

OLD FARM, NORTON ROAD
STOURBRIDGE

Landscape and Visual Assessment

PDP Associates

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SECTION 1; INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 PDP Associates is a landscape architectural practice based in Cumbria with experience in landscape and visual impact assessment undertaken for a variety of clients, ranging from residential developers to local authorities. Recent studies include an assessment of potential development parcels as part of the evidence base for Eden District Council's Local Development Framework. Eden District is a sparsely populated rural area in Cumbria which includes parts of the Lake District National Park and The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.2 PDP Associates has been commissioned by Development Design Partnership to undertake a landscape and visual assessment for a residential development on land off Norton Road, Stourbridge.
- 1.3 The proposed site is located off Norton Road and forms part of the grounds of Old Farm located at the junction of Norton Road (A451) and County Lane, east of Norton Covert. The site is bounded by Norton Road with open farmland to the north and east. The southern boundary partly extends along the drive to Old Farm. The site lies within land currently designated as Green Belt. The proposed site covers approximately 1.1 hectares of managed amenity grassland which forms part of the enclosed grounds around Old Farm.
- 1.4 The following site appraisal is based on outline proposals for a residential development. This study considers the potential landscape/visual effects and impacts associated with the change in land use from domestic garden to residential/urban and the loss of Green Belt.
- 1.5 The assessment is made on the basis that the proposed development will comprise residential properties with internal roads, lighting, new boundary treatments, landscaping, street planting and gardens. The site will be accessed off Norton Road.
- 1.6 The landscape and visual appraisal involves an element of subjectivity on the part of the assessor. Professional judgement, taking into account a combination of quantitative and qualitative factors is now widely accepted as best practice for assessing effects on landscape character and on visual amenity. The approach taken for this study broadly follows the guidance recommended by the Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Assessment Guidelines for landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) and also by the Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage Landscape Character Assessment Guidance.
- 1.7 The level of assessment is considered to be appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the level of information currently available for the outline proposals.

SECTION 2; METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The approach adopted in this study for assessing landscape sensitivity and capacity broadly follows recommendations in the latest edition of the GLVIA. It assumes from the outset that even though a landscape may be designated or protected, the landscape does not automatically have a high landscape and visual sensitivity, especially where there may be specific local factors which would mitigate potential landscape and visual effects. Furthermore, even some sensitive areas may not automatically have no or low capacity to accept change.
- 2.2 It should be noted that the identification of areas of high sensitivity does not necessarily mean that all development would be unacceptable. Similarly, areas of low or medium sensitivity will not necessarily be able to accommodate any or all types of development. Local conditions, site and development detailed design, mitigation and cumulative impacts must also be considered.
- 2.3 The 2.0 km study area was largely defined by the extent of land within which the site is theoretically visible and would potentially experience significant landscape and visual effects, i.e. the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). Where appropriate, the study area was extended beyond the ZTV to show the wider landscape/urban context and connectivity.
- 2.4 For the purpose of this assessment, the ZTV was established by a desk study and verified using site survey and photographic analysis. The ZTV shown on Figure 5 illustrates the extent of land which theoretically has the potential to be effected by views of the proposed development. The ZTV was based on analysis of local views observed during the winter months without the screening benefit of deciduous leaf cover. The ZTV therefore represents a 'worse case' situation. It does not illustrate the extent of view or the reducing effects of perspective/distance back-grounding, context or other mitigating effects, nevertheless, the ZTV is a useful working tool to support the visual assessment. Field-work was undertaken in December, 2015.

SECTION 3; APPRAISAL CRITERIA

Landscape appraisal

- 3.1 An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource. This includes how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character.
- 3.2 An appraisal of landscape sensitivity is made by combining professional judgements in relation to the susceptibility of the landscape to change (particular to the proposed development type) and the value of the landscape receptor.
- 3.3 Professional judgments are made in relation to the susceptibility of the landscape receptor to change. This is the capacity of a landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies (whether the landscape receptor contributes to the overall character of a particular landscape type/area, or an individual element/feature or designation within it).
- 3.4 Judgments in relation to the value of the landscape receptor should reflect;
 - The value of the landscape character types or areas that may be affected based on a review of any designations at both national and local levels. Where there are no designations, judgements are based on criteria that can be used to establish landscape value.
 - The value of individual contributors to landscape character, especially key characteristics, which may include individual elements of the landscape, particular landscape features, notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities, and combinations of these contributors.
- 3.5 The appraisal of value is based on professional judgement and includes consideration of factors such as;
 - Landscape quality (condition): A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
 - Scenic Quality: The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses).
 - Rarity: The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type.
 - Representativeness: Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.

- Conservation Interests: The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historic and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.
- Recreational Value: Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
- Perceptual Aspects: A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and / or tranquility.
- Cultural Associations: Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

3.6 The resulting landscape sensitivity is described using a four-point scale (very high, high, medium or low) based upon the criteria set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – Summary of landscape sensitivity

Landscape sensitivity	Description
Very high	Typically highly valued landscape of international or national landscape or conservation importance such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in pristine condition with no/few detracting elements. Key characteristics of landscape are very vulnerable to change and are unable to accommodate development without significant character change; thresholds for significant change are very low.
High	Typically valued landscape of national or regional landscape or conservation importance such as some Special Landscape Areas, or areas within National Parks or AONBs with minor detracting factors. Key characteristics of landscape are vulnerable to change and development can be absorbed only in limited situations without significant character change; thresholds for significant change are low.
Medium	Typically valued landscape of regional or local landscape or conservation/amenity importance such as some Special Landscape Areas and Areas of Local Landscape Importance, areas within National Parks or AONBs with significant detracting factors or local areas with value expressed in local publications. Key characteristics of landscape are susceptible to change but with some ability to absorb development in some situations without significant character change; thresholds for significant change are intermediate.
Low	Typically undesignated landscape with some local community importance such as unmanaged/fragmented green space, highway corridors and remnant farmland. Key characteristics of landscape are resilient to change and are able to absorb development in many situations without significant character change; thresholds for significant change are high.

Visual appraisal

- 3.7 An appraisal of visual effects deals with the effects of change on the views available to people and their visual amenity. This includes how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may specifically be 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 the introduction of new elements.
- 3.8 A visual receptor is a special interest or viewer group that will experience an effect. This includes residents, recreational users, visitors and groups of viewers present at or passing through the viewpoint.
- 3.9 An appraisal of visual sensitivity is made by combining professional judgements in relation to the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change (particular to the proposed development type) and the value of the visual receptor. In visual appraisal some visual receptors are considered more sensitive than others. Greater weight is given to the visual effects upon public viewpoints than upon private properties. Views from rooms that are used during daylight hours, such as sitting rooms, are also deemed to be more important than views from secondary rooms such as bedrooms.
- 3.10 Professional judgements are made in relation to the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change. This is mainly a function of;
- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations.
 - The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.
 - The contents/context of the existing view in relation to the type of development proposed. e.g. a view overlooking a moorland or other natural area devoid of any man-made features or intrusions has a higher susceptibility to change.
- 3.11 Judgements in relation to the value of the visual receptor should reflect;
- Recognition of the value attached to particular views i.e. in relation to heritage assets or planning designations.
 - Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, i.e. the appearance of them in tourist maps, provision of facilities for the enjoyment of views or references to specific views in literature or art.

