

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

**Land South of Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, Essex**  
Marden Homes Limited

October 2020



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by Liz Lake Associates on behalf of Marden Homes Limited to address the landscape and visual issues relevant to the Land south of Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, Essex (the Site).
- 1.1.2 The principal objective of the assessment is to identify the landscape and visual issues of the potential development Site and to identify the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development and to assess the significance of those effects.
- 1.1.3 The report considers the existing baseline conditions and seeks to identify the relevant landscape and visual issues applicable to the Site. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken to assess the likely effects upon the landscape resource, specific views and visual amenity.
- 1.1.4 Site visits were undertaken during 2019 and 2020, initially to appraise and understand the character and condition of the Site and the surrounding landscape context, and to provide landscape and visual input into the emerging proposals. The assessment was made by an experienced Chartered Landscape Architect once the revised scheme proposals (summer/autumn 2020) had been sufficiently progressed. Site visits were undertaken in mixed weather, with some patches of cloud cover amongst sunny spells; however, visibility was good for the purposes of undertaking the assessment of effects.
- 1.1.5 All photographs were taken with a digital camera, a Canon EOS 1100D with a 30mm fixed lens. The 30mm lens is the digital equivalent to a standard 50mm focal length lens with a single lens reflex camera.
- 1.1.6 Liz Lake Associates is a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy with over 30 years' experience of master planning, landscape, ecology, urban design, heritage and environmental impact assessment. The company is a registered practice of the Landscape Institute.
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## METHODOLOGY

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- 2.1.1 An LVIA of the Site and the development proposals has been prepared, encompassing the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA) 3rd edition (published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013), and 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland' (published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish National Heritage 2002). In summary, the approach combines information and desktop reviews with on-Site surveys and appraisal.
- 2.1.2 The Site based assessment involves the recording of both objective description and subjective impressions of the landscape, as well as details of the existing landscape condition. It includes an assessment of the extent and nature of views to and from the Site and the type of receptors that experience these views.
- 2.1.3 The following relevant studies and documents have been considered as part of the desk based review and subsequent assessment:
- Natural England – National Character Areas 2014
  - Essex Landscape Character Assessment and Colchester Borough Council LCA, Chris Blandford Associates (CBA), 2003, 2005
- 2.1.4 The landscape and visual assessment of the proposed development has been based upon the proposals illustrated on drawings prepared by DAP Architects.
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## 3 EXISTING SITUATION

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### 3.1 Context

3.1.1 The Site is located to the north west of Tiptree, a large village in the administrative District of Colchester and located approximately 10 miles south west of the historic Roman town. The village, and in particular the north west part of the settlement has undergone significant recent change, with new residential development taking place, and further allocations for the north west are set out in the emerging local neighbourhood plan and policies. The Site itself forms part of one of three further growth locations in the village and as such is allocated with local policies for development.

3.1.2 The Site comprises partly previously developed land with existing residential houses, together with associated outbuildings, structures, sheds and hardstanding beyond which are horse paddocks, grass fields with dense boundary hedgerows with trees.

3.1.3 The Site forms part of the plateau at the north west edge of Tiptree village, and lies at approximately 65m AOD partly within the Messing Wooded Farmland LCA and partly within the Urban Area.

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### 3.2 Published Landscape Character Assessments

3.2.1 A brief summary of the published landscape character assessments in the context of the Site is detailed below.

#### National Character Area

3.2.2 The Site lies in National Character Area (NCA) 111: Northern Thames Basin as defined by Natural England. The NCA extends from Hertfordshire in the west to the Essex coast in the east.

3.2.3 Key characteristics of the area relevant to this Site, include:

- *"The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the 'Bagshot Hills' are notable to the north-west and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.*
- *Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.*
- *Areas capped by glacial sands and gravels have resulted in nutrient-poor, free-draining soils which support remnant lowland heathlands, although these are now small. Areas that have alluvial deposits present are well drained and fertile.*
- *The water bearing underlying Chalk beds are a main source of recharge for the principal London Basin Chalk aquifer.*
- *A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area.*
- *The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.*
- *The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting historical activity. Informal patterns of 18<sup>th</sup> century or earlier enclosure reflect medieval colonisation of the heaths. Regular planned enclosures dating from the Romano-British period are a subtle but nationally important feature on the flat land to the south-east of the area. In the Essex heathlands 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>- century enclosure of heathlands and commons followed by extensive 20<sup>th</sup>- century field enlargement is dominant.*
- *Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands. Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.*
- *The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.*

