

# White Oak Farm, Morwenstow, Cornwall

## Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal



18<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Prepared by Foxford Design Ltd – Chartered Landscape Architects

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## 1.0 Introduction

This Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal has been prepared to accompany a revised proposal for the redevelopment of White Oak Farm, Morwenstow. produced by Heighway Field Associates, to be submitted as a variation to the existing planning approval.

Planning permission has been granted, on 29 March 2018, for a redevelopment of White Oak Farm reference PA18/-00123 with proposals submitted by The Bazeley Partnership. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was not required for that application.

Following a pre-application enquiry ref PA20/02097/PREAPP, the council encouraged that a proportionate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the revised scheme be undertaken to show the proposal in relation to the surroundings/context when viewed from longer distance vantage points. The purpose of this appraisal is to meet these requirements, to analyse and assess the scale and character of the proposal with reference to the surrounding landscape in terms of landscape character and visual amenity. It will refer to the new proposals, the approved development proposals as well as the existing situation.

It will consider the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors and the magnitude of the likely impact in order to assess the importance of the effects of the development. It will also consider ways to mitigate any adverse effects.

The report is a summary of the key findings following the site assessment and survey carried out on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020. It is prepared by Claire Foxford, BSc, MA, and Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute on behalf of Foxford Design, following landscape and visual impact assessment methodology guidelines produced by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002)<sup>1</sup> and the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment (2013)<sup>2</sup> respectively, modified and refined to be proportionate to the nature of the development.

## 2.0 The Site - Location and Landscape Context

The site is situated in a rural location in NE Cornwall (OS Grid reference SS 2098 1240), 4.5km WNW of Kilkhampton, 3km south of Morwenstow and 250m east of the GCHQ complex,



Figure 1 – Site location and Aerial Photo

The site is in an area which is covered by 2 overlapping landscape designations the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) (Hartland Section) and the Hartland Heritage Coast. (see Figure 3). These areas are nationally valued landscape areas.

The site consists of an existing dwelling built in the mid 1970's (White Oak Farm) sitting in 0.5 hectares of domestic curtilage and immediately surrounded by fields/pasture. The dwelling is located on the side of the slope and occupies split levels (GFL's 124.370 and 122.815 m OD ), with a maximum ridge height of about 129.0m OD and chimneys projecting to about 129.7m OD.

To the NE of the property is a small brick outbuilding with GL 126.4m OD. It is 3.9m high with a mono pitch roof with ridge at 130.32m OD. To the north of the dwelling, on higher plateau land at around 129.5m, is an unused modern barn 5.63m high (ridge level 135.13m OD) and defunct military building 5.24m high (ridge level 134.74m OD). To the west of the defunct military building lies the site entrance at 130.2m OD.

The current complex of buildings is a feature within the landscape (Figure 2). Only the dwelling is included in the application. Fig 2 show the approximate footprint and orientation of the new proposals on the aerial photograph. Further details are shown in figure 4.

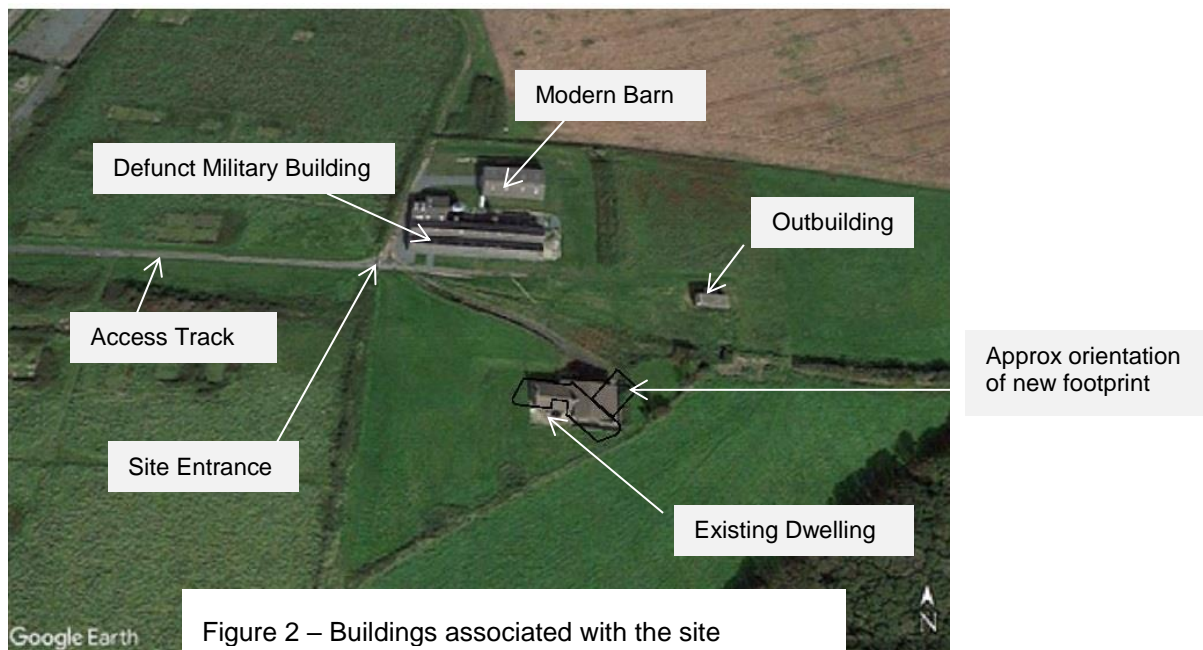


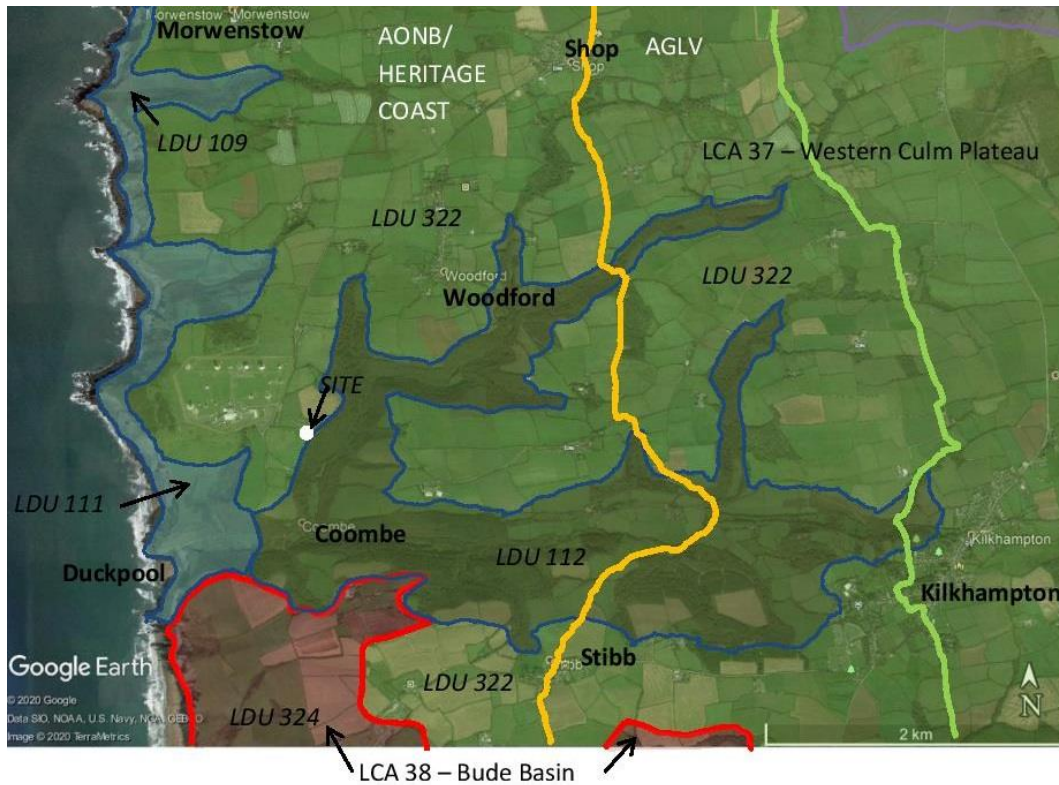
Figure 2 – Buildings associated with the site

The site is accessed from the road that links Morwenstow and Coombe. The turn off is at a point opposite the southern end of the secure GCHQ complex (at 131.4m OD). A track of approximately 165m long then runs due East from the road to the site entrance gate, near the defunct military building at 130.2m OD. Within the site a drive of about 1:7 slope leads down in a SE direction to the front of the dwelling which is set at around at around 122.7m OD

The site occupies an elevated position on the upper slopes of the valley. It is flanked to the east by the steeply sloping wooded valley of Hollygrove Wood and on the other less steep sides by fields/pasture. To the SW the land slopes gradually to the steep valley around Coombe and the valley and coastal cliff near Duckpool. To the north and northwest of the site the land is flatter, between 130 to 134m OD. The land was part of RAF Cleave, a second world war airfield, and includes the GCHQ complex.

