

CHAPEL GATE, BASILDON

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (TVIA)

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF SEMPRA HOMES LTD

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Document Status	Final
Ref	32026
Revision	v1.2
Author	AC
Checked by	GM
Authorised by	MC
Issue Date	April 2021



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INTRODUCTION





1. OVERVIEW

1.1 This document has been prepared by Barton Willmore LLP on behalf of Sempra Homes Ltd. It provides an assessment of the townscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development in the vicinity of the 'Site' at Chapel Gate in Basildon Borough Council (BBC).

1.2 The 'Proposed Development' seeks to secure full planning permission for residential development comprising apartment blocks and dwellinghouses including affordable housing, vehicular access from Laindon Link, cycle and pedestrian accesses, associated parking, landscaping including open space, boundary treatments, drainage and earthworks. The Site equates to an area of 2.38 hectares (ha).

1.3 This Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) includes a detailed analysis of the existing townscape and identifies views of the Site and its surroundings. This analysis has fed into a townscape and visual mitigation-by-design rationale, with the TVIA going on to assess the effects of the Proposed Development against the baseline conditions of the Site and surrounding area from a townscape and visual perspective.

1.4 The TVIA describes:

- The assessment methodology;
- The existing baseline conditions of the Site and the surrounding area;
- The townscape and visual mitigation-by-design rationale in order to prevent, reduce or offset adverse effects; and
- The likely significance of effects on townscape character and visual amenity.

1.5 The TVIA methodology is set out in full in Appendix A.1: TVIA Methodology, and should be read in conjunction with the verifiable views that have been produced and their supporting methodology (prepared by Realm Ltd).

2. OUR METHODOLOGY





2.1 The Townscape and Visual methodology has been drawn from best practice guidance and the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013). The aim of these guidelines is to set high standards for the scope and content of landscape/townscape and visual impact assessments and to establish certain principles that will help to achieve consistency, credibility, transparency and effectiveness throughout the assessment.

2.2 The assessment of townscape and visual effects includes a combination of objective and subjective judgements, and it is therefore important that a structure and consistent approach is adopted to ensure that the assessment undertaken is as objective as possible.

2.3 A townscape assessment is the systematic description and analysis of the features within the townscape, such as landform; vegetation cover; settlement pattern; building forms; transport patterns; and land use, which create a particular sense of place. A visual assessment considers visual receptors, which are the viewers of and within the townscape, and includes locations such as residential and business properties; public buildings; transport routes; Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and public open space.

2.4 The significance of effect thresholds for townscape and visual effects is determined by considering the sensitivity of the receptor concerned alongside the magnitude of effect that will be experienced. The townscape and visual methodology is set out in full in Appendix A.1.

2.5 Limitations to the assessment include:

- The baseline assessment has been based on information readily available at the time of undertaking the assessment;
- During visits to the Site and surrounding area, weather conditions, the time of day and seasonal factors have influenced the visual assessment and photographic record of the environment; and
- Access to private properties has not been obtained.

2.6 The following assumptions have been made in the assessment:

- Tall plant and machinery, including mobile cranes, will be in place for the minimum practicable period of time; and
- Contractors will follow best practice during the construction period to minimise townscape and visual effects

2.7 The Study Area for the assessment of townscape and visual effects is determined using professional judgement and is informed by, inter alia, site visits, baseline studies, the outcomes of the consultation process and preliminary appraisal.

3. PROJECT TEAM EXPERTISE

BARTON WILLMORE

3.1 Barton Willmore is an award-winning practice that provides a unique combination of high quality landscape consultancy services. We operate at all stages of the development process, from feasibility through to implementation.

3.2 We pride ourselves on the diversity of skills that our Townscape Planning and Design Team are able to bring to projects. This allows us to provide a design-led process that, in every instance, can deliver realistic and exciting, dynamic solutions.

3.3 Barton Willmore is a registered practice of the UK Landscape Institute (member number 897) and an Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) EIA Quality Mark Registrant.

3.4 This TVIA has been prepared and overseen by chartered landscape architects, who have over 30 years' experience specialising in the assessment of landscape/ townscape and visual effects.

THE AUTHOR

Andrew Cox BA CMLI MLA

3.5 Andrew is a Senior Landscape Planner at Barton Willmore and is based in the London Office. He is experienced in and enjoys providing landscape, townscape and visual expertise to clients across the UK. Andrew specialises in producing landscape, townscape and visual impact assessments for residential and mixed use projects.



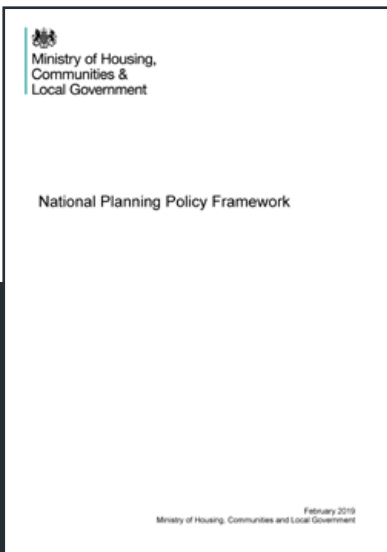




PLANNING CONTEXT



4. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY



The NPPF (2019)



NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF), 2019

4.1 The NPPF outlines that *"the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"*, which is defined as *"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*.

4.2 The NPPF also clarifies that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

4.3 The NPPF states that the planning system has three overarching objectives, with the environmental objective outlined as follows:

"To contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

4.4 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF also notes that the objectives should be delivered through the planning process but recognises that planning policies and decisions should *"take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area"*.

4.5 Section 12: Achieving well-designed places sets out that *"the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve"*. This section seeks to promote good design within the built environment and notes, in Paragraph 127, that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

"a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);



d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."

4.6 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states:

"Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans

or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision maker as a valid reason to object to development"

4.7 NPPF Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment (Paragraph 170) states that the planning system should contribute to, and enhance, the local environment; and explicitly acknowledges that this can be delivered by *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes"*.

4.8 Good design is set out in the National Design Guide under the following ten characteristics:

- Context (enhances the surroundings);
- Identity (attractive and distinctive);
- Built form (a coherent pattern of development);
- Movement (ease of accessibility);
- Nature (enhanced and optimised);
- Public Spaces (safe, social and inclusive);
- Uses (mixed and integrated);
- Homes and Buildings (functional, healthy and sustainable);
- Resources (efficient and resilient); and
- Lifespan (made to last).



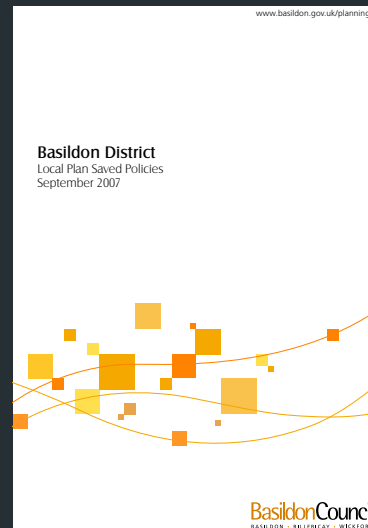
The National Design Guide (2019)

Design Guidance

5. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

BASILDON DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN SAVED POLICIES - SEPTEMBER 2007

5.1 The Saved Policies represent the local planning policies currently applied by the BBC to inform the determination of planning applications in the Borough and enforce planning control. The Saved Policies have been reviewed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) first published in July 2018 to assess the level of compliance each policy has with the NPPF. Policies relating to landscape/townscape and design are detailed here.



5.2 Policy BAS BE12: Development Control states:

“Planning permission for new residential development, and for the alteration and extension of existing dwellings, will be refused if it causes material harm in any of the following ways:-

- v) Harm to the character of the surrounding area, including the street scene;*
- vi) Overlooking; and*
- viii) Overshadowing or over-dominance.”*

5.3 Policy BAS R1: Open Space - Protection notes:

“Within the urban areas, planning permission will not be granted for development of open space which would cause significant harm to the recreational or amenity value of the open space, or to the contribution which the open space makes to the character of the area within which it is located.”

5.4 The western extent of the Site is identified as ‘Open Space’ within the Proposals Map.



EMERGING LOCAL PLAN

5.5 BBC is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan. BBC submitted the Basildon Borough Local Plan 2014-2034 to the Secretary of State on 28 March 2019 for Examination. The Hearings have not yet taken place however, the Local Development Scheme (September 2020) anticipates adoption of the new Local Plan in early 2022. Policies and objectives relating to landscape/townscape and design are detailed here.

5.6 Strategic Objective (SO) 1: Protecting and Enhancing the Quality of the Local Environment highlights the need to “enhance the quality of the Borough’s natural, historic and built environment through spatial planning and design, conservation of heritage assets and their setting, and the improvement of the character and appearance of its landscapes, including green corridors, to secure the future of the Borough’s distinctiveness and sense of place”. As the quote is embedded within an paragraph sentence, the full stop comes after the . SO1 further indicates the necessity to “protect, enhance, conserve, increase and positively manage the Borough’s biodiversity resources through the protection, enhancement, restoration and creation of habitats and green and blue infrastructure opportunities”

5.7 SO3: Minimise our Impact on the Environment suggests the need for “designing local environments so that they are of a high quality, more resilient to a changing climate and benefit from integrated environmental systems for drainage and waste management.”

5.8 Policy DES1: Achieving Good Design states

“The Council will protect and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the Borough’s built environment through high quality and inclusive design that makes effective use of land, supports healthy lifestyles and creates better places for people. This will be achieved through the following...:

2) Expecting all development proposals to adopt high quality design that optimises the use of land, whilst complementing and enhancing the quality, appearance and functionality of an area. In particular, the design of development proposals should:

a) Contribute positively to an area’s visual and architectural character by reflecting and responding to locally distinctive patterns of development including elements of construction, architectural detailing, building and surfacing materials, scale, density, massing, height and layout;

b) Correspond with the natural features and historic quality of the area that contributes to its special interest including all heritage assets together with their settings ...;

...

d) Provide well-designed streets and spaces which support and sustain a broad variety of users and community activity. Within the street there should be a clear distinction between public and private spaces, continuity of street frontages, and appropriate levels of enclosure to create active, comfortable, and safe public spaces;

e) Address community safety issues in accordance with ‘Secure by Design’ principles, to reduce the incidence of crime and anti-social activity;

f) Create the conditions for walking and cycling between locations within and beyond the development, and prioritise these travel modes through the safe integration of walking and cycling routes. Opportunities for new walking and cycling routes will be sought when the existing permeability is poor;

g) Incorporate a network of multifunctional open spaces which provide opportunities for a range of different active uses, and also offer benefits in terms of wildlife and environmental mitigation, having regard to policies NE1 and HC1 of this plan;



h) Deliver buildings, places and spaces that promote healthy lifestyles and can adapt to changing social, technological, economic, and environmental conditions;

i) Support diversity and choice through the efficient use of land and infrastructure by ensuring a mix of compatible uses and development densities that respond to local needs and enhances the special qualities of an area; and

j) Foster an inclusive and accessible environment that functions safely for all.

3) Where appropriate, design guidance, development briefs, masterplans, regeneration strategies, public realm strategies, and design guidance in Supplementary Planning Documents will be prepared and used to consider new development proposals to ensure that new development is well designed to reflect its context and respond to future needs..."

5.9 Policy DES3: Urban Character Areas states:

"5) The Borough's Urban Character Areas will be managed and where possible, enhanced through development proposals using character assessments as part of the planning application process, and taking into account the Basildon Borough urban design evidence base.

6) Planning applications will be expected to respond effectively to local character and distinctiveness. Where there are local features or characteristics that are considered to undermine the overall character of the area, and/or it relates poorly to the surrounding development or lacks a coherent and integrated built form, new development will be expected to take reasonable steps to improve the area's character, enclosure, permeability, public realm and appearance and better integrate the area with its surroundings.

7) Where there are no significant or predominant local design styles, innovative contemporary design is encouraged, however regard should be had to characteristic features of the wider Borough such as using local materials or adopting successful urban forms. "

5.10 Policy DES4: High Quality Buildings states:

" 1) Buildings should be designed to a high standard, responding appropriately to their location and reflecting their function and role in relation to the public realm. Proposals for new buildings, extensions, and alterations to existing buildings will be expected to:

a) Use good quality and durable building materials, that are appropriate to the context of the development;

b) Be clearly organised in terms of their form and internal layout and circulation to reflect the hierarchy of function they will accommodate, the uses they will serve and the context they will address;

c) Establish a coherent and consistent building line that relates to the existing street alignment;

d) Incorporate active frontages to the public realm that emphasise corners, establishes new, or reinforces the most prominent existing frontages, and provide natural surveillance over all publicly accessible spaces;

e) Create distinct public frontages and private areas with clear and delineated boundaries;

f) Allow for flexibility in future adaptation or extension to accommodate alternative uses, or to respond to the changing future needs or circumstances of occupiers by means of their internal arrangement, internal height, detailed design and construction;

g) Incorporate exteriors and elevations that provide visual interest, and are visually organised and well-proportioned to contribute positively to the legibility of the area; and

h) Enable the provision of adequate, appropriate and usable private or communal amenity space, defensible space, as well as parking and servicing as necessary..."



5.11 Policy DES5: High Quality Landscaping and Public Realm Design states:

"1) All development must contribute to safe, inclusive, accessible, attractive, and user friendly streets and spaces that encourage appropriate levels of activity, social interaction, and connections for all users.