- *Rich archaeology including sites related to Roman occupation, with the Roman capital at Colchester and City of St Albans (Verulamium) and links to London. Landscape parklands surrounding 16<sup>th</sup>- and 17<sup>th</sup>-century rural estates and country houses built for London merchants are a particular feature in Hertfordshire.*
- *The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements, with the creation of new settlements such as the pioneering garden city at Welwyn and the planned town at Basildon.*
- *Brick-built dwellings are characteristic from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Prior to this dwellings and farm buildings tended to be timber built with weatherboarding, now mainly painted white but traditionally black or tarred, and whitewashed plaster walls.”<sup>1</sup>*

#### ***County Character Assessment***

3.2.4 The Essex Landscape Character Assessment was published in 2003, commissioned by Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and undertaken by Chris Blandford Associates.

3.2.5 The Site lies primarily within Landscape Character Type D: Wooded Hill and Ridge Landscapes, within Landscape Character Area (LCA) D4: Tiptree Ridge.

3.2.6 Key Characteristics of LCA D4: Tiptree Ridge include:

- *“Elevated, broad ridge.*
- *Strongly wooded western ridge side.*
- *Small – medium scale field pattern.*
- *Enclosed character provided by many tall, thick hedgerows and woodland.*
- *Framed views over the Blackwater Valley and the Blackwater coastal farmlands.”<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> National Character Area profile 111: Northern Thames Basin, P.8.

<sup>2</sup> Essex Landscape Character Assessment, 2003, P.129

3.2.7 Woodland/tree cover features of note in LCA D4: Tiptree Ridge include:

- *“Extensive deciduous woodland cover of large and small woods/copses, some interlocking.*
- *A few straight bounded conifer plantations, and treebelts.*
- *Many hedgerow trees including oak, sweet chestnut, holly, field maple.”<sup>3</sup>*

3.2.8 The County LCA describes the Landscape Condition as:

- *“The condition of the hedgerows is moderate to good, in localised areas they are fragmented.*
- *Some poor quality development out of character is found around Tiptree and in the small settlements to the south west.”<sup>4</sup>*

3.2.9 The County LCA evaluates the landscape sensitivity of LCA D4: Tiptree Ridge to development. The Site falls at the upper end of the small urban extension and a Low Sensitivity to change but is part of a wider allocation that will eventually form a major urban extension.

3.2.10 The initial site work identified that the Site forms part of the plateau and is contained by urban development characteristics on three sides, including recently completed housing to the south and east with an industrial estate to the north west, with an existing hedgerow being retained to the western boundary, and to the extent it does not have a tranquil context. In addition, the Site has rather limited visibility, in part due to containment and as established in the ztv and supported by field work, it is not a visually exposed Site on the plateau itself or affecting a ridge side. As such, there are no key sensitivities in landscape or visual terms that would appear to be a constraint to development when considering a residential extension in this location, informed from the below table from the County Level LCA.

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<sup>3</sup> Essex Landscape Character Assessment, 2003, P.131

<sup>4</sup> Essex Landscape Character Assessment, 2003, P.132

Type/scale of Development/Change	Key Landscape Sensitivity and Accommodation of Change Issues	Landscape Sensitivity Level
<b>Major Urban Extensions (&lt;5ha) and new settlements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern.</li> <li>- Visual exposure of some ridgesides.</li> <li>- Small areas of tranquillity in the west.</li> </ul>	High
<b>Small Urban Extensions (&lt;5ha)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low to moderate intervisibility.</li> <li>- Opportunities to improve some existing urban edges.</li> </ul>	Low

### ***District Landscape Character Assessment***

#### 3.2.11

The Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), 2005 provides the District level study for the area and the Site straddles the fringes of the LCA F1: Messing Wooded Farmland, and part of the LCA G2: Principal Urban Area of Tiptree. Almost adjacent to the south, lies the LCA F2: Tiptree Wooded Farmland, where a significant amount of the character and key features of the adjacent character area have been lost (since the 2005 assessment was undertaken) as a result of residential development, and are now urban in character, forming part of the Principal Urban Area. These recent changes have further influenced the character of the land surrounding the Site.