Table 2 – Sensitivity of visual receptors

Sensitivity of visual receptor	Criteria
Very High	People at tourist attractions with a specific focus on the view, visitors to historic features/estates (where the setting is important to the appreciation and understanding of the property and history).
High	Residents with direct open views of the site. Users of long distance trails (e.g. Pennine Way) and public rights of way, caravan parks and campsites, tourist attractions with opportunities for views of the landscape (but not specifically requiring an appreciation of the landscape), slow paced recreational activities which derive part of their pleasure from an appreciation of setting (e.g. golf).
Medium	Residents with partial/oblique views of the site. Users of public rights of way within urban /urban fringe or degraded landscapes Users of minor road users and commercial railways travelling through or past the affected landscape, recreational activities not specifically focused on the landscape (e.g. football), hotel users.
Low	People at their place of work (e.g. offices), shoppers, users of trunk/major roads. Industrial and commercial activities, military facilities.

Appraisal of effects

3.12 The magnitude of change (or nature of effect) arising from the proposed development at any particular viewpoint is described as high, medium, low or negligible based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows;

- Degree of physical change in landscape features and landscape character.
- Duration of effect.
- Distance of the viewpoint from the development.
- Extent of the development in the view.
- Angle of view in relation to main receptor activity.
- Proportion of the field of view occupied by the development.
- Background to the development.
- Extent of other built development visible, particularly vertical elements.

Table 3 – Definition of magnitude of change

<p>High</p>	<p>The proposed development would be extremely damaging to landscape character and would;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result in a complete change to character, or introduce features, which are dominant, intrusive or totally uncharacteristic. • Be at complete variance with landform, scale and settlement pattern. • Result in the total loss or alteration of characteristic features and elements, and/or reduce or remove their setting. • Be incapable of mitigation.
<p>Medium</p>	<p>The proposed development would damage landscape character and would;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result in a clearly identifiable or prominent change to character, although may not necessarily considered to be substantially uncharacteristic. • Be out of scale, or at odds with the landform, scale and settlement pattern. • Result in partial loss or alteration of characteristic features and elements, and/or reduce or remove their setting. • Be incapable of full mitigation and/or mitigation may conflict with local guidelines.
<p>Low</p>	<p>The proposed development would have a minor, but discernible change to landscape character and would;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result in a discernible change to character, although not necessarily uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. • Slight change in landform, scale and settlement pattern. • Result in the minor loss or alteration of characteristic features and elements, and/or reduce their setting. • Cannot be entirely mitigated, due to the nature of the proposals or character or not fulfil local guidelines.
<p>Negligible</p>	<p>The proposed development will have no noticeable effect due to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development being barely discernible as a change in character. • It complements the scale, landform and settlement pattern. • It incorporates measures for mitigation/enhancement that enable the proposals to blend with the surrounding area, meeting local guidelines for the area.

3.13 The significance of the effect on landscape amenity is determined by combining the landscape sensitivity with the magnitude of change for each viewpoint, in accordance with the matrix and descriptions shown in Table 4.

Table 4 – Criteria for assessing landscape and visual impact.

Magnitude of effect	Negligible	Low	Medium	High
Landscape sensitivity				
Low	Neutral	Minor/Neutral	Minor	Moderate/Minor
Medium	Minor/Neutral	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate
High	Minor/Neutral	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Major/Moderate
Very high	Minor/Neutral	Moderate	Major/Moderate	Major

Table 5 – Significance of criteria for landscape and visual impact.

Level of significance	Definition
Neutral	The proposed scheme would affect no landscape or visual receptors.
Minor/Neutral	The proposed scheme is largely appropriate in its context and would have very little effect on its surroundings and affect very few receptors.
Minor	The proposed scheme would cause a minimal change in the landscape and would affect very few receptors.
Moderate/Minor	The proposed scheme would have a slight change on the landscape and would affect few receptors
Moderate	The proposed scheme would have a noticeable effect on the landscape and would affect several receptors, therefore changing the character of a view.
Major/Moderate	The proposed scheme would have a very noticeable effect on the landscape and would affect several or many receptors, therefore changing the character of a view.
Major	The proposed scheme would change the character and appearance of the landscape, either for a long period or permanently. It would affect many receptors and would therefore greatly alter the character of a view.

	Not significant
	Potentially significant
	Significant

- 3.14 Where an effect falls within a split category, professional judgement is used to evaluate which of the two categories most closely fits. While the matrices are helpful to moderate opinion, professional judgement may overrule a matrix in specific cases where this can clearly be justified.
- 3.15 The resulting significance values for appraisal of the effects upon both landscape and visual amenity are defined in Table 5.
- 3.16 This is combined with an appraisal of whether or not each effect is positive or negative or neutral. This is somewhat subjective and relies largely upon professional judgement, but can be broadly defined as follows:
- Beneficial - the effect would result in an improvement in the baseline situation
 - Neutral - the effect would result in there being little or no change in the baseline situation, or a change that is neither negative nor positive
 - Adverse - the effect would result in a deterioration of the baseline situation

SECTION 4; BASELINE CONDITIONS

The study area

- 4.1 The study area is centred around a small cluster of properties at Iverley and Norton Covert located immediately south of Stourbridge. It covers the southern urban fringe of Stourbridge including Pedmore Common, Stourbridge Golf Club and extends south to include the rural fringe around West Hagley. The A451, Norton Road/Kidderminster Road is the primary route through the study area. The Birmingham to Worcester railway line lies to the east of this road. Outside the main urban areas there are numerous country lanes, tracks and footpaths which provide access to the surrounding countryside, scattered farms and hamlets.
- 4.2 The study area straddles three Counties. The proposed site at Norton Covert lies within West Midlands (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council). Land to the south and west of Stourbridge falls within Staffordshire. The southern part of the study area is in Worcestershire. Land outside the main urban areas is designated Green Belt.

Planning context

- 4.3 The Black Country Core Strategy (adopted February 2011) provides the regional planning framework for the Black Country Authorities' Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy sets out a raft of policies which cover development in the Green Belt, Landscape Character, Nature Conservation, Design Quality, Environmental Infrastructure and Open Space.
- 4.4 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's adopted Development Plan sets out policies for development and land use. It consists of;
- The Black Country Core Strategy (February 2011)
 - Brierley Hill Area Action Plan (August 2011)
 - Saved Policies in the Dudley Unitary Development Plan
 - Halesowen Area Action Plan (October 2013)
 - Stourbridge Area Action Plan (October 2013)
- 4.5 In addition, there are a number of Supplementary Planning Documents which provide further guidance to support the policies in the Development Plan.
- 4.6 Dudley MBC is currently preparing and adopting a range of planning documents to replace the Dudley Unitary Development Plan 2005. These documents will make up the Borough's Local Plan (The Dudley Borough Development Strategy) and will guide development within the Borough until 2026. As part of this process the local authority is preparing the Dudley Borough Development Strategy which will cover strategic policy on matters such as housing, green infrastructure, the historic environment and urban design. These documents will set out allocations and local planning policies to guide future development across the Borough.

- 4.7 There are also a number of published and emerging Green Infrastructure Strategies which provide the baseline audit and strategic objectives for Green Infrastructure for each Local Authority within the study area.

Landscape designations

- 4.8 The site lies within the West Midlands Green Belt which covers over 900 square miles of land around the West Midlands conurbation.
- 4.9 Within the 2.0km study area there is 1 listed buildings or structures. Sugar Loaf Farmhouse, (Grade II) lies approximately 651m distance from the proposed development site. The Birches, (Grade II) is at approximately 1.2km distance.

