

LAND OFF LECONFIELD ROAD, NANPANTAN,  
LOUGHBOROUGH

LPA ref. P/20/2199/2

PINS ref: APP/X2410/W/22/3304644

“S Higson’s Landscape and Visual Assessment”

Appendix 1 to Proof of Evidence of

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Prepared for Charnwood Borough Council

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## Contents

|   |                                           |    |
|---|-------------------------------------------|----|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION .....                        | 1  |
| 2 | LANDSCAPE-RELATED PLANNING CONTEXT .....  | 6  |
| 3 | ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS .....     | 13 |
| 4 | ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS .....        | 33 |
| 5 | CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS IN DISPUTE ..... | 48 |

### DRAWINGS

|                |                                                                          |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CBC-LEC-PI-001 | Viewpoint 7i (micro-siting within Appeal Site)                           |
| CBC-LEC-PI-002 | Viewpoint 8i (micro-siting to interpretation board within Burleigh Wood) |
| CBC-LEC-PI-003 | Viewpoint 8ii (micro-siting to memorial bench within Burleigh Wood)      |

### FIGURES

|          |                                                                                                                           |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Figure 1 | Screen shot from Charnwood Borough Council’s website, Proposals Map Local Plan 2004                                       |
| Figure 2 | Screen shot from Charnwood Borough Council’s website, Proposals Map Local Plan 2021-2037 Examination                      |
| Figure 3 | Mark up of Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Areas and Appeal Site                                                     |
| Figure 4 | Mark up of G+LLVIA Site Location Plan to show my interpretation of the ‘Local Setting of Appeal Site’ (green dashed line) |
| Figure 5 | Screen shot from RPS Archaeology Report 2020 (Figure 6 OS Map 1884)                                                       |
| Figure 6 | Screen shot from Ordnance Survey getoutside website                                                                       |

Figure 7                      Screen shot from Big Red Directory website

Figure 8                      Mark up of G+LLVIA Site Location Plan to show my specific viewpoints  
(7i, 8i and 8ii)

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Scope of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**

1.1.1 This appendix sets out my summary re-assessment of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment included with the planning application, produced by Golby and Luck, November 2020 (G+LLVIA, **CD 1.10**) and consideration of matters in dispute.

1.1.2 My landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) is carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3, **CD 5.2.7**), produced by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in 2013.

1.1.3 I have used the methodology set out in Appendix 1 of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment included with the planning application, produced by Golby and Luck (G+LLVIA), with the exception of considerations relating to landscape value where I have used Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – “Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations”, published by the Landscape Institute in May 2021 (after GL+LVIA and the Council’s SHLAA Assessment 2019 was completed) (TGN 02/21) (**CD 5.2.15**).

1.1.4 I have also reviewed the Charnwood Borough Council Appeal Statement (**CD 4.3.1**), Landscape Statement of Case prepared by Influence (Influence-LSoC **CD 4.2.2**) and the Statement of Common Ground (**CD 4.1.1**).

1.1.5 This appendix is structured as follows:

- Landscape-related Planning Context;
- Assessment of Landscape Effects;
- Assessment of Visual Effects; and
- Consideration of Matters in Dispute.

### **1.2 Definitions**

1.2.1 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) defines landscape as “*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*” (see GLVIA3, paragraph 2.2). As GLVIA3 states, the ELC definition of

landscape is inclusive, in that it covers “*natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas*”, as well as “*inland water and marine areas*”.

- 1.2.2 In accordance with ELC and GLVIA3 the definition of landscape within this proof therefore includes natural, rural, urban and peri-urban (‘urban fringe’) areas.
- 1.2.3 Paragraph 1.1 of GLVIA 3 states that “*Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity*”.
- 1.2.4 Paragraph 5.1 of GLVIA3 describes how landscape effects are concerned with “*how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character*”.
- 1.2.5 Allied to this, paragraph 6.1 of GLVIA3 describes how visual effects are concerned with “*assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements*”.
- 1.2.6 This assessment considers landscape and visual effects separately, although where relevant and appropriate, cross references may be made to the same features or elements.
- 1.2.7 The determination of potential landscape and visual effects follows a step-by-step process based on the combination of the sensitivity of the receptor (susceptibility to type of change proposed and value) and the magnitude of effect (size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility).
- 1.2.8 Paragraph 3.23 of GLVIA3 describes how LVIA “*is an evidence-based process combined with professional judgement. It is important that the basis of such judgements is transparent and understandable, so that the underlying assumptions and reasoning can be understood by others.*”
- 1.2.9 G+LLVIA, Appendix 1 defines significance as “*A measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect, defined by significance criteria specific to the environmental topic. The use of the word significance in this LVIA is a measure of to the importance to be placed on an identified effect in the planning decision making process. This is distinct from the identification of ‘significant effects’ used in the framework of Environmental*

*Impact Assessment (EIA)."*

### **1.3 Methodology**

1.3.1 I have carried out a desk top review of relevant landscape-related planning policies and guidance, other appeal decisions, relevant character assessments for the Appeal Site and its context, materials submitted as part of the planning application and sequent correspondence, as described in more detail below.

1.3.2 As part of my assessment, I visited the Appeal site and surrounding area on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023. This included the representative viewpoints shown on the Golby and Luck Drawing GL1028 01 Site Context and GL1028 02 Site Location which was included in G+LLVIA and the AVR 'Verified Views' included in the Influence-LSoC.

1.3.3 During the site visits, the weather conditions were suitable for assessing all views for this assessment. Visual effects vary depending on light and weather conditions and also the time of day and time of year. Accordingly, this assessment takes account of the conditions in the photographs but also considers alternative conditions within the written assessment, where relevant.

1.3.4 I have included annotated baseline photography from my visits within Drawings CBC-LEC-PI-001 to 003 to illustrate micro-siting of representative viewpoints 7 and 8 and the relationship between several key elements around the viewer at each location, as well as the extent and position of the site. These 'illustrative viewpoints' are intended as an aid in assessing landscape and visual effects and are defined as Type 1 in the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (CD 5.2.16). Photographs were taken using a Canon D6 digital camera. The camera was set to a focal length which is the equivalent of a 50mm lens for a 35mm format camera. The panoramic views consist of several photographic frames digitally merged using industry standard software.

### **1.4 The Study Area**

1.4.1 The Study Area for my re-assessment of landscape and visual effects is based primarily on the visual envelope of the Appeal Site as described within paragraph 4.28 of G+LLVIA. However, I have made references to either landscape or visual receptors in the wider area, where this is relevant and provides context to the assessment (e.g. characteristics of Charnwood Forest and / or sequential views for users of certain routes).

## 1.5 Development Proposal

- 1.5.1 The development proposal is as described within the Statement of Common Ground and comprises of an outline planning application for *“residential development with associated infrastructure for up to 30 dwellings, including detail of associated point of access. All other matters (landscaping, scale, layout and appearance) reserved.”*
- 1.5.2 The Appeal site extends to approximately 1.69ha. The parameter plan N1249 010 Rev B (CD 2.5) shows a development zone across the centre of the site, with a corridor to the north for the retention of boundary hedges and an area of open space in the south-western corner to the rear of the Tudor Farmhouse. There is also an offset of 15m from the western site boundary (no earthworks) and a further 5m offset (earthworks permitted). There is an area for surface water attenuation in the north-east corner of the Appeal site and vehicular access from Leconfield Road to the east.
- 1.5.3 The Illustrative Layout plan N1249 007 Rev F (CD 2.4) which was submitted with the planning application, shows a housing layout and site access, with reference to a graded and planted earthwork batter and retaining structure, along with a children’s play area.
- 1.5.4 Page 51 of the Design and Access Statement (CD 2.20) refers to 0.66 ha of open space and surface water attenuation areas and 1.03ha for new homes, resulting in a density of 29 dwellings/ha.
- 1.5.5 The individual plots are numbered on the Illustrative Layout plan, with plots 27-30 positioned over a single dwelling in the north of the Appeal site.
- 1.5.6 However, as this was an outline application only, the arrangement of the proposed development shown on the submitted layout plan is for illustrative purposes only. Nevertheless, I have taken this into account in my assessment.
- 1.5.7 Once construction (and landscaping) phases are complete, the proposed development would be permanent. Any landscape planting would develop over time, with young trees and shrubs anticipated to grow and mature. The likely heights will therefore vary based on species, ground conditions and planting techniques / establishment success. G+LLVIA refers to short term (Year 1) and long term (Year 15) landscape and visual effects.

## 1.6 Potential Sources of Landscape and Visual Effect

1.6.1 The main landscape and visual components of the proposed development include:

- site preparation of new highways access and soil stripping, with associated materials and plant (including stocking and loading areas and vehicle movements);
- construction of development plots / individual dwellings, access (roads, driveways and paths), landscaping (including individual garden plots and management of perimeter vegetation) and infrastructure (retaining structures and embankments, drainage, fencing / railings, signage); and
- occupation of the new dwellings, use of access and management of the landscaping and infrastructure.

1.6.2 These components would result in direct effects upon landscape elements and features within the Appeal site itself. The above changes would also influence the Appeal site's appearance, aesthetic and perceptual aspects and therefore may also have potential effects on landscape character and the visual amenity of offsite receptors in the surrounding area.

1.6.3 The main indirect effects would be from traffic generated from the development, as this would have a general impact on the scenic quality of local views (and receptors such as local residents, pedestrians, cyclists and other road users).



## 2 LANDSCAPE-RELATED PLANNING CONTEXT

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 In this section of my Assessment, I have briefly reviewed the relevant designations, planning policy and correspondence in order to understand the landscape-related planning context for the proposed development. I have also reviewed other relevant appeal decisions. A full consideration of planning policy and history is included within the evidence of Sam Salt; this section focuses only on those aspects relevant to the effects of the development upon landscape character and views.

### 2.2 Landscape-related Designations

2.2.1 The Appeal Site is not located within, nor is it adjacent to a nationally designated landscape, such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or National Park. As such the landscape does not benefit from statutory status.

2.2.2 The Appeal Site is within the settlement limits of Loughborough as defined by saved Policy ST/2 in the Local Plan adopted 2004 (CD 6.1).

2.2.3 The Appeal Site was designated as Open Space of Special Character in the Local Plan under Policy EV/18 (referenced as 'Burleigh Farm'), as illustrated by Figure 1 below (screenshot from the Council's website, accessed on 10/02/23). This designation also covered other areas of greenspace in the Borough, including both Queens Park and Southfields. However, this is not a saved policy and there is no new open space designation currently in place within the Borough.

2.2.4 Nevertheless, for context I have noted the wording from paragraph 3.62 in the 2004 Local Plan relating to Open Space of Special Character:

- *"The character of settlements is a function of the interrelationship between buildings and the spaces they define. Very often, open spaces make a vital contribution to a settlement's character. Important areas of open land can include:*
  - *spaces of historic importance within conservation areas or adjoining listed buildings;*
  - *spaces important in the streetscene;*

- spaces creating a feeling of spaciousness within an area;
- spaces that provide a link to the countryside or provide a transition between the settlement and the countryside beyond;
- private garden land which is an important feature in the streetscene or forms part of the transition between the settlement and the countryside.”