2) Proposals for new development or the redevelopment of prominent sites within town centres, and for developments comprising 50 homes or more, or 1,000m² or more in other locations will be expected to be supported by a Public Realm Strategy setting out how they will:

- a) Incorporate appropriate materials, street furniture, and lighting of high quality, environmental performance and durability;*
- b) Harmonise with the street scene and enhance the quality, character and appearance of the public realm through their siting and design;*
- c) Conserve and enhance any historic fabric, features and assets;*
- d) Seek to minimise visual clutter;*
- e) Ensure legibility and permeability within and surrounding the development;*
- f) Incorporate good quality landscape design with an emphasis on creating an attractive green environment;*

g) Incorporate public art in accordance with policy DES6;

h) Sensitively integrate and prioritise appropriate levels of movement infrastructure for all users, having regard to age, gender and disability, including provision for convenient pedestrian and cycle movement;

i) Ensure that any vehicle and cycle parking and provision for servicing are appropriate and are sensitively integrated so as not to dominate the public realm; and

j) Be designed to enhance safety and security in the environment by creating natural surveillance."

5.12 Policy NE1: Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies the need to:

"f) Secure the provision of green infrastructure alongside development across all sites to achieve a reduction in pollution to air, water and soil;

g) Develop and improve the urban environment through provision of local scale green infrastructure including footpaths, cycleways, green links, parks, gardens, allotments, trees and green roofs; and

h) Seek the provision of blue and green infrastructure which is multi-functional and incorporates measures that will help to reduce the extent of climate change and/or enable the Borough's communities to adapt better to a changing climate."





BASILDON TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN (2012)

5.13 The Basildon Town Centre Masterplan (BTCM) has been approved as an Interim Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) forming part of the emerging Basildon Borough Local Plan. This document sets out the overall plan and guidance for how development in Basildon Town Centre should occur and will help to inform any future planning applications that are submitted within the Masterplan area.

5.14 The Site lies within the south-western extent of the Masterplan area and is identified as an area for new residential development. The Masterplan area has been divided into several Development Area Zones and the Site lies within the western extent of the zone 'Southern Gateway'.

5.15 'Southern Gateway' is described as an area that "... will comprise predominantly new residential communities with opportunities for mixed use to include retail and office uses facing Roundacre to the east". As the quote is embedded within a sentence, the full stop comes after the quotation mark. .

5.16 In terms of layout and appearance the BTCM notes:

"A key ambition of the Masterplan is to increase the density of the residential communities within the town centre with easy access to the central area to create demand for a retail and leisure range that is accessible and vibrant. The Masterplan therefore promotes new non-car dependant residential communities within the periphery and core of the town centre with easy access to the services of the town centre. The new communities will also provide an opportunity to create visual diversity through the provision of a greater mix and style of housing than currently exists within the town centre.

The development of new residential communities should take the opportunity to provide landscape prominent development with public and private amenity provision used to enhance appearance and setting. The focus for the residential communities is central landscape squares and courts that seek a balance between residential amenity and town centre living."

5.17 With regards to scale and massing the BTCM states:

"The Town Centre - Urban Blocks

The Masterplan proposals avoid very large block format arrangements or fully internalized environments in favour of an open street layout and permeable medium size blocks, which respect the building lines and the New Town character of the original environment. The Masterplan promotes building to the edge of a curtilage wherever possible and maximises the amount of active frontage onto a street with a clear distinction between backs/fronts, public and private.

The Transition Zone

The town centre core is surrounded by a transition zone which is characterised by underdevelopment and surface car parking. The development of new residential communities in this area would overcome the existing spatial segregation and the interruption in the urban fabric between town centre and the outer neighbourhoods.

New development in this zone could in selected areas promote a transition in scale, height and massing between the town centre and the surrounding outer suburban neighbourhoods.

At Southern Gateway the railway embankment constrains development opportunities and would benefit from a gradual west to east increase in building height from 2-3 storeys in the west at Laindon Link culminating at 5 - 7 storeys adjacent to the central 10 storey Icon building next to the railway station."





BASILDON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION STRATEGY (2020)

5.21 The Basildon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy (the Strategy) published in September 2020 builds on the 2012 masterplan and looks at where there are opportunities for improvement and developments. The Strategy has been informed by public consultation undertaken in July 2020.

5.22 The Strategy identifies the Site as within the St Martin's Quarter and Westgate focus area and states that there is a potential for significant residential development within this area.

5.23 The evidence base for the Strategy states:

"The original layout of Basildon town centre was notably smaller than it is today. The Roundacre roundabout marked the west end of the east-west spine route which terminated at the current location of the council buildings."

5.24 In terms of 'Biodiversity net gain and greenery,' the Strategy identifies opportunities for future public realm improvements to the town centre including:

- *"Improving signage and routes to green spaces to address perceived distance between town centre and green spaces;*
- *Incorporating new trees could bring shade in the summer and reduce the impact of wind flows around tall buildings, and provide habitats for a variety of life town centre wildlife;*
- *Protecting and enhancing the existing habitats present in the town centre as well as surrounding neighbouring parks;*
- *Maximising urban greenery along new permeable linking routes ensuring a vibrant, connected and accessible town centre for all;*
- *Introducing efficient and less polluting night time lighting, reducing threat to night time wildlife; and*
- *Using resourceful materials and considering SUDS and water conservation techniques in order to maintain and enhance the quality of ground and surface waters."*

5.25 In relation to 'Design Quality' the Strategy encourages high quality design to retain and enhance the distinct and unique character by:

- *"Encouraging architectural design that is appropriate, respectful and celebratory of the New Town context of the town centre;*
- *Encouraging applicants to propose new development that meets the same level of ambition of the architecture of the New Town movement;*
- *Making clear the council's aspirations to meet ambitious standards for high quality design and use of forward thinking construction techniques;*
- *Promoting safety and security in the design, for example through Secured By Design principles to ensure the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings to provide safe places to live, work, shop and visit;*
- *Creating high quality and sustainable urban design and public spaces ;*
- *Providing new well connected routes;*
- *Integrating Basildon's built heritage; and*
- *Creating a vibrant town centre."*





BASELINE CONDITIONS



6. TOWNSCAPE SETTING

LAND USE, SCALE, PATTERN AND GRAIN

6.1 The Site forms the westernmost extent in a series of transitional townscapes on the southwestern periphery of Basildon town centre. The Site is separated from the town centre by Roundacre: a dumbbell arrangement of roundabouts physically connected by a six lane high speed carriageway.

6.2 The Site is defined by the Laindon Link road to the north and by the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway and its embankment to the south. To the east of the Site the four lane A176 stretches southwards from Roundacre and beneath a rail overpass. Beyond the A176 and to the east of the Site there is a mixture of light industrial, retail and workspace land uses bordering the railway. There is 'out of town' retail land use at Westgate Park to the north-east of the Site on the far side of Roundacre, approximately 150m away.

6.3 The Site comprises a former car park in the east and grassland and semi-natural woodland in the west. The Site and its immediate context is well treed with several of these subject to Tree Protection Orders (TPOs). There is no built form on the Site and the surface car parking and areas of hard-standing are in a derelict state.

6.4 Land use across the surrounding townscape consists predominantly of medium density, modestly grained residential development. Road, rail and nonvehicular infrastructure and associated public realm occupy a notable proportion of the land within the local Site context. The town centre encompasses transport, offices, retailing/ commercial, leisure/recreation, and civic uses. Car parking associated with the town centre is also a distinctive feature of the local Site context.

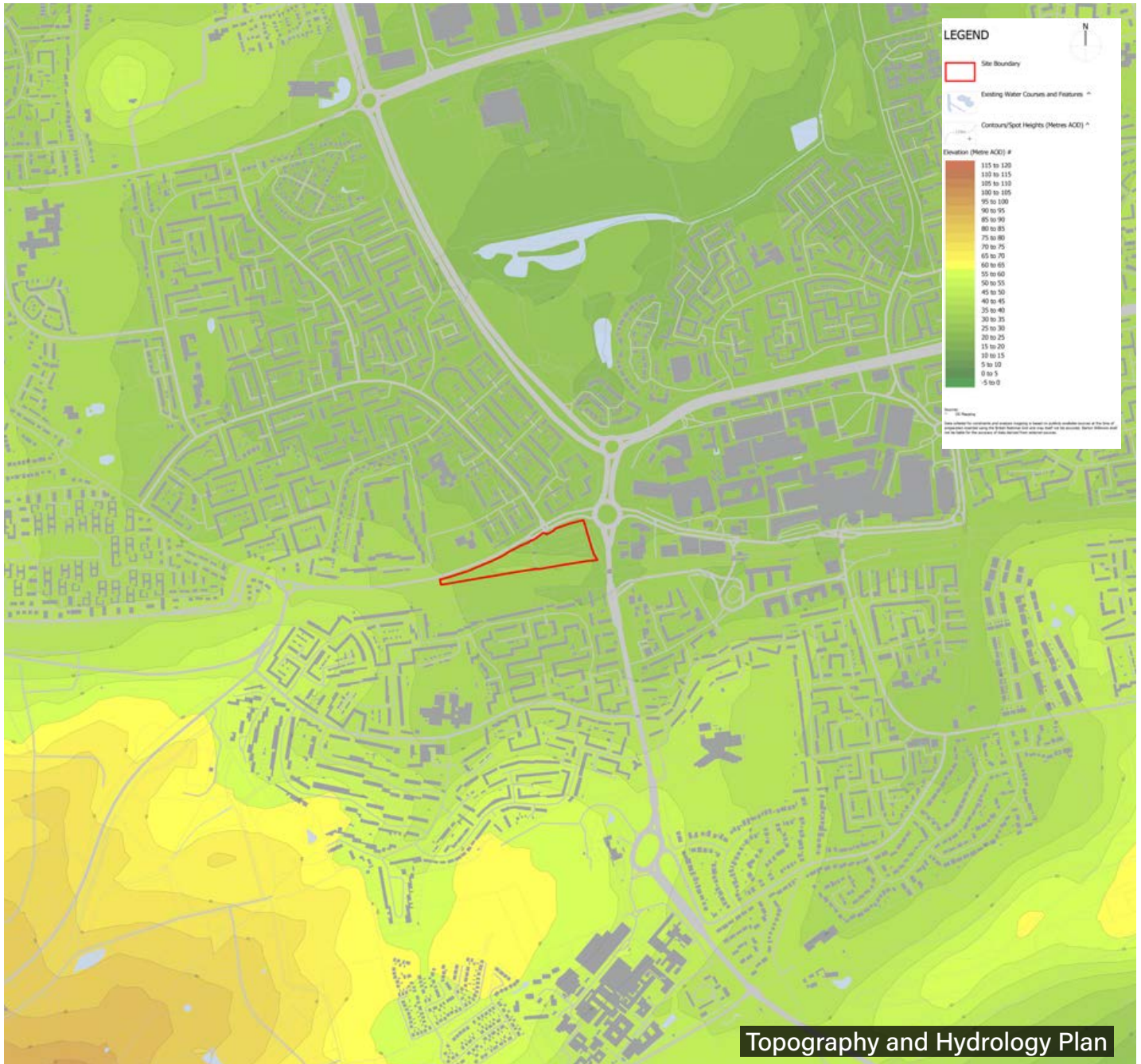
6.5 The predominantly built-up urban context is broken up by Gloucester Park, a notable area of green open space to the north-east of the Site. The park was designed as part of the original New Town concept. It features large scale manmade landforms including the Sharpeville Hills. The southern extents of the park have been developed and changed to residential use, notably the recently completed Gloucester Gate that has frontage on to the park and very high permeability.

6.6 The Lee Chapel suburbs extend to the north and south of the Site and predominantly consist of two and three storey residential land use. The town centre and periphery to the east of the Site includes the following taller buildings: The Icon (10 storeys), Brooke House (14 storeys), Trafford House (8 storeys) and Great Oaks House (11 storeys).

6.7 In terms of the likely future scale of buildings within the town centre, submitted planning applications as of April 2021 include Basildon Market Square (ref. 20/00955/FULL, 17 storeys), Basildon Town Square (ref. 20/01350/FULL, 26 storeys) and the Eastgate Development (ref. 20/01104/OUT, 25+ storeys).



BASELINE CONDITIONS





TOPOGRAPHY AND HYDROLOGY

6.8 The Site itself is relatively flat at approximately 30m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The north-to-south falls are minimal and the west to east falls to the car park levels vary by approximately 0.5m across the eastern section of Site. There is approximately 3m height difference along Laindon Link in the western part of the Site. The Site is bisected by a watercourse that runs north-south and enters and exits the Site via culverts. There is a railway embankment to the immediate south of the Site that rises to a maximum of approximately 10m above the Site levels.

6.9 The topographical Site context is defined by more elevated land to the south and west including the adjacent suburb of Lee Chapel South between 30m to 70m AOD. The Langdon Hills area to the south of the Site rises to approximately 120m AOD at its highest point. Basildon town centre to the east of the Site is relatively flat and sits at a similar elevation to the Site.

6.10 The Site interior visual envelope is restricted by the railway embankment to the south and by built forms and infrastructure to the north and east. There are relatively few vantage points around the Site that allow views of the upper parts of the vegetation within and adjacent to the Site. Notable vantage points are covered by

6.11 The Basildon natural hydrological context is unremarkable and watercourses and waterbodies therefore have a very limited influence on character. There is a manmade watercourse running northwards through Gloucester Park and there are recreational water bodies associated with this including fishing ponds.