Landscape Character

National level

- 4.10 The study area falls within National Character Area 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau. The key characteristics in relation to this landscape character area are described as follows;

- *Extensive sandstone plateau in the core and east of the NCA underpins an undulating landscape with tree-lined ridges; this contrasts with the irregular topography and steep, wooded gorges of the Severn Valley in the west.*
- *Plateau underlain by Permian and Triassic sandstones and conglomerate from the Sherwood Sandstone Group forming an important aquifer. Silurian limestones and Carboniferous Coal Measures of the Coalbrookdale and Wyre Forest coalfields in the west provide the source of mineral wealth which fuelled the Industrial Revolution.*
- *Permian and Triassic sandstones erode to free-draining, slightly acid mineral soils which historically supported extensive heathland and grassland. In contrast, marls and sandstones associated with Coal Measures erode to clayey (argillic) brown earth soils.*
- *The plateau is drained by the rivers Worfe and Stour and fast-flowing streams in small wooded, steep-sided streamside dells, locally known as dingles. The main river is the fast-flowing Severn, flowing north to south in the west of the NCA, often through steep, wooded gorges, the largest being the Ironbridge Gorge.*
- *Interlocking blocks of mixed woodland and old orchards provide a well-wooded landscape and conifer plantations combine with parklands to give an estate character. Wyre Forest is part of one of the largest ancient lowland oak woods in England.*
- *Large, open arable fields with a weak hedgerow pattern on the plateau contrast with mixed arable and pasture land with smaller, irregular shaped fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow oaks in the west.*
- *Characteristic lowland heathland associated with acid grassland and woodland supports nationally important populations of flora and fauna, notably butterflies including the pearl-bordered fritillary.*
- *Post-industrial sites, disused coal mines and mineral quarries are important habitats around Telford and urban areas in the Black*

Country and are becoming increasingly important because of their dwindling number.

- *Rich and important heritage assets have led to World Heritage status for Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution.*
- *Traditional buildings constructed of brick vary in colour. The local Kidderminster and Bromsgrove Sandstone features extensively. Its characteristic red colouration provides local distinctiveness to many towns and villages and estate boundary walls.*
- *The Stour and Severn valleys contain frequent villages and there are a number of attractive historic towns, for example Bridgnorth and Bewdley with cores of Georgian and earlier buildings; there are fine individual examples of timber-framed buildings in Kinver, Bewdley and Bridgnorth.*
- *There is a coalfield remnant landscape along the Severn Valley.*
- *Important manmade features include the Roman road Watling Street,*
- *the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, the M54 and the railway line that links the urban areas of Birmingham and the Black Country in the east with Shrewsbury in the neighbouring NCA in the west.*

Regional level

4.11 At Regional level, land within the study area is classified as Kniver Sandlands. The following description is extracted from the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment (2012).

- *The Kinver Sandlands are an area of former woodland and waste which are closely associated with an irregular zone of Permian and Triassic rocks that extend northwards from Stourport-on-Severn into south Staffordshire and south-east Shropshire. The feature that most distinguishes this region from the more settled agricultural landscapes of Mid-Worcestershire, is the nature of the underlying bedrock which typically gives rise to sandy, free draining soils. Leaching is a problem on all of these soils which show a general tendency towards strong acidity and poverty in plant foods. Historically, this posed a major constraint to land use and settlement and until relatively recently the region continued to be dominated by woodland and heath.*
- *Sandstone Estatelands is the dominant landscape type occurring in the Kinver Sandlands covering much of the area.*

County level

4.12 At County level, land within the study area is classified as Sandstone Estates in the Staffordshire (2000). The proposed development site is classified under Sandstone Estates in the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment (2012) and described under Landscape Description Unit LDU KS22.1

4.13 The Sandstone Estates landscape type is described in the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment as follows;

- *These are open, rolling landscapes characterised by an ordered pattern of large, arable fields, straight roads and estate plantations. Fields are typically defined by straight thorn hedges, reflecting the late enclosure of much of this landscape from woodland and waste. This historic land use pattern is also reflected in the occurrence of isolated brick farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings,*

interspersed with occasional small villages. Despite the fact that this is a functional landscape, the consistent geometric pattern can convey a strong sense of visual unity.

- *This is an ordered landscape in which strong, regular patterns - in terms of field layout, road networks and woodland shape - play a dominant structural role. Large plantation woodlands provide a notable structural component to the landscape, although it is the field pattern that provides the overall unity.*
- *Further structure is provided by tree belts and linear tree cover along watercourses, although this is essentially a fairly open landscape, the tree cover providing a framework to views rather than producing a sense of enclosure and blocking them. Parkland features and associated ornamental planting, together with estate villages, can all contribute to the diversity of these landscapes.*
- *These are landscapes of arable dominance in which the hedgerows have largely lost their function.*
- *Hedgerow loss and deterioration is already apparent in places to the detriment of landscape scale and character. The deterioration and reduced size of parklands is often evident, with parkland trees now located in areas of arable cultivation. These are landscapes that have a particularly distinctive natural vegetation, resulting from sandy soils, of heathy/gorse communities that are seldom expressed, being too often suppressed by management, particularly in such non-farmed locations as the wide roadside verges.*

Key characteristics

- *Arable land use*
- *Hedgerow boundaries to fields*
- *Planned enclosure pattern - straight roads and field boundaries*
- *Woodland pattern of discrete blocks*
- *Planned woodland character - estate plantations and groups of trees*
- *Large-scale landscape with wide views over open farmland*
- *Impoverished sandy soils with relic heathy vegetation*
Dispersed pattern of isolated farmsteads and scattered wayside dwellings
- *Discrete settlement clusters often in the form of small estate villages*
- *Rolling topography with occasional low escarpments*

4.14 Landscape Description Unit KS22.1 is classified as Churchill Sandstone Estatelands and described as follows ;

An area of soft sandstone with an intermediate, undulating topography and impoverished sandy soils. The land use is arable and the tree cover comprises an ordered pattern of large plantations, together with parkland and belts of trees. The settlement pattern is one of small villages and hamlets, associated with a low level of dispersal and a sub-regular pattern of fields, derived mainly from arable fields.

Key characteristics

- *red brick*
- *thorn hedges*
- *localised patches of gorse*

- *mixed farming*
- *localised sequences of pools associated with valley bottoms and wet land associations*
- *woodland localised in the south of area*
- *relic deer park and designed landscape*
- *wooded streams*

Condition (updated 2009)

- *moderate to high intensity farming with a generally intact field pattern declining in places*
- *boundaries in variable condition*
- *localised impact of modern ribbon development in the Hagley - Kidderminster corridor*
- *localised moderate impact of amenity land use*

Site and immediate area

- 4.15 The site comprises a single parcel of land, part of the extended grounds around Old Farm. It is predominantly managed grassland, substantially enclosed on three sides with hedging (mainly hawthorn with some conifer and occasional trees) conifer and ash. Hedging is typically 4-5 metres high with gaps along the northern and eastern boundary colonised with bracken and occasional holly. There are a number of ornamental/native trees and shrubs within the site, mainly located around the two ponds (the southern pond is outside the proposed site). These include ash, birch, willow, pine and conifer spp.
- 4.16 The local landscape character around Iverley is influenced by the A451 road corridor and the small groups of properties overlooking and set back from the road frontage. The oldest properties are clustered around Old Farm, at the A451/ County Lane junction (route of former Roman Road). These properties are of the traditional brick, tile roof construction, some now partially rendered and/or painted white. Most of the other properties at Iverley were built in the post war period and are of various styles and construction, depending on the age of the buildings. Many of the more recent properties are set back from the road frontage in large plots surrounded by mature hedges and trees.
- 4.17 The surrounding agricultural landscape is typically enclosed by high hedges and mature hedgerow trees. These landscape features create a rather enclosed landscape with relatively few open views except from private land occupying the higher ridges and local hills. Norton Covert provides a high canopy wooded backdrop which effectively screens encroaching urban development at Norton from the A451. These woodland trees visually merge with other roadside vegetation along the A451 and surrounding country lanes creating a high degree of enclosure within the locality.
- 4.18 The key characteristics of the site and its surroundings are described as follows;
- Key Characteristics; Extended domestic garden associated with former farmstead. Predominantly managed grassland with ornamental pond and native/garden trees and shrubs. Substantially enclosed by hedges and buildings. No public access. Site located in Green Belt adjacent to small settlement comprising individual sites and large building plots

grouped in close proximity but often screened by hedges and mature trees. Settlement pattern is predominantly ribbon development with small cluster of properties around Norton Covert. Buildings often set back from the road. Mixed architecture styles.