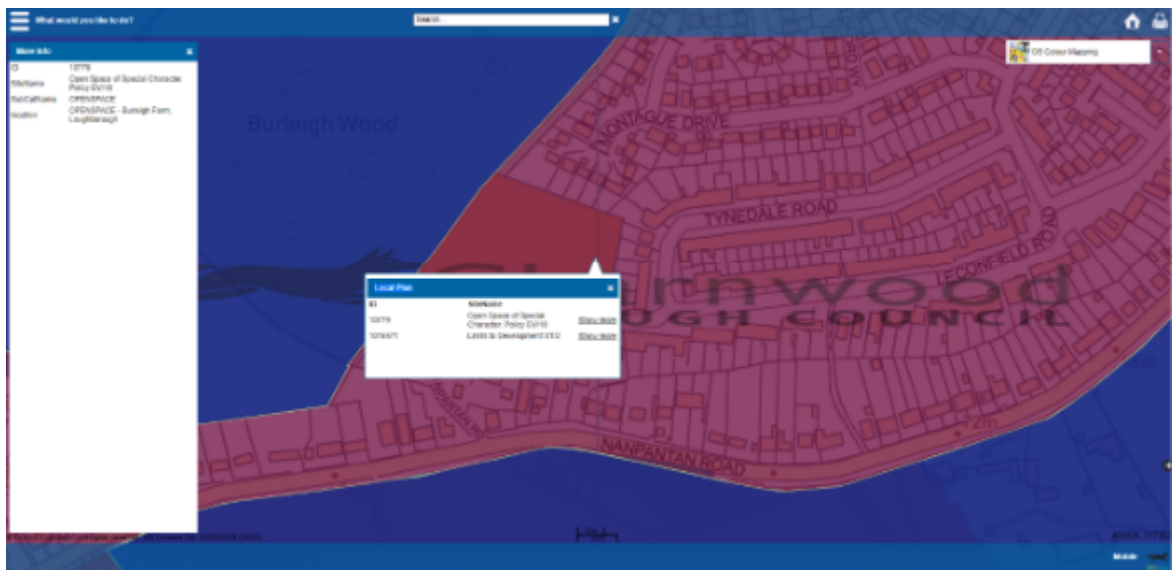


Figure 1 - Screen shot from Charnwood Borough Council's website, Proposals Map Local Plan 2004

2.2.5 The Appeal Site is also located within the Charnwood Forest Regional Park. The Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 - Core Strategy Adopted November 2015 (CD 6.2) , under paragraph 7.18 describes how “Charnwood Forest is an important landscape for the region. It is an area of particular beauty, characterised by extensive woodlands set in a hilly and open landscape” and under Policy CS 12 - Green Infrastructure states that:

- “We will protect and enhance our green infrastructure assets for their community, economic and environmental values.
- We will work with our partners to define, protect and enhance the Charnwood Forest Regional Park.”

2.2.6 The Council submitted the Local Plan 2021-2037 for Examination in December 2021.

The Policies Map (CD 6.3) identifies that the Appeal Site as not allocated for housing, as an area of Countryside (Policy C1) and outside of the settlement limits (which have amended those in the Core Strategy by extending around its northern, eastern and southern boundaries), as illustrated by Figure 2 below (screenshot from Council's website, accessed 10/02/23).

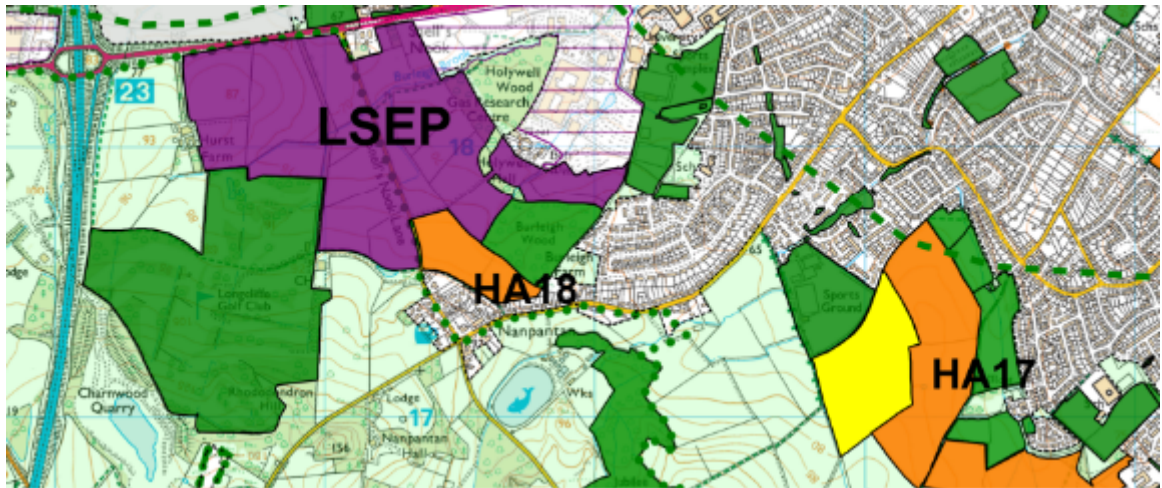


Figure 2 - Screen shot from Charnwood Borough Council's website, Proposals Map Local Plan 2021-2037 Examination

- 2.2.7 Part of Burleigh Wood is designated Ancient Woodland. The designation boundary is adjacent to the western boundary of the Appeal site. It is also a Local Wildlife Site. Whilst I am not giving evidence on the effect on ecology, I note that the landscape of the Appeal site has a connection to Burleigh Wood.
- 2.2.8 Burleigh Farmhouse, Grade II Listed Building is close to the south-western boundary of the Appeal Site and therefore described as designated 'Heritage Asset' under the provisions of NPPF. Whilst I am not giving evidence on the effect on designated heritage assets, I note that the landscape of the Appeal site has a connection to the Burleigh Farmhouse.
- 2.2.9 Whilst there are no public rights of way within the Appeal Site, there are well-used footpaths within Burleigh Wood to the west, which is promoted for public access, as a nature reserve and for education with interpretation boards and memorial bench.

### 2.3 Relevant Planning Policy

- 2.3.1 The relevant planning policy context is as referenced in the Decision Notice of 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 (CD 3.4) (for the full text of policies refer to core documents) and the Council's

Statement of Case:

- Charnwood Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted 9th November 2015) Policy CS11, which states *inter alia* that “We will support and protect the character of our landscape and countryside by:
  - “requiring new developments to protect landscape character and to reinforce sense of place and local distinctiveness by taking account of relevant local Landscape Character Assessments”;
- National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF), paragraph 174 which states *inter alia* that “planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
  - “a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
  - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;”

2.3.2 A definition of ‘Ancient woodland’ is provided within the Glossary of NPPF as “An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).” Ancient Woodland is also identified as irreplaceable habitat. The Appeal Site is directly adjacent to a designated area of Ancient Woodland (part of Burleigh Wood).

2.3.3 A definition of ‘Heritage asset’ is also provided within the Glossary of NPPF as “A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).” The Appeal Site is close to a designated ‘Heritage Asset’ (Burleigh Farmhouse, Grade II Listed Building).

2.3.4 A definition of ‘Major Development’ is also described within the Glossary of NPPF as “For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more.” Thus, the proposed development of 30 dwellings at the

Appeal Site would constitute 'Major Development'.

## 2.4 Reference Documents

2.4.1 I have also referenced the following documents in my research (in chronological order):

- Natural England – National Character Area Profile 73 Charnwood (NCA 73). The Appeal Site is located within this NCA (CD 5.2.13);
- Charnwood Borough Council – The Borough of Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment - 2012 (CD 5.2.6). This identifies the Appeal Site as located within the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area (LCA);
- Loughborough University Burleigh Wood, Holywood & Associated Woodland – Management Plan 2018-2023, prepared by FPCR - 2018 (the University's Management Plan) (CD 5.2.14);
- Charnwood Borough Council – Charnwood Borough Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of SHLAA Sites - 2019 prepared by LUC (the SHLAA Assessment 2019) (CD 5.2.4). This report identified the Appeal Site as PSH447;
- Charnwood Borough Council – Landscape Character Assessment for the Charnwood Forest Regional Park (CD 5.2.8) – 2019 prepared by FPCR. This report identified the Appeal site as located within Charnwood Forest Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland; and
- RPS Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment – Leconfield Road, Nanpantan, Leicestershire – October 2020 (CD 2.26).

## 2.5 Relevant Planning History

2.5.1 The Appeal site has been subject of previous applications:

- P/88/2599/2 Residential Development - Refused 15/12/1988; and
- P/07/1974/2 Formation of agricultural access - Granted 26/10/2007.

## 2.6 Landscape Officer's Consultation Comments

2.6.1 Charnwood Borough Council's Senior Landscape Officer provided initial consultation comments on the planning application on 27 April 2021 (CD 8.39) including reference

*inter alia* to the following:

- *“The LVIA downplays the local importance of the site as a valued landscape”;*
- *“I agree with the LVIA that the development would have a major- moderate landscape effect. Development would give rise to harm substantially detrimental to that character and detrimental to the visual amenity of the area.”*

2.6.2 Charnwood Borough Council’s Senior Landscape Officer provided subsequent consultation comments on 25 November 2021 following submission of illustrative masterplan (**CD 8.40**) including reference to *“Landscape and Visual Effects Leading to Harm”* and *inter alia* the following:

- *“Landscape character - loss of unique elevated view, a feature of the physical character /landform of the natural site; loss of landscape setting i.e. sloping pasture as transition to ancient woodland. Level of harm: demonstrable loss of characteristic attributes”*
- *“Visual character– loss or impedance of skyline and view associated with the site. Level of harm: demonstrable loss of skyline and visual panoramic view.”*

## **2.7 Reason for Refusal**

2.7.1 The scope of this evidence is defined by the first Reason for Refusal set out in the decision notice of 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 (**CD 3.4**) which specifically relate to landscape character. The first Reason for Refusal states:

- *“The proposed development would fail to protect and enhance the unique landscape character of the site and surrounding area. The development would be contrary to the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS11 and National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 174 and the identified harm would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when considered against the Framework as a whole.”*

## **2.8 Appellant’s Landscape Statement of Case**

2.8.1 My evidence also addresses the following issues raised in Influence-LSoC (paragraph 1.10):

- *“That the landscape character of the site and the surrounding area are ‘unique’;*
- *That the site is ‘valued landscape’ in the context of the NPPF and Box 5.1 of the GLVIA; and*
- *That there are adverse landscape and visual impacts derived from the visibility of the site from specific vantage points.”*

## 2.9 Other Relevant Appeal Decisions

2.9.1 I have also reviewed the following Appeal Decisions which are relevant to this case:

- Appeal Decision Ref: APP/X2410/W/21/3287864 – Land East of Cossington Road, Sileby (CD 7.1);
- Appeal Decision Ref: APP/X2410/W/21/3271340 – Land at Maplewood Road, Woodhouse Eaves (CD 7.2);
- Appeal Decision Ref: APP/X2410/W/20/3264488 – Land off Melton Road, Burton-on-the-Wolds (CD 7.3); and
- Appeal Decision Ref: APP/X2410/W/15/3028159 and APP/X2410/W/15/3028161 - Land south of Nanpantan Road, Loughborough (CD 7.4).

### **3 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 In this section of my Assessment, I consider the potential landscape effects of the proposed development.

#### **3.2 Landscape Receptors**

3.2.1 As described in paragraph 5.34 of GLVIA3, landscape receptors that may be affected by the scheme include the overall character and key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects.

3.2.2 The G+LLVIA (in Table 3) identifies the following landscape area/receptors, that are considered suitable for the re-assessment of potential effects at different scales:

- Charnwood Forest Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland LCA;
- Charnwood Forest Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Out Woods Heathland Forest LCA; and
- Local setting of the Appeal site (including the Appeal site, the edge of Loughborough, Burleigh Farmhouse and Burleigh Wood).