### 3.0 Landscape Character - Baseline

The site lies within the Western Culm Plateau Landscape Character Area (LCA) (LCA37). This is an elevated plateau of 2 parts that surrounds the Bude Basin LCA (LCA 38). The northern section of the West Culm Plateau, where the site is located, is characterised by a plateau with streams in short steep sided valleys that drain to the west and the coast. These valleys are often wooded with ancient and semi natural woodlands, such as within Hollygrove Woods and Lee and Stowe Woods, providing both wildlife sites and recreational access.



-  Cornwall Area of Outstanding Beauty (Hartland Section) and Hartland Heritage Coast
-  Area of Great Landscape Value
-  Western Culm Plateau LCA 37
-  --Plateau- Hard Rock Plateau LDU 322
-  --Wooded Valleys- Hard Rock slopes and Ridges LDU 112
-  --Coastal – Hard Rock Cliffs LDU 111/107
-  Bude Basin LCA 38
-  --Pasture Land - Hard Rock slopes and Ridges LDU 324

Figure 3 – Landscape Designations, Landscape Character Areas and Landscape Units

The plateau in LCA 37 has an exposed, windswept, undulating landscape with steep cliffs to the coast. The land cover on the plateau is improved pasture, within medium sized fields bound by hedging or earth banks. (See Photos A-E). There are occasional fields of arable on the flatter tops and smaller field patterns occupy the sloping land. The settlements are sparse with scattered farmsteads and dwellings; some housing associated with GCHQ site, and the hamlets of Shop, Woodford, Stibb and Morwentsow. The road network is rural with small narrow lanes connecting most hamlets but with a stronger road circuit linking from the A39 and Kilkhampton to GCHQ complex, Shop and Stibb. Small bridges cross streams in the valleys and there is a ford at Lee Woods. Hedging and earth banks flank the road network. (Photo A, F, G, M, N) The hedging is tight and wind swept on the higher ground (Photo A), but more woody in character in the more sheltered areas (Photo F, G, M, N). The wooded valleys (Photos H, I, J) and trees around hamlets provide a tranquil setting and shelter from the plateau landscape. The scattered farmsteads, including modern barns are prominent features within the landscape (Photo B, E), as are the Satellite dishes at GCHQ which dominate the horizon (Photo B).

Buildings in the area are mainly rendered / or lime wash, slate hung or stone finish with slate roofs. However there are some brick houses near the GCHQ complex. Agricultural buildings are prominent in the landscape, modern concrete and timber structures with corrugated sheet roofing or older stone buildings. Around the site, Edslee Farm to the East and Stowe Barton Farm are prominent farms and further afield Huntapitt Farm. Stowe Barton Farm is a significant Grade II Listed building, dating from post medieval period, with its extensive stone courtyard farm complex, and close to the location of and incorporating parts of Stowe Mansion (1679-1739) The stone and natural building materials tend to recede into the landscape whilst the white rendered buildings, concrete and white Satellite dishes stand out. The amount of planting, hedges or trees around a buildings influence how they are seen in the landscape.

The Western Culm Plateau Landscape Character Area has 3 noticeable character types that occur near the site. These are the Plateau (Hard Rock Plateau LDU 322), the wooded valleys (Hard Rock slopes and ridges LDU 112) and the Coastal Landscape (Hard Rock Cliffs LDU111). This creates a diverse landscape

To the southern edge of the study area is the Bude Basin LCA 38. Much of this area is sloping away from the site towards Bude and so limits the extent of the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV). The landscape here, within the study area, is farmland with medium to large fields include more arable and less woodland than to the north. There is also a caravan park near Houndapitt Farm

The quality of the landscape across the study area, falling within the AONB varies with good to very good quality in much of the area deteriorating locally in quality on the flat plateau around the GCHQ complex, former RAF base, and the concrete block defunct military building on site.. The proposed building lies on the edge of this change in quality. The existing site has fallen into disrepair in recent years. The existing hedges around the site are very poor.

AONB management Plan identifies the local sections within the AONB and highlights what makes each section distinctive. The Hartland Section is identified as the most undisturbed sections of the Cornwall AONB as shown in the Council for Protection of Rural England's tranquillity, intrusion and night blight mapping; Scrub and bracken encroachment affects coastal marginal lands within the coastal valleys; Sycamore has become established in broadleaves woodlands and Dutch Elm disease has had a significant impact on hedgerow elm in this area affecting habitat connectivity and landscape character.



PHOTOS to show characteristics of LDU- 322 – Plateau - Hard Rock Plateau Undulating plateau, medium sized pasture with some arable.



**PHOTOS 1of 2 - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

Typical landscape characteristic of the Western Culm Plateau Landscape Character Area 37 – seen around the site.

**PHOTOS A-E-** Plateau Character (LDU 322)



PHOTO F



PHOTO G

PHOTOS to show characteristics of LDU- 112 – Hard Rock Slopes and Ridges Wooded valley sides and small pasture.

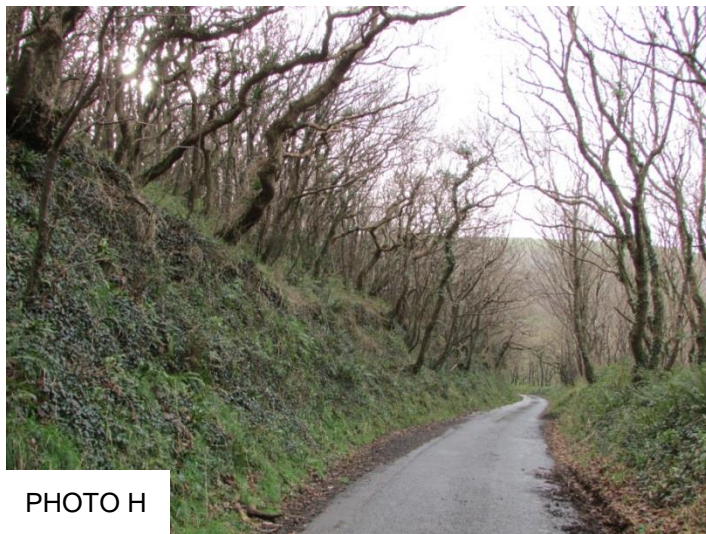


PHOTO H



PHOTO I



PHOTO J



PHOTO K

PHOTOS to show characteristics of LDU- 111 – Hard Rock Cliffs- Coastal scenery. Cliffs, Small Bays and steep valley sides of bramble, gorse rank grass. Coastal footpaths Includes National Trust Land at Duckpool. And Sandymouth Bay



PHOTO L



PHOTO M



PHOTO N (Also VP 11)

**PHOTOS 2 of 2 - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

Typical landscape characteristic of the Western Culm Plateau Landscape Character Area 37 – seen around the site.

**PHOTOS F-J** - Wooded Valley Slopes (LDU 112)

**PHOTOS K-L** - Coastal cliffs and slopes (LDU 111)

**PHOTOS M-N** – Taller Hedges

Taller hedgerows in more sheltered locations.





