

Stable Cottage, Mentmore

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL STATEMENT

for

Elizabeth Hough

Planning | 1st April 2022

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Viewpoints 1-8

Viewpoints A-B

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by The Landscape Partnership on behalf of Elizabeth Hough in relation to the suitability of the proposed stable block and arena on land associated with Stable Cottage (refer to Figure 01), to the north of Mentmore (hereafter referred to as the 'Site').

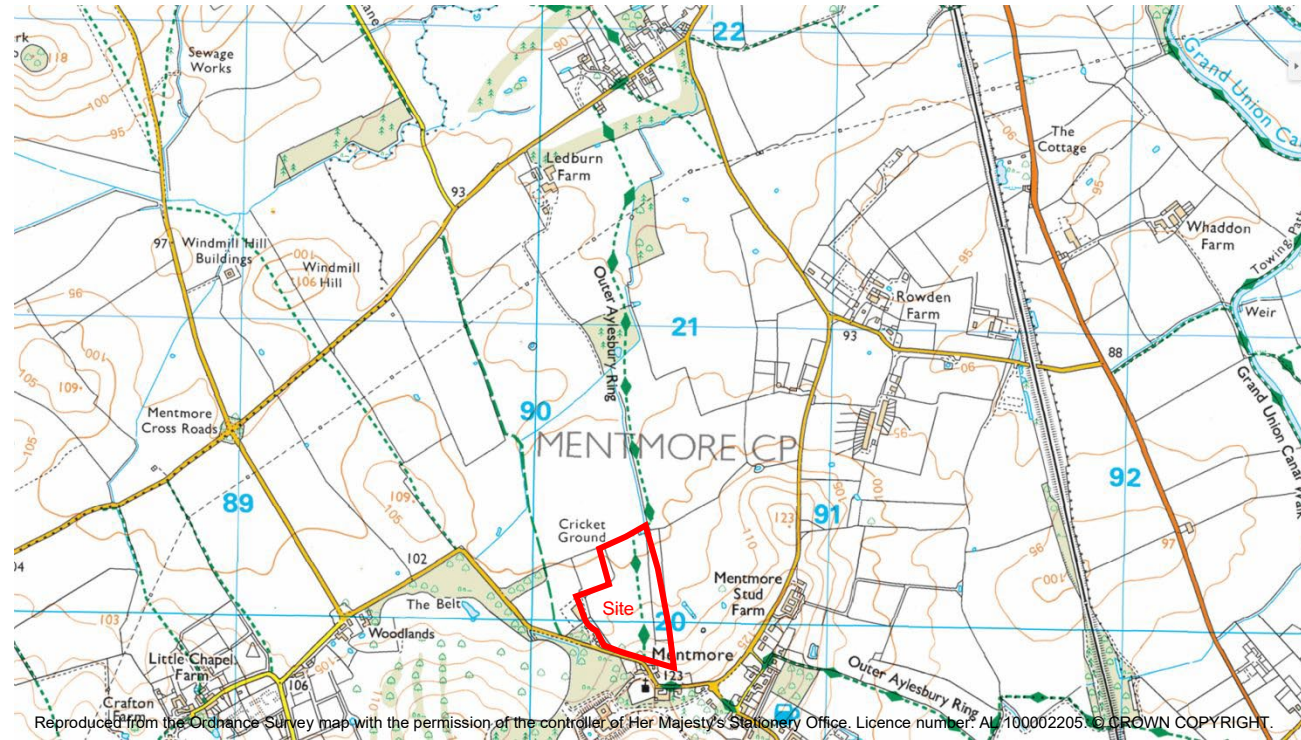


Figure 01: Location Plan

- 1.2 The assessment has been undertaken by Graham Farrier (CMLI) based on a desktop analysis and field survey carried out on 25 February 2022. The weather was sunny with good light levels and visibility. The study area covered an approximate 2kms radius.

- 1.3 The Landscape and Visual Statement (LVS) sets out the following:
- ◆ context of the Site in relation to the existing and historic settlement and landscape of Mentmore;
 - ◆ main features of the Site and their contribution to the Site and local context;
 - ◆ landscape and visually related designations and how these may be affected;
 - ◆ landscape character and effects arising from the proposed development; and
 - ◆ Site visibility, key views and effects of the proposed development on visual receptors.