3.2.3 For clarity, in Figure 3 below, I have marked up the location of the Appeal Site relative to the published eleven character areas within the Charnwood Forest Regional Character Assessment (2019). In Figure 4 below, I have marked up my interpretation of the Local Setting of the Appeal Site, on to the G+LLVIA Site Location Plan (Drawing GL1028 02).



Figure 14: Landscape Character Areas

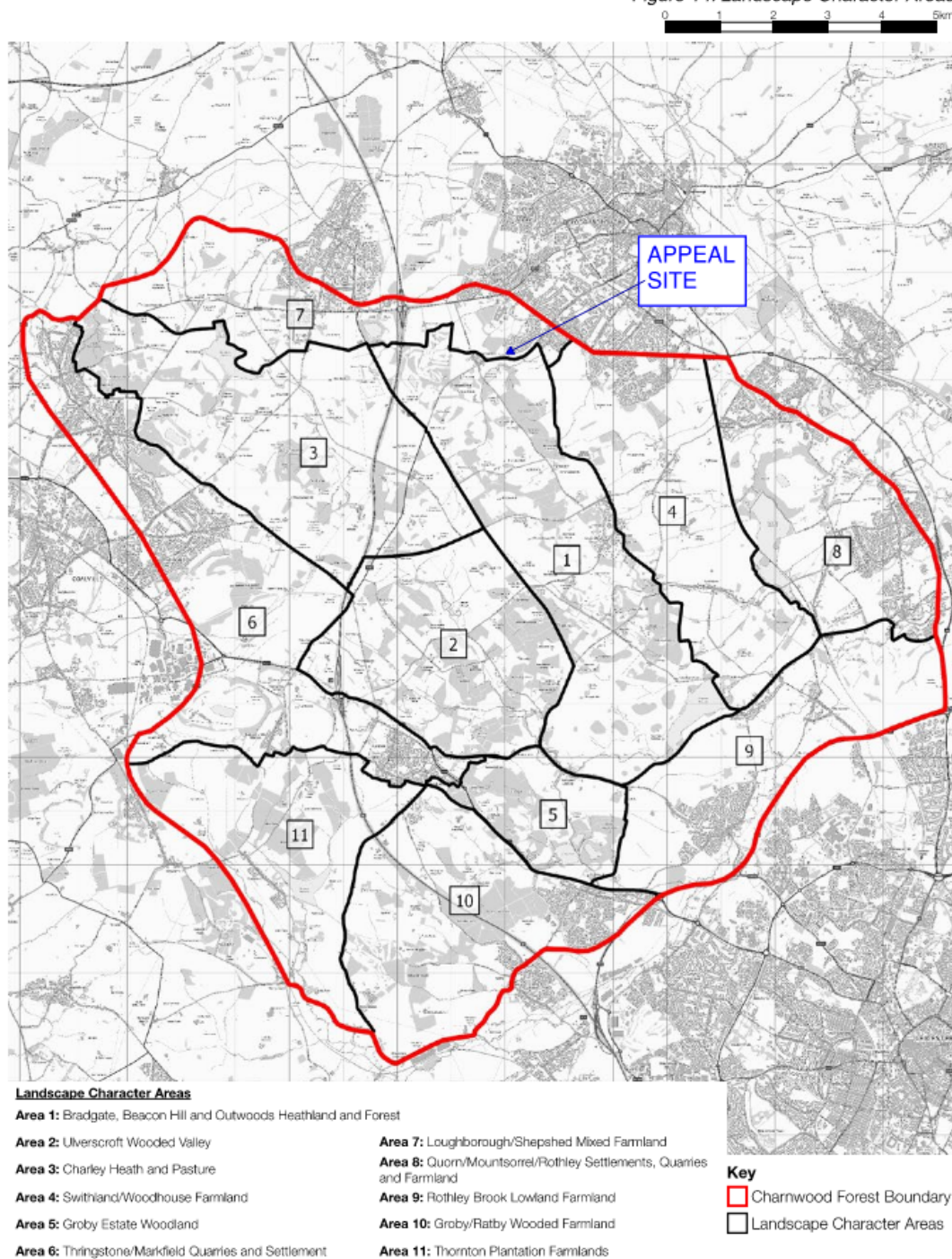


Figure 3 – Mark up of Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Areas and Appeal Site



Figure 4 – Mark up of G+LLVIA Site Location Plan to show my interpretation of the ‘Local Setting of Appeal Site’ (green dashed line)

#### Landscape Susceptibility to change

- 3.2.4 In assessing landscape susceptibility, I have referenced the methodology within Appendix 1 of G+LLVIA and I have also referenced GLVIA3 paragraph 5.40 “*This means the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.*”
- 3.2.5 My assessment of the susceptibility of each landscape area / receptor is set out in the Tables SH-1 to SH-3 below. In summary both the wider Charnwood Forest Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland LCA and the Local Setting of the Appeal Site has a medium susceptibility to the proposed development. The adjacent Charnwood Forest Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest LCA has a medium-high susceptibility to the proposals.
- 3.2.6 The Appeal site has several of the key characteristics of Charnwood Forest Area 7:

Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland LCA, with rolling landform, being a small grassland field, adjacent to a small block of ancient woodland and listed building (Tudor farmhouse), on the edge of Loughborough, with long views. The Appeal site forms a locally distinctive transition from the built form on the edge of Loughborough to the Charnwood Forest countryside.

**Table SH-1 – Landscape Susceptibility of Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland**

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Defined character                     | <p>The published key characteristics for Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland includes reference to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Gently rolling landform, generally falling to the north.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Wider extent of arable farmland with some pasture and smaller blocks of woodland.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“An urban fringe landscape which includes the edge of Shepshed and Loughborough and associated influences such as Loughborough University which features within views”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Relatively low number of listed buildings, although some vernacular stone and brick buildings”</i></li> </ul>                                                                                            |
| Moderate scenic quality               | <p>The published description of the perceptual qualities for Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland describes how <i>“The area is of a medium to large scale and is more open, especially to the west, with long views possible away from the settlements. Development including the edge of Shepshed and Loughborough University buildings do however feature within many views. Longer views are predominantly to the north across the more open, lower levels beyond the Charnwood Forest boundary. From some locations planes leaving or approaching East Midland Airport are regularly visible. The area is not particularly tranquil due to disturbance from main roads such as the A512 and M1 motorway and from the edge of developments.”</i></p> |
| Good condition                        | <p>The published description of the landscape condition for Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland refers to the following: <i>“The overall condition of this area is considered to be good. Hedgerows and stone walls are generally intact and managed although some hedgerows need gapping up in places and stone walls appear in need of repair.”</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Moderate tolerance to proposed change | <p>The published description for Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland refers to the following: <i>“Any further development in the form of settlement expansion or industrial developments and also including expansion of Loughborough University would increase the urban influences in the area and potentially erode the landscape character, without appropriate design.”</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Medium Overall                        | <p>Medium overall susceptibility of Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland to the proposed development</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

**Table SH-2 – Landscape Susceptibility of Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest**

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Defined character                | <p>The published key characteristics for Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest includes reference to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Elevated undulating topography</i></li> <li>• <i>“Large heathland at Bradgate Park and areas at Beacon Hill and Longcliffe Golf Course. Extensive coniferous and broadleaved woodland, also grassland with some small areas of arable farmland. Ancient woodland at Swithland Wood and the Outwoods which are also SSSIs.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Small regular field pattern enclosed with walls or hedgerows with hedgerow trees.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“A strong cultural heritage associated with Bradgate Park as well as international geological interest. Also multiple listed buildings at Newtown Linford and Woodhouse Eaves. Beacon Hill features an Ancient Monument.”</i></li> </ul> |
| Good scenic quality              | <p>The published description of the perceptual qualities for Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest describes how <i>“There is a strong sense of history within the area as a result of a combination of the historic Bradgate Park, a strong built vernacular, numerous listed buildings and mature woodlands. The area is generally enclosed as a result of the undulating landform and extent of mature woodland although some panoramic and far reaching views are possible at certain locations such as the peak of Beacon Hill and at the War Memorial within Bradgate Park. The more open areas of rough grassland combined with rocky outcrops and deer parks create an upland character.”</i></p>                                                                                                                                                        |
| Good condition                   | <p>The published description of the landscape condition for Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest describes how <i>“The landscape is generally intact and of good condition with evidence of intense management, especially related to areas of high visitor numbers i.e. Bradgate Park, the Outwoods and Beacon Hill. The area is distinctive and has strong key characteristics which define the overall Charnwood Forest character. Due to its location and visibility within the wider area, it exerts an influence on the surrounding area.”</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Low tolerance to proposed change | <p>The published description of the landscape condition for Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest refers to <i>“Encroachment from expansion of Loughborough in the north”</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Medium - High Overall            | <p>Medium - High overall susceptibility of Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest to the proposed development</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

**Table SH-3 – Landscape Susceptibility of the Local Setting of the Appeal Site**

|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Defined character                   | The Local Setting of the Appeal Site forms a recognisable part of the wider Charnwood Forest Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland, being rolling landform, a small pocket of grassland, with some natural reversion, bounded by hedges and trees (the Appeal site), adjacent to a small block of woodland (Burleigh Wood, which includes Ancient Woodland) and close to a listed building (Burleigh Farmhouse), the urban edge of Loughborough (Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Nanpantan Road), with long views (to the Wolds). The Appeal Site was previously designated as ‘Open Space of Special Character’ and contributes to the character of the local streetscene and part of the transition to countryside. The Appeal site has a strong landscape character association to the Ancient Woodland, as transition from grassland to woodland. Burleigh Wood is part of a fragmented distribution of ancient woods which includes the Jubilee – Outwoods ancient woodland complex to the south and southwest, but severed by development along Nanpantan Road. |
| Moderate scenic quality             | The Local Setting of the Appeal Site extends over rising land which, although lower than the central areas of Charnwood Forest, offers longer distance views, both over the lower-lying areas to the north and east, but also the elevated woods to the south. The undulating grassland slopes of the Appeal site are visible from residential properties and streets around its immediate boundaries, with Burleigh Wood providing a backdrop to the west. Other aesthetic aspects include the contrast between the open and simple character (with muted greens) of the Appeal site and the more enclosed and complex (with brighter colours) of the settlement edge.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Good condition                      | The Local Setting of the Appeal Site is in good condition. The RPS Archaeology report, para 4.35 confirms the 1884 OS as the first map to show the site in any detail (reproduced in Figure 5 below) with <i>“the site fully enclosed to the north of Burleigh Farm and adjacent to Burleigh Wood in the west”</i> . The RPS Archaeology report, para 4.36 describes how <i>“the site remains largely unchanged to the present day, other than the demolition of the outbuilding by 1903 (map not reproduced) and the pond filled in by 1964”</i> and that <i>“map regression also demonstrates the growing residential areas around the site, first to the south in the 1960s”</i> and then <i>“to the north and west in the 1970s and 1980s”</i> . Although the existing housing extends around the boundaries, there is limited negative urbanising influences (neglect, litter) within the Appeal site itself.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Medium tolerance to proposed change | The Local Setting of the Appeal Site is heavily influenced by the existing built development which has expanded up to the edge of the small grassland field (on three sides), Ancient Woodland and historic Tudor Farmhouse. The further expansion of the built form of the settlement at this location would potentially erode landscape character. The SHLAA Assessment 2019 described how <i>“development on these slopes may be out of keeping with the existing settlement pattern”</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Medium Overall                      | Medium overall susceptibility of the Local Setting of the Appeal Site to the proposed development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