PHOTO 1



PHOTO 2



PHOTO 3



PHOTO 4



PHOTO 5

**SITE PHOTOS – 1-5**

PHOTO 1 – Looking east along access track towards site

PHOTO 2 – Looking east into site from the gate entrance to site

PHOTO 3 – Looking west towards the site entrance and access track

PHOTO 4 – Earth Hedge Bank at the road near the entrance to access track.

PHOTO 5 – Existing Dwelling – looking south east .



**SITE PHOTOS - 6-12**

- PHOTO 6 – Brick Outbuilding - Looking north from front entrance to property.
- PHOTO 7 – Slope to North side of dwelling - Looking North
- PHOTO 8 – From south side of property looking east towards Edslee Farm.
- PHOTO 9 – From south side of property looking south west towards the coast
- PHOTO 10 – From south side of property looking north east over Hollygrove Wood.
- PHOTO 11 – From access track to the site looking north East towards Shop.
- PHOTO 12 – From south side of property looking south towards Coombe Valley and Stowe Barton.

#### 4.0 Current Approval and Revised Proposals

There is current consented scheme for the replacement of the existing dwelling at White Oak Farm (PA18/-00123 – approved March 2018). The approval is for a two storey dwelling with pitched roof, with a “contemporary take on the vernacular style”. It uses stone and render walls with elements of timber/metal and other cladding, slate roof with elements of zinc, glazing, glass balustrading and stainless steel fixings. It extends 12m further west than the existing building and the southern projection extends 5.5m further south than the existing. The approved drawings include an indicative cross section showing the ridge height to be 132.775, which is a level similar to the eaves of existing defunct military building and 1.6m higher than the following revised scheme. The approved scheme also includes a detached carport structure with pitched slate roof which would extend 8m to the north of the existing building and 6.5m to the East.

The revised architectural proposal is a contemporary design (Figure 5). It is located in a similar location on the site, (Figure 4) but the footprint is cranked to maximise views to the south through to the WSW. The new footprint is larger than the existing dwelling, extending 7.3m further west and extending 6m further SE over the existing patio. The new single storey carport extends 4m further to the north east and will have a “green” planted roof. The main element of the building has 2 floors set over split levels to work with the levels on the site and a flat roof and roof top gazebo to the eastern end. The flat roof will have solar panels, elements of green roof and access to an area of roof terrace. The materials proposed in the elevations are a combination of stone, timber, glass, zinc with some “green” planted roof. (see Figure 5 and Architects drawing and Design and Access statement). The colour and hues of the predominantly natural materials will harmonise with the landscape to a far greater degree than the painted render palette proposed under the consented scheme. The maximum heights of the revised scheme are at 129.95m OD to the west, 130.5 in the centre and 131.15 at the roof top gazebo in the east. All these heights are lower than the ridge height of the existing defunct military building (@134.74mOD) and the consented scheme. Only the eastern end of the new building is higher, by 830mm, relative to the top of existing low brick outbuilding (ridge @130.32).

Compared to the revised design the consented replacement dwelling is higher; of greater overall volume, extends further west and proposes a light coloured render dominated materials palette with the most dominant parts of the building coinciding with the least dominant part of the existing dwelling. It is therefore considered that any perceived impacts associated with replacement of the existing dwelling identified within this appraisal, would be more apparent in the case of the consented scheme than the revised scheme.

**Figure 4**

Plan to show the scale of development in terms of the existing buildings and comparison of footprints between the proposed, (pink shaded), the approved (blue outline) and the existing buildings (grey base). Refer to architect drawing 1905-103





## 5.0 Visual Assessment - Baseline

A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was produced for an area 5km from the site to indicate where any part of the new development may be seen based on topography alone. A desk top study, using aerial photos and OS Explorer Map 126, and a site survey was then carried out to establish the actual extent of visibility within that area. The visual assessment is based on publicly accessible areas, such as footpaths, roads and open access land.

The visual receptors were identified, those likely to be affected by changes in views and visual amenity arising from the development. This includes people living in, using and passing through the area, and these are weighted in terms of their sensitivity to the effect.

By driving and walking around the area, the visual field survey established the nature and extent of the views of the development on the surrounding receptors. The views are assessed in terms of the level of the effect of development, determined by considering the nature of the impact, the scale, extent, level of importance, distance between viewpoint and the site, and the magnitude and sensitivity of the receptors. From these the overall importance of the effect of the Visual Impact of the development is judged.

Figure 6 indicates the ZTV and the viewpoints within the field study and Table 1 analyses the nature of these views to give a judgement on the effect of the development on those views.

### 5.1 Actual Visibility and key visual receptors

The landscape character of the study area, with its wooded valleys and hedges and hedge bank enclosing medium sized field, winding narrow lanes and footpaths bound by hedges, scattered buildings, and secured complex at GCHQ provides significant obstructions to views of the site within the Zone of Theoretical visibility. So the views into the site from publicly accessible areas are mainly from the East through to the South and South South West.

Being within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty the visual assessment places a higher rating on the views due to the status of the AONB and the importance of retaining its scenic quality. The development is the replacement (in the same location) of an existing building which is part of a group of former farm buildings that is already a feature within the landscape of the AONB. Therefore the amount of change to the existing views will be limited, with change focusing on the new mass and the material finishes.

**The key visual receptors likely to experience the development are identified as:**

- Tourists and visitors to the AONB, Heritage Coast and National Trust Land. (High -Medium sensitivity rating)
- Walkers using the public rights of ways and open access areas around the area (High-Medium sensitivity rating)
- Local people (High- Medium sensitivity rating)
- Local landowners (High- Medium sensitivity rating) and Agricultural workers (Medium-Low sensitivity rating) GCHQ employees commuting to area (Medium-Low sensitivity rating)

- Car drivers using the route down from Stibb to Coombe including visitors and tourists (Medium sensitivity rating)
- Individual dwellings scattered within the ZTV. (High- Medium sensitivity rating) In many cases the views from the scattered dwellings will be obscured by the landform and woody vegetation cover. However there is potential for views of the development from some individual private properties but these have not been fully assessed in this study.