HERITAGE ASSETS

Historical Development

6.12 Basildon was first mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 as Berlesduna and being in the Barstable Hundred, but for centuries was little more than a small village before being designated a new town. Its small population was mainly centred around the area of Church Road, close to Holy Cross Church. Variant spellings of Basildon through the years have included: Battlesdon, Basseldon and Bassendon. The name Basildon is of Saxon origin meaning Beorhtel's Hill.

6.13 Basildon as it is today was created from the conglomeration of four small villages: Pitsea, Laindon, Basildon (the most central of the four) and Vange. Sir Basil Spence created the Basildon New Town master plan for the town centre and this included a Brutalist centrepiece on pilotis that became Brooke House (14 storeys). The remainder of the town centre is distinctly low rise in comparison.

6.14 The 'Mark One' new town was designated on the 4th January 1949 and built in a number of phases over 50 years. When designated to regulate the scattered settlements of the existing Plotlands to assist in the decentralisation of London's population, Basildon was the most ambitious New Town in size and population.

6.15 The town centre was set out using the principle of segregation of transport modes and this is evident in the subways and underpasses that penetrate the multi-lane ring roads today.

6.16 The majority of the development of the new town took place in the 1950s and 60s, which witnessed a population increase from 25,000 at designation to 140,000 in 1965. The population at the 2011 census was 110,762.

6.17 The Site had historically contained a handful of unplanned dwellings, but was redeveloped as a car park in the late 20th century. This provided overflow parking for the Westgate retail park when it was built around the turn of the century. Following the opening of a competing retail park to the north, Westgate became less busy and the car park became increasingly empty and has been closed for the last 10 years.

6.18 There are very few statutorily listed buildings within Basildon, the most notable being the Grade II Brooke House located approximately 0.5km to the east of the Site (see view 14). There are two other listed features adjacent to Brooke House: a raised pool and sculpture to the south and the sunken East Square to the east (both Grade II).

6.19 There are no conservation areas located within the vicinity of the Site. The nearest is Noak Bridge, a 1970s new town estate approximately 1.8km to the north of the Site.

Scheduled Monuments

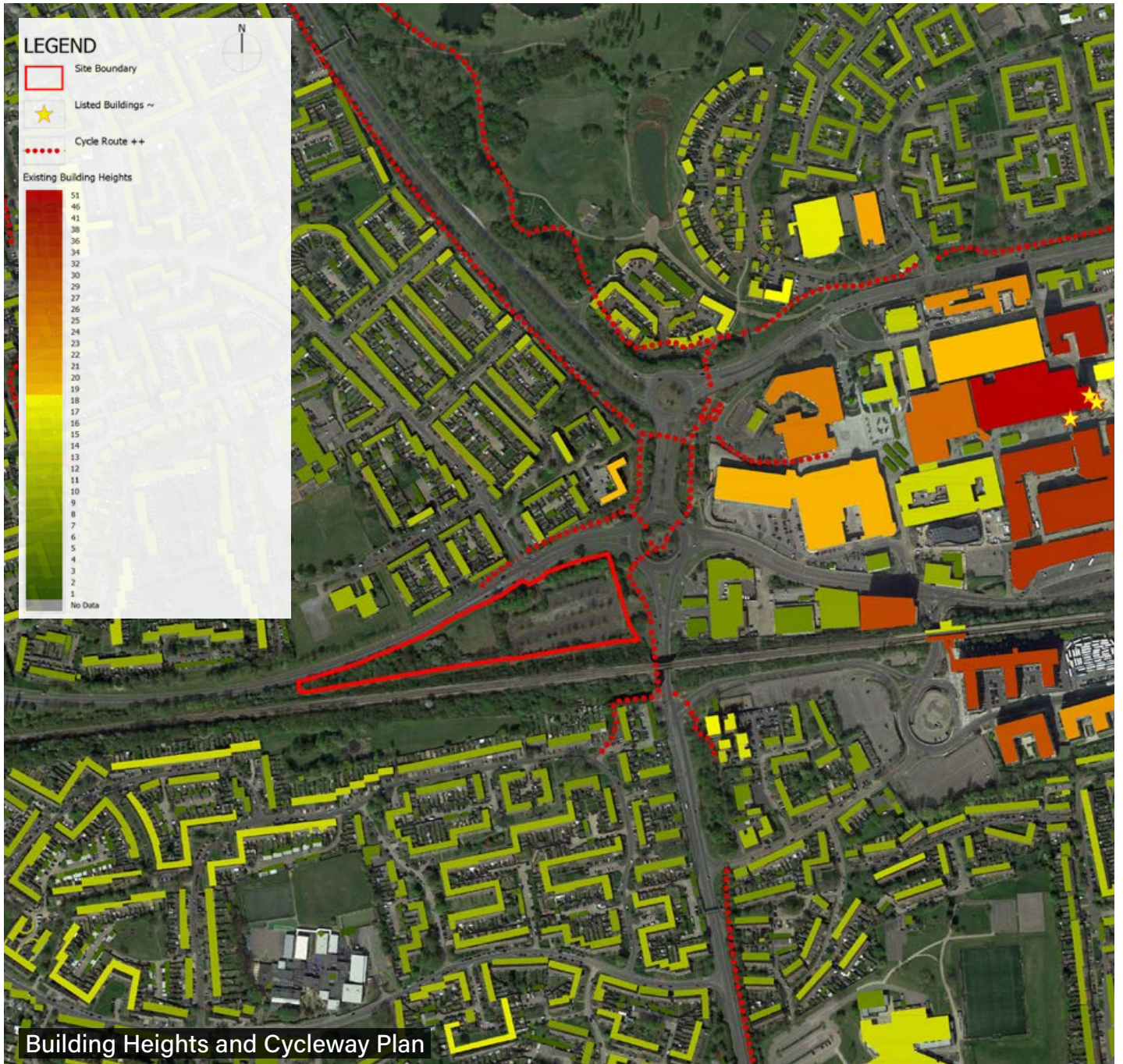
6.20 There are no scheduled monuments within the vicinity of the Site, with the nearest located at Botelers, approximately 1.2km to the east of the Site.

Registered Parks and Gardens

6.21 There are no Registered Parks and Gardens located within the vicinity of the Site.



BASELINE CONDITIONS





MOVEMENT, CIRCULATION & GRAIN

6.22 As demonstrated by the accompanying Building Heights and Cycleway Plan the Site is not within the urban fabric of Basildon. The 'island' Site is surrounded by infrastructure corridors, beyond which there are recognisable clusters of built form. The width of these corridors varies and is greatest around the railway to the south of the Site and at Roundacre to the north-east. The separation distance between the Site and the Westgate retail park (the closest part of the town centre on the far side of Roundacre) is approximately 150m.

6.23 The built form can be broadly separated into two typologies: the town centre and the suburbs. The larger and taller buildings within the town centre are distinctive and in marked contrast to the finer grain of the suburbs. For the most part the ring road around the town centre interrupts the urban fabric and defines the threshold between town and suburb. The exception to this is the area around the train station which lies to the south of the town centre and outside the ring road. There are two clusters of larger, taller buildings near the station: the Icon to the north-west and Trafford House to the south-east.

6.24 Other non-linear interruptions in the urban fabric occur as a result of car parking, public open space and school grounds. The most notable open space is Gloucester Park, approximately 300m to the north of the Site at its nearest point. It is noteworthy that the public open spaces within the town centre are very modest in size, particularly when compared with surface car parking areas.

6.25 Roundacre defines the eastern boundary of the Site and results in a degree of severance from the town centre, with pedestrian access currently facilitated by way of two underpasses connected by a sunken public open space in centre of a roundabout.

6.26 National Cycle Network Route 13 passes within 20m of the Site and connects into the network of underpasses under Roundacre. Non-vehicular users are required to use the underpasses as Roundacre has no at-grade provision for pedestrians. The subway network beneath and adjacent to Roundacre is complex to navigate, involving level changes, ramps, switch backs and non-linear routes that do not correspond with a simple desire line in or out of the town centre.

7. TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

PUBLISHED NATIONAL CHARACTER

7.1 As part of Natural England’s responsibilities in delivering the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention, Natural England has developed a series of National Character Area (NCA) Profiles.

7.2 These NCA Profiles provide a broad range of information including an outline of the key characteristics of a given area; a description of the ecosystem services provided and how they relate to people, wildlife and the economy; and they identify an array of opportunities for positive environmental change.

7.3 The Site lies within the eastern part of NCA Profile 111: Northern Thames Basin. The key characteristics of this NCA Profile are outlined as follows:

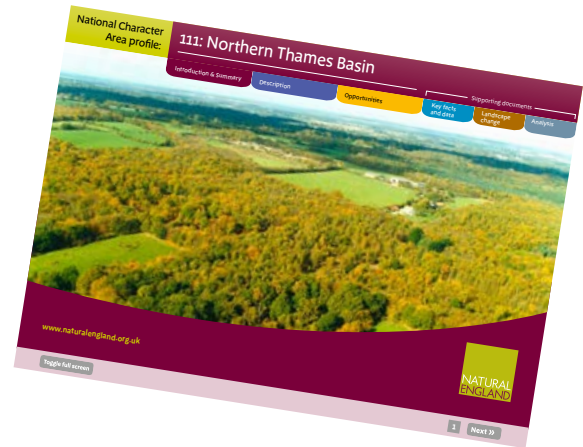
“The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the ‘Bagshot Hills’ are notable to the north-west and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.

...

A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area

The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.

...



The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements, with the creation of new settlements such as the pioneering garden city at Welwyn and the planned town at Basildon.

Brick-built dwellings are characteristic from the late 17th century onwards. Prior to this dwellings and farm buildings tended to be timber built with weatherboarding, now mainly painted white but traditionally black or tarred, and whitewashed plaster walls.”

7.4 The NCA further notes Statements of Environmental Opportunity of which SEO 4 is of relevance which states:

“Manage and expand the significant areas of broadleaf woodland and wood pasture, and increase tree cover within urban areas, for the green infrastructure links and important habitats that they provide, for the sense of tranquillity they bring, their ability to screen urban influences and their role in reducing heat island effect and sequestering and storing carbon.”



PUBLISHED LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

7.5 The Landscape Character and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study was published in December 2014 on behalf of BBC. The Site, being part of the urban area of Basildon is not covered within this assessment. However, the Study has identified landmarks within the Borough including the following of relevance to the Site and its context:

- “Landmark E; Church of St Nicholas, Laindon, Basildon (Grade I) 14th Century structure of ragstone rubble and pudding stone with some tile and old brick incorporated. A weatherboarded tower with shingle spire showing a traditional Essex timber framed style;
- Landmark F; Brooke House, Basildon (Grade II) Listed tower block of 14 storey flats built between 1960 and 1962 of concrete with dark brown handmade brick cladding and aluminium glazed screens and windows; the architectural advisor for which was Sir Basil Spence. Built to provide the first high density residential accommodation in Basildon town centre and to form a vertical landmark amongst the surrounding horizontal features of the town; and
- Landmark Q; Basildon & Thurrock University Hospital buildings Large intrusive modern buildings, of a brutalist style, with two large tower blocks, one of which is taller than the other. Noticeable in otherwise unspoilt views of the Langdon Hills”

PUBLISHED LOCAL URBAN CHARACTER

7.6 The Urban Characterisation and Design Review (UCDR) was published in December 2015 by BBC to “distinguish the characters of existing urban areas, in order to identify the context for future design and to identify those features of the existing urban environment that contribute to or detract from the quality of the urban areas”

7.7 The Site and its immediate surroundings lie within Character Area 9: Basildon New Town, described as:

“[a] suburban expansion in the post-war period, through government-facilitated building programmes, as a replacement of earlier housing that was deemed unfit for habitation. Basildon was officially designed as a New Town to assist in comprehensive redevelopment of the area into a modern new town due to which ... the prevalent urban layers that impact a feeling of place only span a period of about 50 years which is unusual in much off England.”

7.8 The UCDR for Character Area 9 notes that this area:

“comprises a combination of high-rise tower blocks, terraced properties, and detached/semi-detached houses... These areas tend to consist of estates of detached and semi-detached housing with some large and distinctive schemes of two-three storey terraces, maisonettes, and houses set around linked courtyards with some cul-de-sac arrangements. Small estates often consist of just one housing type, although larger estates sometimes contain a mix of bungalows, detached and semi-detached houses and low rise flats. Low rise flats are generally a feature of the council estates. Although broadly characterised by mixed building styles, there are unifying features within smaller areas. Houses are chiefly constructed with brick and often rendered in smooth plaster or pebbledash. White and black painted weatherboarding is sometimes found on the façade of houses.”



7.9 Character Area 9 has been further sub-divided into smaller zones based on "... the mix of uses, the refinement of architectural detailing and the changes in urban form and condition ... The consistent style and layout repeated in an area gives it a particular character and sense of place". The Site and most of its surroundings lie within the zone 'Lee Chapel'. The south-eastern corner of the Site adjoins the zone 'Kingswood', whilst the eastern extents of the Site are in proximity to the zone 'Basildon Town Centre'.

7.10 The UCDR describes Lee Chapel as follows:

"contains the historic Church of St. Nicholas which forms a focal point within a sparsely populated landscape. Development density here is much lower than in other zones within the character area. Some plotland development within the zone was regularised as part of the new town, retaining some of its historic former plot-land lanes. The zone contains extensive modern housing developments dating to the 1950s and 60s. Soft-landscaping, street trees and greenery lend to the better quality of this residential environment, with views into the country park. Properties here attract higher values in comparison to the rest of Basildon New Town."