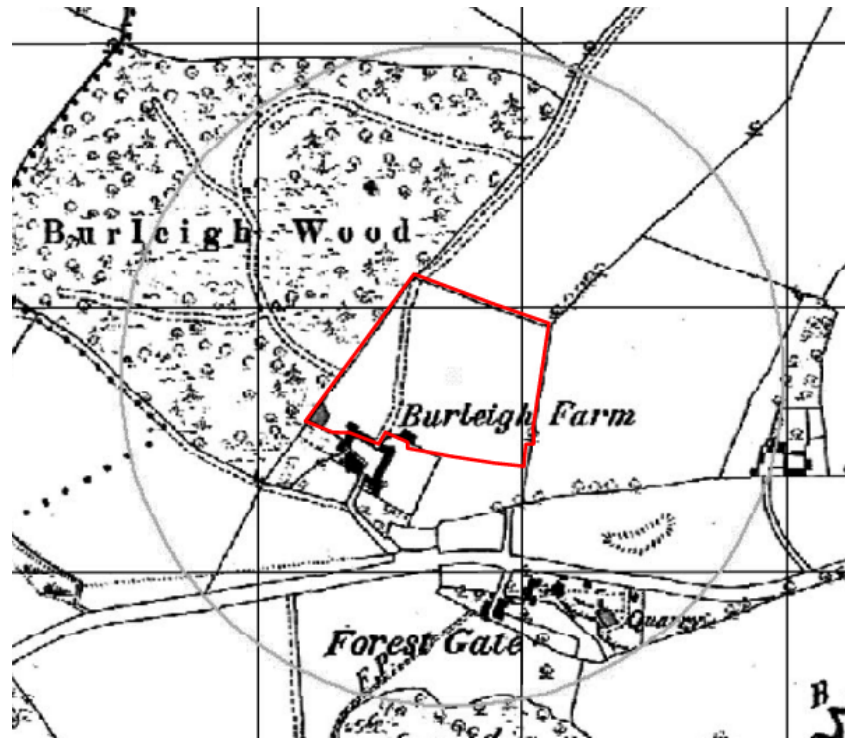


Figure 5 - Screen shot from RPS Archaeology Report 2020 (Figure 6 OS Map 1884 )

## Landscape Value

- 3.2.7 In assessing landscape value, I have referenced the methodology within Appendix 1 of G+LLVIA and also GLVIA3 paragraph 5.19 *“As part of the baseline description the value of the potentially affected landscape should be established. This means the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.”*
- 3.2.8 I have also referenced GLVIA 3, para 5.29 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet which states that *“Areas of landscape whose character is judged to be intact and in good condition, and where scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and natural or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important associations, are likely to be highly valued”*.
- 3.2.9 Whilst I have reviewed the factors set out in Box 5.1 in GLVIA3, I have also used the more recently published TGN 02/21. Bullet 5, paragraph 2.4.5 of TGN 02/21 states that *“When assessing landscape value of a site as part of a planning application or appeal it is important to consider not only the site itself and its features/elements/characteristics/qualities, but also their relationship with, and the role they play within, the site’s context. Value is best appreciated at the scale at which a landscape is perceived – rarely is this on a field-by-field basis.”*
- 3.2.10 I have therefore reviewed the agreed landscape areas / receptors using the factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value in Table 1 of TGN 02/21, as summarised in Tables SH-4 to SH-6 below. In summary, Charnwood Forest Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland is generally of medium value and the adjacent Charnwood Forest Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest is of medium-high.
- 3.2.11 I have also concluded that the Local Setting of the Appeal Site is of medium value. This is due to the combination of the small grassland field parcel (which is largely unchanged since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century), the Listed Building (farmhouse) and Ancient Woodland, with rolling topography and long-distance views which form a distinctive part of the transition between Loughborough and Charnwood Forest countryside. The Appeal site is part of the Green Infrastructure



**Table SH-4 – Landscape Value of Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland**

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Natural Heritage                       | Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland has ecological and physiographic interest which contributes positively to the landscape. For example, the published description refers to <i>“Ancient woodland close to Shepshed and Loughborough”</i> and <i>“Gently rolling landform, generally falling to the north”</i>                                                 |
| Cultural Heritage                      | Parts of Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland offer a dimension of time depth, for example with <i>“There are a relatively low number of listed buildings within the area”</i> and <i>“Further listed buildings are associated with the edge of Loughborough”</i> .                                                                                              |
| Landscape Condition                    | The published description of the landscape condition for Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland refers to the following: <i>“The overall condition of this area is considered to be good. Hedgerows and stone walls are generally intact and managed although some hedgerows need gapping up in places and stone walls appear in need of repair.”</i>              |
| Associations                           | No known associations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Distinctiveness                        | Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland is described as <i>“An urban fringe landscape which includes the edge of Shepshed and Loughborough and associated influences such as Loughborough University which features within views”</i> and therefore contributes to the character of these settlements.                                                              |
| Recreational                           | Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland provides recreational opportunities where experience of the landscape is important, with <i>“Some public footpaths lead out of the main settlements of Shepshed and Loughborough, but there is no access land within the area.”</i>                                                                                         |
| Perceptual (Scenic)                    | There are no National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland. However, the landscape appeals to the visual sense, with reference in the published description to how <i>“The area is of a medium to large scale and is more open, especially to the west, with long views possible away from the settlements.”</i> |
| Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity) | The published description for Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland refers to how <i>“The area is not particularly tranquil due to disturbance from main roads such as the A512 and M1 motorway and from the edge of developments.”</i>                                                                                                                           |
| Functional                             | The published description for Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland describes how <i>“The character area lies between central upland areas to the south and the wider lowland to the north”</i> and performs a clearly identifiable function within the broader Charnwood Forest Regional Park, a valued green infrastructure asset.                              |

**Table SH-5 – Landscape Value of Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest**

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Natural Heritage                       | Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest has ecological, geological and physiographic interest which contributes positively to the landscape. For example, the published description refers to <i>“Ancient woodland at Swithland Wood and the Outwoods which are also SSSI”</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Cultural Heritage                      | Parts of Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest offer a dimension of time depth, for example with <i>“A strong cultural heritage associated with Bradgate Park as well as international geological interest. Also multiple listed buildings at Newtown Linford and Woodhouse Eaves. Beacon Hill features an Ancient Monument.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Landscape Condition                    | The published description of the landscape condition for Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest refers to the following: <i>“The landscape is generally intact and of good condition with evidence of intense management, especially related to areas of high visitor numbers i.e. Bradgate Park, the Outwoods and Beacon Hill. The area is distinctive and has strong key characteristics which define the overall Charnwood Forest character. Due to its location and visibility within the wider area, it exerts an influence on the surrounding area.”</i> |
| Associations                           | No known associations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Distinctiveness                        | The published description of Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest refers to <i>“Distinctive features of an elevated landform, heathland, ancient woodland, rocky outcrops and stone walls define this area.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Recreational                           | Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest offers recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important, for example key characteristics includes <i>“A high proportion of ‘honeypot’ visitor sites (Bradgate Park, Beacon Hill &amp; Outwoods). PRoW focussed around Bradgate Park but multiple informal footpaths and tracks within the woodlands.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Perceptual (Scenic)                    | There are no National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest. However, the landscape appeals to the visual sense, with reference in the published description to how <i>“Far reaching views are possible from Beacon Hill and within Bradgate Park.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity) | Tranquillity is reduced within certain parts of Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest with <i>“Pressure on honeypot sites with an ever increasing need for visitor facilities such as car parking and cafes.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Functional                             | Parts of Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape, for example with extensive coniferous and broadleaved woodlands as carbon sinks within the broader Charnwood Forest Regional Park, a valued green infrastructure asset.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

**Table SH-6 – Landscape Value of the Local Setting of the Appeal Site**

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Natural Heritage                       | The Local Setting of the Appeal Site includes features of ecological interest (Ancient Woodland, woodland edge, with grassland adjacent) and physiographic interest (rolling, hilly topography) which contribute positively to the landscape.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Cultural Heritage                      | The Local Setting of the Appeal Site forms part of a landscape with visible historic features of importance to character, and a variety of time depth, including the Burleigh Farmhouse Listed Building and an intact, small field parcel.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Landscape Condition                    | The Local Setting of the Appeal Site is in good condition, with the size and scale of the small grassland field, Burleigh Wood (including Ancient Woodland) and Burleigh Farmhouse (Listed Building) generally intact and appearing on historic maps. Although the settlement edge has expanded, there is limited negative urbanising influences (neglect, litter) within the Appeal site itself.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Associations                           | No known associations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Distinctiveness                        | The Local Setting of the Appeal Site includes landscape on the edge of the settlement, where the rising slopes within the Appeal site and the mature trees and woodland are visible from the adjacent residential properties, road and footpaths and contribute to the visually distinctive skyline. Thus, the Appeal site is an important feature in the streetscene and forms part of the transition between the settlement and the countryside (as recognised in previous designation as ‘Open Space of Special Character’). Views show several of the key characteristics identified in the published landscape character assessments.                        |
| Recreational                           | The Local Setting of the Appeal Site includes Burleigh Wood which is promoted as a visitor attraction on several websites (for its nature interest and walking), See Figures 6 and 7 (accessed on 02/02/23). The long-term vision in the University’s Management Plan is “ <i>To maximise the biodiversity value of all the woodlands, with controlled public access to protect this over-arching objective</i> ” and “ <i>Local residents continue to enjoy walking through Burleigh Wood</i> ”. There is good accessibility via Compton Close, Nicolson Road and Loughborough University campus. The Appeal Site itself does not have any public rights of way. |
| Perceptual (Scenic)                    | The Local Setting of the Appeal Site demonstrates a contrast between the open and simple character (with muted greens) of the Appeal site and the more enclosed and complex (with brighter colours) of the settlement edge. Long views from the settlement out to the north, east and south are possible from the elevated ground.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity) | The sense of tranquillity within and around the local setting of the Appeal site is influenced by the proximity of the settlement edge (up to the Appeal site boundaries and along part of Burleigh Wood) and sound of traffic along the Nanpantan Road.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Functional                             | The Local Setting of the Appeal Site contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape, for example with a small area of farmland and the Burleigh Wood as carbon sink and within the broader Charnwood Forest Regional Park, a valued green infrastructure asset.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

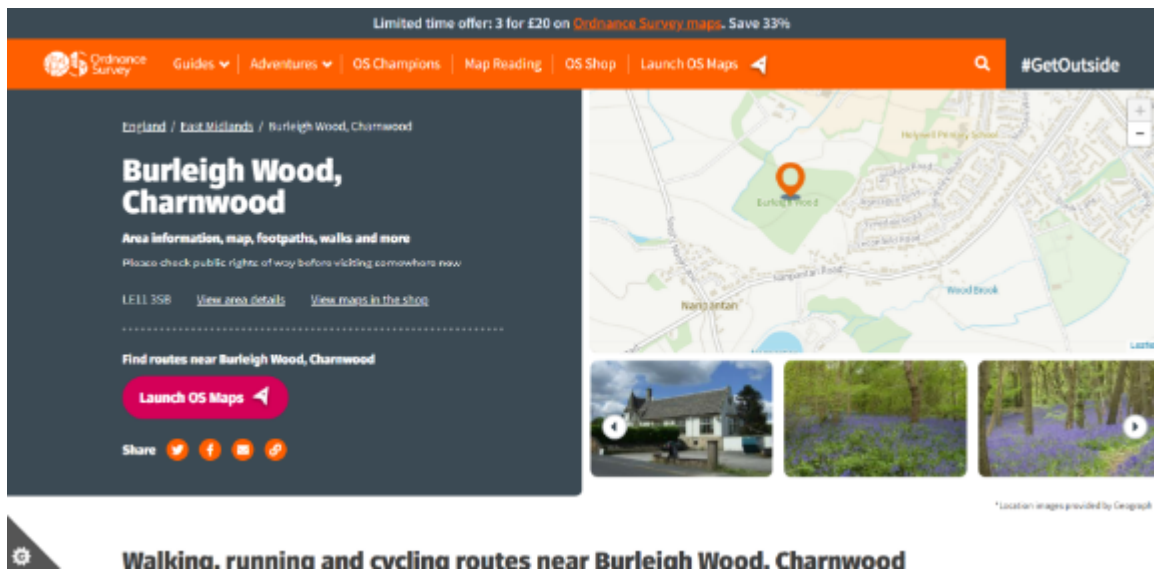


Figure 6 - Screen shot from Ordnance Survey getoutside website



Figure 7 - Screen shot from Big Red Directory website

### Landscape Sensitivity

3.2.12 In Table SH-7 below I have combined the above gradings of landscape susceptibility with landscape value to derive an overall judgement of landscape sensitivity for each of the landscape areas / receptors identified (with reference to Table 1, Appendix 1 of G+LLVIA).