#### 3.2.12

The proximity to the expanding urban fringes means that the Site displays few of the characteristic landscape features of the LCA Messing Wooded Farmland, although the list includes, features in the surrounding area beyond the Site:

- *“Sparse settlement pattern consisting of the small village of Messing, and a number of small isolated farmsteads;*
- *Elevated plateau landform which is situated on a broad ridge and dissected by small streams, providing undulations in topography;*
- *Large areas of mixed woodlands (for example Layer Wood and Pods Wood);*
- *Number of small ponds and lakes;*

- *Single mature trees at field boundaries or standing within fields.*<sup>5</sup>

3.2.13 Visual characteristics include:

- *“Framed views to the distinctive square tower of All Saints Parish Church (Messing) from several locations within the farmland plateau;*
- *Large patches of woodland are distinctive landscape features which are always visible on the skyline;*
- *Long-distance panoramic views across adjacent (Easthorpe Farmland Plateau) from winding roads to the east and west of Messing.*<sup>6</sup>

3.2.14 The Key Planning and Land Management Issues relevant to the Site include the:

- *“Potential for visually intrusive development on the northern fringes of Tiptree;*
- *Existing visually intrusive and sometimes derelict farm buildings.*<sup>7</sup>

3.2.15 The stated Landscape Strategy Objective is to Conserve and Enhance, whilst the suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines include to,

- *“Conserve the mostly rural character of the area;*
- *Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character (refer to the Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas, Essex Planning Officers Association, 1997, for further information). Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape;*
- *Encourage screening, through tree planting, of visually intrusive modern farm buildings;*

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<sup>5</sup> Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2005, P.121

<sup>6</sup> Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2005, P.122

<sup>7</sup> Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2005, P.122

- *Maintain panoramic views across farmland plateau to the north.*<sup>8</sup>

3.2.16 Suggested Land Management Guidelines include:

- *“Conserve and restore the existing hedgerow network where gappy and depleted;*
- *Conserve, manage and enhance large areas of woodland such as Pods Wood and Layer Wood (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding in keeping with existing landscape character);*
- *Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features;*
- *Conserve, manage and enhance smaller patches of woodland, taking into consideration the role that they play in the creation of a distinctive landscape pattern to the north west of Tiptree;*
- *Plant half-standard trees within field hedgerow boundaries to succeed over mature trees.*<sup>9</sup>

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### 3.3 Statutory Designations

- 3.3.1 **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** There are no SSSI’s covering the Site. The closest SSSI is Tiptree Heath SSSI, approximately 1.9km south of the Site. (Refer to **Figure 2: Statutory Designations**).
- 3.3.2 **Ramsar Sites:** There are no Ramsar designations covering the Site or within 2km of the Site.
- 3.3.3 **Local Nature Reserves (LNR):** There are no LNR’s covering the Site or within 2km of the Site.
- 3.3.4 **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC):** There are no SAC’s covering the Site or within 2km of the Site.

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<sup>8</sup> Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2005, P.122-123

<sup>9</sup> Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2005, P.123

- 3.3.5 **Special Protection Areas (SPA):** There are no SPA's covering the Site or within 2km of the Site.
- 3.3.6 **Listed Buildings:** There are no Listed Buildings within the Site. In closest proximity to the Site is Pan in the Wood (List Entry Number: 1224971), Grade II listed, approximately 245m north east of the Site. York House (List Entry Number: 1266591), Grade II listed, lies approximately 400m south east of the Site. Theobalds Farmhouse (List Entry Number: 1224936), Grade II listed, lies approximately 552m north west of the Site. (Refer to **Figure 3: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way**).
- 3.3.7 **Conservation Area:** The Site is not located within or within 2km of a Conservation Area.
- 3.3.8 **Scheduled Monuments:** There are no Scheduled Monuments covering the Site. Bowl barrow in Corneyfield Wood (List Entry Number: 1009447), 570m NNE of Messing Park Farm, lies approximately 1.4km north east of the Site. (Refer to **Figure 3: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way**).
- 3.3.9 **Public Rights of Way (PRoW):** There are no designated Public Rights of Way (PRoW) crossing the Site itself. Although, PRoW (footpath) 150\_4 runs adjacent to the south western boundary of the Site connecting the village (via Grange Road) to the wider landscape north west of the settlement. (Refer to **Figure 3: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way**).
- 3.3.10 **Environmental Designations:** The Site is not covered by any Environmental Designations. In closest proximity to the Site is an area of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland, approximately 165m north west of the Site. Areas of Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland are scattered across the surrounding landscape. (Refer to **Figure 4: Environmental Designations**).
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### **3.4 Landscape Resource and Contribution to Local Landscape Character**

