribution to landscape character and the degree to which the particular element can be replaced. We used our professional judgement to determine the magnitude of direct physical impacts on individual existing landscape elements as follows:

Table 2 Levels of sensitivity for landscape elements

Low	Landscape elements in below average or poor condition which detract from landscape character, such as obtrusive man-made structures such as power lines or large areas of hard standing.
Medium	Landscape elements in good condition but with no statutory protection. Locally distinctive but commonplace features.
High	Landscape elements with statutory protection, which are unique or scarce, for example ancient woodland or feature parkland trees, national trails or cycle routes.

Table 3 Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape character and landscape elements

Negligible	No notable introduction of new elements into the landscape or change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape. The proposals would be apparent as a landscape feature without being conspicuous. In addition, the proposals are short to medium term in duration and reversible.
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Low	Introduction of minor new elements into the landscape or some minor change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape. In addition, the proposals are medium to long term in duration and reversible.
Medium	Introduction of some notable elements into the landscape or some notable change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape. The balance of the landscape characteristics are not altered but the proposals would be a conspicuous feature of the make-up of the character area. In addition, the proposals are medium to long term in duration and reversible or permanent.
High	Introduction of major elements into the landscape or some major change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape. The proposals would be a prominent feature in the make-up of the character area. In addition, the proposals are long term to indefinite in duration and permanent.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

We used representative viewpoints in the assessment to represent different visual receptor groups at various distances and directions from the site. Generally speaking, residential receptors, recreational users of Public Rights of Way or people at recognised vantage points have a higher sensitivity to change than people travelling along roads or conducting their daily business e.g. at their place of work.

Table 4 Levels of sensitivity for visual receptors

Low	Includes people at place of work e.g. industrial and commercial premises, public rights of way with low levels of use and road users engaged in commuting or commercial travel and people engaged in outdoor sporting activities.
Medium	Includes non-strategic footpaths or other rights of way, secondary or oblique views from residences, and people travelling through the landscape on roads and trains engaged in tourism or journeys of a recreational nature.

High	Includes principal views by occupiers of residential properties and users of strategic recreational footpaths or other rights of way. Important landscape features with physical, cultural or historic attributes. Views from beauty spots and picnic areas.
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Table 5 Criteria for magnitude of change for visual receptors

Negligible	No notable change in the view. In addition, the proposals are short to medium term in duration and reversible.
Low	Some change in the view that is not prominent / few visual receptors affected. Proposals would be visible but not eye-catching or noticeably distinct. In addition, the proposals are medium to long term in duration and reversible.
Medium	Some change in the view that is clearly visible and forms an important but not defining element in the view. The proposals would be conspicuous and form a noticeably distinct feature. In addition, the proposals are medium to long term in duration and reversible or permanent.
High	Major change in the view that has a defining influence on the overall view / many visual receptors affected. A fundamental change in the view with proposals being dominant. In addition, the proposals are long term to indefinite in duration and permanent.

Significance of Effect

The significance of the landscape and visual effects is determined by considering the sensitivity of the landscape element, landscape character or view in conjunction with the magnitude of change. The significance of effects is described as substantial, moderate or slight, as guided by the matrix in Table 6 below. Those effects identified as being of substantial, substantial/moderate and moderate may be regarded as having the greatest significance.

Significance of effect may be affected by factors such as the potential for weather conditions to restrict views, the principal aspect of the viewpoint/viewer, the proportion of a view affected, or the

potential for the development to attract the eye or become the focal point in the view to the detriment/benefit of competing visual elements.

Visual effects may be either adverse or beneficial in nature, and relate to the individual perceptions of the assessor. If no material effect is experienced, this may be seen as being neutral.

The term ‘significant’

The term ‘significant’ is specifically used when considering developments with the greatest effect on the environment. These developments are considered as set out in the European Parliament Directive 2011/92/EU and require an Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”). Where it has been agreed with the LPA that the development does not require an EIA, or where the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is being submitted as a stand-alone document, this term will not be used.

Table 6 Visual and Landscape Assessment Matrix

	Magnitude of change (grey shading shows greatest effect)			
Sensitivity	Negligible	Low	Medium	High
High	Slight/Moderate	Moderate/Slight	Substantial/Moderate	Substantial
Medium	Slight	Slight/Moderate	Moderate	Substantial/Moderate
Low	Effectively no change	Slight	Slight/Moderate	Moderate/Slight

Duration of effects

For the purposes of this assessment the following time scales have been used:

Short term: 0 to 10 years;

Medium Term: 10 to 25 years;

Long term: 25 to 50 years;

Indefinite: more than 50 years and permanent.

Appendix 3

Methods for Visualisations

Introduction

The photomontage methodology conforms to the latest Landscape Institute (LI) Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals (December 2019) for photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment. This document outlines the process by which all photomontage images have been produced.

Data Collection

The viewpoints for photomontage are selected by a Landscape Architect. Consideration to safety and legal access is also given when electing the viewpoint positions for the photomontages. The team conducting the site-work consists of both a photographer and a surveyor who will be responsible for the entire process from image capture to final photomontage. When collecting visual data, relevant control points within the photo are surveyed to a high level of accuracy to ensure that the proposed development accurately correlates to the photo.

Equipment

Relevant camera settings such as focal point are also noted in the document. These settings are selected in accordance with the LI guidance, and are set for the conditions at the time of the photo. When appropriate, surveying equipment is used to establish the position of the photo.

Image Processing

Each panoramic image is produced by the stitching together of a number of individual photographs using industry standard software. The images are then individually checked to ensure both that the original photographic quality is maintained and that the resulting image is clear and realistically stitched together. An overlap of 30% is applied for each image.

Photomontage

Industry standard image-handling software is used to produce the final photomontage image. The stitched image is the base for the photomontage viewpoint, with additional images captured from the

survey or previous surveys introduced where relevant. As per the LI Advice Note, the photomontage composition process includes the digital manipulation of these images. Final images are saved as .jpg format.

Presentation

Industry standard drafting software is used to produce the final deliverable drawing. Both existing and proposed images are shown at the same size and scale, with all required details displayed in the title block of the drawing.

APPENDIX 4

Data sources:

Accessed between 27.06.2021 and 23.07.2021

An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396192/landscape-character-assessment.pdf

Bing maps: [REDACTED]

Biodiversity 2020:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf

British History Online: [REDACTED]

British Geological Survey: [REDACTED]

British Standards: BS5837:12 Trees in relation to design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations BSI Standards Ltd April 2012

English Heritage listed buildings [REDACTED]

Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/summary?easting=548969&northing=219035>

Essex County Council

LCA: [REDACTED]

Google earth

Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013. *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge

Landscape Institute website: Visual Representation of Development Proposals- Technical Guidance Note 06/19– 2019

Listed buildings: [REDACTED]

Magic Map: <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

National Planning Policy Framework: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Natural England Publications:

NCA Profile: 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands



Agricultural Land Classification Map Eastern Region:



Uttlesford District Council

Local Plan 2005: https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/4723/Uttlesford-Local-Plan-Adopted-January-2005/pdf/Local_Plan_2005.pdf?m=637471937917270000

Uttlesford Green Belt Review (2016): https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/6035/Green-Belt-Review-Report/pdf/Uttlesford_GB_Review_-_Report_Methodology_and_Assessment_FINAL_2016_03_24_low.res1.pdf?m=636038357590570000

Interactive map:



LCA: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4937/Environment>

Conservation Areas: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/caa>