3.2.13 In summary, Charnwood Forest Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland LCA, has a generally medium overall landscape sensitivity and Charnwood Forest Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland Forest LCA also has medium-high sensitivity to the proposed development. I have also concluded that the Local Setting of the Appeal Site has a medium sensitivity to the proposed development.

**Table SH-7 – Overall Landscape Sensitivity to the Proposed Development**

|                                                                                                                                 | Susceptibility to the Proposed Development | Landscape Value | Overall Landscape Sensitivity |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Charnwood Forest Area 7:<br>Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland LCA                                                            | Medium                                     | Medium          | Medium                        |
| Charnwood Forest Area 1:<br>Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland Forest LCA                                             | Medium-High                                | Medium-High     | Medium-High                   |
| Local setting of the Appeal site<br>(including the Appeal site, the edge of Loughborough, Burleigh Farmhouse and Burleigh Wood) | Medium                                     | Medium          | Medium                        |

### Magnitude of Landscape Change

3.2.14 In assessing magnitude of landscape change I have referenced the methodology within Appendix 1 of G+LLVIA, as well as GLVIA3 where relevant to take account of size or scale, geographical extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility (paragraph 5.48 of GLVIA3).

3.2.15 My assessment of the magnitude of change for each landscape area / receptor is set out in the tables SH-8 to SH-10 below. In summary, the proposals would result in a low adverse degree of change upon the wider Charnwood Forest Area 7:

Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland and a negligible adverse change to the adjacent Charnwood Forest Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest.

- 3.2.16 The proposed development would result in a high adverse degree of change upon the Local Setting of the Appeal Site. The proposed development would completely change the existing character of the Appeal Site and there would be the loss of several characteristics such as openness, simple appearance, small scale, green grassland field. These would be replaced by up to 30 dwellings and other built elements / vertical and horizontal forms, increasing enclosure, complexity, wider range of colours, movement and noise. There would also be the loss of long-distance views and undeveloped skyline. This would be perceived to varying degrees within its local setting (including local residential properties and streets, to the rear of a Listed Building and from Burleigh Wood) and on a permanent basis.
- 3.2.17 The potential influence of the establishment of potential landscaping treatments and therefore long-term effects (year 15) is not anticipated to reduce the short-term effects (year 1) from the overriding loss of open countryside and introduction of new built elements.
- 3.2.18 The nature of the effect would be adverse as it would erode landscape character and would not be well integrated into the landscape.

**Table SH-8 – Magnitude of Landscape Change to Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland**

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Size or Scale<br/>- Small</p>       | <p>Loss of published characteristic elements – small grassland field on rolling landform</p> <p>Replace with published characteristic element – expansion of the urban edge of Loughborough</p> <p>Adverse effect – the development would erode the pastoral aspects of landscape character and would not be well integrated into the landscape, extending up higher slopes and reducing the existing buffer to Ancient Woodland (The SHLAA Assessment 2019 described how “<i>development on these slopes may be out of keeping with the existing settlement pattern</i>”)</p> |
| <p>Geographical Extent -<br/>Small</p> | <p>1.69ha Appeal site is a small part of the wider Charnwood Forest Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland and contained within an established framework of settlement and woodland.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>Duration -<br/>High</p>             | <p>Permanent / irreversible</p> <p>Influence of the establishment of landscaping treatments over long-term (Year 15) is not anticipated to reduce the main short-term (Year 1) effects of the loss of open grassland and expansion of the urban edge / built development</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p>Overall –<br/>Low Adverse</p>       | <p>Low adverse overall magnitude of landscape change upon Charnwood Forest Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland from the proposed development.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

**Table SH-9 – Magnitude of Landscape Change to Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest**

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Size or Scale<br>- Negligible    | Relatively small change to outward views from this adjacent character area - Any changes would be perceived as expansion of Loughborough                                                                                                |
| Geographical Extent - Negligible | Relatively small change to outward views from this adjacent character area - No direct alteration to the character area itself                                                                                                          |
| Duration - High                  | Permanent / irreversible<br><br>Influence of the establishment of landscaping treatments over long-term (Year 15) is not anticipated to reduce the main short-term (Year 1) expansion of Loughborough on outward views, where perceived |
| Overall – Negligible Adverse     | Negligible adverse overall magnitude of landscape change upon Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest from the proposed development                                                                             |



**Table SH-10 – Magnitude of Landscape Change to the Local Setting of the Appeal Site**

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Size or Scale<br/>- High</p>       | <p>Loss of key characteristic element - small scale grassland field on rolling landform, adjacent to and acting as transitional buffer to Ancient Woodland and Tudor Farmhouse (replaced with built development, associated landscaping and other infrastructure).</p> <p>Loss of aesthetic and perceptual aspects - open and simple, green in colour (replaced with increased enclosure and complexity, with vertical and horizontal forms, a wider range of colours, movement and noise).</p> <p>Loss of valued attributes - long-distance views and undeveloped skyline (building facades and rooftops extending over the higher ground and obscuring existing views)</p> <p>Adverse effect – the proposed development would erode the pastoral aspects of landscape character and would not be well integrated into the landscape, extending up higher slopes and reducing the existing buffer to Ancient Woodland and backdrop to residential street (The SHLAA Assessment 2019 described how “<i>development on these slopes may be out of keeping with the existing settlement pattern</i>”)</p> |
| <p>Geographical Extent –<br/>High</p> | <p>All of the Appeal Site would be directly altered to a high degree and this would also be perceived to varying degrees beyond the current visual envelope, due to the height of the proposed buildings</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>Duration -<br/>High</p>            | <p>Permanent / irreversible</p> <p>Influence of the establishment of landscaping treatments over long-term (Year 15) is not anticipated to reduce the main short-term (Year 1) effects of the loss of open grassland and expansion of the urban edge / built development</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>Overall –<br/>High Adverse</p>     | <p>High adverse overall magnitude of landscape change to the Local Setting of the Appeal Site from the proposed development</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

### Summary of Landscape Effects

3.2.19 I have carried out an assessment of the potential landscape effects of the proposed development in accordance with the latest guidance and the methodology set out in G+LLVIA. In my assessment I have reviewed the existing character assessments as well as carrying out my own assessment of the Appeal Site and its context.

3.2.20 As described in paragraph 5.56 of GLVIA3, *“There are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and landscape context and with the type of proposal. At opposite ends of the spectrum it is reasonable to say that:*

- *major loss or irreversible negative effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes are likely to be of the greatest significance;*
- *reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value are likely to be of the least significance and may, depending on the circumstances, be judged as not significant;*
- *where assessments of significance place landscape effects between these extremes, judgements must be made about whether or not they are significant, with full explanations of why these conclusions have been reached.”*

3.2.21 As set out in Table SH-11 below, the landscape effects on the wider Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland would be minor adverse overall, whilst effects on the Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest would be minor-minimal adverse. Although these effects involve permanent, negative effects to key characteristics, they would occur over a relatively restricted extent of these published character areas and I would not consider them to be significant.

3.2.22 The effects upon the Local Setting of the Appeal Site would be major-moderate and adverse. The effects would involve major loss and permanent, negative effects on the Appeal site and its immediate surroundings, removing elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character. Overall, I would consider these to be significant.

**Table SH-11 – Overall Landscape Effect of the Proposed Development**

| Landscape Receptor                                                                                                               | Landscape Sensitivity | Magnitude of Landscape Change | Landscape Effect                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Area 7:<br>Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland                                                                                  | Medium                | Low and Adverse               | Minor and Adverse                 |
| Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest                                                                  | Medium-High           | Negligible and Adverse        | Minor-Minimal and Adverse         |
| The Local Setting of the Appeal Site (including the Appeal site, the edge of Loughborough, Burleigh Farmhouse and Burleigh Wood) | Medium                | High and Adverse              | <b>Major-Moderate and Adverse</b> |

## **4 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 In this section of my Assessment, I consider the potential visual effects of the proposed development.

### **4.2 Potential Visual Envelope**

4.2.1 G+LLVIA described the potential visual envelope of the Appeal site, in paragraph 4.28 as follows:

- *Private open views from the properties adjoining the northern, eastern and southern boundaries of the site;*
- *Open views from sections of Leconfield Road close to the southern boundary of the site;*
- *Filtered and glimpsed views from the highway and properties associated with Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close beyond the immediate boundaries of the site;*
- *Filtered views from the trodden footpath network within Burleigh Wood, and filtered and open views from Burleigh Wood at the western boundary of the site;*
- *Possible filtered views from section of the local rights of way network to the south and east of the site associated with the open farmland to the south of Nanpantan Road; and*
- *Possible restricted filtered views from the public rights of way network to the west of the site.*

4.2.2 I broadly agree with this visual envelope, but note that the addition of 2 storey dwellings (c6m high) onto the highest part of the Appeal site would increase the overall extent of potential visibility and visual effects. This may for example, bring in more distant vantage points from private upper storey views further to the east.

### **4.3 Visual Receptors**

4.3.1 Paragraph 6.13 of GLVIA3 defines visual receptors as people living in the area; people

who work there; people passing through on road, rail or other forms of transport; people visiting promoted landscapes or attractions; and people engaged in recreation of different types.

4.3.2 I have identified the following key visual receptors as suitable for re-assessment of potential effects on views and visual amenity (with reference to GLVIA3):

- local residents at properties with direct views onto the Appeal site, as well as others within and around Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close beyond the immediate boundaries of the site;
- road users travelling along Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close (including pedestrians and cyclists);
- recreational users of the footpaths within Burleigh Wood; and
- recreational users of the wider public right of way network, including to the south, east and west of the Appeal site.

4.3.3 Local residents and road users more broadly and further to the east, where distant views are glimpsed, or from upper storey private windows are not considered any further in this assessment (due to proportionality).

4.3.4 The G+LLVIA identified a series of 13 viewpoints at the locations shown on Drawing GL1028 01 and 02 that are considered representative of the visual envelope of the Appeal site and acceptable for assessment purposes. Photographs of the representative views at locations 1 to 13 are shown on Drawings GL1028 07 to GL1028 13 and have been referenced alongside my field assessment.

4.3.5 I have also carried out my own photography to provide additional micro-siting that I identified during my fieldwork. They show the wider context of views within and around the Appeal Site and in particular the relationship between several key elements around the viewer at each location (such as Burleigh Farmhouse, Burleigh Wood, the edge of Loughborough, with the elevated rolling topography and undeveloped skylines), as set out in Table SH-12 below and Drawings CBC-LEC-PI-001 to CBC-LEC-PI-003. Figure 8 is a mark up of G+LLVIA Site Location Plan to show the location of my specific viewpoints.