7.11 Kingswood is described as follows:

"This small area has a scale and use of materials that give a traditional, suburban character different from its immediate surroundings. Houses are generally detached, semi-detached or terraced. The area achieves good densities within a more spacious layout, with more private gardens and public green space provision within the neighbourhood. Properties and amenity spaces also look well cared for. The visual appearance of housing condition reflects the capacity and/or willingness of owners to maintain their property."

7.12 Basildon Town Centre is described as follows:

"This zone comprises extensive modern development including the modern town centre/shopping core of Basildon as well as recreational opportunities at the Basildon Sporting Village. Although some remodelling has taken place since its completion, the town centre has retained its original design concept of a traffic-free pedestrian shopping area lying within an inner ring road. Pedestrian connections from surrounding neighbourhoods is

however severed by the high speed dual carriageway which isolates the Centre. The shopping area is busy and characterful, and is highly provided for in terms of A1 retail. But it has a tired air, with significant problems in the quality of its retail offer particularly relating to evening and leisure uses since the opening of Festival Leisure Park. The office market has also been very limited, established by a falling demand and lack of investment.

The physical fabric of the town is also fading. It is however the civic status of this zone that defines its distinctive character. Tall buildings are set adjacent to low to medium rise buildings, a tradition established early on in the development. Many of the buildings have become iconic to Basildon and recognised for their architectural and historic interest. It also benefits from a number of existing pieces of public art and important public spaces. The Basildon Market adds to the interest and vitality of this town centre. The quality and range of current housing stock reflects a lack of town centre housing/communities, with higher proportions of compact terraced housing and a higher level of social rented accommodation. Several high quality new build and conversion schemes, including the development at Gloucester Gate, are now contributing to improving the accommodation and environment of the centre. Planned town centre regeneration is expected to guide future development, and ensure the viability of the town centre as a vibrant and popular to visit and live."

7.13 The relevant recommendations within the study are as follows:

"Residential footprints should not be too massive, and should facilitate permeability and future flexibility. Walkable, short blocks should be created to expand pedestrian access, maximize building frontage, and increase sidewalk activity;

Existing landmarks, vistas and views along corridors and orientation points should be recognised and protected. Opportunities should also be maximised to create new landmark buildings, memorable and distinctive images, and strategic breaks in frontages; and

Key nodes and clear gateways into distinct areas should be established and marked by such features as gateway signage, key buildings, and changes in streetscape treatment that express the function of buildings and places through the design, detailing and quality of materials."





8. VISUAL APPRAISAL

8.1 A series of photographs were taken in February 2021 to help understand and demonstrate the character and appearance of the surroundings within which the Site lies, as well as to test the responsiveness of the development proposals to the visual context. Photographs were taken from areas to which the public readily gain access i.e. along roads and pavements and within areas of public open space.



8.2 The built form around the Site is almost entirely post-war and of limited visual diversity. There are three main development typologies in the vicinity of the Site: the town centre, the suburbs and the railway environs. The Town Centre is dominated by Brooke House forming a vertical landmark amongst the surrounding horizontal features of the town; the initial concept was a pedestrian public realm, encircled by a four lane ring road albeit with some outward facing commerce; much of the centre is now inward looking including the Westgate development. The low rise residential suburbs incorporate houses and flats. There is a cluster of taller apartment blocks around the railway station area.



8.3 Taller buildings serve as reference points in views from areas of open space, for example Trafford House and Brooke House are visible on the skyline from Great Gregorie Park.

8.4 The wide roads near the Site exert a negative visual influence generally despite attempts to improve the non-vehicular experience through the use of public art. The associated infrastructure of subways, guard rails, ramps and bridges that characterise the public realm do not experience natural surveillance from residential areas and are therefore not well used for staying despite offering good permeability.



8.5 The railway embankment and canopy trees within and around the Site provide a high degree of visual containment to the Site. The grassland within the western part of the Site is notably more open in character and has the appearance of a wide verge to the Laindon Link road.

CHAPEL GATE • TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Clockwise from top left:
Great Gregorie Park
St Martin's Bell Tower, St Martin's Square
Roundacre underpass
Brooke House, Town Square
Gloucester Park
Botelers, Lee Chapel South
Trafford House
Lee Chapel North





DESIGN RATIONALE

9. SCOPE FOR DEVELOPMENT

9.1 Based on the findings of the baseline analysis, the redevelopment of the Site is considered to provide the following opportunities from a townscape and visual perspective:

- Strengthen the urban fabric of the town centre periphery and improve the sense of place by overcoming the underdevelopment of the Site;
- Assist in the spatial definition of the town centre using a coherent hierarchy of built form;
- Support the Basildon Town Centre Masterplan vision for a revitalised urban core by inviting movement along approach routes from the south and west and improving the sense of arrival at the town centre;
- Provide a gradual west to east and south to north increase in building heights to promote a transition in scale between the town centre and the surrounding outer suburban neighbourhoods;
- Enhance the Nether Mayne and Laindon Link streetscapes by introducing rhythmic, visual and human interest;
- Provide a focal point that visually connects the town centre with its periphery;
- Improve wayfinding through the presence of built form at a key nodal point where car, pedestrian and local and national cycle routes converge;
- Support the future development of a reinstated axis between Roundacre and the town centre and thereby assist in overcoming the perception of severance and restricted movement caused by the ring road;
- Enhance legibility and the future setting of designated heritage assets in the town centre by presenting a dynamic faceted architectural form to the north-east corner of the Site fronting directly onto Roundacre and the western end of the east-west axial spine from the 1950s Masterplan; and
- Introduce contemporary architecture to act as a catalyst to deliver high quality public realm and vitality within Basildon town centre..

9.2 Development of the Site should respond positively to the stated aims of the NPPF, in contributing to the enhancement of the built environment by improving the places in which people live and the effective re-use of land.

9.3 Development within the Site should ensure the delivery of good design and add to the overall quality of the area. Furthermore, development of the Site should respond positively to the existing local policy context including DES3: Urban Character Areas.



MITIGATION STRATEGY

9.4 The townscape and visual mitigation-by-design rationale takes into account the identified existing townscape character context in the vicinity of the Site, the findings of the visual appraisal, and planning policy context. Set out below are a series of townscape and visual mitigation objectives, each of which are supported by a set of design prompts that the Proposed Development should seek to achieve.

Contribute Positively to Townscape Character

- The new built forms should integrate with the built fabric and wider context in terms of their proportion, orientation, relationship to other buildings, and materiality; and
- The new built forms should be designed in a manner that transitions between larger developments in the town centre to the north-east and the undeveloped character in the south-west.

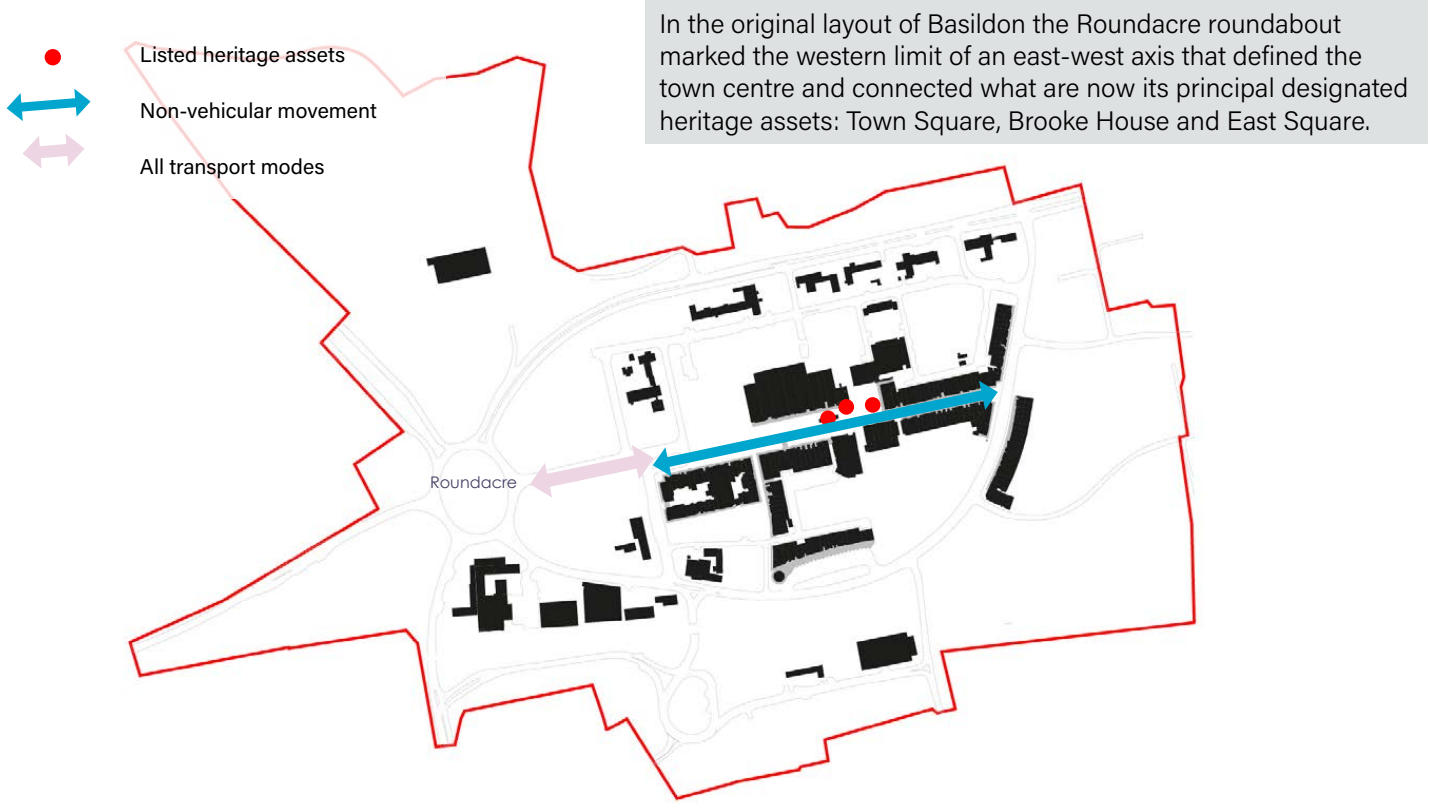
Integrate with the Immediate Townscape

- The scale of the development should provide a bold massing arrangement that brings built form as close as possible to the town centre to the north-east of the Site; and
- Respect the substantial mature landscape framework of existing trees and hedgerows that are to be retained on the periphery and within the Site to ensure the public continues to benefit from these green infrastructure assets and to soften the edges and visually assimilate the new development into its surroundings.

Enhance Public Realm and Visual Amenity

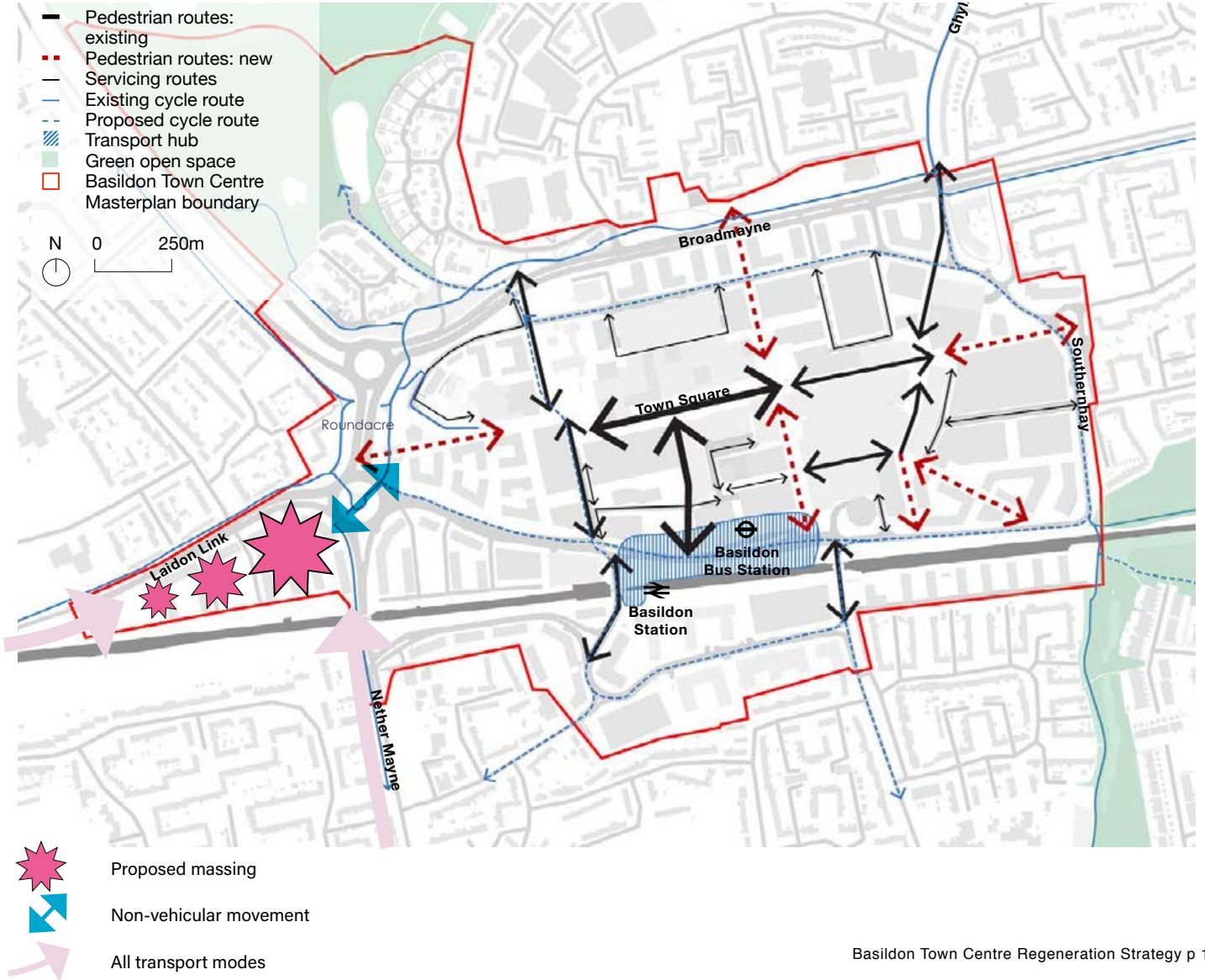
- Contribute to civic pride by presenting appropriate, well maintained boundary treatments along the eastern and northern Site boundaries that interface with the public realm;
- Provide safe and attractive non-vehicular routes through the Site;
- Introduce green infrastructure corridors for habitat connectivity through the Site both north-south and east-west; and
- Creation of a distinctive, high quality landscape, with a welcoming, pedestrian friendly environment and a strong sense of place.