2 Site Location and Context

Location

- 1.4 The Site is located in the village of Mentmore (refer to Figure 02), approximately 3.6kms to the south of Leighton Buzzard within the administrative area of Buckinghamshire and Mentmore Parish. The Site comprises a larger east field and a smaller west field. These are both laid to grass and are used for horse grazing.



Figure 02: Local Context

- 1.5 The village is set on a low ridge, forming a key part of the character of the village, with the rising approach to the village forming a distinctive sense of arrival and approach to the main entrance to Mentmore Towers and its grounds. At the entrance, the road forms a T junction, with road diverting to the west towards the hamlet of Crafton and the east towards the village of Cheddington. At the junction, lies The Green, formed by a village green and surrounding residential properties. Residential properties extend further to the north up to the former Mentmore Studs. To the west of the T junction, the road falls a zig zag through the village, before descending the ridge. Along this section of the road lie a number of scattered large residential properties in the village, including the Stable Yards, Stable

Cottage, The Old Vicarage, Vicarage Cottage, The Laundry, The Old Laundry, and Red House. Set amongst these buildings is St Mary's Church. Further to the west as the road descends the ridge, lie three detached residential properties, that of Coach House, Spinney Cottage and Spinney Hall, and the adjoining warehouse rented by KBB Logistics and neighbouring straw barns, all of which back on to the south-western boundary of the west field. Immediately to the north of the Site's western field is the Mentmore Cricket Club pitch and pavilion.

- 1.6 The Public Footpath MEN/3/1 also passes through the Site, connecting Mentmore to Ledburn, and forms part of the Outer Aylesbury Ring (refer to Figure 01 above and Figure 07 in Appendix 1).

Historic Context

- 1.7 A detailed summary of the history of Mentmore and locality is set out in Section 5 of this report, in relation to Mentmore Conservation Area.
- 1.8 In the context of the Site, there has been a strong equine history associated with Mentmore over many years. Baron Mayer Amschel de Rothschild was not only an avid art collector and hunter but also enthusiastic horse rider and built the large stables at Mentmore Towers and Crafton Stud, in the adjoining hamlet of Crafton. 5th Earl of Rosebery acquired Crafton Stud, when he married Hannah de Rothschild. He then built Mentmore Stud between 1913 and 1914, which lies to the north of the village. This forms a large area of stables that have now been converted to residential units. The studs were very successful, with several horses going on to win various prestigious flat horse races. In addition a riding school formed part of the Mentmore Towers estate. The studs, stable buildings and associated paddocks form an intrinsic part of the history the landscape.
- 1.9 There has been a continued established use for keeping horses on the Site and formed part of the land used for horse grazing by the Earl of Rosebery. This includes the 22 acre field sold by the Earl of Rosebery and has continued to be used by the previous owners for keeping horses. As part of this, the existing barn within the northern part of the field was erected and used for sheltering four / five horses and two ponies for a period of over 30 years.
- 1.10 Other equine facilities also continue to form part of the landscape around Mentmore and Crafton, including: the existing Crafton Stud Farm, which continues to be used as an equine facility, including an arena; an arena and horse paddock on the northern edge of Crafton; two arenas and several horse paddocks along Crafton Lodge Road; and Rowden Farm Barn to the north of Mentmore, which includes stables and arena (refer to Figure 02).