**Table SH-12 – Summary Description of Specific Viewpoints (micro-siting)**

|                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Viewpoint 7i</p> <p>Drawing Number CBC-LEC-PI-001 (micro-siting within Appeal Site)</p>                    | <p>180 degree panoramic photography from within Appeal Site, close to western boundary.</p> <p>Close to G+LLVIA representative view 7, which was located at the edge of Burleigh Wood looking through the tree line across the site and was described as a view which is filtered by the intervening tree canopies and will change as leaves fall into winter.</p> <p>The micro-siting location shows elevated, open long-distance views over Soar Valley to the east and rising wooded hills of Charnwood Forest to the south. Wide undeveloped skyline.</p> <p>Northern façade of Burleigh Farmhouse, Grade II Listed Building with timber-frame and white painted brick infill on a brick plinth (dating from the 17th century) is visible to the south above a managed hedgerow. Both upper storey and ground floor windows have direct views onto Appeal site.</p> <p>The Appeal site is a small grassland field and marks the transition from the settlement edge to ancient woodland to the west (with oak saplings).</p> |
| <p>Viewpoint 8i</p> <p>Drawing CBC-LEC-PI-002 (micro-siting to interpretation board within Burleigh Wood)</p> | <p>180 degree panoramic photography from trodden footpath within Burleigh Wood, near to interpretation board.</p> <p>Close to G+LLVIA representative view 8 which was located on the trodden path within Burleigh Wood looking south-east and was described as having a restricted appreciation of the site and its visual setting due to heavily filtered views.</p> <p>The micro-siting location shows that where the existing residential development has been built up to the edge of the woodland, the feel is of an urban woodland, with tall, two storey properties blocking all views out and enclosing the woodland. The properties overlook the woodland path.</p> <p>The Loughborough University interpretation board provides information about the history, wildlife and management of the woodland and confirms that it is very important both nationally and locally, with controlled limited access for local enjoyment and as an educational resource.</p>                                                      |
| <p>Viewpoint 8ii</p> <p>Drawing CBC-LEC-PI-003 (micro-siting to memorial bench within Burleigh Wood)</p>      | <p>180 degree panoramic photography from trodden footpath within Burleigh Wood, near to memorial bench.</p> <p>Close to G+LLVIA representative view 8 which was located on the trodden path within Burleigh Wood looking south-east and was described as having a restricted appreciation of the site and its visual setting due to heavily filtered views.</p> <p>The micro-siting location shows that there is no existing residential development along this part of the woodland. The feel is of a more rural woodland, with a green field along the woodland edge, filtered longer distance views between the trunks and branches, with expansive sky.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p>These views will change over the course of the year, becoming dominated by bluebells in the Spring, more leafy and enclosed in the Summer, turning brown and russet in the Autumn. The more open and transparent views are possible over the Winter months.</p> <p>There is only one memorial bench within the woodland and this is located along the footpath where it passes adjacent to the Appeal Site. It is located within a relatively peaceful and secluded part of the wood.</p> |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



Figure 8 – Mark up of G+LLVIA Site Location Plan to show my specific viewpoints (7i, 8i and 8ii)

### Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to Change

- 4.3.6 In assessing susceptibility of visual receptors to change, I have referenced the methodology within Appendix 1 of G+LLVIA and I have also referenced GLVIA3 paragraph 6.32 *“The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is 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.”*
- 4.3.7 My assessment of the susceptibility of each visual receptor is set out in Table SH-13 below.
- 4.3.8 In summary, the visual receptors which have a high susceptibility to the proposed changes include local residents with direct views of the Appeal site and recreational users of Burleigh Wood and public rights of way to the south, east and west of the Appeal site.
- 4.3.9 Visual receptors with medium susceptibility to the proposed changes include other local residents which are set back from the Appeal site and/or travellers more generally along Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close.



**Table SH-13 – Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to the Proposed Development**

| Receptors                                                                                                              | Reference                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Susceptibility        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Local Residents at properties with direct views onto the Appeal site                                                   | People with direct views from settlement edge over countryside which contributes to the landscape setting and enjoyed by residents of the area.<br><br>Refer to G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 1 and 5 and also my Illustrative Viewpoint 7i micro-siting (Drawing CBC-LEC-PI-001). | High susceptibility   |
| Other Local Residents at properties within and around Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close | People with secondary / restricted views from residential properties. Countryside on the settlement edge contributes to the landscape setting and enjoyed by residents of the area.<br><br>Refer to G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 2, 3, 4 and 6.                                   | Medium susceptibility |
| Road users generally - travelling along Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close               | General travellers (vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians), whose attention may not be focused on the landscape.<br><br>Refer to G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.                                                                                                   | Medium susceptibility |
| Recreational users of the footpaths within Burleigh Wood                                                               | People whose attention is likely to be focused on the landscape.<br><br>Refer to G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 7 and 8 and my Illustrative Viewpoints 7i, 8i and 8ii micro-siting (Drawings CBC-LEC-PI-001, 002 and 003).                                                          | High susceptibility   |
| Recreational users of the wider public right of way network, including to the south, east and west of the Appeal site  | People whose attention is likely to be focused on the landscape.<br><br>Refer to G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 7 and 10 to 13                                                                                                                                                      | High susceptibility   |

Value attached to Views

4.3.10 In assessing value attached to views, I have referenced the methodology within Appendix 1 of G+LLVIA and I have also referenced GLVIA3 paragraph 6.37 *“This should take account of: recognition of the value attached to particular in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations; indicators of value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearance in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of*

*facilities for their enjoyment (such as parking places, sign boards and interpretive material) and references to them in literature or art)."*

4.3.11 My assessment of the value attached to views for each visual receptor is set out in the Table SH-14 below. In summary, the views of recreational users of Burleigh Wood and the public right of way network, to the south, east and west of the Appeal site are of high value.

4.3.12 Local residents (with direct views of the Appeal site and those which are set back from the Appeal site) and travellers more generally along Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close (including cyclists and pedestrians) are of medium value.

**Table SH-14 – Value attached to Views of Visual Receptors**

| Receptors                                                                                                                                | Reference                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Value        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Local Residents at properties with direct views onto the Appeal site                                                                     | Includes properties around the Appeal site boundary from regularly used rooms or living space. Appeal site forms feature in the streetscene, to varying degrees and part of the transition between the settlement and the Charnwood Forest countryside.<br><br>Refer to G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 1 and 5 and also my Illustrative Viewpoint 7i micro-siting (Drawings CBC-LEC-PI-001). | Medium value |
| Other Local Residents at properties within and around within and around Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close | Includes other properties, regularly used rooms or living space. Appeal site forms a feature in the streetscene, to varying degrees and part of the transition between the settlement and the Charnwood Forest countryside.<br><br>Refer to G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 2, 3, 4 and 6.                                                                                                    | Medium value |
| Road users generally – travelling along Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close                                 | General travellers – vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, where Appeal site forms a feature in the streetscene and part of the transition between the settlement and the Charnwood Forest countryside.<br><br>Refer to G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.                                                                                                                       | Medium value |
| Recreational users of the footpaths within Burleigh Wood                                                                                 | Including publicised and popular routes, where the views form an important part of the experience. Provides an appreciation of a landscape which defines Charnwood Forest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | High value   |

|                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
|                                                                                                                       | Refer to G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 7 and 8 and my Illustrative Viewpoints 7i, 8i and 8ii micro-siting (Drawings CBC-LEC-PI-001, 002 and 003).                                                                        |            |
| Recreational users of the wider public right of way network, including to the south, east and west of the Appeal site | Including popular routes, where the views form an important part of the experience. Provides an appreciation of a landscape which defines Charnwood Forest.<br><br>Refer to G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 7 and 10 to 13 | High value |

### Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

4.3.13 In Table SH-15 below I have combined the above gradings of susceptibility of visual receptors with the value attached to views, to derive an overall judgement of sensitivity of visual receptors to change (with reference to Table 3, Appendix 1 of G+LLVIA).

4.3.14 In summary, recreational users of Burleigh Wood and public rights of way are of high sensitivity to the changes proposed, whilst local residents are of medium-high sensitivity to the changes proposed. Travellers more generally along Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close are of medium sensitivity.

**Table SH-15 – Overall Sensitivity of Visual Receptors to Change**

| Receptor                                                                                                                                                        | Susceptibility to the Proposed Development | Value attached to Views | Sensitivity of Visual Receptors |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Local Residents at properties with direct views onto the Appeal site (G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 1 and 5)                                                 | High                                       | Medium                  | Medium - High                   |
| Other local residents within and around Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close (G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 2, 3, 4 and 6)       | Medium                                     | Medium                  | Medium - High                   |
| Road users generally - travelling along Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close (G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) | Medium                                     | Medium                  | Medium                          |
| Recreational users of the footpaths within Burleigh Wood (G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 7 and 8)                                                             | High                                       | High                    | High                            |

|                                                                                                                                                                         |      |      |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Recreational users of the wider public right of way network, including to the south, east and west of the Appeal site (G+LLVIA Representative Viewpoint 7 and 10 to 13) | High | High | High |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|

Magnitude of Visual Effects

- 4.3.15 In assessing magnitude of change to views and visual amenity I have referenced the methodology within Appendix 1 of G+LLVIA, as well as GLVIA3 where relevant, to take account of size or scale, geographical extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility (paragraph 6.38 of GLVIA3).
- 4.3.16 I have also reviewed the ‘verified views (photomontages)’ included within the Influence-LSoC for Viewpoint 02 Leconfield Road, Viewpoint 06 – Montague Drive, Viewpoint 11 and Viewpoint 12 – PRoW K58 to the south-west.
- 4.3.17 My assessment of the magnitude of change for each representative viewpoint is set out in the Table SH-16, with my summary in relation to each of the key visual receptors, below.
- 4.3.18 In summary, a high adverse degree of change resulting from the proposed development is identified for local residents with direct views of the Appeal site and road users along parts of Leconfield Road and Montague Drive near to the Appeal site (Refer to G+LLVIA viewpoints 1 and 5). In these instances, the changes to views and visual amenity would be clearly noticeable and permanently alter the character of this edge of the settlement / transition to Charnwood Forest countryside.
- 4.3.19 Change to views for other residents at properties within and around Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close (as well as general road users), would vary from medium to medium-low adverse (Refer to G+LLVIA viewpoints 2, 3, 4 and 6). The changes to views and visual amenity would be noticeable, typically with permanent alteration to roof lines and undeveloped skyline beyond the end of the streets depending on position and orientation of properties, as well as intervening elements.
- 4.3.20 There would be a low-medium magnitude of change for recreational visitors to Burleigh Wood, as they pass along the trodden path by the Appeal site (Refer to G+LLVIA viewpoints 8), rising to high on the edge of the woods (Refer to G+LLVIA viewpoint 7).

This is due to a noticeable change to the views and visual amenity, from the loss of long-distance filtered views across a grass field and undeveloped skyline. It is noted that where the existing residential development has been built up to the edge of the woodland, the visual amenity of walking through the woodland is reduced in comparison to the experience of walking along the section of footpath as it passes adjacent to the Appeal Site (where the visual appearance is of a more rural woodland and open edge). The proposals would permanently alter the views and visual amenity within an important part of the wood, near to the memorial bench.

4.3.21 The magnitude of change for recreational users of the public right of way network to the south, east and west of the Appeal site would be negligible and adverse, or no change (Refer to G+LLVIA viewpoints 9 to 13).

4.3.22 The potential influence of the establishment of potential landscaping treatments and therefore long-term effects (year 15) is not anticipated to reduce the short-term effects (year 1) from the overriding loss of open undeveloped skylines / edge of countryside and introduction of new built elements. Even where new planting softens and filters the built development, this would still be at odds with the existing visual character and alter the appreciation of the local views.