- Local Distinctiveness; Enclosed garden, former paddock.
- Views; Some potential intervisibility with small number of properties immediately overlooking the site. Some potential intervisibility with the A451, minor roads and footpaths.
- Functionalities; Green Belt. Enclosed domestic garden. Limited biodiversity. Relatively few notable landscape elements. Field boundaries contribute to established landscape pattern. No buildings of special historical or architectural importance.

Historic development

- 4.19 Historic maps from the nineteenth and twentieth century show that most of the field enclosures around Iverley, including the proposed site, have remained largely unchanged for over 150 years, giving rise to the existing irregular pattern of enclosed rectilinear fields and paddocks. On 1880's O.S. maps, the farmstead and associated buildings of Old Farm are clearly visible at the junction of Norton Road and the former Roman Road. There are no other properties around Iverley except for outlying farmsteads including Iverley Park Farm, Sugar Loaf Farm, Iverley Hay Farm, High Lodge Farm and Iverley House Farm. The woodland and quarry at Norton Covert is clearly visible on the nineteenth century maps. Other notable local features include Bunkers Hill Wood, Pedmore Common and racecourse and the wooded estate around The Birches.
- 4.20 Apart from a single property at Norton Covert (shown on the 1903-1904 O.S.map) most of the other existing residential properties at Iverley only appear on post-war maps from the 1950's. This period also sees an expansion of the urban development at Norton to its present day limit, north of Norton Covert.
- 4.21 The Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation Report (2009) classifies the site and the surrounding landscape under the Pedmore and Lutley Character Area (DY08).The report provides the following summary;

This is an area on the edge of the Black Country conurbation, characterised almost entirely by fields interspersed with small settlements. The northern boundary of the area is formed by the change to the much more intensely residential character of Stourbridge1, while in the south the limit of the area is marked by the boundary with rural parts of Worcestershire.

Historic character

The persistence of the area's rural nature has, in contrast to the rest of the Black Country, led to the survival of ancient features in the landscape - clues to its character before the medieval period. Just to the north is another site which originates in an earlier landscape, i.e. that of Pedmore Hall. Although the current hall itself is predominantly modern, its location and surroundings, with its straight, tree-lined approach and pond, probably date to at least the 17th century.

Further west, the Character Area was part of a large area of common land in the medieval period. However, the land had been parcelled into enclosed fields by the early 19th century, and their straight boundaries suggest that this enclosure was a planned rather than piecemeal process.

In addition to agriculture, the landscape retains evidence of extractive industries which have been carried out during different parts of its history. Although not on the scale of that in the central Black Country to the north, a number of former mines and quarries have now given way to small areas of grassland or woodland. These include Norton Covert, a former sandstone quarry in the far west of the area which is now a recreational woodland.

Topography

- 4.22 The site is located in a local depression surrounded by rising land and local hills which form distinct ridges to the east and west. Immediately north of the site there is a pronounced rounded hill, which may be partially man-made, formed with overburden from quarrying activity at Norton Covert. The site generally slopes south-north and east-west, with a crown of higher land in the north-east corner and a low lying area in the north-west part of the site which contains a pond. The highest point is at approximately 108m AOD on the eastern site boundary. The lowest point is at approximately 101.5m AOD at the north west corner of the site.

Vegetation

- 4.23 The site is presently managed amenity grassland substantially enclosed with mainly hawthorn hedges with occasional boundary trees and peripheral planting of native and garden spp, including ash, holly, birch, willow, conifer and pine. Most of the trees/shrubs have little landscape or amenity value except for the hawthorn hedge and the large ash specimen along the western boundary which contribute to the visual amenity of the road corridor.

Access and movement

- 4.24 There is no public access to the site. The nearest footpath is along the west side of the A451 which is the main vehicular route between Stourbridge and Kidderminster. County Lane is a designated bridleway. There are also a number of footpaths around the edge and through Norton Covert which link to other routes to Sugar Loaf Lane. The Monarch's Way long distance route (partly following the North Worcestershire Path) takes a route to the south of Iverley, approximately 1.0km distance from the site. There are also a number of country lanes and minor tracks which provide private access to properties and countryside around the Iverley area.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

- 4.25 The following description is based on site analysis undertaken during the survey visit in December 2015 without the benefit of leaf cover. It is not expected that the ZTV would differ significantly during the summer months as there is extensive all-year-around screening provided by hedgerows, landform and surrounding built development (with the

exception of glimpsed winter views from County Lane which are likely to be completely screened when vegetation is in full leaf).

- 4.26 Views out of the site are limited by properties around Old Farm, woodland at Norton Covert and the extensive hedgerows/field trees which enclose and define local field patterns. Most significantly, the site sits in a local depression surrounded by rising land, marked by ridges and local hills. In particular, the field immediately north of the proposed site, forms a distinct rounded hillock which provides effective screening to the northern approach from the A451.
- 4.27 Views of development on the site from publically accessible land are likely to be restricted to a short (approximately 300m) section of the A451 and from the small number of footpaths around Norton Covert and Iverley, where they join this part of the road corridor. Some partial, middle distance views may also be available from a small number of viewpoints south of Sugar Loaf Farm.
- 4.28 Several properties immediately overlooking the site at Norton Covert have the potential to be visually affected by views of the development. There is also likely to be some intervisibility with land around Sugar Loaf Farm. Hogs Barn, located next to Old Farm, is likely to have views of the development from upper floor windows.
- 4.29 Site survey and photographic analysis suggests that the ZTV will be generally restricted to a short section of the A451 corridor and areas of mainly inaccessible farmland to the east and west, up to a distance of 850m from the site.

SECTION 5; POTENTIAL EFFECTS

- 5.1 The nature and magnitude of landscape and visual impacts will change during the phases of the development, through construction, at completion and after establishment of any landscape proposals i.e. the long term residual impacts. Some types of development may generate impacts which are severe but short term, i.e. during construction, whereas others may have minor impacts with residual effects which may be of a permanent nature. In addition, some impacts could be significantly mitigated by landscape and other measures which will be of benefit in the longer term. This assessment will consider all potential effects from construction to completion and long term residual impacts.
- 5.2 The following aspects of the proposed development are of particular relevance in the consideration of potential landscape and visual effects;
- ground formation works.
 - removal of tree/scrub vegetation in association with construction works.
 - visibility of the construction works.
 - the permanent existence of new roads and built development on the site.
 - visibility of new roads and built development.
 - visibility of artificial lighting.
 - loss of existing landscape features.
 - changes in existing landscape character and visual amenity.
 - changes in access which may affect local amenity.

SECTION 6; LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The following assessment is based on the outline proposals for a residential development on the proposed site off Norton road, Stourbridge.
- 6.2 This section identifies the key landscape and visual receptors. It then provides an appraisal of the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the development and makes recommendations for mitigation which may avoid, remediate or reduce those effects.