3 Site

- 1.11 The Site falls from a high point of approximately 120m AOD in the south to a low point of approximately 99m AOD in the north. The southern part of the Site is formed by steeper slopes, becoming progressively more gentle to the north, with the northern part of the Site becoming largely flat. The Site's two fields have largely open boundaries, with demarcation being mainly formed by post, wire and mesh fences.
- 1.12 The Site southern boundary is partly shared with the unnamed road that connects Mentmore to Crafton, which is demarcated by estate fencing and a row of scattered trees. The remainder of the southern boundary is shared with the rear gardens of The Old Vicarage and Vicarage Cottage, which is defined by a brick wall. Vicarage Cottage has an open aspect overlooking the Site, whilst the views from The Old Vicarage are restricted by orientation of the house, the intervening presence of Vicarage Cottage and the presence of the brick wall and trees in the garden. An overgrown mature hedge and small copse encloses the northern boundary of the eastern field. The hedge is comprised of predominantly hawthorn and is of varying condition. The boundaries shared with the cricket pitch are defined by a post, wire and mesh fence and a delapidated estate fence, and a short section of fragmented hedge. A cricket pavilion lies just beyond the north-west corner of the Site.
- 1.13 The western boundary of the western field is shared with the residential properties of Coach House, Spinney Cottage and Spinney Hall, and the adjoining warehouse rented by KBB Logistics and neighbouring straw barns. The garden boundaries are demarcated by a mixture of fences, including: post and rail fence; estate fence; post, wire and mesh fence. A number of small to large deciduous trees and a Leyland cypress lie with these gardens, but otherwise the gardens have a largely open aspect over the Site. Towards the northern end of the western boundary, adjacent to KBB Logistics and straw barns, lies a Leyland cypress hedge of approximately 12m height. A tall Leyland cypress hedge also forms the southern garden boundary of Coach House with the Mentmore to Crafton road.
- 1.14 Within the northern part of the eastern field lies a modest barn that was formerly used for as a shelter for horses. To the rear of the shelter are three stables and an area used for storage of hay and tack. An individual mature spreading oak also lies within the northern part of this field. Two small stables have recently been erected within south-eastern corner of the eastern field but are due to be removed. An overhead powerline crosses the Site from east to west.
- 1.15 The Site is also characterised by ridge and furrow within both fields. This is more clearly defined and evident within the eastern field. The ridge and furrow are discernible within the western field but

becomes largely indiscernible within the western and northern edges of the field. The ridge and furrow are no longer present within the adjoining cricket pitch and arable fields.

4 Proposed Development

1.16 The proposed development incorporates the following elements:

- ◆ stable block, including six loose boxes, a wash bay and two rooms 18.55 x 11.016m and 4.271m high. The stables will be of timber construction, with two entrances and a pitched roof;
- ◆ an arena 20 x 60m, constructed of an equestrian flexi ride (black synthetic material), laid on to a sand and drainage layer. The arena would be limited to the use for dressage and would not include any other features e.g. fencing along the boundaries of the arena or use of jumps, etc.;
- ◆ planting of a mixed native hedge with trees along the boundaries of the cricket pitch; and
- ◆ the management of the existing hedge along the northern boundary of the western field, and infilling gaps in the hedge with new plants, to improve its condition and longevity.

1.17 Both the stable block and arena would be located within the north-west corner of the Site, adjacent to the cricket club. The stable block would be located adjacent to the Leyland cypress hedge and the arena immediately to the south of the cricket pitch. The two recently erected two small stables will be removed.

5 Designations

Area of Attractive Landscape

1.18 Refer to Section 6.

Registered Park and Garden

1.19 The Site is located immediately adjacent the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden of Mentmore Towers (refer to Figure 03). Joseph Paxton designed the 19th century formal gardens and park of one of the largest of the Rothschild family houses. The gardens are characterised by formal terraces, grass slopes to a lawn with an oval pool. A Sub-tropical Garden and Pleasure Garden were laid out in 1864 and 1874, followed by the Italian and Fountain Gardens. Mature woodland contains much of the parkland, with notable areas of woodland within the parkland, including the Big Wood and New Spinney.

1.20 Permission was granted to convert the house to a conference centre, and due to the fragmented estate ownership, much of the parkland was also converted to a golf course at the beginning of the 21st century.