**Table SH-16 – Magnitude of Change to Views – Summary for Individual Viewpoints**

| VP Ref                                                                                         | Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Magnitude of Visual Change |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| G+LLVIA VP 1<br>Leconfield Road                                                                | Size or scale – High - complete change, with loss of grass slope and undeveloped skyline at end of street. Reduction of character at edge of settlement / Charnwood Forest countryside.<br><br>Geographical Extent – High – a wide angle of view, due to proximity<br><br>Permanent / irreversible                   | High and Adverse           |
| G+LLVIA VP 2<br>Leconfield Road at the junction with the cycleway connection to Nanpantan Road | Size or scale – Medium - perceptible change, with loss of grass slope and undeveloped skyline at end of street. Reduction of character at edge of settlement / Charnwood Forest countryside.<br><br>Geographical Extent – Low – a limited angle of view, due to intervening elements<br><br>Permanent / irreversible | Medium - Low and Adverse   |

|                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <p>G+LLVIA VP 3<br/>Tynedale Road at<br/>the No.3 bus stop</p>                         | <p>Size or scale – Medium - perceptible change, with alteration to roof lines and undeveloped skyline beyond end of street.</p> <p>Geographical Extent – Low – a limited angle of view, due to intervening elements</p> <p>Permanent / irreversible</p>                                                                                                        | <p>Medium –<br/>Low and<br/>Adverse</p>  |
| <p>G+LLVIA VP 4<br/>junction of<br/>Montague Drive<br/>and Guildford<br/>Way</p>       | <p>Size or scale – Medium - perceptible change, with alteration to roof lines and undeveloped skyline beyond end of street.</p> <p>Geographical Extent – Low – a limited angle of view, due to intervening elements</p> <p>Permanent / irreversible</p>                                                                                                        | <p>Medium -<br/>Low and<br/>adverse</p>  |
| <p>G+LLVIA VP 5<br/>Montague Drive</p>                                                 | <p>Size or scale – High – noticeable change, with loss of grass slope and undeveloped skyline between existing housing at end of street.<br/>Reduction of character at edge of settlement / Charnwood Forest countryside.</p> <p>Geographical Extent – High – a wide angle of view, due to proximity</p> <p>Permanent / irreversible</p>                       | <p>High and<br/>adverse</p>              |
| <p>G+LLVIA VP 6<br/>Compton Close</p>                                                  | <p>Size or scale – High – noticeable change, with loss of grass slope and undeveloped wooded hills on skyline beyond existing housing.<br/>Reduction of character at edge of settlement / Charnwood Forest countryside.</p> <p>Geographical Extent – Medium – moderate angle of view, due to relative proximity</p> <p>Permanent / irreversible</p>            | <p>Medium and<br/>adverse</p>            |
| <p>G+LLVIA VP 7<br/>western site<br/>boundary at the<br/>edge of Burleigh<br/>Wood</p> | <p>Size or scale – High - complete change, with loss of long-distance filtered views across grass field and undeveloped skyline. Reduction of character with increased enclosure and introduction of a settlement edge.</p> <p>Geographical Extent – Medium to High – a wide angle of view, due to proximity, but filtered</p> <p>Permanent / irreversible</p> | <p>High and<br/>adverse</p>              |
| <p>G+LLVIA VP 8 the<br/>trodden path<br/>within Burleigh<br/>Wood</p>                  | <p>Size or scale – Medium - noticeable change, with loss of long-distance filtered views across grass field and undeveloped skyline. Reduction of character with increased enclosure and introduction of a settlement edge.</p> <p>Geographical Extent – Low – restricted angle of view and filtered</p> <p>Permanent / irreversible</p>                       | <p>Low to<br/>Medium and<br/>adverse</p> |

|                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                           |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| G+LLVIA VP 9<br>from public<br>footpath K62  | No change to views, obscured by intervening elements                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No change                 |
| G+LLVIA VP 10<br>from byway K58              | Size or scale – Negligible – Very limited change, with additional roof tops potentially extending above existing rooftops<br><br>Geographical Extent – Negligible – very limited angle of view, due to distance and intervening elements<br><br>Permanent / irreversible | Negligible<br>and Adverse |
| G+LLVIA VP 11<br>from public<br>footpath K58 | No change to views, obscured by intervening elements                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No change                 |
| G+LLVIA VP 12<br>from public<br>footpath K58 | Size or scale – Negligible – Very limited change, with additional roof tops potentially extending above existing rooftops<br><br>Geographical Extent – Negligible – very limited angle of view, due to distance and intervening elements<br><br>Permanent / irreversible | Negligible<br>and Adverse |
| G+LLVIA VP 13<br>from public<br>footpath K58 | Size or scale – Negligible – Very limited change, with additional roof tops potentially extending above existing rooftops<br><br>Geographical Extent – Negligible – very limited angle of view, due to distance and intervening elements<br><br>Permanent / irreversible | Negligible<br>and Adverse |

### Summary of Visual Effects

4.3.23 I have carried out an assessment of the potential visual effects of the proposed development in accordance with the latest guidance and the methodology within G+LLVIA. In my assessment I have reviewed the previously identified representative viewpoints as well as carrying out my own assessment of the visibility of the Appeal Site and its context.

4.3.24 As described in paragraph 6.44 of GLVIA3, *“There are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and context and with the type of proposal. In making a judgement about the significance of visual effects the following points should be noted:*

- *Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant;*
- *Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant; and*
- *Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present in the view.”*

4.3.25 As set out in Table SH-17 below, I have identified major / moderate and adverse visual effects for local residents at properties with direct views onto the Appeal site and general users of Leconfield Road and Montague Drive towards the edge of the Appeal site. Overall, I would consider these to be significant.

4.3.26 Moderate adverse effects are identified for other local residents within and around Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close and for recreational visitors to Burleigh Wood, as they pass by the Appeal site along the trodden path. I would consider these to be just below the threshold of significant.

4.3.27 Potential visual effects from the edge of Burleigh Wood increases to Major adverse and although significant, is off the route of the existing trodden path.

4.3.28 Moderate-minor effects are identified for road users more generally within and around other parts of Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close. Recreational users of the wider public right of way network, including to the south, east and west of the Appeal site are typically minor and adverse (or no change).

**Table SH-17 – Overall Visual Effects – Summary for Individual Viewpoints**

|                                           | Sensitivity of Visual Receptors                                | Magnitude of Visual Change | Visual Effect                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| G+LLVIA VP 1 Leconfield Road looking west | Medium - High (residential)<br><br>Medium (general road users) | High and Adverse           | <b>Major/Moderate and Adverse (residential and road users)</b> |



|                                                                                                          |                                                            |                           |                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| G+LLVIA VP 2 Leconfield Road at the junction with the cycleway connection to Nanpantan Road looking west | Medium - High (residential)<br>Medium (general road users) | Medium - Low and Adverse  | Moderate and Adverse (residential and road users)                         |
| G+LLVIA VP 3 Tynedale Road at the No.3 bus stop looking west                                             | Medium - High (residential)<br>Medium (general road users) | Medium – Low and Adverse  | Moderate and Adverse (residential)<br>Moderate/minor (general road users) |
| G+LLVIA VP 4 junction of Montague Drive and Guildford Way looking south-west.                            | Medium - High (residential)<br>Medium (general road users) | Medium - Low and adverse  | Moderate and Adverse (residential)<br>Moderate/minor (general road users) |
| G+LLVIA VP 5 Montague Drive looking south-west                                                           | Medium - High (residential)<br>Medium (general road users) | High and adverse          | <b>Major/moderate and Adverse (residential and road users)</b>            |
| G+LLVIA VP 6 Compton Close looking south-west                                                            | Medium - High (residential)<br>Medium (general road users) | Medium and adverse        | Moderate and Adverse (residential and road users)                         |
| G+LLVIA VP 7 western site boundary at the edge of Burleigh Wood                                          | High (recreational)                                        | High and adverse          | <b>Major and Adverse (recreational)</b>                                   |
| G+LLVIA VP 8 the trodden path within Burleigh Wood looking south-east                                    | High (recreational)                                        | Low to Medium and adverse | Moderate and Adverse (recreational)                                       |
| G+LLVIA VP 9 from public footpath K62 looking north-east                                                 | High (recreational)                                        | No change                 | No change                                                                 |
| G+LLVIA VP 10 from byway K58 looking west                                                                | High (recreational)                                        | Negligible and Adverse    | Minor and Adverse (recreational)                                          |
| G+LLVIA VP 11 from public footpath K58 looking north-west                                                | High (recreational)                                        | No change                 | No Change                                                                 |

|                                        |                     |                        |                                  |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| G+LLVIA VP 12 from public footpath K58 | High (recreational) | Negligible and Adverse | Minor and Adverse (recreational) |
| G+LLVIA VP 13 from public footpath K58 | High (recreational) | Negligible and Adverse | Minor and Adverse (recreational) |

## 5 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS IN DISPUTE

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 In this section of my Assessment, I consider the reason for refusal and matters in dispute. In particular, whether *“The proposed development would fail to protect and enhance the unique landscape character of the site and surrounding area”*.

5.1.2 The Charnwood Borough Council Appeal Statement paragraph 7.7 refers to the *“Ground for refusal one - The Council considers significant harm will arise from the development arising from its landscape impact.”*

5.1.3 The Statement of Common Ground listed seven issues of disagreement between the parties including:

- *“Issue 1 – Whether the Proposed Development is contrary to Policy CS11 (Landscape and Countryside) of the Core Strategy and Paragraph 174 of the NPPF, such that, when all other local and national policy and other material considerations are taken into account, the Application should be refused outline planning permission as a consequence.”*

### 5.2 Is the landscape character of the Appeal Site and surrounding area unique?

5.2.1 I have carried out a literature review of the key reference and policy documents and highlighted below references to the unique character of Charnwood Forest (with my addition of bold and underline emphasis).