- 3.4.1 At a local scale, the Site comprises a partly brownfield site comprising residential properties fronting the street, with associated structures, outbuildings and hardstanding sited mainly to the rear, together with a mixed use of horse paddocks and grassland on the plateau at the north west edge of Tiptree. The Site also includes some internal features such as ponds and ditch aligned with some mature hedgerow vegetation, including trees along the existing boundaries, providing a relatively high degree of containment from the wider landscape.
- 3.4.2 As part of the plateau landscape at the urban edge of Tiptree village, the Site's immediate context is one contained almost entirely (except on part of the western boundary) by built development, comprising residential development to the south and east with the Tower Industrial Estate to the north west. An existing hedgerow to the western boundary ensures the Site has rather limited visibility in the wider landscape and is not a visually exposed Site on the plateau itself or affecting a ridge side.
- 3.4.3 As the Site straddles the fringes of the LCA F1: Messing Wooded Farmland, and part of the LCA G2: Principal Urban Area of Tiptree the character is mixed, but influenced by the built context and contrasting characteristics associated with the wider LCA. The adjacent LCA F2: Tiptree Wooded Farmland, where a significant amount of the character and key features of the adjacent character area have been lost (since the 2005 assessment was undertaken) as a result of residential development, and are now urban in character, forming part of the Principal Urban Area. These recent changes have further influenced the character of the land surrounding the Site to the south and increased the urban context adjacent to the Messing Wooded Farmland.
- 3.4.4 Overall, the Site contains some elements such as mature boundary/field hedges with trees, and ponds on the plateau that form part of the Site, with surrounding woodland blocks located beyond the Site in the wider LCA, that are representative attributes of the local landscape and contribute to its character; whilst there are also some elements that contrast with the LCA some with urban characteristics at the settlement edge and influence the rural quality and perceptual aspects of the landscape.

## 3.5 Visual Resource

3.5.1 The visual amenity experienced by people (visual receptors) in the locality of the Site differs according to many factors. Visual receptors of higher sensitivity with the greatest susceptibility to change include residents at home (private viewpoints), people engaged in outdoor recreation (including use of PROWs), visitors to heritage assets and other attractions, travellers on recognised scenic routes (public viewpoints) and people at their work place where views are an important contributor to the setting and quality of their working life. Travellers on roads, rail or other transport routes are considered less sensitive to changes in visual amenity.

3.5.2 Consideration of the study area, via desk research, a ztv along with detailed field survey, has identified the approximate extent of theoretical visibility of the proposed development, and helped to inform the locations from which the Site (proposed development) will potentially be visible. From the analysis, it is evident that the scheme has a localised visual influence in the surrounding area.

3.5.3 As a result, the following specific, representative and illustrative views have been selected for inclusion in the report to support the consideration of the visual effects of the proposed development:

### **Private viewpoints** (no photos from private locations)

- Residential properties (new development off Grange Road).
- Residential properties along Kelvedon Road and Oak Road, close to the Site.

### **Public viewpoints**

- Views from PRoW 150\_4 (example photo location 2, 3, 4, and 5).
- Views from PRoW 150\_5 (example photo location 16).
- Views from PRoW 150\_14 (example photo location 7).
- Views from PRoW Restricted Byway 150\_17 (Pennsylvania Lane) (example photo location 20).
- Views from PRoW 150\_38 (example photo location 21).

### **Transport routes**

- Views from Windmill Lane/ Highfields Lane (example photo locations 17, 18 and 19).

- Views from Kelvedon Road (example photo locations 10, 11, 13, and 14).
  - Views from Oak Road (example photo locations 12 and 15).
  - Views from Grange Road/ Vine Road (example photo locations 8 and 9).
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## 4 THE PROPOSALS

### 4.1 General Principles

4.1.1 This section of the report considers the results of the initial baseline work in the context of the future residential development of the Site.

4.1.2 Building on the key sensitivities and vulnerabilities arising in the landscape character assessment work, the LCA offers the following guidance in relation to the Landscape Character Area (LCA) F1: **Messing Wooded Farmland,**

Landscape Guidance	Commentary
<i>“Conserve the mostly rural character of the area;</i>	The scheme develops an area that is partly urban in character and at the very edge of the LCA where the influence of the village edge is apparent – the site is well contained and surrounded by mature vegetation and trees, limiting views; accordingly, the parts of the character area with the greatest rural qualities and attributes in the wider landscape would be fully conserved.
<i>Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character (refer to the Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas, Essex Planning Officers Association, 1997, for further information). Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape</i>	The scheme responds to settlement pattern and is well contained by existing built development on three sides. (Forward development proposals will completely enclose the Site in future). This, together with the existing mature boundary vegetation will ensure the development is well integrated at the edge of the settlement, leaving the surrounding landscape unaffected.
<i>Encourage screening, through tree planting, of visually intrusive modern farm buildings</i>	The Site contains some modern buildings and structures and buildings that will be removed in any event; however, the Site is well contained by existing mature boundaries and built development.