**Visual receptors where the impact of the development will have an insignificant effect are:-**

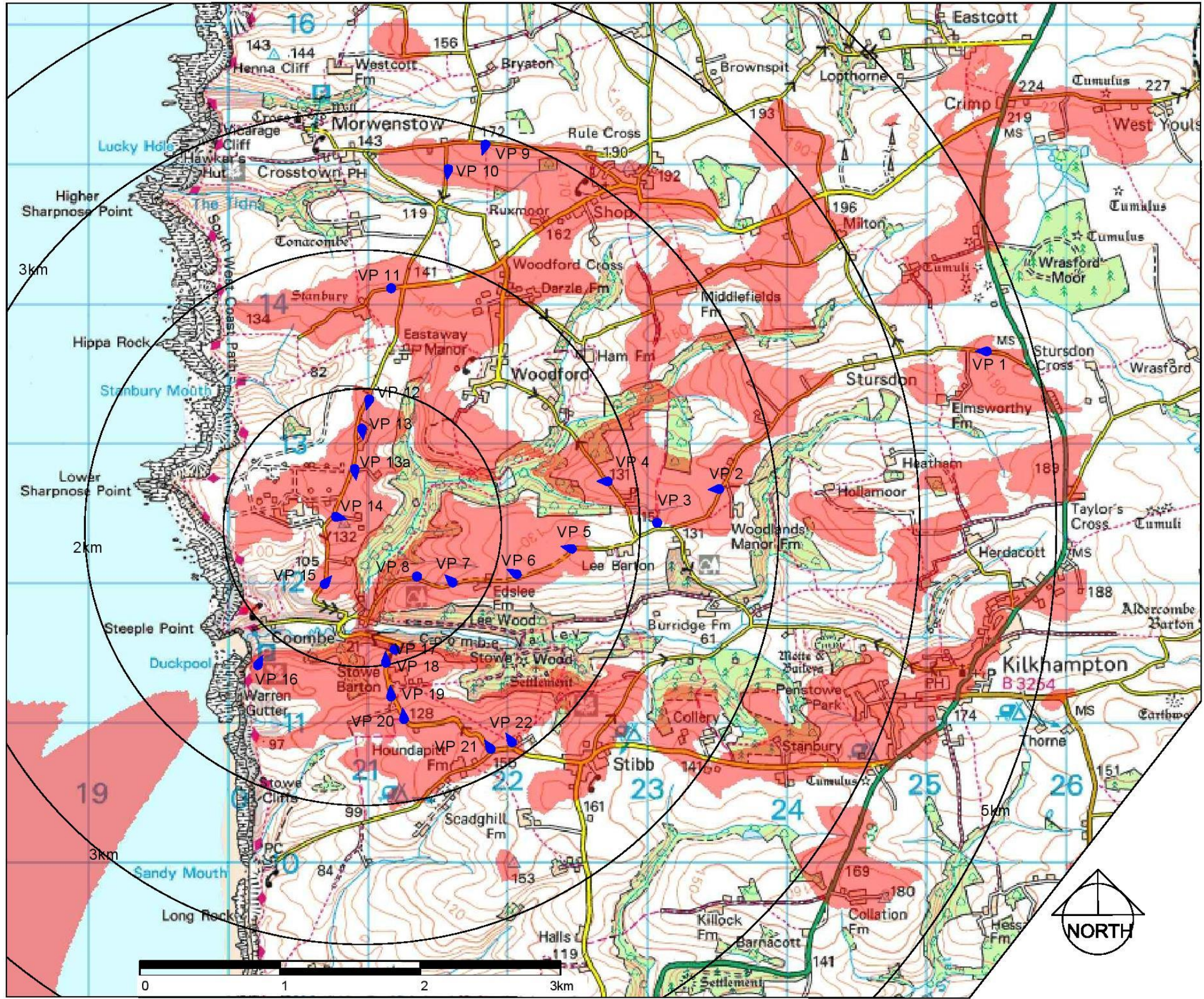
- Majority of residents living in the area
- Car drivers using the Country Lanes

**From the findings of the Visual Assessment**

- Full views of the site are generally between 1km – 2km (termed “Far” in the analysis) and in from the East through to the South and South South West. Whilst footpaths pass close to the site these are in the wooded valleys, so there are no near views from publicly accessible areas. The one exception and closest viewpoint (800m away) to the site is on the lane past Edslee Farm View I at Viewpoint 7. (See Figure 7- VIEWS)
- Due to the complexity and diversity of elements in the landscape, views of the site from the distances over 2km are mostly obscure. Where views occur the site is seen in a wide panoramic view of the AONB. As distance from the site increases the site becomes a progressively smaller element in the wider view and so the potential visual effect of the development diminishes. Often these views are from higher ground, inland and when looking in the direction of the site from these areas it is the GCHQ complex and tall satellite dishes on the horizon that are prominent. (View II at Viewpoint 9, View X at Viewpoint 21 and View XI at Viewpoint 22). The development is judged to have a minor visual impact from these areas.
- “Far” views in from the north through to north east and east are mainly obscured by local landscape features, hedgerow and woodland. The development is on the south east side of a slope, with the defunct military building and modern barn on the northern side. Where views in from the north are seen they are limited to only a very small part of the development (a minimum intrusion of the taller eastern element of the building) (View V at Viewpoint 13 and View VI at Viewpoint 13a) and it will be seen in the context of the existing farm buildings and or a wider landscape view. The GCHQ’ complex has an impact on the landscape character of the area from which the views are seen, lessening the landscape. The visual receptors are small in numbers and relate mainly to employees at GCHQ with low-medium sensitivity. The development is judged to have a minor visual impact from these areas.
- To the West and North West the land is higher than the development site, the secure GCHQ site with buildings and double security fencing limits views out, and road side hedges along the Coombe to Morwenstow Road obscure views in towards the site.
- The wooded nature of the valleys around the site means the views of the development from the lower lying areas to the E and S below 90m are screened. The visual receptors using these footpaths and recreational areas will not be affected.

- f. Footpaths in the AONB, though extensive in the ZTV, often follow hedge lines, streams and wooded valleys and so views of the site are restricted – The exception being the footpath from Stibb to Stowe Barn through fields to the SSW. (VP 22 VIEW XI)
- g. The areas of right to roam around the coast, to the South side of GCHQ complex and In Coombe Valley, fall outside of the actual zone of visibility. The exception being a view from the SSW on high ground near Warren Point above Duckpool (Managed by the National Trust) (Viewpoint 16 VIEW XI). The development is judged to have a moderate visual impact from this view.
- h. Hedges and hedgerows along lanes and roads limits the views of the site from publically accessible areas, restricting them to gateways and openings so the visual impact insignificant or minor. The exceptions are:
  - i) the Stibb to Coombe Road passing Stowe Barton. Here the road descends in a north easterly direction to Coombe. The road is edged with tightly managed hedge banks, allowing views out to the wider landscape at regular intervals. Ovis Farm, White Oak Farm and the GCHQ complex are all visible within the view. (VP 17-21 VIEW X, XI, XII XIII, XIV). At higher longer distances a wider panoramic view is seen, the site is a small element of the view and the the GCHQ satellite dishes behind are more prominent. So the visual impact is minor (VP 21 VIEW X,) As the road descends and gets closer to the site the field of view lessens, the site and Ovis Farm are more apparent, but the white satellite dishes on the horizon remain visually prominent (VP 18 VIEW XIV,). The views of the site gained on the Stibb to Coombe road and footpath from Stowe to Stowe Barton are judged to have a moderate/minor visual impact, increasing locally to a moderate impact around Stowe Barton.
  - ii) the Lane passing through Edslee Farm to the East. From this direction the site is seen close to the horizon with its farm buildings in context with Hollygrove Woods, The satellite dishes project above the horizon. The views of the site from this side are judged to have a moderate/minor visual impact (VP 7 VIEW I)

There may be some views from individual properties, scattered through the wider study area, but this is felt to be small in numbers. This report has not carried out an assessment of the residential visual amenity in the study area. However it is recognised that there may be some places where residents will see the change. These visual receptors will have a medium-high visual sensitivity, but generally the development will be a small element in a wider view, and so the likely effect is judged as minor.



The ZTV was generated by Swan Paul Partnership using WindPRO version 3.3 software. The ZTV was produced on the 03/12/2020 using grid reference take for two points on the new building

North West Corner of the building Datum 129.950  
 -123.899 = 6.06m high  
 South East Corner of the Building Datum 131.15  
 -123.193 = 7.95m high

2 points were used to reflect differing heights of the proposed dwelling

1.5m eye level height criteria for calculations of the ZTV and for views to 5km radius.



Building Layout from Site Plan showing reference points used

- LEGEND**
- VP 3 - View point Locations - see Table 1
  - KM radius from site
  - Zones of Theoretical Visibility ZTV Potential locations of views of any part of the new development based on topography only.