5.2.2 Natural England – National Character Area Profile 73 Charnwood describes how *“Charnwood is a **unique** landscape, marked out by its geology and upland qualities, which contrast with the surrounding gentle lowlands. It is formed by a mosaic of heathland, farmland, parkland and woodland.”*

5.2.3 This was also recognised by the Inspector in the Land south of Nanpantan Road Appeal Decisions APP/X2410/W/15/3028159 and APP/X2410/W/15/3028161 in paragraph 11, *“The site lies within National Character Area 73 Charnwood (NCA73), which is said to have a **unique** landscape, marked out by its geology and upland qualities, which contrast with the surrounding gentle lowlands.”*

5.2.4 Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment 2012 (page 2), states that the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area, is *“the most distinct and has the strongest landscape*

*character of the areas in the Borough”.*

- 5.2.5 Charnwood Local Plan 2011 - 2028 Core Strategy Adopted November 2015 under paragraph 7.23 states that *“The plans we have with our partners for the Charnwood Forest Regional Park recognise the unique natural and cultural heritage features of Charnwood Forest as an essential part of our growing communities, now and in the future.”*
- 5.2.6 Charnwood Local Plan 2021-37 Pre-Submission Draft July 2021 under paragraph 8.24. states that *“The Partnership is also pursuing other means to secure the recognition of the distinctive and unique qualities of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park which may include UNESCO Geo Park status in recognition of the special value of the area’s geology.”*, and under paragraph 8.25 *“It is essential that visitor growth is managed in a way that is compatible with the special and unique character of Charnwood Forest.”*
- 5.2.7 Charnwood Local Plan 2021-37 Pre-Submission Draft July 2021 under paragraph 8.59. also states that *“We want to protect the listed buildings and other designated heritage assets in our Borough and ensure that the special architectural and historic interest they represent are preserved for future generations and continue to reflect Charnwood’s unique character.”*
- 5.2.8 I also note that NPPF considers Ancient Woodland to be irreplaceable habitat, under paragraph 180 and that within the glossary, irreplaceable habitat is defined as *“Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity.”*
- 5.2.9 It is also relevant that the Appeal Site was until recently (following the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2015) designated as the Burleigh Farm Open Space of Special Character. This designation is defined relating to *“important areas of open land retained in public or private ownership which contribute to the character of a settlement either individually or as part of a wider network of open space”* and can include: *“spaces of historic importance within conservation areas or adjoining listed buildings”*
- 5.2.10 Historic England defines Grade II buildings as being *“of special interest; 91.7% of all listed buildings are in this class and it is the most likely grade of listing for a home*

owner.”<sup>1</sup> Burleigh Farmhouse is Grade II and the description on Historic England’s official list entry includes reference to “*Farmhouse; C17, timber-framed with white painted brick infill, on brick plinth, with brick outshut, enlarged early-mid C19, in brick, painted white, to south.*”

5.2.11 Taking the above literature review into account and also my own observations (via desk study of maps and fieldwork), I have concluded that the Local Setting of the Appeal Site forms part of the unique Charnwood Forest landscape:

- The small grassland field (with some natural reversion, bounded by hedges and trees) has a visual connection to Burleigh Farmhouse (Listed Building) and direct physical association with the edge of Burleigh Wood (including Ancient Woodland);
- These elements are characteristic of the Charnwood Forest mosaic of farmland and woodland, with the natural transition from grassland to ancient woodland reinforcing this strong landscape character association;
- The site is elevated, rolling and in part steeply sloping, which in combination with its open nature contributes to the character of the area (and forms a backdrop in certain views alongside other wooded hills to the south), whilst the site’s upper levels allow for extensive views across Loughborough to the Wolds (reflecting the geology and upland qualities); and
- This combination of natural and cultural elements, with aesthetic and perceptual characteristics, create a distinctive character which contrasts with the built form of the settlement edge and lower-lying Soar Valley.

### **5.3 Would the Proposed Development protect and enhance the unique landscape character of the site and surrounding area?**

5.3.1 I have concluded that the Proposed Development would not protect or enhance the unique landscape character of the site and immediately surrounding area, due to the following:

- major / moderate adverse landscape effect on the Local Setting of the Appeal

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<sup>1</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/listed-buildings/#Categories>

Site (as also identified in G+LLVIA);

- major / moderate and adverse visual effects for local residents at properties with direct views onto the Appeal site, general users of Leconfield Road and Montague Drive towards the edge of the Appeal site and moderate adverse effects for recreational visitors to Burleigh Wood, as they pass by the Appeal site (increasing to Major adverse on the edge of the wood);
- alteration to the natural sloping and rolling landscape, with introduction of retaining walls and embankments (roads and other built elements);
- alteration to the grassland field size and shape (which has been largely unchanged since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) and the transition to the woodland;
- loss of elevated long-distance views;
- alteration to the local streetscene and views out of the settlement, with loss of undeveloped skylines / wooded hills; and
- overall, permanent and irreversible erosion of the unique Charnwood Forest landscape character at this location.

#### **5.4 Is the Proposed Development contrary to Policy CS11 (Landscape and Countryside)?**

5.4.1 Policy CS11 states *inter alia* that “We will support and protect the character of our landscape and countryside by: “requiring new developments to protect landscape character and to reinforce sense of place and local distinctiveness by taking account of relevant local Landscape Character Assessments”.

5.4.2 Appeal Decision Ref: APP/X2410/W/21/3287864 – Land East of Cossington Road, Sibleby (CD 7.1) under paragraph 33 states “In summary, the development would result in harm to landscape and visual character from the loss of an open field on a rising valley slope contrary to CCS Policy CS11.”

5.4.3 Appeal Decision Ref: APP/X2410/W/21/3271340 – Land at Maplewood Road, Woodhouse Eaves (CD 7.2) under paragraph 34 states “Accordingly, I conclude that the development would fail to respect the character and appearance of the locality as it extended the perception of the built-up area into the wider countryside in a manner that was at odds with that of the immediately adjacent settlement. As such, it would conflict with Core Strategy Policy CS.11 which requires new development to protect landscape

*character and reinforce sense of place and local distinctiveness.”*

- 5.4.4 Appeal Decision Ref: APP/X2410/W/20/3264488 – Land off Melton Road, Burton-on-the-Wolds (CD 7.3) under Paragraph 31 states *“In conclusion on this matter, the change from open field to housing is bound to have an adverse impact on the edge of Burton on the Wolds. There would therefore be conflict with CS policies CS2, CS11 and WVNP Policy WV1, which seek to protect landscape character and important views and ensure development respects and enhances the character of the area.”*
- 5.4.5 Appeal Ref: APP/X2410/W/15/3028159 and APP/X2410/W/15/3028161 - Land south of Nanpantan Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire (CD 7.4) under Paragraph 23 states *“The built form of the proposed scheme would diminish the significance of what is an important skyline feature. The proposed ‘vista corridor’ would appear as a contrived design feature in this context, at odds with the aims of Policy CS2. I do not consider that the proposal would preserve or enhance a valued landscape. It would not protect landscape character or reinforce a sense of place and local distinctiveness, and so would conflict with Policy CS11.”*
- 5.4.6 In similar circumstances to the conclusions set out in the above Appeal Decisions, the proposed development would change an open field, on a rising slope, to mainly housing, constituting an expansion of the built edge of Loughborough into countryside which would be at odds with the existing settlement pattern (reducing the existing transitional buffer towards Ancient Woodland and a designated Heritage Asset) and affecting part of a recognised Green Infrastructure asset (Charnwood Forest Regional Park).
- 5.4.7 I have concluded that the proposed development would not protect the landscape character or reinforce a sense of place and local distinctiveness to this part of Charnwood Forest and would be contrary to CS11.

## **5.5 Would the Proposed Development enhance the natural and local environment, by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes?**

- 5.5.1 NPPF, paragraph 174 states *inter alia* that *“planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: “a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)”*.

- 5.5.2 I have taken account of Charnwood Borough Council's Senior Landscape Officer who in April 2021 stated that the *"The LVIA downplays the local importance of the site as a valued landscape"*.
- 5.5.3 I am aware that the Appellants Statement of Case in paragraph 7.1 asserts that *"the site is not a valued landscape as defined by the NPPF, 174 (a) and therefore paragraph 174(a) is not a relevant consideration."*
- 5.5.4 I am also aware that the Council's Appeal Statement of Case does not reference sub-paragraph 'a' of NPPF paragraph 174 and refers to sub-paragraph 'b' – as discussed in more detail below.
- 5.5.5 Nevertheless, I am also aware that the Inspector on the Land south of Nanpantan Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire (Appeal Ref: APP/X2410/W/15/3028159 and APP/X2410/W/15/3028161) identified a 'valued landscape', at c400m to the east of the Appeal site. The Inspector described the character and appearance of the site and included reference *inter alia* to the following:
- Paragraph 15. *"The appeal site relates more to the open countryside to its south than it does to the built development to its east, north and west. Beyond the brook, open farm land rises up, at first gently, then more steeply, to a wooded hill containing Outwoods, that is a feature on the skyline."*
  - Paragraph 22 *"...The appeal site is valued locally because it is part of the open countryside that provides a rural context for the urban area, which here forms an important part of Charnwood Forest's setting. It is the combination of the physical attributes of the area with how it is perceived that makes this a valued landscape..."*
- 5.5.6 The land to the south of Nanpantan Road is located within Charnwood Forest Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest, which is a different sub-area to the Appeal site, which as noted above, is within Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland. The boundary line between the two sub-areas follows Nanpantan Road, approximately 65m to the south of the Appeal site at its nearest point.
- 5.5.7 Taking into account my use of TGN 02/21 in Tables SH-4 to SH-6 above, I have identified the following factors that indicate degrees of landscape value for the Local Setting of the Appeal site:



- clear ecological and physiographical interest which contributes positively to the local landscape (rolling grassland field and woodland edge and Ancient Woodland);
- close to and visible from a designated ‘Heritage Asset’, Burleigh Farmhouse (listed Building), with additional time depth from the size and scale of the small grassland field (enclosed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) and Ancient Woodland;
- offers an important contribution to the character of a localised part of the settlement edge (until recently recognised as Open Space of Special Character);
- in scenic terms, the open and simple landcover, contrasts with the more complex and enclosed influence of the urban edge; and
- is part of the wider Charnwood Forest Regional Park, a valued green infrastructure asset.

5.5.8 However, in comparison to the land south of Nanpantan Road, the role of the Appeal Site in the wider landscape is more localised, as follows:

- it is not as visually prominent from a main vehicular gateway into and out of the settlement, with pedestrian footpath alongside (e.g. south of Nanpantan Road);
- it is not as visually prominent from a main recreational gateway into and out of the settlement (e.g. the public byway which leads up to Outwoods Farm and the Outwoods, south of Nanpantan Road); and
- it does not form part of views of a relatively large and wide expanse of countryside, up to wooded hills, south of Nanpantan Road.

5.5.9 Overall, whilst the Local Setting of the Appeal site is close to an area of ‘valued landscape’ (south of Nanpantan Road), I have concluded that it is not a ‘valued landscape’ for the purposes of NPPF 174, sub-paragraph ‘a’.

## **5.6 Would the Proposed Development enhance the natural and local environment, by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside?**

5.6.1 NPPF, paragraph 174 states *inter alia* that “*planning policies and decisions should*

*contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland”.*

5.6.2 Natural England – National Character Area Profile 73 Charnwood describes under supporting document 2: Landscape Change how:

- *“Continuing demand for large-scale, mixed-use development is eroding intrinsic landscape character on the fringes of larger settlements. This is creating visual intrusion into the countryside, resulting in the loss of surrounding landscape features and increasing the risk of the coalescence of outlying villages.”*
- *“The conversion of farm buildings to residential use needs to be done sensitively to reduce any negative impacts on the intrinsic landscape character.”*

5.6.3 The Council’s submitted Local Plan 2021-2037 (submitted for Examination in December 2021) under paragraph 2.53 describes how Limits to Development *“define the cohesive built form of settlements, taking account of development allocations made, and makes them distinct from the Countryside”* and that *“Countryside is the largely undeveloped land beyond the defined Limits to Development of our towns and villages and has its own intrinsic character and beauty.”*

5.6.4 The Appeal Site is located within the Charnwood Forest Regional Park. The Core Strategy 2015, under paragraph 7.18 describes how *“Charnwood Forest is an important landscape for the region. It is an area of particular beauty, characterised by extensive woodlands set in a hilly and open landscape”*. The Local Setting of the Appeal site is consistent with this description – a hilly, open and pastoral edge to woodland, giving rise to a particular beauty. Whilst it may be immediately adjacent to the existing built form of settlement, the proposed development would not contribute positively to this defined beauty.

5.6.5 Even considering new planting within and around the housing (which may potentially provide screening and obscuring of parts of the new built elements as it establishes), it would not mitigate for the loss of the small grassland field on the edge of woodland, and the erosion of its hilly, open character. The inclusion of active play and amenity grass in the buffer zone is likely to further erode the edge of woodland character, rather than enhance it.

5.6.6 I have concluded that development within the Appeal site is unavoidably harmful to the natural and local environment and cannot be seen to contribute to or enhance its intrinsic character and beauty and as such is contrary to NPPF, paragraph 174, 'b'.







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