<p><b><i>Maintain panoramic views across farmland plateau to the north.</i></b><sup>10</sup></p>	<p>The Site does not currently provide panoramic views across farmland to the north towards Messing. North of the Site is located the Tower Business Park a commercial development.</p>
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#### 4.1.3

Suggested Land Management Guidelines include:

Land Management Guidelines	Commentary
<p><b><i>“Conserve and restore the existing hedgerow network where gappy and depleted</i></b></p>	<p>Key hedgerows will be conserved and restored as far as possible, by infilling and gapping up, as well as providing more connected green infrastructure.</p>
<p><b><i>Conserve, manage and enhance large areas of woodland such as Pods Wood and Layer Wood (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding in keeping with existing landscape character);</i></b></p>	<p>The Site does not comprise any existing woodland features, and no nearby woodland will be affected by the proposals. It may be appropriate to provide some coppicing and pollarding to the existing trees being retained on Site as part of the future management regime, in collaboration with the arboricultural consultant to maintain character and longevity of the tree stock.</p>
<p><b><i>Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features;</i></b></p>	<p>The Site does not contain any Ancient Woodland or Woodland. The majority of trees are being retained on Site and incorporated into the proposals as part of the development.</p>
<p><b><i>Conserve, manage and enhance smaller patches of woodland, taking into consideration the role that</i></b></p>	<p>The Site does not contain any Woodland. The majority of trees are being retained on Site and incorporated into the proposals as part of the development.</p>

<sup>10</sup> Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2005, P.122-123

<p><i>they play in the creation of a distinctive landscape pattern to the north west of Tiptree;</i></p>	
<p><i>Plant half-standard trees within field hedgerow boundaries to succeed over mature trees.</i><sup>11</sup></p>	<p>The scheme will comprise new tree planting as part of the proposals to be conditioned, which will include boundary trees (as well as other trees) to provide diversity and longevity of the tree stock.</p>

By incorporating these principles into the proposals will help to integrate the development into its surroundings.

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## 4.2 Proposals

4.2.1 The proposed scheme forms a planning application for a new residential development comprising the change of use to new residential homes with associated strategic road infrastructure, open space and landscape proposals. The proposals are shown on drawings produced by DAP.

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## 4.3 Approach to Mitigation

4.3.1 In consideration of the landscape and visual issues relevant to the Site an approach to the mitigation of the proposed development has been developed. The mitigation strategy aims to avoid, reduce and where feasible, remedy the identified landscape and visual effects.

4.3.2 Recommendations have been incorporated into the proposals which aim to mitigate the potential adverse landscape and visual effects and help to integrate the proposed development into the surrounding landscape, this includes;

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<sup>11</sup> Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2005, P.123

- Retention, management and enhancement of existing boundary vegetation, including key trees on the Site boundaries.
  - Retention, management and enhancement of existing vegetation including strong tree line and pond features across the Site.
  - The proposed dwellings will be set back and are proposed to follow the existing frontages along Kelvedon Road to reflect and be wholly contiguous with the existing settlement pattern, which is arranged along roads.
  - The setback of properties allows for character of the street to be maintained and enhanced, allowing for verdant green boundary hedgerow treatments with trees for front gardens.
  - Properties to incorporate green boundaries such as hedging and including trees to help integrate the development into its landscape setting at the edge of the village and soften key views, especially where garden boundaries are outward facing.
  - The positioning of the properties enables the development to fit well with the scale and form of the village and be contiguous with the existing pattern of the settlement, helping it integrate into the landscape setting.
  - The proposals will utilise features of the local vernacular, to reflect the traditional character and materials and colour palette of the village.
  - The proposals include public open space on the western boundary to limit the impact of new houses on the only undeveloped Site edge.
  - The proposals allow for connections onto the public right of way adjacent to the south west boundary.
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## 5 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

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### 5.1 Identifying the Landscape Effects

This section of the report considers the results of the initial baseline work in the context of future potential development of the Site. The landscape effects are the changes to the Site, quantitative or qualitative, compared with a scenario without the Proposals. Effects can be adverse or beneficial, direct, indirect or cumulative.

5.1.1 The following assessment of landscape effect should be read in conjunction with the approach to mitigation (refer Chapter 4).