DESIGN RATIONALE





There is potential for the Proposed Development to support the Basildon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy by inviting movement towards and along the proposed east-west pedestrian spine between Town Square and Roundacre.





ASSESSMENT



10. TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

NATIONAL CHARACTER EFFECTS

NCA Profile 111: North Thames Basin

10.22 The NCA Profile 111: North Thames Basin references Basildon in relation to urban expansion and the creation of new settlements near London. In this regard, the Site and its immediate surrounding area is representative of the settled parts of the NCA. On balance, the NCA is considered to be of Medium value.

10.23 Given that built forms dominate this part of the NCA Profile, that the footprint of the Site has previously been given over to surface car parking development, and that high-rise development is present within the immediate townscape context, it is considered that the NCA can accommodate the type of development proposed with little or no effect upon its overall integrity. The Basildon Masterplan identifies the Site as an area "of underdevelopment" with "potential for comprehensive redevelopment". Therefore, NCA Profile 111: is considered to be of Low susceptibility, which in combination with the Medium value, results in a Medium sensitivity.

10.24 The Proposed Development will be perceived from a localised part of NCA Profile 111 and in the context of other built form. The introduction of additional built form within this context will fit in with the existing density gradient pattern around the town centre of Basildon. The proposed building heights will reinforce the emerging and planned pattern of development that is set out in the Basildon Masterplan.

10.1 The substantial mature landscape framework of existing trees and hedgerows that are to be retained on the periphery and within the Site, in combination with the proposed planting of 77 specimen trees, ornamental planting and the creation of green corridors will contribute to the stated opportunity for NCA 111 to "increase tree cover within urban areas, for the green infrastructure links and ... their ability to screen urban influences".

10.2 These changes should also be weighed in the balance against the restricted area that they will be perceived from, and on the basis of the above the magnitude of effect is considered to be Very Small, resulting in a Neutral significance of effect.



LOCAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER EFFECTS

10.3 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013) make clear and emphasise that the approach to the assessment of effects should be proportionate in relation to the scale and nature of the development proposal and the likelihood for significant effects to arise.

10.4 A balance of beneficial and adverse changes in townscape features and character arising from the Proposed Development has been considered. Potential beneficial changes are likely to arise in a number of ways, as set out below:

- Strengthened urban fabric of the town centre periphery and improved sense of place;
- Improved spatial definition of the town centre;
- Revitalised urban core;
- Improved sense of arrival at the town centre;
- Enhanced streetscape along Laindon Link;
- Improved visual connection between the town centre and its periphery;
- Improved wayfinding and legibility of the Roundacre node;
- Improved Roundacre gateway function;
- Reduced perception of severance and restricted movement caused by the ring road;
- Enhanced legibility and the future setting of designated heritage assets in the town centre; and
- Indirectly improved the public realm and vitality within Basildon town centre.

10.5 In addition to these beneficial changes, adverse changes may potentially arise through a perceived loss of openness and contrasts in height and character with prevailing townscape character or as perceived in views.

10.6 A number of approaches to mitigating such effects are inherent in the design of the Proposed Development, such that it can respond sympathetically to the existing townscape through:

- Retention of important trees including Category A oaks and well-established groups on the northern Site boundary;
- Lower built forms to the west and south to respect the scale of the low-rise residential context; and
- A gradual west to east and south to north increase in building heights to promote a transition in scale between the town centre and the surrounding outer suburban neighbourhoods.

10.7 The scope of the assessment of local townscape effects is limited to Lee Chapel and Basildon Town Centre as it is considered that due to the nature of the type of development proposed, in combination with the appraisal undertaken, that significant adverse townscape effects are unlikely to be appreciated over the wider area.

10.8 Notwithstanding the above, it is acknowledged that there is potential for intervisibility with the Proposed Development to arise within the surrounding townscape areas. However, given this intervisibility is considered to be unlikely to alter the experiential qualities of each TCA and in the interests of proportionality as advocated in the best practice guidance, these effects are therefore considered as part of the visual assessment, from static viewpoint locations that are representative of typical receptor groups.



TCA 'Lee Chapel'

10.9 This TCA is severed in two by the rail corridor that passes adjacent to the southern Site boundary. The urban form is defined by an altered street pattern, with historic routes terminated by ring roads, railways or large scale development plots. The block pattern is characterised by large scale buildings in broad plots creating a large scale urban form of high density development.

10.10 There are very few notable historical or cultural associations within the TCA other than St Nicholas Church listed building approximately 1.5km to the north of the Site and on balance, the area is considered to be of Medium value.

10.11 Given that urban forms characterise the Lee Chapel TCA there is scope to accommodate the type of development proposed. Therefore, it is considered to be of Low susceptibility, which in combination with the Medium value, results in a Medium sensitivity.

10.12 The Proposed Development will be directly introduced into an 'island' site within the eastern extents of this TCA adjacent to the town centre. The existing car parking areas will be replaced by five apartment blocks and parts of the existing semi-natural area will be replaced by terraced housing with front and back gardens. The built form will be arranged around an accessible, inclusive, legible, and interconnecting public realm that promotes feelings of safety and security.

10.13 There will be positive effects on Lee Chapel TCA as a result of the improved sense of place and increased vitality within the streetscene along Laindon Link. The provision of green infrastructure and the improvements to the area's character and permeability will result in a more beneficial integration with its surroundings.

10.14 The mitigation approaches set out above will assist in the assimilation of the Proposed Development into the TCA.

10.15 The proposed massing is in accordance with the Basildon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy that identifies a potential for significant residential development within the Site that is "*appropriate, respectful, and celebratory of the New Town context of the town centre*".

10.16 Block E responds positively to its immediate context of Roundacre and the town centre by presenting a crescendo of dynamic architectural form to the north-east corner of the Site. Blocks C and D step down from Block E to enhance the crescendo effect and in response to the suburban context. In terms of adverse effects these will be limited to the perception of a loss of openness affecting localised parts of the area, notably the south-westerly views from Laindon Link.

10.17 On balance, a Small magnitude of effect will be experienced within the TCA, which considered alongside the Medium sensitivity of the area, will result in a Negligible Beneficial significance of effect.



TCA 'Basildon Town Centre'

10.18 This TCA is located immediately adjacent to the north-eastern edge of the Site and has both functional and visual connectivity with the Site as identified in the Basildon Masterplan. The urban form is defined by the 1950s new town design albeit the Roundacre node has been fundamentally altered as shown on page 42. The town centre has retained its original design concept of a traffic-free pedestrian shopping area lying within an inner ring road. Pedestrian connectivity from surrounding neighbourhoods is however severed by the high speed dual carriageway that isolates the centre. Many of the buildings have become iconic to Basildon and recognised for their architectural and historic interest and on balance, the area is considered to be of Medium value.

10.19 Given that urban forms characterise the TCA there is scope to accommodate the type of development proposed. Therefore, it is considered to be of Low susceptibility, which in combination with the Medium value, results in a Medium sensitivity.

10.20 The Proposed Development will exert indirect townscape effects within the western extents of this TCA in the vicinity of Roundacre. There will be positive effects as a result of the improved gateway function of the Roundacre node. The Proposed Development will support Basildon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy by inviting movement towards and along the proposed east-west pedestrian spine between Town Square and Roundacre. Architecturally, the Proposed Development will reward south-westerly views across Roundacre by presenting a topographic crescendo of dynamic architectural forms that complement the historic and contemporary forms prevalent in the town centre . There will also be beneficial effects on the future setting of heritage assets within the town centre resulting from the improved definition of Roundacre and its relationship with the proposed reinstatement of the pedestrian east-west spine through the town centre.

10.21 Given the severance caused by Roundacre there is a poor relationship between this TCA and the Site currently and whilst a slight loss of openness will be perceived in south-westerly views it is considered that the beneficial effects will outweigh the adverse. On balance, a Very Small magnitude of effect will be experienced within the TCA, which considered alongside the Medium sensitivity of the area, will result in a Negligible Beneficial significance of effect.



11. VISUAL EFFECTS

VISUAL EFFECTS

11.1 The assessment of visual effects considers the impact that the Proposed Development will have on the visual amenity of the visual receptors at the identified key views. The locations of the key views are illustrated in the adjoining Viewpoint Location Plan. These are not intended to be an exhaustive list of the locations where visual impacts will arise, but rather are intended to be representative of the viewing experience in the vicinity of the Site. The viewpoint locations and nature of their visualisation method were agreed with the relevant council officer on the 3rd of March 2021.

11.2 Visual effects resulting from the Proposed Development will be limited to those locations within the surrounding townscape where views of new built form are possible. As demonstrated by the key views, which represent a range of visual receptors across the local townscape, the Proposed Development will almost always be experienced in the context of an already developed skyline.

11.3 Where views of the Proposed Development are possible, they will often be partial and limited to the upper extents of the massing. The Proposed Development will only be visible to its full extent in views from the roadside in the immediate vicinity of the Site, where visual receptors have a reduced degree of sensitivity.

11.4 Where the introduced built form is visible in the context of an undeveloped or partially developed skyline there will be a slight loss of openness albeit on balance this will not result in an adverse visual effect overall. This is due to the following beneficial and mitigatory effects that have been embedded into the design that help to integrate the proposals into the townscape and provide positive character.

11.5 The key mitigatory and beneficial visual effects identified are as follows:

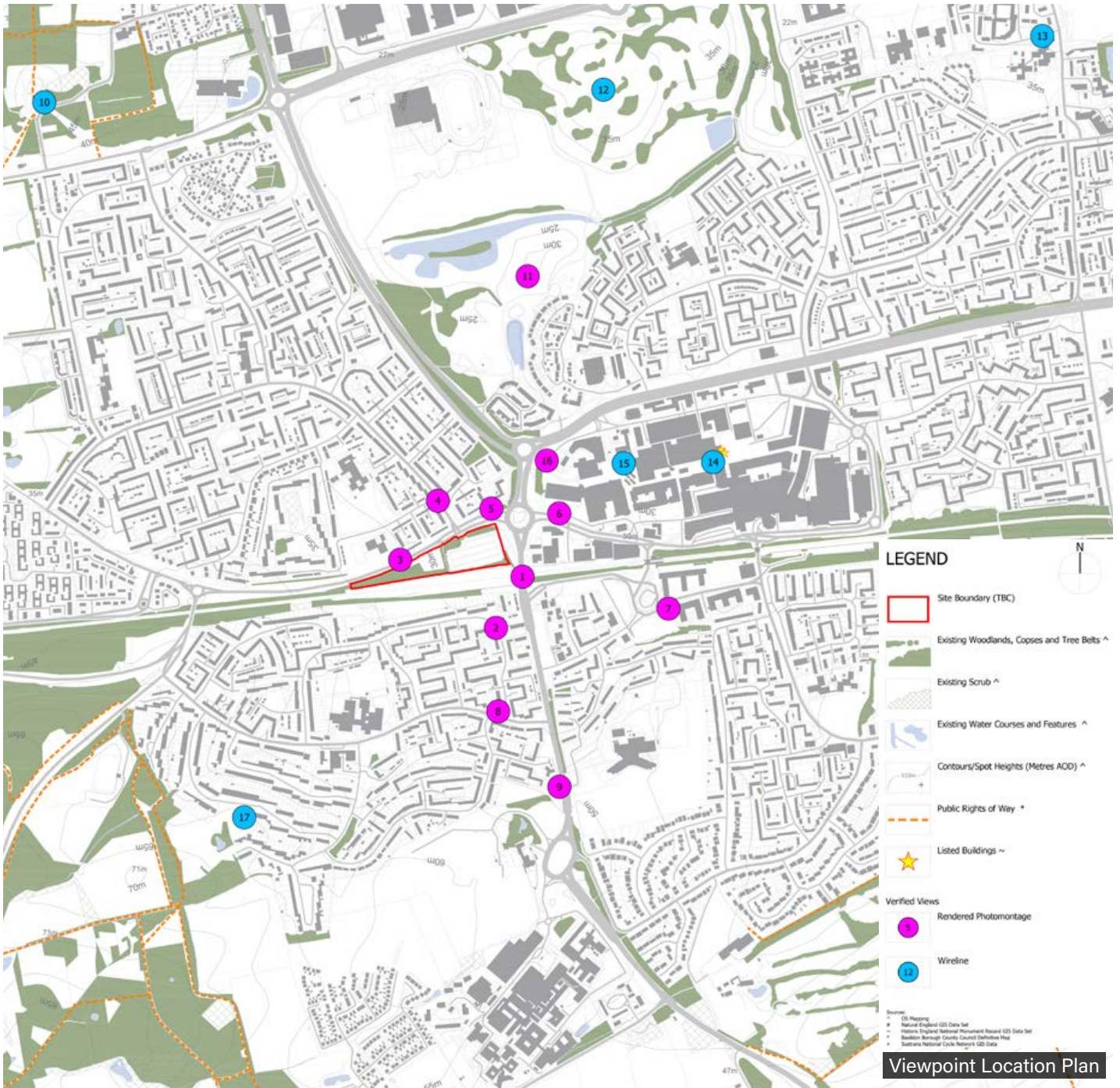
- Massing forms a progression of scale between suburbs and the town centre;
- Retention of important trees;
- Varied architectural forms and detailing;
- Recessive colouration and complementary materiality including locally characterising brick;
- Rhythm and balance enlivens the streetscene;
- Repetition of openings and corner balconies;
- Horizontally and vertically expressed forms; and
- Landscape and public realm enhancement.