Landscape appraisal

- 6.3 The proposed development is likely to bring about changes in the landscape due to alterations in land use, land form, settlement and landscape pattern, land cover and the potential loss of existing landscape features. These changes could potentially affect landscape character and local visual amenity.
- 6.4 The following landscape receptors have the potential to be affected by the development proposals;
- **Landscape receptor 1: Landscape character areas.**
 - **Landscape receptor 2: The site and immediate surroundings**
- 6.5 The following landscape assessment is based upon existing landscape characterisation work covering the site and the wider study area and additional assessment undertaken as part of this report. Together, this provides a good level of baseline information and provides the basis for the judgements used in this study on the sensitivity of the landscape character.

Key considerations;

- The current undeveloped nature of the site.
- The loss of Green Belt on the edge of an existing settlement.
- Views from surrounding properties and publicly accessible land.
- The presence of existing hedges and trees.
- Potential visibility with open countryside and other settlements.

The main sensitivities are;

- The impact on the Green Belt.
- Potential impacts on landscape character.
- Potential change in landscape and settlement pattern.

Landscape receptor 1: Landscape character areas

- 6.6 The site is located in **National Character Area 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau**. At **Regional Level**, the landscape character site is classified as **Kniver Sandlands** and at **County Level** as **Sandstone Estates**.

- 6.7 Development of this site will bring about a change in land use from enclosed domestic garden to residential, however, these changes will not introduce new elements in the landscape which are not already found locally in the character areas, either at a National, Regional, County or local scale. The site is located within Green Belt but is not a designated landscape of special value and contains relatively few landscape features of value except for hedgerows and occasional mature hedgerow trees which will be substantially retained except where removal is required for access. The predominant garden species (trees and shrubs) found inside the site have limited wildlife value and contribute little to local visual amenity.
- 6.8 There are potential views of the development from a limited number of surrounding properties at Old Farm and Norton Covert. Only those properties immediately opposite the proposed site access would have direct open views of the development. None of these properties have panoramic countryside views or views which do not already contain adjacent properties or other urban elements such as the A451 road corridor. Analysis of the ZTV suggests that the potential intervisibility of the development is restricted to a local level and does not extend beyond 850m from the site.
- 6.9 Development of the site would not affect the underlying landscape/field pattern as existing enclosures would remain substantially intact. The layout and juxtaposition of the proposed development reinforces its function as a standalone development, set back from the A451 with no direct physical connectivity with existing properties and limited visual connectivity, such that , the development is unlikely to bring about a change to the predominantly rural character (by creating or introducing an overwhelming urban element in the local landscape due to potential cumulative effects).
- 6.10 The landscape sensitivity of this part of **National Character Area 66** to a small scale residential development in this location is considered to be **medium**. The potential magnitude of change in the landscape due to the development is considered to be **negligible**. The resultant landscape impact will be **neutral**.
- 6.11 The landscape sensitivity of this part of **Regional Character Area, Kniver Sandlands** to a small scale residential development in this location is considered to be **medium**. The potential magnitude of change in the landscape due to the development is considered to be **negligible**. The resultant landscape impact will be **neutral**.
- 6.12 The landscape sensitivity of this part of **County Character Area, Sandstone Estates** to a small scale residential development in this location is considered to be **medium**. The potential magnitude of change in the landscape due to the development is considered to be **negligible**. The resultant landscape impact will be **neutral**.

Landscape receptor 2: The site and immediate surroundings

- 6.13 The site is part of the extended grounds around Old Farm. The former farmstead and adjoining buildings are now solely for residential use. The existing settlement around Iverley has developed piecemeal mainly during the post-war years. Properties and groups of buildings are largely

disconnected and visually discreet from one another with the result that the settlement retains an overwhelming rural character without a recognisable focal point or centre. The settlement contains a mix of architectural styles and detailing but retains an element of visual cohesion through the mature hedges and other vegetation found throughout.

- 6.14 The proposed development would not extend the depth of ribbon pattern either side of the A451. The scale and pattern of the proposed development is similar to that found at Norton Covert on the opposite side of the A451 but it remains an independent site, physically and visually separated by the A451 and roadside planting and set back from the road corridor in a similar fashion to existing properties. In addition, the development would comprise properties of a style and architectural form in keeping with the local modern/traditional vernacular. As a result it is unlikely that the proposed development would significantly change the urban/rural character or the visual character of the existing settlement at Iverley.
- 6.15 There are likely to be potential views of the development site from a limited number of surrounding properties at Old Farm and Norton Covert (see also para. 6.8 above) and some potential views from a short section of the A451 and from several public footpaths which connect to the road corridor. None of these receptors have panoramic views of open countryside or views which do not already contain urban elements such as buildings and the road corridor in close proximity. It is unlikely therefore that the proposed development would significantly affect the nature and quality of these views.
- 6.16 Overall, the sensitivity of the site and immediate surroundings to a small scale residential development in this location is considered to be **medium**. The potential magnitude of effect on the local landscape/urban character due to the development is considered to be **low**. The resultant landscape impact would be **minor**.

Visual appraisal

- 6.17 The appraisal of visual effects was undertaken on the basis of viewpoint analysis recommended in best practice guidance. A number of viewpoints were identified to represent the range of effects likely to be experienced of the development by local receptors. All photography and survey work was undertaken from publicly accessible road and footpaths.
- 6.18 The photographic viewpoints were selected to represent a range of views and viewer types. Where applicable, these cover a variety of different character types, are in different directions from the site and are at varying elevations. The viewpoints are located at a range of distances from the development to illustrate the varying magnitude of visual impacts.
- 6.19 The viewpoints were used as the basis for determining the effects on visual receptors within the ZTV identified in the study area.
- 6.20 In parallel to the viewpoint analysis the ZTV was used to identify potential visual receptors (e.g. residents, users of public rights of way, visitors to tourist attractions etc.) of the proposed development. A filtering process was undertaken to identify which of the visual receptors within the study area had the potential to experience significant visual effects. The significance of effects on visual receptors is determined by cross

referencing the sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of impact.

6.21 Viewpoints fall broadly into three groups;

- Representative Viewpoints; those viewpoints within the general area of the site.
- Specific viewpoints; key viewpoints that are specific visitor attractions or destinations which are noteworthy as a result of their visual and/or recreational amenity such as those within designated areas or viewpoints with particular cultural associations.
- Illustrative viewpoints; chosen to demonstrate a particular effect or specific issues, for example, restricted visibility at certain locations.

6.22 The following residents and local people are potential receptors of visual effects.

- **Residents living in properties at Iverley and surrounding farmsteads**
- **Travelers using the A451 and other minor roads within the area of potential visibility**
- **Walkers using public footpaths within the area of potential visibility**

6.23 To determine the landscape impact on a given viewpoint, a correlation can be made between the landscape sensitivity and the magnitude of change experienced due to development.

6.24 In order to ascertain the importance of any viewpoint, the criteria shown in Table 6 has been adopted.

Table 6. Criteria for grading importance of viewpoint.