5.1.2 The effect of the proposed changes to the Site, specifically on the identified landscape receptors (attributes) has been reviewed including consideration of changes to the existing landscape resource, the introduction of new elements within the landscape and changes to local perceptions of the Site.

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### 5.2 Susceptibility

5.2.1 An important element in identifying the effects of a Proposal is to assess the ability (the susceptibility) of the existing landscape to accommodate the specific proposed changes with regard to the consequences on the local landscape character.

5.2.2 The Site (landscape resource) has been deemed to be of Medium to Low Susceptibility, in a landscape where appropriate changes that are carefully considered and well-designed can successfully be absorbed and could contribute to the maintenance of key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual or, contribute to overall local landscape character.

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### 5.3 Significance of Landscape Effects

5.3.1 Effects can be adverse or beneficial. Where the Proposals are judged to cause deterioration to the landscape resource / local landscape character this is described as an adverse effect. Where the Proposals are judged to increase the value of the

Site to the landscape resource / local landscape character this is described as a beneficial effect.

- 5.3.2 There will be a permanent and noticeable effect to the Site in the proposed change in landscape character over some of the Site from open agricultural land on the plateau to a residential development; although, it is recognised that the scale of change will affect only a small part of what is a well contained Site. The proposed dwellings would however reflect the scale, massing of existing built form and be contiguous with the pattern of the existing settlement in the landscape extending along the road and infilling an area that is surrounded on three sides by existing development. The proposed residential development will be relatively small in scale and entirely within keeping with the established village pattern and offers the similar density and grain within which an appropriate landscape structure comprising trees and hedges can integrate the development at the edge of the village.
- 5.3.3 Whilst existing vegetation will largely be retained, and additional planting will be included along boundaries where appropriate to strengthen the characteristics and rural appearance of the Site in keeping with the existing character and feel of the village edge location.
- 5.3.4 Overall, it is considered that the significance of the landscape effects with regard to the proposed development on a small part of the Messing Wooded Farmland has been assessed to represent a ***Moderate to Slight Adverse Effect***.
- 5.3.5 Once an appropriate landscape management scheme has established and the landscape mitigation proposals have established the significance of the landscape effects in the longer term are considered to represent a ***Slight Adverse Effect*** on the landscape resource and landscape character of the area at the edge of the settlement.
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## 6 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

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The visual effects are the changes to the Site, quantitative or qualitative, compared with a scenario without the Proposals. Effects can be adverse or beneficial, direct, indirect or cumulative. The assessment involves a systematic identification and description of the visual effects, supported by plans and photographs.

The following assessment of visual effect should be read in conjunction with the approach to mitigation (refer Chapter 4).

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### 6.1 Identifying the Visual Effects

6.1.1 The likely value placed upon views by people or the visual amenity of the locality is evaluated to help assess the effects of proposed development.

6.1.2 Consideration of the views and visual amenity has taken into account winter months when vegetation was devoid of foliage. As such, the assessment has endeavoured to make informed judgements applicable to visual amenity throughout the year and the consideration of seasonal views, e.g. the worst case in winter, as well as taking into consideration summer months when vegetation has foliage.

6.1.3 An important element in identifying the visual effects of a Proposal is to assess the existing visual receptors (people who see the view) and their susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity. The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- *The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations;*  
and
  - *The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.*<sup>12</sup>
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<sup>12</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Para 6.32 (2013)

## **6.2 Significance of Visual Effects**

6.2.1 Assessment of the significance of visual effects relating to the proposed development is considered with regard to the sensitivity of the visual receptor, the value attached to the views or visual amenity and the magnitude of change in view. The magnitude of change in view is considered in light of:

- The sensitivity of the visual receptor (the viewer)
- The value attached to the view(s) or visual amenity
- The size and scale of the development
- The geographical extent of the area influenced
- Duration
- Reversibility.

6.2.2 For the identified viewpoints the degree of change which the Proposals will engender is described and assessed. The following section identifies the primary viewpoints and people or visual receptors within the area that are likely to be affected by the change in views and visual amenity resulting from the proposed development. The significance of the visual effect has been assessed upon completion of the scheme and once established (i.e. 15 years plus). It is recognised that features such as trees and woodland continue to grow until they reach maturity.