11.6 The local townscape includes major infrastructure and taller buildings in the town centre. It therefore has some potential to accommodate new built form of the scale proposed without undue harm on the overall visual experience.

11.7 As set out in the assessment of visual effects, beneficial effects have been identified for six of the seventeen views including moderate beneficial significance at viewpoint 3 and minor beneficial at viewpoints 6 and 16. There are no viewpoints that will experience adverse effects. The remainder of visual effects recorded are negligible beneficial (viewpoints 2, 9 and 17) and neutral (viewpoints 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15).

11.8 It is of note that in a number of locations, the Proposed Development will likely be perceived as a positive addition to the existing built fabric of the local area. Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Development can be successfully accommodated within the existing townscape without undue adverse effects on local visual receptors.

CHAPEL GATE • TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



VIEW 1

A176 NORTH

Existing

V1.1 The viewing position is approximately 50m from the Site on the eastern footway of the A176 Nether Mayne where it passes beneath an overpass of the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway.

V1.2 The foreground is dominated by the dual carriageway and there are infrastructure-related elements including grassed verges, signage and lighting columns in the midground. To the right there is a glimpse of the subway passing beneath the Laindon Link road. There are heavily filtered views of the recently constructed Maplewood Court apartments beyond the roundabout. Canopy trees and evergreen shrubs flank the western side of the A176, softening views of the red brick abutment wing wall to the rail overpass on the left.

V1.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include pedestrians whose attention is likely to be partly focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V1.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V1.5 The upper storeys will be visible against the skyline with the lower storeys screened by the abutment wing wall and vegetation. Approximately two thirds of the 7 storey southern and eastern elevations of Block D will appear prominently albeit the pale brick cladding is recessive. Approximately one third of the 7 and 10 storey eastern and southern elevations of Block E will be noticeable. The expanse of brickwork at the top of the south-eastern elevation of Block E contrasts with the simple pattern of openings that characterise the other facades. Despite the progression of scale and screening effect provided by the mature oak trees in front of the Proposed Development there will be a noticeable loss of openness on the left side of the view and the partially developed skyline will be altered.

V1.6 The coherent composition, varied architecture and contrasting yet complementary colouration between Blocks D and E will provide variety and identity and will assist in wayfinding locally. The use of locally characterising brick and the simple repeating pattern of openings and corner balconies will help to integrate the Proposed Development into the view. The landscape improvements to the eastern Site boundary will subtly enhance the scene at pedestrian eye level.

V1.7 On balance, while a Medium magnitude of change will arise, this change neither results in an improvement or deterioration to the existing view and the Significance of Effect will be Neutral.



Existing View



Proposed View

VIEW 2

GREAT GREGORIE ROAD NORTH

Existing

V2.1 The viewpoint is located approximately 200m south of the Proposed Development on a low-rise residential street, typical of the majority of the suburban parts of the study area. The built form visible consists of terraces of uniform height with a consistent roofline. The layout of the buildings is broken up by footways, grassed verges, mature street trees, and a curvilinear estate road with on street parking.

V2.2 In the midground the railway line can be perceived running parallel with a row of terraced houses. There are filtered views of a gantry and overhead lines on the skyline.

V2.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include people at their place of residence whose attention may be focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of high susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V2.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V2.5 The Proposed Development is noticeable beyond the railway line in the backdrop of the view. There will be filtered views of the uppermost storeys of the southern elevations of blocks A, B and D. Built form, infrastructure and vegetation screens the majority of the Proposed Development but the change will be noticeable due to the effects on the skyline. There will be a slight loss of openness. .

V2.6 The massing steps up gradually from west to east and this provides a logical progression of height towards the town centre. The visible buildings are of equal width as are the spaces between the buildings such that there is a sense of rhythm and balance. It is considered that the well proportioned and visually organised composition will improve the sense of place and identity by providing visual interest. The proposals will contribute positively to the legibility of the area by signposting the Roundacre gateway between the suburbs and the town centre. The recessive tonality and use of complementary brick will help to assimilate the built form into the view.

V2.7 On balance a Medium magnitude of effect will arise which will result in a slight improvement to the existing view and the Significance of Effect will therefore be Negligible Beneficial.



VIEW 3

NATIONAL CYCLE ROUTE 13

Existing

V3.1 The viewing position is approximately 10m north-west of the Site on the shared foot and cycle way beside the Laindon Link road. The foreground is dominated by road infrastructure. There is a wide grass verge on either side of the road and a prominent guardrail separates vehicular and non vehicular users. On the right there is a patch of semi-natural woodland flanking the road. Terraced housing is visible on the left in the midground.

V3.2 Beyond the well vegetated midground, parts of the distinctive skyline of the town centre can just be made out. The Icon apartment block to the right is separated from a group of taller forms to the left, which includes Brooke House and St Martin's Bell Tower. The horizontal mass and distinctive yellowy buff and green colouration of the Westgate is the most noticeable built form within the town centre, partly due to its position terminating the viewing corridor along Laindon Link.

V3.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include pedestrians and cyclists whose attention is likely to be partly focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V3.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V3.5 The partially developed skyline will be altered and characterised by built form flanking both sides of the Laindon Link. The loss of openness, removal of vegetation and effects on the skyline (including loss of filtered views of Brooke House) will cause a pronounced change albeit within the context of an arterial road into the town centre.

V3.6 The Proposed Development will form a coherent composition that better integrates the suburban area with surrounding built form and infrastructure, introducing harmony and rhythm into the streetscape and providing an improved sense of place. The low-rise forms and pitched roofs will respond positively to the residential context on the north side of Laindon Link. There will be a logical and appropriate progression to a civic scale of higher-rise apartments with massing that steps up both west-east and south-north. Landscape treatment, locally characterising brick and dark tiles will help to integrate the Proposed Development into the view. The complementary colouration and taller apparent height of Blocks B and E will contribute positively to the legibility of the area and encourage movement towards Roundacre and improve its town centre gateway function.

V3.7 A Large magnitude of effect will arise, leading to a noticeable improvement in the existing view and the Significance of Effect will therefore be Moderate Beneficial.





VIEW 4

GREAT KNIGHTLEYS ROAD,
LEE CHAPEL NORTH

Existing

V4.1 The viewpoint is located approximately 125m north of the Site on a low-rise residential street junction. The view has a strong suburban character and the built form comprises terraces with a consistent building line and roofscape. The public realm consists of footways, and mature street trees flanking a minor road.

V4.2 Terminating the vista along the carriageway into the centre of the view there is a signalised road. Beyond this, a thick swath of vegetation along the northern Site boundary forms a partially developed skyline punctuated by lighting columns.

V4.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include people at their place of residence whose attention may be focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of high susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V4.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V4.5 The Proposed Development brings about a prominent alteration to the view and there will be a noticeable loss of openness.

V4.6 Block E on the left and Block B in the centre form noticeable skyline features that respond positively to the wider context of the Basildon skyline where simple, vertically expressed forms with repeating patterns such as Brooke House and Great Oaks House contrast with and complement their surroundings, which are predominantly low rise and frequently horizontally expressed.

V4.7 It is considered that the well proportioned and visually organised elevations with corner balconies will improve the sense of place by adding vitality to the streetscape. The increased height of Blocks B and E will contribute positively to the legibility of the area and encourage movement towards Roundacre and improve its town centre gateway function. The recessive tonality of Blocks C and D and use of complementary brick help to assimilate the built form into the view.

V4.8 On balance while a Medium magnitude of effect will arise, this change neither results in an improvement or deterioration to the existing view and the Significance of Effect will be Neutral.

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VIEW 5

LAINDON LINK

Existing

V5.1 The viewing position is approximately 20m from the Site at the Roundacre bus stop on the Laindon Link. The north-easterly view is dominated by road and related infrastructure including a signalised cross roads in the midground, the northerly section of which used to be the Site car park entrance and is currently out of use. There are grassed verges on either side of the road. There is a contrast in character between the semi-natural vegetated appearance on the northern side of the road and the two to three storey built form on the right. The south-westerly skyline is predominantly undeveloped albeit punctuated by lighting columns.

V5.2 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include pedestrians whose attention is likely to be partly focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

11.11 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V5.3 The 'single sided' developed character of the road will be altered into a view characterised by built form on both sides of the road. There will be an appreciable loss of openness and Block B appears slightly incongruous in this particular view given the jump in scale between the built form framing either side of the view.

V5.4 Nonetheless, the simple repeating pattern of openings and corner balconies is considered a positive response to the town centre architecture. The use of locally characterising brick will help to integrate the Proposed Development into the view, as will the retained vegetation, which also serves to soften the appearance of the lower storeys. The corner balconies will enliven the streetscape and provide natural surveillance.

V5.5 On balance a Medium magnitude of effect will arise, which neither results in an improvement or deterioration to the existing view and the Significance of Effect will be Neutral.



Existing View



Proposed View

VIEW 6

SOUTHERNHAY

Existing

V6.1 The viewing position is approximately 150m west of the Site on the northern footway of the Southernhay near the car park of the Westgate Park retail facility.

V6.2 The foreground is dominated by four carriageways, a median and the associated infrastructure including lighting columns and signage. A showroom on the opposite side of the road extends into the midground.

V6.3 Infrastructure at Roundacre characterises the background of the view. There are filtered views of built form including the recently constructed Maplewood Court apartments beyond the roundabout. Grassed verges and canopy trees including distinctive oak silhouettes provide visual respite from the carscape.

V6.4 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include pedestrians whose attention is likely to be partly focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V6.5 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V6.6 The upper parts of the eastern elevations of Blocks D and E will be readily apparent against the skyline with the lower two to three storeys partially screened by intervening vegetation, and as a result there will be a slight loss of openness.

V6.7 The simple repeating pattern of openings and corner balconies is considered a positive response to the surrounding architecture. There is a coherent break in the massing that is emphasised by the contrasting form and materiality of Blocks D and E. The use of locally characterising brick and the balance between horizontal and vertical expression will help to integrate the Proposed Development into the view, as will the retained vegetation, which also provides a progression of scale. The increased height and faceted form of the north-eastern elevation of Block E will contribute positively to the legibility of the area and encourage movement towards Roundacre and improve its gateway function for the suburbs.

V6.8 A Medium magnitude of effect will arise, which on balance will represent a limited improvement in the existing view and the Significance of Effect will be Minor Beneficial.

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Existing View



Proposed View



VIEW 7

CHERRYDOWN EAST

Existing

V7.1 The viewpoint is located approximately 400m south-east of the Site near the railway station on a high-rise residential street. Apartment blocks at Trafford House and the Icon frame the right side of the view and the remainder is given over to car dominated infrastructure including surface parking. Street trees are important components of the view and the railway gantries are noticeable on the skyline.

V7.2 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include people at their place of residence whose attention may be focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of high susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V7.3 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V7.4 The Proposed Development will cause an unobtrusive change in the view, appearing in the distance and heavily filtered by intervening vegetation. There will be a very slight loss of openness.

V7.5 The massing steps up gradually from west to east and south to north and this provides a logical progression of scale between the suburbs and the town centre. The simple repeating pattern of openings and corner balconies is considered a positive response to the surrounding architecture. The use of locally characterising brick and the balance between horizontal and vertical expression will help to integrate the Proposed Development into the view. The increased height, contrasting materiality and faceted form of Block E will contribute positively to the legibility of the area and help signpost the Roundacre gateway location.

V7.6 A Small magnitude of effect will arise, which neither results in an improvement or deterioration to the existing view and the Significance of Effect will be Neutral.



VIEW 8

GREAT GREGORIE ROAD SOUTH

Existing

V8.1 The viewpoint is located approximately 400m south of the Site on a low-rise residential street that slopes down to the north. The built form visible consists of terraces of uniform height with a consistent roofline. The layout of the buildings is broken up by footways, grassed verges, mature street trees, and the curvilinear estate road with on street parking.