**Figure 6**

Proposed Re- Development of Dwelling at White Oak Farm, Morwenstow, ZTV and viewpoints

ZTV produced by Windpro software by Swan Paul Partnership Ltd who holds the licence and have given Foxford Design Ltd - Chartered Landscape Architects permission to use the output



**Table 1 - Viewpoints – Visual Analysis**

Refer to photos Views 1-12

View point Reference	Description	Grid Reference of viewpoint	Level of Importance	Degree of visibility of the Development	Distance of dev from viewpoint	Nature of Effect			Receptor of view	Number of receptors	Significance of Visual effect
SITE 122.7-130.2m OD		SS 2098 1240									
VP 1 Height 195m	Road to Stursdon from Stursdon Cross	SS 255 137	Local	Hedge Banks screen views from Road	Far 4.7km	-	-	-	Road Users		None
VP 2 Height 146m	View looking W from gateway	SS 235 126	Local (in AGLV)	Very small partial view set within a broad view of the landscape including Satellite dishes	Distant 2.6km	N	D	P	Locals	Very small	insignificant
VP 3 Height 130m	At Footpath /Bridleway	SS 231 124	in AONB	Tall hedges either side restrict views	Distant 2.1km	-	-	-	Riders/ Walkers /Locals	1	None
VP 4 Height 130m	View looking WSW down farm track	SS 227 127	in AONB	Partial view set within a broad view of the landscape including Satellite dishes	Far 1.9km	N	D	P	Walkers /Locals Landowner	Very small	insignificant
VP- 5 Height 144m	At cattle grid approach near Edslee Farm looking W	SS 224 122	in AONB	Full view of a large part of the site set within a broad view including Edslee Farm, the sea, Hollygrove Wood, the White Oak Farm buildings and Satellite Dishes and compound	Far 1.5km	N	D	P	Road Users/ Walkers/ Landowner	Very small	minor
VP- 6 Height 125m	Lane through Edslee Farm looking WNW	SS 221 120	in AONB	Full view of a large part of the site set within a wider view including Hollygrove Wood, the White Oak Farm buildings and Satellite Dishes on the horizon	Far 1.2km	N	D	P	Road Users/ Walkers/ Landowner	Very small	Moderate/ minor
VP- 7 Height 112m (VIEW I)	Lane passing by Edslee Farm looking WNW	SS 216 120	in AONB	Part view of the upper levels of the house set behind Hollygrove Wood, with the White Oak Farm buildings on the horizon	Long 800m	N	D	P	Road Users/ Walkers/ Landowner	Very small	Moderate/ minor

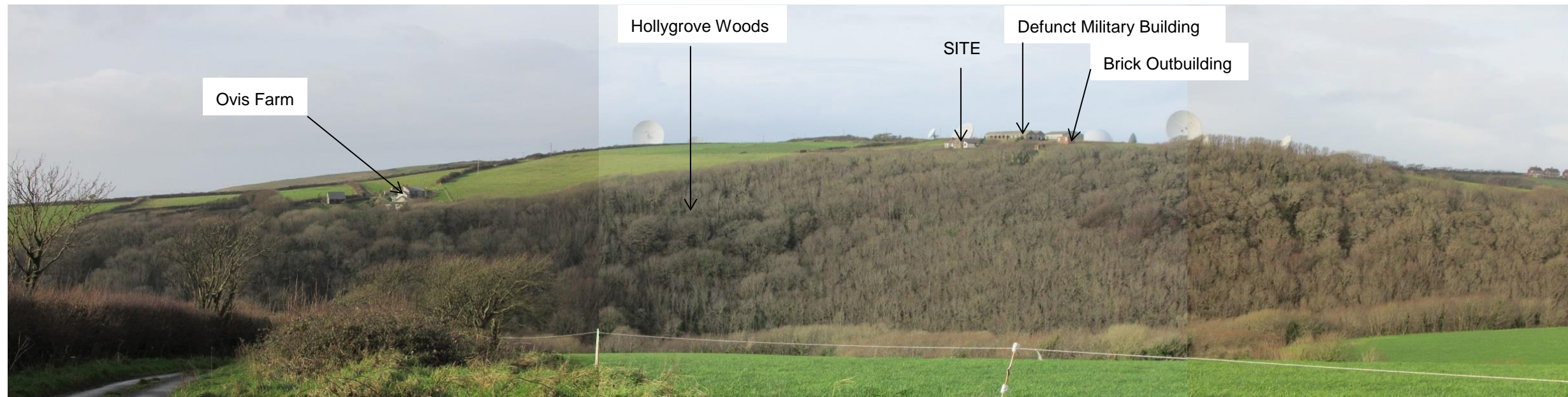
View point Reference	Description	Grid Reference of viewpoint	Level of Importance	Degree of visibility of the Development	Distance of dev from viewpoint	Nature of Effect			Receptor of view	Number of receptors	Significance of Visual effect
SITE 122.7-130.2m OD		SS 2098 1240									
VP- 8 Height 90m	Lane through Edslee Farm descending down to Coombe	SS 213 120	in AONB	No View – Woodland screens view of site	Medium 500m	-	-	-	Road Users		None
VP- 9 Height 170m  (VIEW II)	Road West of Rule Cross – at Gateway	SS 218 152	in AONB	Hedgerows screen views from the Road . View at Gateway Site is visible below the horizon close to Hollygrove wood, but seen within a broad view of the landscape incl. Satellite dishes	Distant 2.9km	N	D	P	Walkers/ Landowner	Very small	minor
VP- 10 Height 150m  (VIEW III)	Driving down Barn Hill	SS 216 150	in AONB	Very small partial views of site set in wider view with the White Oak Farm buildings on the horizon	Distant 2.5km	N	D	P	Road Users	Very small	insignificant
VP- 11 Height 138m	Lane to Stanbury– Hedgerows obscure Views	SS 212 141	in AONB	No view. Roadside hedgerows obscure Views	Far 1.8km	-	-	-	Locals/ Walkers/ Landowner		None
VP-12 Height 132m  (VIEW IV)	On Road Morwenstow- Coombe Road– Hedges obscure views	SS 210 133	in AONB	No view. Hedges obscure views Satellite dishes are dominant	Long 900m	-	-	-	Road Users		None
VP 13 - Height 130m  (VIEW V)	Looking from brick houses	SS 209 131	in AONB	Possibly glimpse of the very top of roof top gazebo. Existing Brick building on the horizon in the fore ground	Long 770m	N	D	P	Local residents	Very small	minor
VP- 13a Height 129  (VIEW VI)	View at end of access over hedge	SS 209 128	in AONB	Very small glimpse of top of roof top gazebo. The White Oak Farm buildings prominent on near horizon and long distance views to Houndapitt Farm	Near 250m	N	D	P	Road Users/ Locals/ Landowner	Very small	minor

View point Reference	Description	Grid Reference of viewpoint	Level of Importance	Degree of visibility of the Development	Distance of dev from viewpoint	Nature of Effect			Receptor of view	Number of receptors	Significance of Visual effect
SITE 122.7-130.2m OD		SS 2098 1240									
VP- 14 Height 131m  (VIEW VII)	View at end of access track to site	SS 207 125	in AONB	Possible slight view of the very top of tower. The White Oak Farm buildings prominent on near horizon and long distance views to Lee Barton beyond	Near 250m	N	D	P	Road Users/ Locals/ Landowner	Very small	insignificant
VP- 15 Height 95m  (VIEW VIII)	Layby – looking NNE	SS 207 120	in AONB	View of upper part of site over hedges	Medium 500m	N	D	P	Road Users/ Landowner/ Walkers	Very small	insignificant
VP-16 Height 80m  (VIEW IX)	Coastal Path above Duckpool near Warren Point	SS 202 099	National (in AONB)	View of site within wider landscape view	Long 900m	N	D	P	Visitors/ Walkers/ Landowners	Medium	Moderate
VP 17 Height 60m	Road near Coombe	SS 212 115	in AONB	Woodland obscures views	Long 950m	-	-	-	Road Users/Walkers		None
VP 18 Height 90m  (VIEW XIV)	Just north of Stowe Barton	SS 211 114	National (in AONB)	Full view of the site and its farm buildings relating closely to Hollygrove woods. Ovis Farm and GCHQ prominent within the view. A broad view and being lower the wooded valley is prominent and site defunct military building sits on the horizon.	Long 1km	N	D	P	Road Users/ Visitors/ Tourist Locals	Medium	Moderate
VP- 19 . Height 99m  (VIEW XIII)	Just south of Stowe Barton	SS 211 112	National (in AONB)	Full view of the site and its farm buildings, close to Hollygrove woods with GCHQ satellite dishes prominent on the horizon	Far 1.2km	N	D	P	Road Users/ Visitors/ Tourist Locals	Medium	Moderate