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## **6.3 Identification of Visual Effects**

6.3.1 The following section identifies the receptors within the area which are likely to be affected by the change in views and visual amenity resulting from the proposed development. (Refer to accompanying Figure 7, Photo Location Plan, and Figure 8, Photographic Sheets)

### **Private Viewpoints (High Sensitivity)**

#### ***Residential properties (new development off Grange Road)***

6.3.2 Viewers from the adjacent residential properties may experience a combination of direct and oblique views towards parts of the proposed development from their windows, across adjacent field boundaries and established vegetation patterns, although it is recognised that the principle views already within a residential context, with no interruption of long distance or panoramic views.

- Scheme completion: **Slight Adverse Effect**
- Established scheme (+15 years): **Slight Adverse Effect**

#### ***Residential properties along Kelvedon Road and Oak Road, close to the Site***

6.3.3 A mixture of direct and oblique views from properties that currently front the road, or have rear views, from where a likely change would be experienced with the proposed development, including a greater quantity of new housing extending at a greater depth from the road frontage than at present, and incorporating a new access in the form of a roundabout (and link road) with lighting, some filtered views through existing and new vegetation features, would assist in partially softening the effects of the new dwellings.

- Scheme completion: **Moderate to Slight Adverse Effect**
- Established scheme (+15 years): **Slight Adverse Effect**

### **Public viewpoints (High Sensitivity)**

#### ***Views from PRow 150\_4 (example photo location 2, 3, 4, and 5)***

6.3.4 For the most part it is likely that there will be some heavily filtered views providing glimpses towards the development from parts of the public footpath when approaching the Site from both directions. Although the amenity value of the path is reduced somewhat by the existing built development at the edge of the village

adjacent to the path and some fly tipping that has occurred close to the Tower Industrial Park, views of the development would be partially softened by the existing mature vegetation, and the set back provided in part by the new open space, with views being more apparent in winter months and when path users are adjacent to the development but would recede with distance.

- Scheme completion: **Moderate to Slight Adverse close to the Site, reducing to Negligible Effect with distance**
- Established scheme (+15 years): **Negligible Adverse Effect**

*Views from PRow 150\_5 (example photo location 16)*

6.3.5

Views of the development would be mostly screened by vegetation, and the attractive rolling agricultural landscape in the foreground with a wooded backcloth on the plateau would remain the key feature in the view, with only very limited filtered glimpses of the village including upper parts of the new housing seen between the trees and mostly in winter months.

- Scheme completion: **Negligible Effect**
- Established scheme (+15 years): **Negligible Effect**

*Views from PRow 150\_14 (example photo location 7)*

6.3.6

Views towards the Site from this PRow approaching Grange Road are set beside land which has recently been developed, with residential development to one side and Colchester United FC training centre to the left, including a number of football pitches. A large mature belt of trees lines Grange Road beyond which lies another new development Site with glimpses of built form in winter sited in front of the Site and views of the proposed development are unlikely.

- Scheme completion: **Negligible Effect**
- Established scheme (+15 years): **Negligible Effect**

***Views from PRow Restricted Byway 150\_17 (Pennsylvania Lane) (example photo location 20)***

- 6.3.7 Views towards the Site from this PRow approaching Grange Road are enclosed by a tunnel effect of mature hedgerow trees, with Colchester United FC training centre to one side, including a number of football pitches. A large mature belt of trees lines Grange Road beyond which views of the proposed development will be highly limited.
- Scheme completion: **Negligible Effect**
  - Established scheme (+15 years): **Negligible Effect**

***Views from PRow 150\_38 (example photo location 21)***

- 6.3.8 Views towards the Site from this PRow are heavily filtered by existing layers of hedgerow, woodland and tree cover, including Pennsylvania Lane, Grange Road and other intervening field boundaries, which limits longer views beyond the open field. Views of the proposed development will be highly limited and filtered.
- Scheme completion: **Negligible Effect**
  - Established scheme (+15 years): **Negligible Effect**

**Transport Routes (Low Sensitivity)**

***Views from Windmill Lane/ Highfields Lane (example photo locations 17, 18 and 19)***

- 6.3.9 Windmill Lane and Highfields Lane form part of the undulating agricultural land beyond the north west of the village and these views form the only longer distance glimpses towards the village from an elevated location. Views of the development would be mostly screened by boundary vegetation, and the attractive rolling agricultural landscape in the foreground with a wooded backcloth on the plateau would remain the key feature in the view, with only very limited filtered glimpses of

the village including upper parts of the new housing seen between the trees and mostly in winter months.