Viewpoint	Exceptional	Special	Representative
Established viewpoints	Dedicated viewing area with interpretation signage, recorded on OS maps and in publications as having panoramic views; opportunity to take prolonged view (for example viewing beacons or toposcope); viewpoint of national importance.	Popular viewpoint with dedicated viewing area, where viewers may stop to take the view (for example seating area within town park or common land); viewpoint of regional importance.	Other viewpoints of the locality
Historic viewpoints	Scheduled, historic site of national importance, either with a view of surrounding landscape or a notable view looking out from a National Park or across the surrounding landscape.	Scheduled, historic site of regional importance that is publicly accessible.	Other, unscheduled historic sites of local importance
Cultural heritage viewpoints	Cultural heritage site of national importance; for example, publicly accessible Grade I Registered Historic Parkland or Garden with designed view towards a designed landscape or National Park (for example tree lined avenue or dedicated seating/viewing area); or birthplace/home of nationally famous artist, author or poet whose work has been inspired by the locality.	Cultural heritage site of regional importance; for example, conservation area where street pattern affords vista towards or from a National Park; or place associated with locally famous poet, author or artist whose work has been inspired by the local landscape.	Other cultural heritage site of local importance (for example unregistered historic park or garden); or sites not open to the public.
Movement corridor viewpoints	Where viewer has a unique and prolonged/unfolding view of a National Park from a main transport corridor, scenic holiday route or national cycle route; landscape features which represent a way finding landmark; view is free from visual detractors (for example highway structures); or a prolonged/unfolding view from a route crossing a National Park or designated landscape.	Where viewer has the opportunity to appreciate the view; for example, approach road leading towards a National Park or designated landscape, regional long distance footpath, or well used bridleway or footpath with tranquil and rural setting	Other views from movement corridors, which are typical of the locality, or have fleeting view, are degraded by the presence of urban/highway structures
Other visitor designation viewpoints	Visitor designations of national importance (for example a National Trust site).	Visitor designations of regional importance.	Other visitor designations within the locality.
Designated landscape area or character type viewpoints	Designated and protected area of national importance (for example AONB, National Park); or highly valued and unique area of intact landscape character, quintessential to the identity of the area.	Designated and protected area of regional/district importance (for example SLA, AGLV); or valued area of intact landscape character that contributes to the enjoyment and identity of the area.	Other local designated areas (for example protected by countryside and open spaces policies); or area of typical landscape character, that may have suffered some degradation.

SECTION 7; MITIGATION

7.1 The primary means of mitigation is through the layout and design of the development proposals, the retention/improvement/management of existing hedgerows/ hedgerow trees and the enhancement of the existing pond to improve water quality and ecological/biodiversity of this wetland habitat.

- Scheme layout: The layout utilises an separate access to retain the local settlement pattern of small scale independent development sites, in a scale and pattern which is consistent with other development in the vicinity. Proposed buildings are be set back from the road corridor to minimise potential effects on the landscape and visual character of this strategic route.
- Architectural design: The design of buildings and structures will be consistent with the local traditional/modern vernacular.
- Site development shall minimise disturbance to existing topography.
- Existing boundary landscape features such as trees and hedges should be retained and protected where possible and any unavoidable losses remediated by replacement planting of similar extant and species.
- Where possible the development should utilize sustainable drainage techniques to facilitate water/drainage management integrated with appropriate landscape and management.
- The existing pond and associated wetland area retained on the development site will be enhanced for wildlife and biodiversity with works undertaken to improve water quality and habitat planting.
- A landscape management plan shall be agreed and implemented to ensure the delivery of the strategic landscape proposals and the long term conservation of habitats and landscape features on the site.

SECTION 8; PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS

- 8.1 The location of each viewpoint is shown on Figure 6 and is represented by the photographs (viewpoints 1-7).

Viewpoint 1. View north from County Lane towards Old Farm and the junction with the A451.



Importance of view	Representative viewpoint	Grid ref	388751 281730
Importance of viewpoint	Representative	Distance to site	159m
Sensitivity	Medium	AOD	116m
Existing view and key components	Photograph shows mature trees and hedgerows along County Lane. Old Farm and Hogs Barn are visible at the junction with the A45. Woodland at Norton Covert is visible beyond the junction. The site is partially viewed above the winter hedge line. There are no other potential views of the proposed site from County Lane.		
Predicted views	Partial views of the proposed built development in the south east corner of the site are likely to be visible during the winter months from this location. These views are likely to be completely or substantially screened when vegetation is in leaf.		
Conclusion	The magnitude of visual impact on visual amenity arising from the proposed development would be negligible . When this magnitude of visual impact is correlated with the sensitivity of the view, it would result in a minor impact .		

Viewpoint 2. View northeast from the public footpath off the A451 overlooking Old Farm and the junction with County Lane.



Importance of view	Representative viewpoint	Grid ref	388670 281955
Importance of viewpoint	Representative	Distance to site	52m
Sensitivity	Medium	AOD	108m
Existing view and key components	Photograph illustrates the view from the public footpath, on the southern edge of Norton Covert. Old Farm and Hogs Barn are visible at the junction with County Lane. The western site boundary is marked by the existing conifer/ hawthorn hedge and mature ash tree. The tall conifers are located within the grounds of Old Farm.		
Predicted views	Partial views of proposed built development on the western part of the site are likely to be visible above the existing hedge line. Such views will not introduce new urban elements into the landscape which are not already clearly visible and prominent in the vicinity.		
Conclusion	The magnitude of visual impact on visual amenity arising from the proposed development would be low . When this magnitude of visual impact is correlated with the sensitivity of the view, it would result in a minor impact .		

Viewpoint 3. View northeast from the A451/ Iverley Park Farm access road.



Importance of view	Representative viewpoint	Grid ref	388621 281873
Importance of viewpoint	Representative	Distance to site	130m
Sensitivity	Medium	AOD	108m
Existing view and key components	Photograph shows the existing gardens/boundary walls and properties on the south side of the A451/County Lane junction, visible from the access lane to Iverley Park Farm. The hedging along the western site boundary is visible along the A451 road corridor. The ridge of high land beyond Hogs Barn forms the horizon in the middle distance.		
Predicted views	Partial views of proposed built development are likely to be visible between the existing properties but partially screened and broken up by mature vegetation and hedging. Any such views will not introduce new urban elements into the landscape which are not already clearly visible and prominent in the vicinity.		
Conclusion	The magnitude of visual impact on visual amenity arising from the proposed development would be low . When this magnitude of visual impact is correlated with the sensitivity of the view, it would result in a minor impact .		

Viewpoint 4. View south from the A451 at Norton Covert.



Importance of view	Representative viewpoint	Grid ref	388728 282056
Importance of viewpoint	Representative	Distance to site	14m
Sensitivity	Medium	AOD	108m
Existing view and key components	Photograph shows the existing hedge and mature vegetation along the western site boundary, visible from the A451 corridor, opposite the access road to existing properties at Norton Covert. Old Farm is visible in the middle distance at the junction with County Lane.		
Predicted views	Partial views of proposed built development are likely to be visible above the winter hedge line. These views are likely to be substantially/completely screened when vegetation is in leaf except for development visible around the new access road. Any such views will not introduce new urban elements into the landscape which are not already clearly visible and prominent in the vicinity.		
Conclusion	The magnitude of visual impact on visual amenity arising from the proposed development would be low . When this magnitude of visual impact is correlated with the sensitivity of the view, it would result in a minor impact .		

Viewpoint 5. View south from the A451.



Importance of view	Representative viewpoint	Grid ref	388799 282195
Importance of viewpoint	Representative	Distance to site	110m
Sensitivity	Medium	AOD	103m
Existing view and key components	Photograph shows the most extensive potential view of the site from the A451 south bound. North of this point, views are screened by the pronounced hillock immediately to the north of the proposed development site. Hedging and other mature vegetation is clearly visible around and within the proposed site. Properties at Norton Covert are visible from the road corridor just south (less than 100 metres) from this viewpoint.		
Predicted views	Views of proposed built development are likely to be visible above the winter hedge line and mature trees. These views are likely to be substantially screened when vegetation is in leaf.		
Conclusion	The magnitude of visual impact on visual amenity arising from the proposed development would be medium . When this magnitude of visual impact is correlated with the sensitivity of the view, it would result in a moderate impact .		

Viewpoint 6. View west across the proposed development site towards Old Farm and Norton Covert.