View point Reference	Description	Grid Reference of viewpoint	Level of Importance	Degree of visibility of the Development	Distance of dev from viewpoint	Nature of Effect			Receptor of view	Number of receptors	Significance of Visual effect
SITE 122.7-130.2m OD		SS 2098 1240									
VP- 20 Height 127m  (VIEW XII)	Road to Stowe Barton	SS 212 110	in AONB	Occasional views over the hedges to wide far reaching views including GCHQ complex, and the site close to Hollygrove woods and with its farm buildings prominent	Far 1.5km	N	D	P	Road Users Visitors/ Tourist Locals/	Medium	Moderate/ Minor
VP-21 Height 153m  (VIEW X)	Road leading from Stibb- Coombe at the junction with Houndapitt Farm	SS 218 108	in AONB	Full high level view of a large part of the site set within a broad far reaching panoramic view from the coats, GGCHQ complex through to Shop on the horizon	Far 1.9km	N	D	P	Visitors/ Tourist Locals/ Road Users	Medium	Minor
VP 22 Height 155m  (VIEW XI)	Gateway to Field – On public footpath that leads across the fields to Stowe Barton	SS 220 108	in AONB	Full high level view of a large part of the site set within a broad far reaching panoramic view from the coats, GGCHQ complex through to Shop on the horizon	Far 1.9km	N	D	P	Walkers/ Landowners	Small	Minor

Distance of development from viewport – Near = <250m, Medium Distance = 250-750m , Long Distance = 750-1000m, Far = 1km- 2km, Distant = >2km  
 Nature of effect – A=Adverse, N=Neutral, B=Beneficial, D=Direct effect, I=Indirect effect, P=Permanent, T= Temporary  
 Magnitude of receptors – numbers of receptors, very small, small, medium, large, very large, extensive.  
 Importance – insignificant, minor, moderate, major, severe, -

The significance criteria used within the visual assessment is. SEVERE – An Adverse Landscape or Visual Effects which represents a key factor in the decision-making process. These effects directly affect the landscape or visual quality of the AONB. Typically, mitigation measures are unlikely to remove such effects. MAJOR - Landscape or Visual Effects which will be important to the perception of the AONB and could have an effect on the visual or landscape character of an area. Mitigation measures and detailed design work are unlikely to remove all of the effects upon the affected communities or interests. MODERATE - Landscape or Visual Effects which will be experienced at the district or local scale, but are not likely to be key decision-making issues. Mitigation and detailed design may ameliorate or enhance some of the consequences. Some residual effects will arise. MINOR - Landscape or Visual Effects which will have little overall impact on the landscape and visual character of the area. These effects may be raised as local issues but are unlikely to be of importance in the decision-making process. Nevertheless they are of relevance in enhancing the design of the project and consideration of mitigation measures. MINIMAL/INSIGNIFICANT - No effect or effect which is beneath the level of perception



**VIEW I - (VP7)** – Looking WNW from single track road to west side of Edslee Farm before descent into wooded valley to Coombe.



**VIEW II - (VP 9)** Looking from gateway Morwenstow/Shop road looking SSW



**VIEW III - (VP 10)** looking SSW on lane at Barn Hill

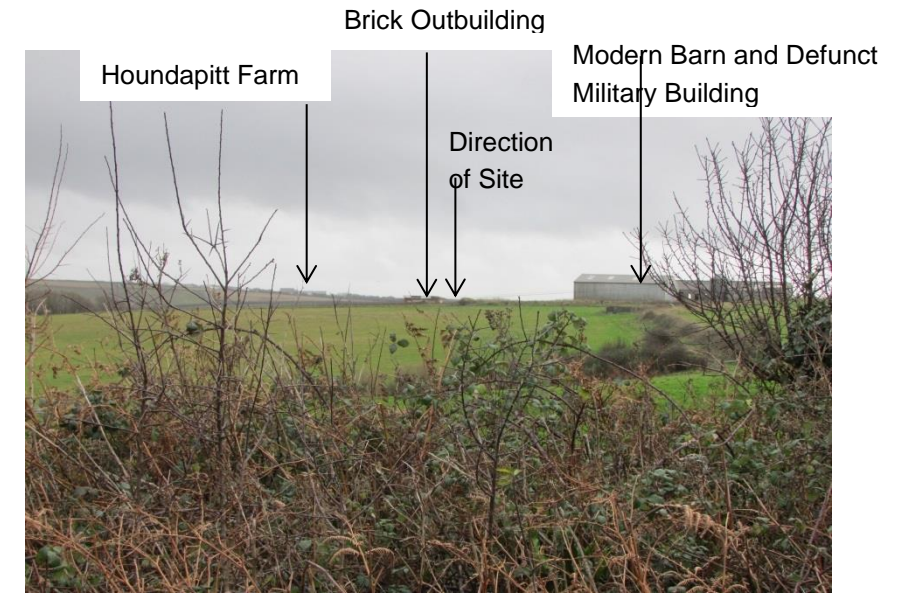
**Figure 7 - VIEWS I – III – Visual Assessment – refer to table 1**



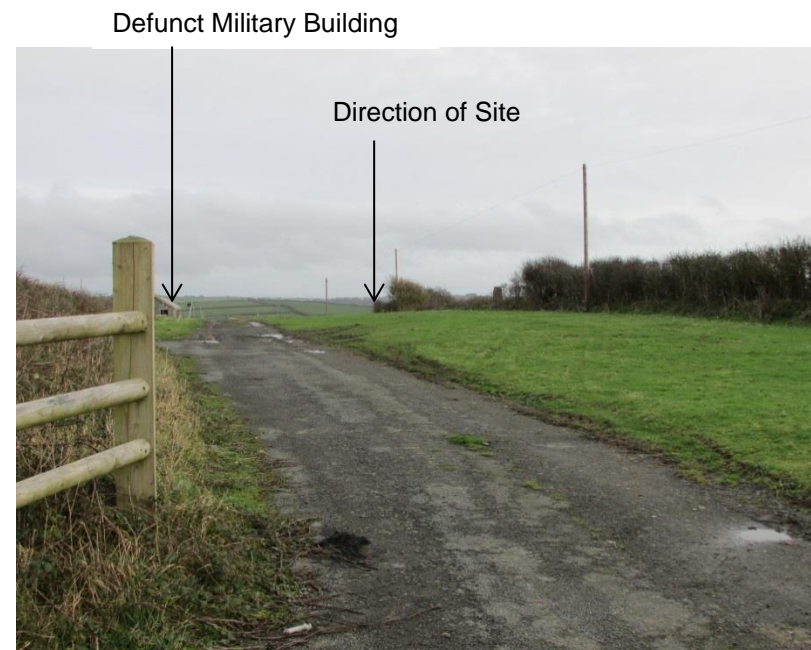
**VIEW IV - (VP 12)**– Looking south along Morwenstow/Coombe Road



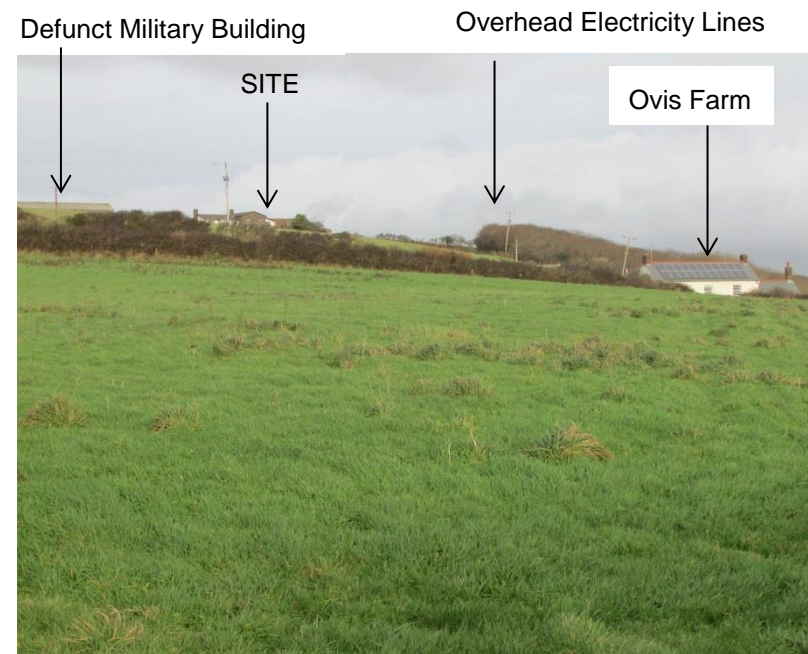
**VIEW V - (VP 13)** looking South past houses towards site