- Scheme completion: **Negligible Effect**
- Established scheme (+15 years): **Negligible Effect**

*Views from Kelvedon Road (example photo locations 10, 11, 13, and 14).*

6.3.10

A mixture of views on the approaches that currently front the road, from where a likely change would be experienced with the proposed development seen in between and behind existing housing, including a greater quantity of new housing extending at a greater depth from the road frontage than at present, as well as incorporating a new access in the form of a roundabout (and link road) with lighting, some filtered views through existing and new vegetation features, would assist in partially softening the effects of the new dwellings with the effects reducing with distance.

- Scheme completion: **Moderate to Slight Adverse Effect**
- Established scheme (+15 years): **Slight Adverse to Negligible Effect**

*Views from Oak Road (example photo locations 12 and 15)*

6.3.11

A mixture of views on the approach that currently front the road, from where a likely change would be experienced with the proposed development seen in between and behind the redeveloped housing on the frontage, including a greater quantity of new housing extending at a greater depth from the road frontage than at present, with the effects reducing with distance.

- Scheme completion: **Slight Adverse Effect**
- Established scheme (+15 years): **Negligible Effect**

*Views from Grange Road/ Vine Road (example photo locations 8 and 9)*

6.3.12

It is unlikely that there would be views of the new development given the foreground context of new housing, any change would be experienced with the proposed development seen in between and behind the redeveloped housing on the frontage.

- Scheme completion: **Negligible Effect**
  - Established scheme (+15 years): **Negligible Effect**
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## 7 CONCLUSION

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- 7.1.1 The village of Tiptree, and in particular the north west part of the settlement has undergone significant recent change, with new residential development taking place, and further allocations for the north west are set out in the emerging local neighbourhood plan and policies. The Site itself forms part of one of three further growth locations in the village and as such is allocated with local policies for development.
- 7.1.2 The Site comprises partly previously developed land with existing residential houses, together with associated outbuildings, structures, sheds and hardstanding beyond which are horse paddocks, grass fields with dense boundary hedgerows with trees.
- 7.1.3 The Site forms part of the plateau at the north west edge of Tiptree village, and lies at approximately 65m AOD partly within the Messing Wooded Farmland LCA and partly within the Urban Area. The proposed development consists of new residential development together with associated access roads, parking, open space and landscape proposals.
- 7.1.4 Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposed Site layout to reduce the effects on both landscape and visual amenity and to help to integrate the proposed development into the surrounding landscape, in line with relevant planning policy. These include:
- Retention, management and enhancement of existing boundary vegetation, including key trees on the Site boundaries.
  - Retention, management and enhancement of existing vegetation including strong tree line and pond features across the Site.
  - The proposed dwellings will be set back and are proposed to follow the existing frontages along Kelvedon Road to reflect and be wholly contiguous with the existing settlement pattern, which is arranged along roads.

- The setback of properties allows for character of the street to be maintained and enhanced, allowing for verdant green boundary hedgerow treatments with trees for front gardens.
- Properties to incorporate green boundaries such as hedging and including trees to help integrate the development into its landscape setting at the edge of the village and soften key views, especially where garden boundaries are outward facing.
- The positioning of the properties enables the development to fit well with the scale and form of the village and be contiguous with the existing pattern of the settlement, helping it integrate into the landscape setting.
- The proposals will utilise features of the local vernacular, to reflect the traditional character and materials and colour palette of the village.
- The proposals include public open space on the western boundary to limit the impact of new houses on the only undeveloped Site edge.
- The proposals allow for connections onto the public right of way adjacent to the south west boundary.

7.1.5 The significance of the landscape effects of the proposed development upon completion is considered a Moderate to Slight Adverse Effect on the Site itself, representing a small part of the Messing Wooded Farmland LCA beyond the settlement edge. However, various mitigation measures are proposed, see above. This will reduce the effects of change over time where the effect on the local landscape character would be a Slight Adverse Effect.

7.1.6 The significance of the visual effect of the proposed development upon completion is considered to generally range within Moderate to Slight Adverse to Negligible Effect across all identified viewpoints. As the scheme matures and the landscape provides increasing screening of the built form, the overall significance of the visual effect is generally considered to reduce to a range of Slight Adverse Effect to a Negligible Effect.

### 7.1.7

However, it is recognised that the proposed development forms a logical extension to the village which is allocation and is contiguous with the settlement pattern. The landscape effects are considered to be relatively limited and localised with the effects being felt on part of the urban character area, together with a small part of the character area of Messing Wooded Farmland, where a significant amount of change has already eroded some of the key rural characteristics of the north west edge of the village. The study also concluded that the visual sphere of influence established by the ZTV was also of a limited nature and affected only a localised area around the site. Beyond this, future development plans if brought forward will further contain the development Site.

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