

LAND OFF LECONFIELD ROAD, NANPANTAN,
LOUGHBOROUGH

LPA ref. P/20/2199/2

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Summary Proof of Evidence of
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Prepared for Charnwood Borough Council

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Contents

1	LANDSCAPE EFFECTS	1
2	VISUAL EFFECTS.....	2
3	MATTERS IN DISPUTE	3

1 LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 1.1.1 The Appeal Site is located within Natural England – National Character Area Profile 73 Charnwood (NCA 73), which 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.”*
- 1.1.2 Charnwood Borough Council’s Landscape Character Assessment for the Charnwood Forest Regional Park 2019 is the most recent local publication. This report identified eleven individual character areas, with the Appeal Site located within Charnwood Forest Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland, *“A lower lying, predominantly open, arable landscape with some small pockets of pasture and small blocks of ancient woodland. The character area lies between central upland areas to the south and the wider lowland to the north. This area is heavily influenced by settlement from the urban edges of Shepshed and Loughborough.”* The boundary to Charnwood Forest Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest follows along Nanpantan Road to the south of the Appeal Site.
- 1.1.3 The Local Setting of the Appeal Site includes a small grassland field, on a rising, rolling slope and forming a transition to Burleigh Wood (and area of designated Ancient Woodland) to the west. There are long-distance views to the east, possible from the hilly, elevated ground. The built form of the edge of Loughborough (from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s) are located to the northern, eastern and southern Appeal Site boundaries with Burleigh Farmhouse (Grade II Listed Building, dating back to 17th Century) in the south-western corner. The 1884 OS map is the first to show the site in any detail and it remains largely unchanged to the present day. The Appeal Site is consistent with the published character area descriptions for Charnwood Forest.
- 1.1.4 The proposals would have a minor adverse effect on the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland and a minor-minimal adverse effect on Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest. These would not be significant.
- 1.1.5 However, the effects upon the Local Setting of the Appeal Site would be major-moderate and adverse and I consider these to be significant.
- 1.1.6 I recognise that the development proposals are outline, nevertheless, the parameter plan would result in the permanent loss of elements and aesthetic and perceptual

aspects that are key to the specific characteristics of the Local Setting of the Appeal Site. The proposed offsets around the edges of the development would not be adequate to mitigate harm to the existing woodland edge / transitional character of this small site.

2 VISUAL EFFECTS

- 2.1.1 The visual envelope of the Appeal Site is relatively localised, being primarily associated with Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close, as well as properties on the north side of Nanpantan Road and part of the footpath through Burleigh Wood. However, the addition of 2 storey dwellings (c6m high) onto the highest part of the Appeal Site would increase the extent of visibility, with visual effects to more distant vantage points along the wider public right of way network to the south, east and west and potentially from private upper storey views and roads within parts of Loughborough, further to the east.
- 2.1.2 The proposals would have a major/moderate adverse visual effect upon 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. I consider these to be significant.
- 2.1.3 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 consider these to be just below the threshold of significant.
- 2.1.4 Potential visual effects from the edge of Burleigh Wood (Viewpoint 7) increase to major adverse and although these would be significant, are off the route of the existing trodden path.
- 2.1.5 Moderate-minor adverse effects are identified for road users more generally within and around other parts of Leconfield Road, Tynedale Road, Montague Drive and Compton Close and minor adverse effects for recreational users of the wider public right of way network, including to the south, east and west of the Appeal site. These would not be significant.
- 2.1.6 I have considered the potential influence of landscaping treatments, however the long-term effects (Year 15) are not anticipated to reduce the overriding loss of an open grassland field and introduction of new built elements, obscuring the visual

connectedness to woodland and open skylines. Even where new planting might soften and filter the built development, this would still be at odds with the existing visual character and alter the appreciation of local views.

3 MATTERS IN DISPUTE

3.1.1 With reference to Policy CS11, I conclude that the proposals would not protect landscape character or reinforce a sense of place and local distinctiveness.

3.1.2 The Local Setting of the Appeal Site forms part of the unique Charnwood Forest landscape, which extends right up to the existing built form of Loughborough and forms part of an attractive backdrop to several residential streets.

3.1.3 The small grassland field has a landscape connection to Burleigh Wood (including area of Ancient Woodland) and Burleigh Farmhouse (Listed Building) and is largely unchanged since the 19th century. Individually, these elements are characteristic of the Charnwood Forest mosaic of farmland and woodland, with the natural transition from grassland to woodland reinforcing this strong landscape character association.

3.1.4 However, it is the combination of these land cover elements, with the rolling elevated landform and long-distance views, which defines this distinctive character and contrasts with the built form of the settlement and the lower-lying Soar Valley.

3.1.5 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 buffer to Ancient Woodland and a Heritage Asset), and affecting part of a recognised Green Infrastructure asset (Charnwood Forest Regional Park).

3.1.6 The harm would be perceived within the immediate vicinity of the site, but including recreational visitors to Burleigh Wood, as well as local residents and general road users (vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians).

3.1.7 With reference to National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 174 'b', I conclude that the proposals would not enhance the natural and local environment and would cause permanent and significant harm to the intrinsic character and beauty of the site.

3.1.8 The published description of Charnwood Forest in the Council's Core Strategy 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”.

3.1.9 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 intrinsic character or beauty.

3.1.10 Table SH-SP1 below sets out the summary of key conclusions.

Table SH-SP1 Summary Proof of Evidence - Key Conclusions

<p>Landscape Effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Appeal Site is located within and is consistent with the published character area descriptions for Charnwood Forest • A small grassland field, with landscape connection to Burleigh Wood (including Ancient Woodland) and Burleigh Farmhouse (Listed Building) • Rolling elevated landform and long-distance views, contrasts with the built form of the settlement and the lower-lying Soar Valley • The proposals would result in the permanent loss of elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the specific characteristics of the Local Setting of the Appeal Site and would be significant
<p>Visual Effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The visual envelope of Appeal Site is relatively localised, although the addition of the development on to the highest parts would be visible over a wider area • The proposals would result in the loss of views of an open grassland field and introduce new built elements, obscuring the visual connectedness to woodland and open skylines • Changes would be perceived by 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 and would be significant • Visual effects just below the threshold of significant would be perceived by 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
<p>Policy CS11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals would not protect landscape character or reinforce a sense of place and local distinctiveness • The Local Setting of the Appeal Site forms part of the unique Charnwood Forest landscape, which extends right up to the existing built form of Loughborough and forms part of an attractive backdrop to several residential streets
<p>NPPF, para 174 b</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals would not enhance the natural and local environment and would cause permanent and significant harm to the intrinsic character and beauty of the site • Whilst it may be immediately adjacent to the existing built form of settlement, the proposed development would not contribute positively to the particular beauty or character of this hilly, open and pastoral edge to woodland





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