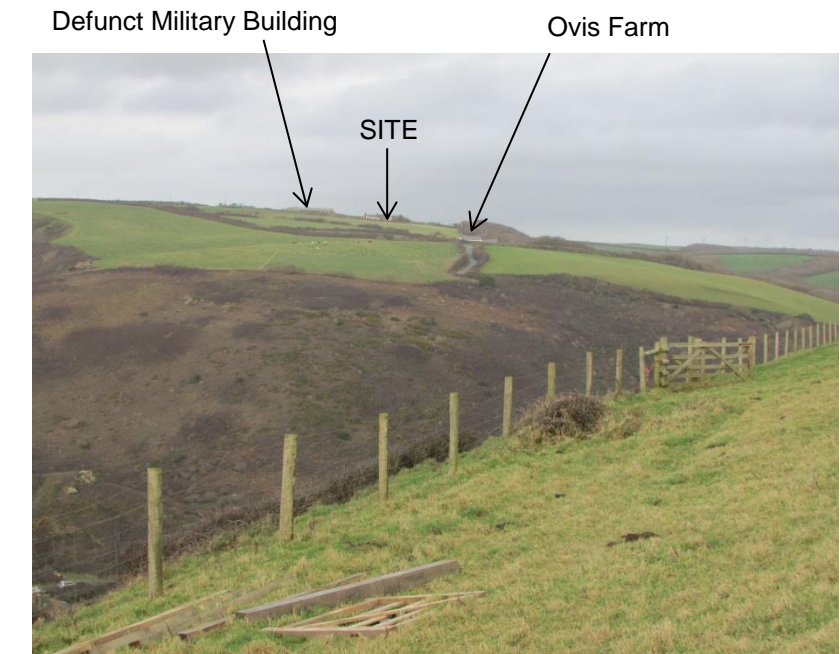
**VIEW VI - (VP 13a)** Looking South towards site from track entrance to XX



**VIEW VII - (VP 14)** Looking east along access track towards site



**VIEW VIII - (VP 15)** Looking NNE from Gateway at Layby



**VIEW IX - (VP 16)** Looking north east from above Duckpool near Warren point. along access track to site

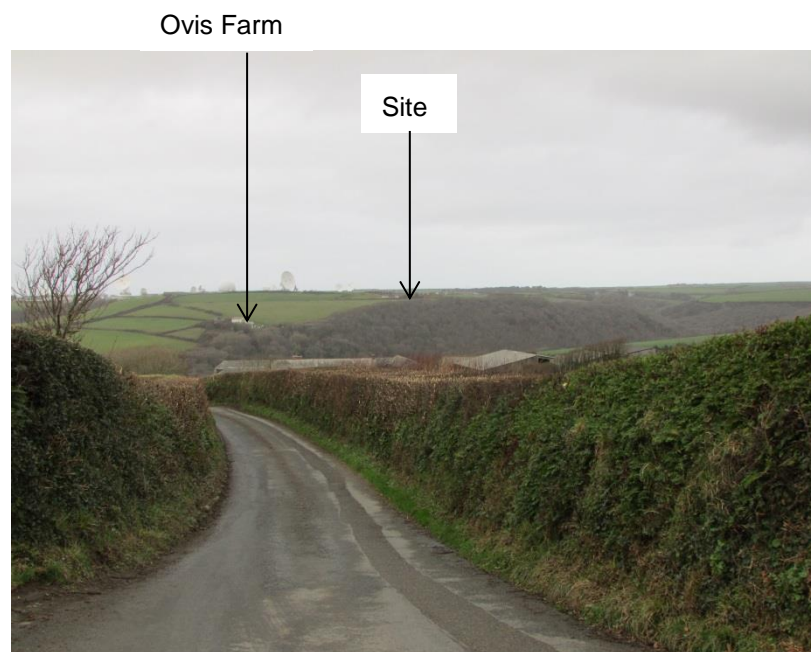
**Figure 7 - VIEWS IV - IX** –Visual Assessment – refer to table 1



**VIEW X - (VP 21)** Looking north on Stibbs to Coombe Road near Junction to Houndapitt Farm along access track to site



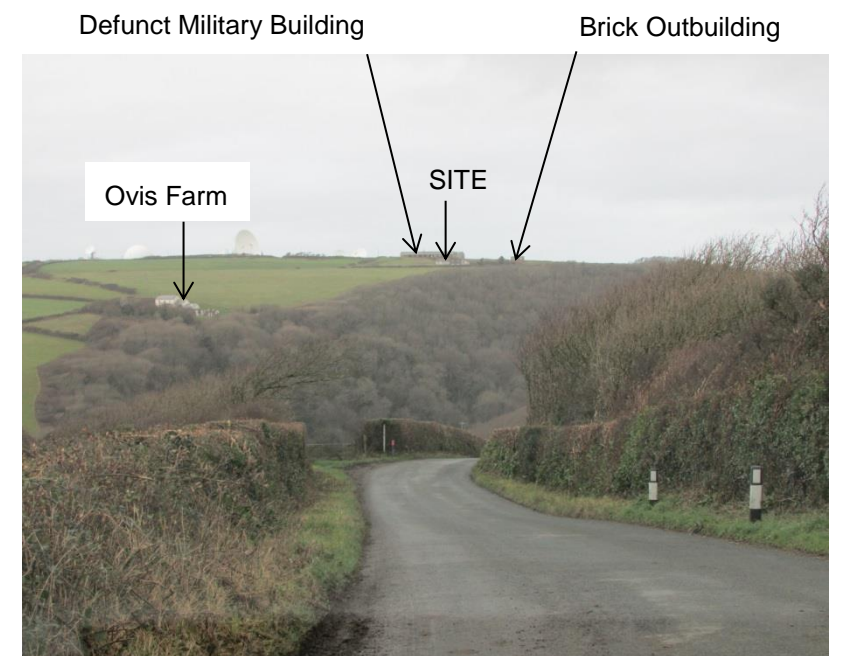
**VIEW XI - (VP 22)** Looking north west across field and route of public right of way.



**VIEW XII - (VP 20)** Stibb to Coombe Road Looking north over Stowe Barton



**VIEW XIII - (VP 19)** Near Stowe Barton on the Stibb to Coombe Road looking north



**VIEW XIV - (VP 18)** Near Stowe Barton on Stibb to Coombe Road Looking north on descent into Coombe valley

**Figure 7 - VIEWS X - XIV -Visual Assessment - refer to table 1**

## 6.0 Potential Landscape and Visual Effect of the development on the baseline

The site lies within the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Hartland section) and Heritage Coast. These areas are nationally valued landscape areas of landscape and scenic beauty so their sensitivity to change will be higher than areas outside the AONB.

The proposed development is the replacement of an existing dwelling. The building is part of a group of former farm buildings that already form a landscape element in the area of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Western Culm Plateau Landscape Character Area (LCA 37), where it is situated. Therefore the size of the change will be very small compared to the baseline. The nature of the change will be realised through the nature of the building mass and building materials and how that is perceived visually in the landscape.

The site is in the Western Culm Plateau Landscape Character Area, the undulating plateau of medium sized pasture is a working landscape. White Oak Farm lies at the top of a woody valley above Hollygrove Wood. The wooded valleys to the east of the site add to the diversity of the landscape and give a sense of tranquillity. The wider farmed landscape of the plateau is of good quality and the coastal scenery and wooded valleys contribute to a diversity of very good quality. However above the site, the flatter landscape where the remnants of a former military base and GCHQ complex are, the landscape quality deteriorates with few landscape elements of any quality. White Oak Farm lies on the edge of this land and having not been occupied has itself fallen into disrepair and is generally of low quality.