V8.2 In the background the railway line can be perceived running parallel with a row of terraced houses. There are filtered views of a gantry and overhead lines on the skyline.

V8.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include people at their place of residence whose attention may be focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of high susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V8.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V8.5 The upper parts of the Proposed Development are noticeable on the skyline. There will be filtered views of the uppermost storeys of the southern elevations of blocks A, B and D. Built form, infrastructure and vegetation screens the vast majority of the Proposed Development but the change will be noticeable due to the effects on the skyline. There will be a slight loss of openness.

V8.6 The massing steps up gradually from west to east and south to north providing a progression of scale between the suburbs and the town centre. The recessive tonality and simple repeating pattern of openings and corner balconies is considered a positive response to the surrounding architecture. The use of locally characterising brick and the balance between horizontal and vertical expression will help to integrate the Proposed Development into the view. The increased height, contrasting materiality and faceted form of Block E will contribute positively to the legibility of the area and help signpost the gateway location of the Site to the town centre.

V8.7 On balance a Medium magnitude of effect will arise, which neither results in an improvement or deterioration to the existing view and the Significance of Effect will be Neutral.



VIEW 9

A176 SOUTH

Existing

V9.1 The viewpoint is located approximately 620m south of the on the grassed verge that separates a shared foot/cycle way and the A176 Nether Mayne. There is a prominent block of flats in the midground on the left that punctuates the skyline. Other built form visible includes the Icon apartments near the railway station and the high-rise apartments in the town centre. There are long distance views over the built up Basildon area to the partially developed hills to the north.

V9.2 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include pedestrians whose attention is likely to be partly focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V9.3 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V9.4 The upper parts of the Proposed Development are noticeable in the distance beyond intervening built form and vegetation and the uppermost two storeys of Block E break the skyline thus drawing attention to a topographic 'crescendo' within the background that has a legibility function as set out below. The alteration to the skyline and obscuring of a small portion of the hills near Great Burstead will be slightly discordant in the view.

V9.5 However, as thee massing steps up gradually from west to east and south to north, this will provide a progression of scale between the suburbs and the town centre. The increased height, contrasting materiality and faceted form of Block E will contribute positively to the legibility of the area and draw the viewers' eye towards this gateway location.

V9.6 A Small magnitude of effect will arise, and on balance there will be a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view and the Significance of Effect will be Negligible Beneficial.

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VIEW 10

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH

Existing

V10.1 The viewpoint is located approximately 1.5km north-west of the Site at the summit of Church Hill on the ramped footpath to St Nicholas Church, a Grade I listed building.

V10.2 The sloping, mostly undeveloped fore and midground includes the churchyard, grassed road verges, tall shrubs and mature trees. There is a narrow break in the canopy line, through which views of Lee Chapel can be obtained. Built form in Basildon clothes both north and south facing slopes of the valley landform in the distance. The town centre is barely discernible due to intervening vegetation.

V10.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of high value as the location is a designated heritage asset. As the receptors in this location will include people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention may be focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of high susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V10.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be High.

Proposed

V10.5 The Proposed Development will result in a barely discernible change to the view due to the distance of view, the screening effects of the intervening vegetation and the absence of any noticeable effect to the skyline.

V10.6 On balance the change neither results in an improvement or deterioration to the existing view and the Significance of Effect will be Neutral.





VIEW 11

GLOUCESTER GATE

Existing

V11.1 The viewpoint is located approximately 750m north of the Site atop a manmade landform within the Gloucester Park public open space.

V11.2 The green space in the foreground includes a grassed expanse and prominent mature trees. There is a mixture of urban and natural influences in the midground where modern three storey housing at Gloucester Gate fronts on to a landscaped waterpark. To the right there are longer distance glimpsed views of higher ground around Lee Chapel South. The heavily filtered upper parts of Basildon hospital are just visible on the horizon.

V11.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of medium value as they are within an area of local importance as an open space. As the receptors in this location will include people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention may be focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of high susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V11.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be High.

Proposed

V11.5 The upper parts of the Proposed Development will be clearly visible on the skyline rising above Gloucester Gate but separated from it by a thin band of vegetation. Parts of the skyline will be altered such that the view of the top of Basildon hospital will be obscured by Block D. There will be a minimal loss of openness and the vertical layering of built forms will be perceived as slightly incoherent.

V11.6 Nonetheless, the use of locally characterising brick and the proposed colouration will complement the Gloucester Gate palette and help to assimilate the proposals into the view. The simple repeating pattern of openings is considered a positive response to the town centre architecture. The topographical crescendo and the balance between horizontal and vertical expression will help to integrate the Proposed Development into the view.

V11.7 The increased height, contrasting materiality and faceted form of Block E will contribute positively to the legibility of the area and assist in wayfinding of this town centre gateway location.

V11.8 A Small magnitude of effect will arise, and on balance the change neither results in an improvement or deterioration to the existing view and the Significance of Effect will be Neutral.





VIEW 12

SHARPEVILLE HILLS

Existing

V12.1 The viewpoint is located approximately 1.3km north of the Site at the highest point within the Gloucester Park public open space to the north of the Site. The grassed manmade hill top in the foreground is framed by woodland blocks in the midground that partially obscure panoramic views of the town centre and the higher ground south of Basildon.

V12.2 The skyline is punctuated by vertical built form including Brooke House (14 storeys) and Great Oaks House (11 storeys) to the left. To the right of these landmarks the horizontal mass of Trafford House breaks the skyline. Further right a break in the vegetation permits a glimpse of the distant, wooded horizon formed by the Langdon Hills. The upper parts of Basildon hospital are just visible on the horizon albeit heavily screened by intervening vegetation.

V12.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of medium value as they are within an area of local importance as an open space. As the receptors in this location will include people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention may be focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of high susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V12.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be High.

Proposed

V12.5 The Proposed Development will be entirely screened by intervening vegetation and there will be no change discernible in the view. The magnitude of effect will be None and the Significance of Effect will be Neutral.



Existing View



Proposed View



VIEW 13

FAIR MEAD NEAR CHURCH ROAD

Existing

V13.1 The viewpoint is located approximately 1.9km north-east of the Site at the junction between Fair Mead and Church Road. The elevation of the viewpoint is approximately 43m AOD, 13m higher than the Site.

V13.2 The foreground is a grassed expanse of public realm located adjacent to a minor road with on street parking that cuts obliquely across the midground. The built form and vegetation associated with the Willows Primary School is prominent on the far side of Fair Mead and there are filtered views over the school buildings including a glimpsed long distance view towards the distinctive profile of Langdon Hills. This natural feature and depth adds to the sense of place by providing a contrast to the bland suburban immediate context.

V13.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include pedestrians whose attention is likely to be partly focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V13.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V13.5 The Proposed Development will be almost entirely screened by intervening vegetation and built form and there will be a barely discernible change in the view. The magnitude of effect will be Very Small and the Significance of Effect will be Neutral.



VIEW 14

TOWN SQUARE

Existing

V14.1 The viewpoint is located within the Town Square public realm approximately 600m east of the Site. The location is adjacent to the Brooke House, a 14 storey Brutalist tower that was designed as the centrepiece of the new town.

V14.2 The westerly view consists of a developed skyline created by buildings with large footprints and up to five storeys in height. There is a strong horizontal emphasis in the built forms and the architecture includes simple repeating patterns of openings above a parade of shops. The Westgate buildings terminate what would once have been a vista out of the town centre.

V14.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of high value as the location is adjacent to a cluster of designated heritage assets that form an important part of the history and identity of Basildon New Town. As the receptors in this location will include people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention may be focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of high susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V14.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be High.

Proposed

V14.5 The Proposed Development will be entirely screened by intervening built form and there will be no change discernible in the view. The magnitude of effect will be None and the Significance of Effect will be Neutral.



Existing View



Proposed View



VIEW 15

ST MARTIN'S SQUARE

Existing

V15.1 The viewpoint is located within St Martin's Square public realm approximately 350m north-east of the Site. The location is adjacent to St Martin's Church and Bell Tower that frame the northern edge of the hard landscaped public open space. The Westgate retail facility and Towngate theatre frame the southern and western sides of the square respectively.

V15.2 The south-westerly view takes in vegetation including vertical accents in raised planters and seating areas within the public realm. There is a notable lack of active frontage onto the square, particularly along the northfacing edge. There is a strong degree of containment and the built forms visible create an interesting skyline.

V15.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include pedestrians whose attention is likely to be partly focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V15.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V15.5 The Proposed Development will be entirely screened by intervening built form and there will be no change discernible in the view. The magnitude of effect will be None and the Significance of Effect will be Neutral.



VIEW 16

ROUNDACRE

Existing

V16.1 The viewing position is approximately 240m north-east of the Site on the footway of an access road. The car park in the foreground is located to the rear of the council offices.

V16.2 The access road, surface car parking and car-related infrastructure occupy the foreground. There is a ramp on the right of the view that provides non-vehicular permeability beneath Roundacre. Views of Roundacre itself are filtered by intervening vegetation. The blank north-facing facades of the Westgate retail facility are prominent against the skyline on the left. Vegetation around Roundacre characterises the background of the view. There are filtered views of built form including the recently constructed Maplewood Court apartments beyond the roundabout.

V16.3 Receptors in this location are considered to be of low value as they are not within a designated area or area of particular local importance. As the receptors in this location will include pedestrians whose attention is likely to be partly focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

V16.4 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be Medium.

Proposed

V16.5 The upper parts of the eastern elevations of Blocks B, D and E will be readily apparent against the skyline with the lower storeys completely screened by intervening vegetation. As a result, there will be a slight loss of openness in the view. Nonetheless, the simple repeating pattern of openings and corner balconies is considered a positive response to the new town architecture. The use of locally characterising brick, the balance between horizontal and vertical expression, and the topographical crescendo will help to integrate the Proposed Development into the view. The increased height and faceted form of the north-eastern elevation of Block E will contribute positively to the legibility of the area and encourage movement towards Roundacre and improve its town centre gateway function. As a result there will be a Medium magnitude of effect.

V16.6 On balance there will be a limited improvement in the existing view and the Significance of Effect will be Minor Beneficial.

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VIEW 17

SPORHAMS

Existing

V17.1 The viewing position is approximately 700m south-west of the Site on a hillock within Sporhams public open space in Lee Chapel south.

V17.2 The steep grassed banks of the foreground give way to a suburban midground and there are expansive panoramic views across Basildon and beyond. Brooke House (14 storeys) stands proud as the tallest apparent built form, punctuating the skyline in the centre of the view. The Westgate retail facility forms a noticeable buff brick horizontal expanse to the left of Brooke House whereas other buildings within the town centre tend to be less contrasting in colour.

11.12 Receptors in this location are considered to be of medium value as they are within an area of local importance as an open space. As the receptors in this location will include people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention may be focused on an appreciation of the townscape, they are considered to be of high susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

11.13 The overall sensitivity of visual receptors in this location is therefore considered to be High.

Proposed

V17.3 The Proposed Development will not break the skyline and the only obtrusive change will be the obscuring of parts of the Westgate facility and this is considered beneficial as the proposed colouration will be more in keeping with the muted recessive colours of the majority of the context.

V17.4 The massing steps up gradually from west to east providing a progression of scale between the suburbs and the town centre. The proposals will contribute positively to the legibility of the area through the use of locally characterising brick materials and the provision of a balance between horizontal and vertical expression in the massing.

V17.5 On balance there will be a Very Small magnitude of change resulting in a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view and the Significance of Effect will be Negligible Beneficial.





SUMMARY



12. CONCLUSION

OVERVIEW

12.1 Barton Willmore was instructed by the 'Applicant' Sempra Homes Ltd. to undertake a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) for the Proposed Development at Chapel Gate in Basildon. The Proposed Development seeks to secure planning permission for residential development comprising apartment blocks and dwellinghouses including affordable housing, vehicular access from Laindon Link, cycle and pedestrian accesses, associated parking, landscaping including open space, boundary treatments, drainage and earthworks.

12.2 The Site forms part of Basildon's town centre periphery and it is surrounded by major infrastructure on all sides with no functional or visual connectivity with the surrounding urban fabric. The Site is not located within, nor does it adjoin a conservation area.

12.3 With respect to published character studies, at a national level the Site is identified within NCA 111: North Thames Basin, while at a local level the Site is encompassed within the Lee Chapel TCA in the UCDR Townscape Assessment (2015).

12.4 The visual appraisal undertaken has identified both the visual character of the Site and its surroundings, as well as the existing visual envelope of the built form within the Site.

12.5 An analysis of the baseline townscape and visual characteristics of the Site and surrounding area has identified that there are a number of opportunities for the redevelopment of the Site and accordingly a mitigation-by-design rationale has been developed to inform the iterative design process.

MITIGATION-BY-DESIGN RATIONALE

12.6 In relation to effects on townscape character and visual amenity, it is considered that the Proposed Development will satisfy the objectives of the townscape and visual mitigation-by-design rationale.

12.7 The Proposed Development will integrate the Site into the urban fabric, strengthening the urban core and supporting planned regeneration of the town centre and periphery. The Proposed Development will form a progression in scale between the suburban residential context and the town centre to the east.

12.8 The Proposed Development will enhance the future setting of the heritage assets within the town centre by inviting movement towards and along the reinstated east-west pedestrian spine.