9

Importance of view	Illustrative viewpoint	Grid ref	388764 281939
Importance of viewpoint	Representative	Distance to site	On site
Sensitivity	Medium	AOD	109m
Existing view and key components	Photograph shows the existing grounds around Old Farm taken from the south eastern corner of the proposed development site. This is currently a private view. It illustrates the screening effect of existing vegetation along the site (western) boundary and within the site and also around Norton Covert. This vegetation substantially screens any potential views of the proposed development from existing properties at Norton Covert.		
Predicted views	This private viewpoint would be lost following development of the site. The hedgerows and most of the existing garden vegetation would be retained and supplemented with additional planting.		
Conclusion	For illustration only.		

Viewpoint 7. View east from Sugar Loaf Lane.



Importance of view	Representative viewpoint	Grid ref	387531 281688
Importance of viewpoint	Representative	Distance to site	830m
Sensitivity	Medium	AOD	137m
Existing view and key components	Photograph shows the panoramic view of Green Belt land south of Stourbridge. A series of ridges and hills are visible in the far distance including Wythbury Hill (marked by the Obelisk), Stevens Park and Brierley Hill. Old Farm and the proposed development site occupy low lying land in the middle distance.		
Predicted views	It is likely that several properties on the proposed development site would be partially visible from this location to the east and north of Old Farm. They would not dominate the view or the immediate area or introduce new urban elements into the view which are not already present. This view is only available on Sugar Loaf Lane at this location. Any potential glimpsed winter views from the adjacent footpath link to Sugar Loaf Lane will be completely screened when vegetation is in full leaf.		
Conclusion	The magnitude of visual impact on visual amenity arising from the proposed development would be low . When this magnitude of visual impact is correlated with the sensitivity of the view, it would result in a minor impact .		

SECTION 9; SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 9.1 Tables 7 and Table 8 summarise the likely landscape and visual effects/impacts arising from the development. An appraisal has been made as to the likely residual effects of the development following the establishment of the landscape proposals. The judgements made in this assessment are cognisant of the existing landscape character and amenity value of the site and the surrounding Green Belt.

TABLE 7- Summary of landscape assessment

					Assessment of the likely residual effects after landscape mitigation (15 yrs after completion)			
Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance	Effect	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance	Effect
1: Landscape character areas								
National level NCA 66	Medium	Negligible	Neutral		Medium	Negligible	Neutral	
Regional level Kniver Sands	Medium	Negligible	Neutral		Medium	Negligible	Neutral	
County level Sandstone Estates	Medium	Negligible	Neutral		Medium	Negligible	Neutral	
2: The site and immediate surroundings	Medium	Low	Minor	Adverse	Medium	Low	Minor	Adverse

TABLE 8- Summary of visual assessment

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance	Effect	Assessment of the likely residual effects after landscape mitigation (15 yrs after completion)			
					Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance	Effect
1: Residents at Norton Covert	High	Low	Moderate	Adverse	High	Low	Moderate	Adverse
2: Residents at Hogs Barn	High	Low	Moderate	Adverse	High	Low	Moderate	Adverse
3: Residents at Iverely (including properties off County Lane)	High	Negligible	Neutral	Adverse	High	Negligible	Neutral	Adverse
4: Residents at Iverely Park Farm	High	Low	Minor	Adverse	High	Low	Minor	Adverse
5: Residents at Sugar Loaf Farm	High	Low	Minor	Adverse	High	Low	Minor	Adverse
6: Walkers using public footpaths at Norton Covert	Medium	Low	Minor	Adverse	Medium	Low	Minor	Adverse
7: Walkers using footpath between A451 and Sugar Loaf Lane.(via High Acres Nusery)	High	Low	Negligible	Adverse	High	Low	Negligible	Adverse
8: Travelers using A451	Low	Low	Minor	Adverse	Low	Low	Minor	Adverse
9: Travelers using County Lane	Medium	Low	Minor	Adverse	Medium	Low	Minor	Adverse

SECTION 10; CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Development of this site will bring about a change in land use from enclosed domestic garden to residential, however, these changes will not introduce new elements in the landscape which are not already found locally in the character areas, either at a National, Regional, County or local scale. The site lies within Green Belt but is not a designated landscape of special value and contains relatively few landscape features of value except for hedgerows and occasional mature hedgerow trees which will be substantially retained except where removal is required for access. The predominant garden species (trees and shrubs) found inside the site have limited wildlife value and contribute little to local visual amenity.
- 10.2 Although the site is currently designated as Green Belt, this does not automatically infer that Green Belt land has any special landscape and visual qualities or that the Green Belt itself defines a specific landscape character area with clearly identifiable boundaries. The Green Belt around the southern fringe of Stourbridge is part of the extensive West Midlands Green Belt which seeks to limit development outside the main urban areas. The Green Belt covers a broad area of farmland, small settlements and open countryside. It is classified under a number of character areas at a National, Regional and County level.
- 10.3 The impact of potential landscape effects on the wider landscape i.e. National/ Regional /County landscape character areas, due to the proposed development, is considered to be neutral due to the small scale of the development and its limited visual effects. Potential landscape effects are likely to be restricted to the site and its immediate surroundings. Local impacts may arise due to the change in land use, local character and views. This assessment considers that impacts on local landscape character would be minor due to the limited scale of the development, the layout and design of the proposals and the limited visual effects. This is within the range of impacts that would be normally expected for any new built development on a greenfield site.
- 10.4 Site survey and photographic analysis indicates that the area of land potentially visually effected by the development proposals would be confined to within 850m of the site and within this area only two receptor groups (residents at Covert Norton and Hogs Barn), in the immediate vicinity of the site, would experience moderate visual effects. Both these receptor groups already have views of surrounding properties and other urban development (ie. A451 road corridor) in close proximity and these changes in local views do not significantly affect local landscape character (impacts on local landscape character are described as minor), therefore, it is concluded that there would be no significant visual impacts due to the development.
- 10.5 Landscape and visual effects are summarised in the predicted impact tables contained in this report.
- 10.6 Development of the site would not affect the underlying landscape/field pattern as existing enclosures would remain substantially intact. The

layout and juxtaposition of the proposed development reinforces its function as a standalone development, set back from the A451 and no direct physical connectivity with existing properties and limited visual connectivity, such that , the development is unlikely to bring about a change to the predominantly rural character (by creating or introducing an overwhelming urban element in the local landscape due to potential culmulative effects).

APPENDIX

- FIGURE 1. SITE LOCATION**
- FIGURE 2. STUDY AREA**
- FIGURE 3. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS**
- FIGURE 4. SETTLEMENT/LANDSCAPE PATTERN**
- FIGURE 5. VISUAL ANALYSIS**
- FIGURE 6. PHOTOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS**