The sensitivity of an area to change combines its susceptibility (the ability of a landscape, view or receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the baseline situation and/or achievement of planning policy and strategies) and the value of the landscape. The area can accept change as the landscape character of the site / former farm is low quality and amount of change is low and there will not impact on any valuable landscape elements. However as the area lies within an AONB, a National Landscape designation of landscape and scenic value the overall areas value is of high. So the overall sensitivity of the site to change (for both the landscape and visual assessment) within the AONB is judged as medium.

The significance of a landscape and visual effect on the baseline situation is then assessed taking into account the sensitivity of the area and the magnitude of the effect on the landscape or visual receptor.

The new building mass of the revised proposals (by the Heighway Field Associates) will be larger than the existing 1970s dwelling but smaller than that of the previously consented scheme (refer to section 4). The change in position is slight and likely to have no significant landscape effect when considering it in terms of the scale of the landscape in which it is perceived. The development will not result in the loss of any landscape features, such as trees, hedges or pasture.

The replacement building heights under the submitted revised design (being at a maximum 129.95 OD to the West, 130.5 in the centre and 131.15 locally to the eastern rooftop gazebo) are higher compared to the existing dwelling (which has a maximum height of 128.98m OD) but generally lower than those approved under the previously consented scheme (being a maximum 132.775m OD) and substantially lower than the ridge of the defunct military building (being 134.74m OD). Furthermore the revised scheme adopts the lowest site level for the ground floor bedrooms with a stepped planted bank in front. This will visually drop the ground floor into the ground slightly so tying the development into the landscape and lessening the overall visual



height of the building when seen from the southerly elevations. The proposed finishes to walls are stone and timber with glazing and some flat green roofs accommodating solar panels and small roof terrace. The natural material palette proposed will lead the building to recede into the landscape. The roof top gazebo to the east will relate to the woodland rather than pasture, so grounding the building into the landscape. The roof top gazebo is 830mm higher than the brick outbuilding's ridge to the NE (which is at 130.32) but will remain lower than the ridge height of defunct military building (134.74) and lower than the approved plan ridge (132.775). The roof top gazebo when seen in views will relate to the woodland, rather than pasture. New planting could further integrate the eastern side of the site in to the landscape character in the long term.

The cranked footprint of the building focuses view out to the South and South West and these are the aspects where the building's glazing will be concentrated. However, the total extent of exposed glazing visible from any one direction will be mitigated by the cranked nature of the building, the set back of the glazed atrium and locally by timber shuttering and vertical fins in front of the glazing. As a result, the glazing will tend to visually recede in the context of the other predominantly natural material of the building. As a proportion of the total area of the seaward elevations the area of glazing is slightly less than under the previously consented scheme.

As is the case with the existing dwelling, the replacement building will be perceived as part of a cluster with those existing at the higher level (lying outside of the immediate application boundary) remaining visually dominant, along with the GCHQ satellite dishes beyond. The landscape effect of the development on the baseline condition of the overall subject site is therefore judged as minimal. The landscape effect of the development on the baseline condition of the perception of the AONB is judged as minor<sup>a</sup>.

The visual assessment (Table 1) identified that the visual impact of the development taking into account the scenic value of the AONB is most significant from the East through to the South and South South West at around 1km – 2km. However views in from this direction generally include the large satellite dishes on the horizon, which being white are prominent within the view, and draw the eye. From the east the magnitude of visual receptors is low lessening the importance of the impact to moderate / minor. The main views are in from the south to south east at points along the Stibb to Coombe Road. The higher up on the Stibb to Coombe road the wider the view and smaller the site is within it so the visual impact of the development reduces to minor<sup>a</sup>. The views with the most visual impact of the site and a larger number of visual receptors perceiving the site in the context of the AONB, are near Stowe Barton and above Duckpool and so the impact is judged as moderate<sup>b</sup>. However the quality of the development will contribute to enhance the baseline situation of the site within the AONB and to a greater degree than in the case of the previously consented scheme. The visual receptors that will perceive these views will be walkers, tourist, local residents and landowners and road users. Most of these will have a high-medium visual sensitivity; however it will be those that are familiar with the existing views that will notice the change, rather than visitors, because the scale of the change within the wider landscape is small.

<sup>a</sup> MINOR - Landscape or Visual Effects which will have little overall impact on the landscape and visual character of the area. These effects may be raised as local issues but are unlikely to be of importance in the decision-making process. Nevertheless they are of relevance in enhancing the design of the project and/ or consideration of mitigation measures.

<sup>b</sup> MODERATE - Landscape or Visual Effects which will be experienced at the district or local scale, but are not likely to be key decision-making issues. Mitigation and detailed design may ameliorate or enhance some of the consequences. Some residual effects will arise.

## 7.0 Mitigation and Enhancement

The proposed revised design for the replacement building incorporates features which will inherently lessen its landscape and visual effect. Whilst contemporary in style with a flat roof the use of a palette of locally distinctive natural material will preserve the tranquil character of the area (as required by AONB management Policy) and help the replacement dwelling to recede into its landscape setting. The prevailing pattern of sparsely populated settlements would be maintained with the replacement dwelling perceived as a tight cluster of built structure, like the existing, set in the context of other existing buildings. The replacement dwelling would merely slightly alter an existing impact rather than impose an entirely new one.

Implementation of the proposed scheme could variously restore and enhance currently poor quality landscape features on the site helping to integrate the replacement building into the setting and benefiting the wider landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. By-

- Reinforcement of the existing hedge planting along the south–eastern boundary of the domestic curtilage using indigenous species, including hazel and oak to improve the hedgerow structure, improving habitat connectivity and landscape character in the long term.
- Clearing of inappropriate scrub and bracken combined with planting of native species to the existing bank to the north-east of the dwelling location and in the field boundaries to the south of the brick outbuilding to mitigate the marginal additional impact introduced by the north-eastern corner of the replacement structure by virtue of an embracing background of vegetation. This planting would further provide screening from the north and connect the site visually with the woody landscape structure to the east.
- Refinement and reinforcement of the existing native species rich grassland to the north/ north west of the dwelling location and south of the existing cut in sloping driveway to enhance biodiversity.
- Use planting mixes that are drought and salt tolerant and reflect the indigenous coastal species for the proposed planted “green” roof surfaces.

At the wider landscape level, the combination of these measures would achieve both visual integration of the replacement dwelling and mitigation of its marginally increased impact within the landscape when compared with the existing building.

## 8.0 Conclusion

The proposed development location lies on the edge of a part of the AONB where the landscape quality deteriorates. Overall the landscape appraisal concludes the landscape impact of the proposals will be felt at a local level and be minimal and have only a minor effect within the AONB. A moderate visual impact will be perceived from the south, but limited to a few locations and long or far distance views. The revised design’s architectural design and the hues and inherent characteristics of the predominantly natural materials proposed along with the mitigating landscape elements will have an effect of harmonising the development with the natural environment and grounding it in the wider landscape, lessening its visual impact. Additionally the site planting enhancement and hedgerow reinforcement measures included within the scope of the revised proposals would further contribute to improving the landscape quality of this area of the AONB.

It is judged the replacement dwelling proposed according to the revised design would not result in any undue consequences for the baseline situation or the achievement of wider planning policy and other strategies pertaining to the AONB. By virtue of the combination of its cranked footprint, correspondence to existing site levels and low lying overall form, planted roof decks and predominantly natural materials palette, it is considered that implementation of the proposed revised replacement dwelling scheme would impose a lower additional impact beyond that already attributable to the existing dwelling than implementation of the previously consented scheme.

The previously consented scheme would conversely have a more dominant presence in the landscape in the views identified by virtue of its position on the site (extending further to the west of the existing bungalow), the height and proposed material finishes.

## References

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3. *Cornwall Landscape Character Study 2007*
4. *Cornwall County Interactive Map <http://map.cornwall.gov.uk/ccmap/> (2021)*
5. *Cornwall AONB Management Plan 2016-2021– adopted 2016 Cornwall Council*