12.9 Taller forms will be focussed to the north-east of the Site, to act as a marker for Roundacre. This will ensure the built form assists in wayfinding and legibility, drawing users towards the gateway between the town centre and the western suburbs and assist in signposting this gateway locality.



RESPONSE TO POLICY

NPPF

12.10 The Proposed Development will satisfy the requirements of the NPPF Paragraph 9 in that it will reflect the character, needs and opportunities of the local area.

12.11 In relation to Section 12 of the NPPF, the Proposed Development will add to the quality of the area; will be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; and will be sympathetic to local character and landscape setting.

BBC Emerging Local Plan

12.12 There will be an enhanced quality and local distinctiveness of the built environment public in accordance with Policy DES1.

12.13 The Proposed Development will improve the area's character, enclosure, permeability, public realm and appearance and better integrate the area with its surroundings in accordance with Policy DES3.

12.14 The buildings will respond appropriately to their location and reflect their function and role in relation to the public realm in accordance with Policy DES4.

12.15 The Proposed Development will contribute to safe, inclusive, accessible, attractive, and user friendly streets and spaces that encourage appropriate levels of activity, social interaction, and connections for all users in accordance with Policy DES5.

12.16 The Proposed Development will develop and improve the urban environment through provision of local scale green infrastructure including footpaths, cycleways, green links and trees in accordance with Policy NE1.

CONCLUSION

12.17 In conclusion and having regard to the existing baseline townscape context, the Proposed Development is considered to respond positively to its local area and relevant policy, and therefore is able to be accommodated successfully on the Site without overall adverse effects on the existing townscape and visual amenity.



APPENDIX A.1

A.1 TVIA METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

A.1.1 The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment's 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition' (GLVIA 3), 2013, states in Paragraph 1.1 that:

"Landscape and Visual Assessment 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."

A.1.2 Paragraph 2.6 outlines that the definition of landscape applies to townscapes, and is therefore interchangeable with the term 'landscape', with Paragraph 2.7 stating:

"Townscape means the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationship between them, the different types of urban spaces, including green spaces, and the relationship between buildings and open space..."

A.1.3 The methodology employed in carrying out the Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) of the Proposed Development has been drawn from guidelines set out in GLVIA 3. The guidelines are not intended as a prescriptive set of rules, and have been adapted to the specific project.

A.1.4 TVIAs are often undertaken by professionals who are involved in the design of the public realm and preparation of management proposals. This can allow the assessment

to proceed as an integral part of the overall Proposed Development. Judgements are based on training and experience, and supported by clear evidence and reasoned argument.

A.1.5 The purpose of the TVIA is to identify the potential for, and assess the likely effects of change resulting from development. Townscape and visual assessments are separate, although linked, procedures. A distinction is made between:

- townscape - townscape character and the elements and features that contribute to it (townscape receptors); and
- visual - people who experience views within the townscape (visual receptors).

A.1.6 A TVIA is typically accompanied by illustrative material, including baseline mapping and photographs of the Site itself and from the surrounding area.

A.1.7 There are typically three key stages to TVIA, as follows:

- Baseline Studies;
- Mitigation by Design; and
- Assessment of Townscape and Visual Effects.



BASELINE STUDIES

A.1.8 The design and assessment stages are iterative, with stages overlapping in part. Measures are embedded within the Proposed Development as a result of the desk-based study and TVIA field work. These measures are termed 'Primary Mitigation', which typically include:

- Avoid or reduce impact by ensuring the form of the development is sympathetic with the existing baseline;
- Remediation of impact (e.g. by planting to 'soften', absorb and integrate the Proposed Development into the townscape);
- Compensation of impact (e.g. by replacing felled trees with new trees); and
- Enhancement (e.g. the creation of a new landscape or habitat).

A.1.9 Where the design process does not enable mitigation to be embedded, or an assessment is based on the assumption of an implemented management plan, these measures are termed 'Secondary Mitigation', which typically include:

- A Landscape and Biodiversity Management Strategy;
- A Construction Environmental Management Plan;
- Tree protection fencing in line with BS5837:2012; and
- A programme of appropriate monitoring may be agreed with the regulatory authority, so that compliance and effectiveness can be readily monitored and evaluated.

ASSESSMENT OF TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

A.1.10 The GLVIA 3 in Paragraph 5.1 states:

"An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource."

A.1.11 In order to assess the townscape effects, the sensitivity of the townscape receptor and the magnitude of effect experienced as a result of the Proposed Development is assessed.

Sensitivity of Townscape Receptors

A.1.12 The sensitivity of a townscape receptor is a combination of the value of the townscape receptor and the susceptibility of the townscape receptor to the type of change proposed, using professional judgement.

Townscape Value

A.1.13 The GLVIA 3 Glossary defines landscape [townscape] value as:

"The relevant value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a variety of reasons"



A.1.14 Townscapes, including their character and features, may be designated at a range of levels (international, national, county and local level), examples of which are set out below.

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
High	Features or areas likely to be of national importance, designated at national or international level
Medium	Features or areas likely to be of county or borough importance, designated at county or borough level
Low	Features likely to be of importance to the local community but have little or no wider recognition of their value, and are not designated
Very Low	Features or areas with little or no evidence of being value by the community, and are not designated

A.1.15 The assessment of value is based on a combination of the importance of townscape-related planning designations and the following attributes:

- Townscape quality (condition): the measure of the physical state of the townscape. It may include the extent to which typical townscape character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the townscape and the condition of individual elements;
- Scenic quality: the extent that the townscape receptor appeals to the visual senses;
- Perceptual aspects: the extent that the townscape receptor is recognised for its perceptual qualities (e.g. remoteness or tranquillity);
- Rarity: the presence of unusual elements or features;
- Representativeness: the presence of particularly characteristic features;
- Recreation: the extent that recreational activities contribute to the townscape receptor; and
- Association: the extent that cultural or historical associations contribute to the townscape receptor.

A.1.16 The overall value for each townscape receptor is



categorised as High, Medium, Low or Very Low.

Townscape Susceptibility

A.1.17 The GLVIA 3 Glossary defines landscape [townscape] susceptibility as:

“The ability of a defined landscape...receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences”

A.1.18 The following criteria is taken into consideration in the assessment of townscape susceptibility, although not all criteria are equally applicable or important within a given townscape / type of development proposed:

- Landform;
- Pattern/Complexity;
- Composition;
- Landcover; and
- Relationship of a given townscape area to any existing settlements or developments.

A.1.19 Townscape susceptibility of the character of the townscape / of the features is categorised as High, Medium or Low, as set out in the table to the right. Townscape susceptibility can also be considered in the context of the capacity of townscape / townscape features to accommodate change.

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
High	The receptor is likely to have little scope to accommodate the type of change proposed without undue effects upon its overall integrity
Medium	The receptor is likely to have some scope to accommodate the type of change proposed without undue effects upon its overall integrity
Low	The receptor is likely to be able to accommodate the type of change proposed with little or no effect upon its overall integrity



Townscape Magnitude of Effect

A.1.20 The townscape magnitude of effect is informed by judgements about the size and extent of the change brought about by the Proposed Development both in terms of the existing townscape character and townscape elements / features and the addition of new townscape elements / features, and its duration and reversibility, as set out below.

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Large	Total alteration to the existing townscape receptor; may also affect an extensive area
Medium	Partial alteration to the existing townscape receptor; may also affect a wide area
Small	Slight alteration to the existing townscape receptor; may also affect a restricted area
Very Small	Very slight alteration to the existing townscape receptor; may also affect a limited area
None	No direct change to the existing townscape receptor or a change that is so inconsequential that it does not alter the existing townscape receptor

ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

A.1.21 The GLVIA 3 in Paragraph 6.1 states:

“An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity.”

A.1.22 In order to assess the visual effects, the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of effect experienced as a result of the Proposed Development is assessed.

Viewpoint Selection

A.1.23 In order to assess the effects on visual receptors, a selection of publicly accessible viewpoints is made, which could include representative viewpoints (e.g. representing views of users of a particular footpath) and specific viewpoints (e.g. a key view from a specific visitor attraction).

A.1.24 Views are categorised as either near distance, medium distance or long distance with the relevant distances dependant on the size and nature of the development, based on professional judgement.

A.1.25 The type of view is typically described firstly as transient (i.e. in passing) or fixed (i.e. from a static location) and then in relation to being filtered (i.e. through intervening vegetation), oblique (i.e. not within the direct field of view), or open (i.e. uninterrupted).

A.1.26 Photographs of representative viewpoints are taken at eye level, using a digital SLR camera, with reference to the Landscape Institute TGN 06/19 ‘Visual Representation of Development Proposals.’



Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

A.1.27 The sensitivity of a visual receptor is a consideration of the value of the view and the susceptibility of the visual receptor to the type of change proposed, using professional judgement. The assessment of value is based on the below criteria.

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
High	A location that is likely to be of national importance, either designated or with national cultural associations, where the view obtained forms an important part of the experience
Medium	A location that is likely to be of local importance, either designated or with local cultural associations, where the view obtained forms part of the experience
Low	A location that is not designated, with minimal or no cultural associations

A.1.28 The assessment of visual susceptibility is based on the below criteria.

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
High	People at their place of residence; People engaged in outdoor recreation, whose attention is likely to be focussed on the townscape; and People travelling along recognised scenic routes or where their appreciation of the view contributes to the amenity experience of their journey
Medium	People engaged in outdoor sport and recreation, where their appreciation of their surroundings is incidental to their enjoyment; and People travelling on secondary roads of lanes, rail or other recognised transport routes
Low	People travelling on major roads; and People at their place of work

A.1.29 Based on the combination of value and susceptibility, an assessment of visual sensitivity is reached, defined as High, Medium or Low.



Visual Magnitude of Effect

A.1.30 The magnitude of visual effect is typically described with reference to:

- The scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition;
- The duration and nature of the effect;
- The angle of view;
- The distance of the viewer; and
- The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.

A.1.31 The magnitude of visual effect classifications are set out below.

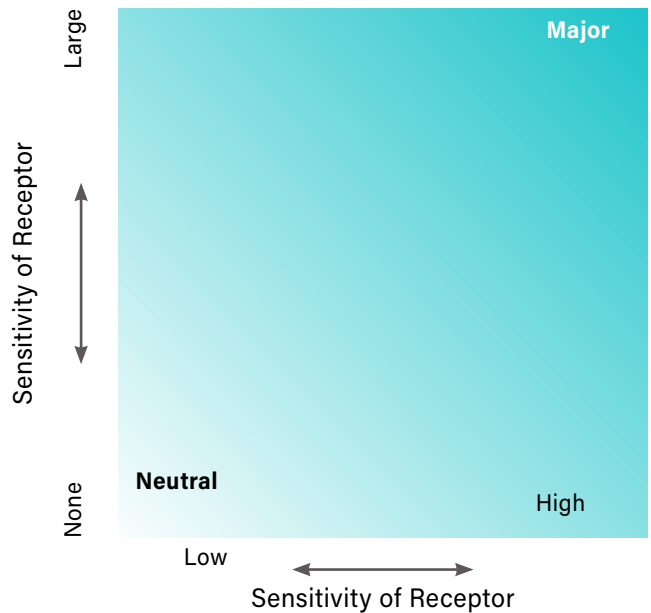
LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Large	The proposals will cause a pronounced change to the view
Medium	The proposals will cause a noticeable change in the view
Small	The proposals will cause an unobtrusive change in the view
Very Small	The proposals will cause a barely perceptible change in the view
None	No change discernible in the view

SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS

A.1.32 In order to draw conclusions about the significance of townscape or visual effects, the combination of the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of effects are considered for the Proposed Development at Year 1 once the development is completed.

A.1.33 The effects diagram, provided below, illustrates the typical relationship between the magnitude of effect and the sensitivity of the receptor.

A.1.34 The table on the adjacent page sets out the significance of effects criteria.





LEVEL	TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS CRITERIA	VISUAL EFFECTS CRITERIA
Major Beneficial	Alterations that result in a considerable improvement of the existing townscape resource. Valued characteristic features could be restored or reintroduced as part of the Proposed Development	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced improvement in the existing view
Moderate Beneficial	Alterations that result in a partial improvement of the existing townscape resource. Valued characteristic features could be largely restored or reintroduced	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable improvement in the existing view
Minor Beneficial	Alterations that result in a slight improvement of the existing townscape resource. Characteristic features could be partially restored	Alterations that typically result in a limited improvement in the existing view
Negligible Beneficial	Alterations that result in a very slight improvement to the existing townscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the townscape	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view
Neutral	No alteration to any of the components that contribute to the existing townscape resource; or an alteration that does not beneficially or adversely affect the existing townscape receptor	No change to the view, or a change which on balance neither results in an improvement or deterioration to the existing view
Negligible Adverse	Alterations that result in a very slight deterioration to the existing townscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the townscape	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view
Minor Adverse	Alterations that result in a slight deterioration of the existing townscape resource. Characteristic features could be partially lost	Alterations that typically result in a limited deterioration in the existing view
Moderate Adverse	Alterations that result in a partial deterioration of the existing townscape resource. Valued characteristic features could be largely lost	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable deterioration the existing view
Major Adverse	Alterations that result in a considerable deterioration of the existing townscape resource. Valued characteristic features could be wholly lost	Alterations that typically result in pronounced deterioration in the existing view

TOWN PLANNING
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ARCHITECTURE
LANDSCAPE PLANNING & DESIGN
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GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION
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HERITAGE