PDP Associates
Great Asby
Appleby in Westmorland
Cumbria
CA16 6HD

Tel. 017683 54130





Proposed development site

0m 500m 1000m

PDP Associates

Figure 1
Site location



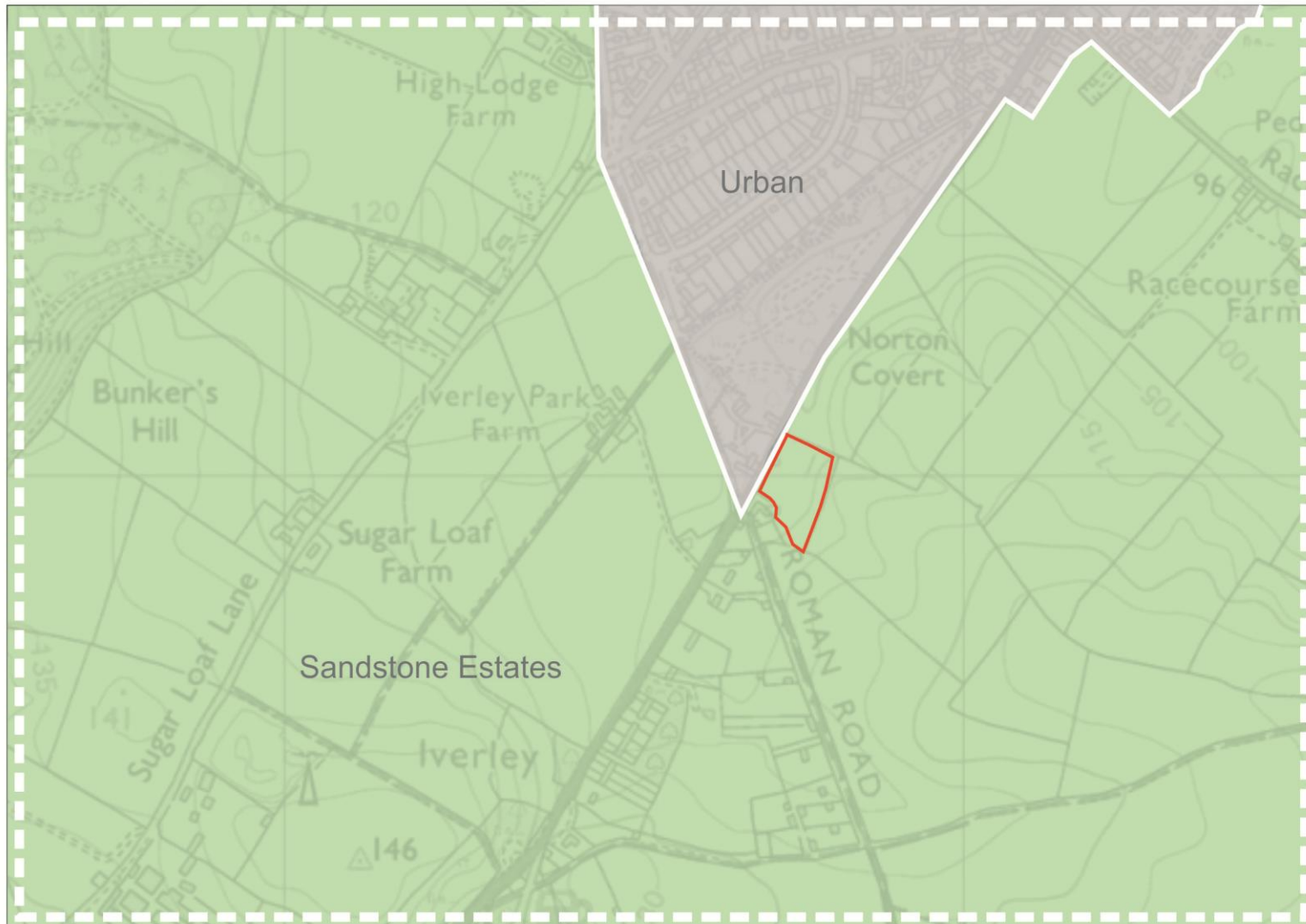
 Proposed development site




0m 500m 1000m



PDP
Associates

Figure 2
Study area



-  Proposed development site
- National Landscape Character Areas
 -  66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau
- County Landscape Character Areas
 -  Sandstone Estates

0m 500m 1000m

PDP Associates



Figure 3
Landscape character areas



 Proposed development site

0m 500m 1000m

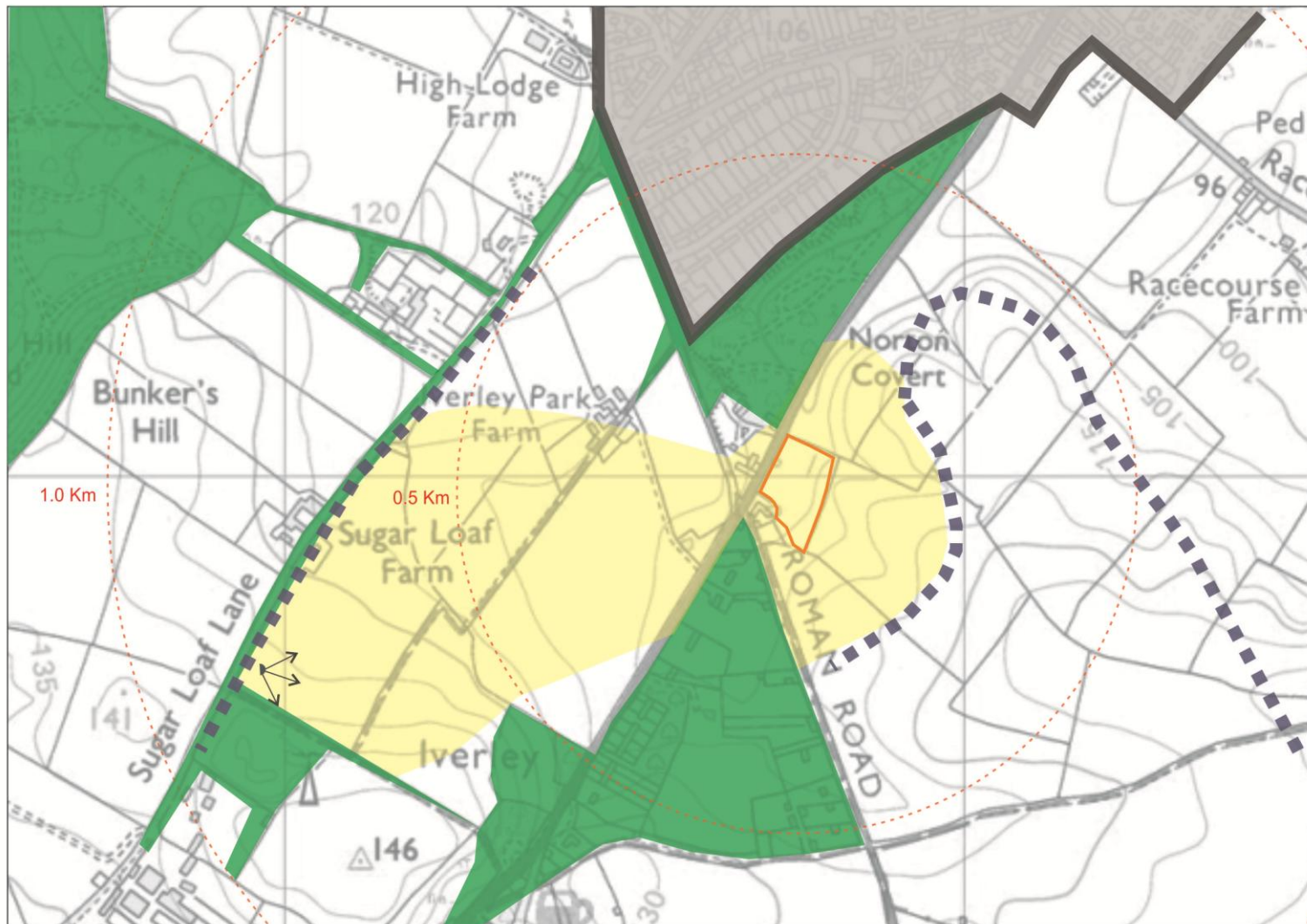


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Figure 4
Settlement/landscape
pattern

NORTON ROAD, STOURBRIDGE

January 2016



-  Proposed development site
-  Zone of theoretical visibility
-  Woodland/screen belt
-  Urban/urban edge
-  Ridgeline
-  Views

0m 500m 1000m

PDP Associates



Figure 5
Visual analysis



-  Proposed development site
-  Photographic viewpoint



Figure 6
Photographic locations