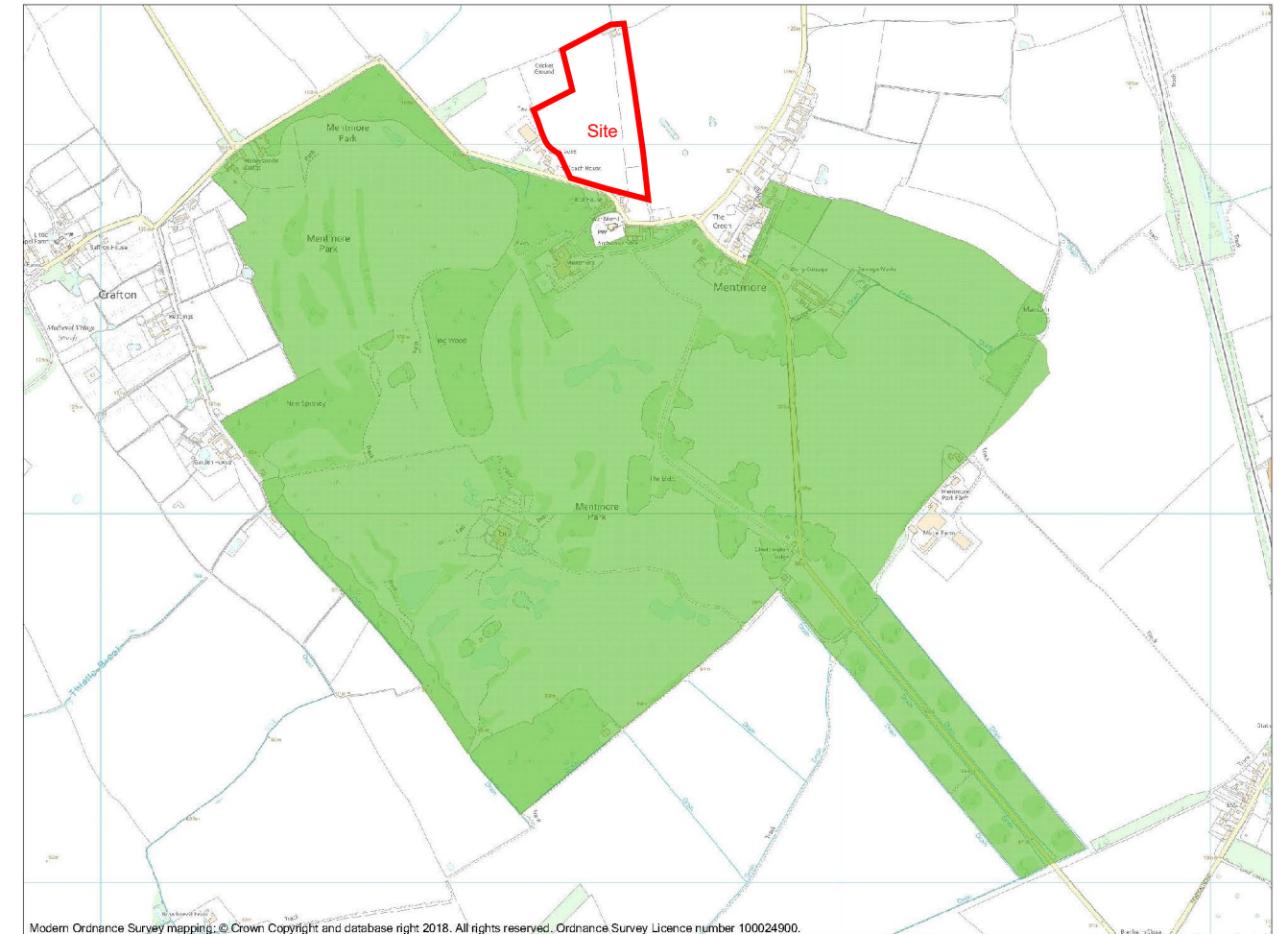


Figure 03: Mentmore Towers Registered Park and Garden

Mentmore Conservation Area

1.21 The Conservation Area was designated on 12 July 1978, covering an area that included the mansion of Mentmore Towers, gardens and the eastern part of the parkland, St Mary's Church and adjoining residential properties, The Manor House and properties around The Green, but excluding the Site. The designation was significantly extended in March 2020 to cover the whole of Mentmore Towers parkland and settlement of Mentmore, the hamlet of Crafton, and the farmland adjoining Mentmore to the north-west and south-east, including the Site (refer to Figure 04). The justification for extending the Conservation Area was covered as part of the review undertaken in the Mentmore Conservation Area Review 2019.

1.22 The Review also provides a detailed description of the features and characteristics of the Mentmore estate and village that makes them special and provides a sense of place. The report highlights that the ridge is a key feature in defining the character of the Conservation Area and that the area is primarily rural and beyond the Conservation Area is sparsely settled with a mosaic of scattered farmsteads, villages and hamlets, many of which are associated with the Rothschild estates. The land is predominantly arable on the drier hill tops, with smaller pastoral fields on the lower slopes. Tree cover is a distinctive feature, particularly on the upper slopes of the ridge.

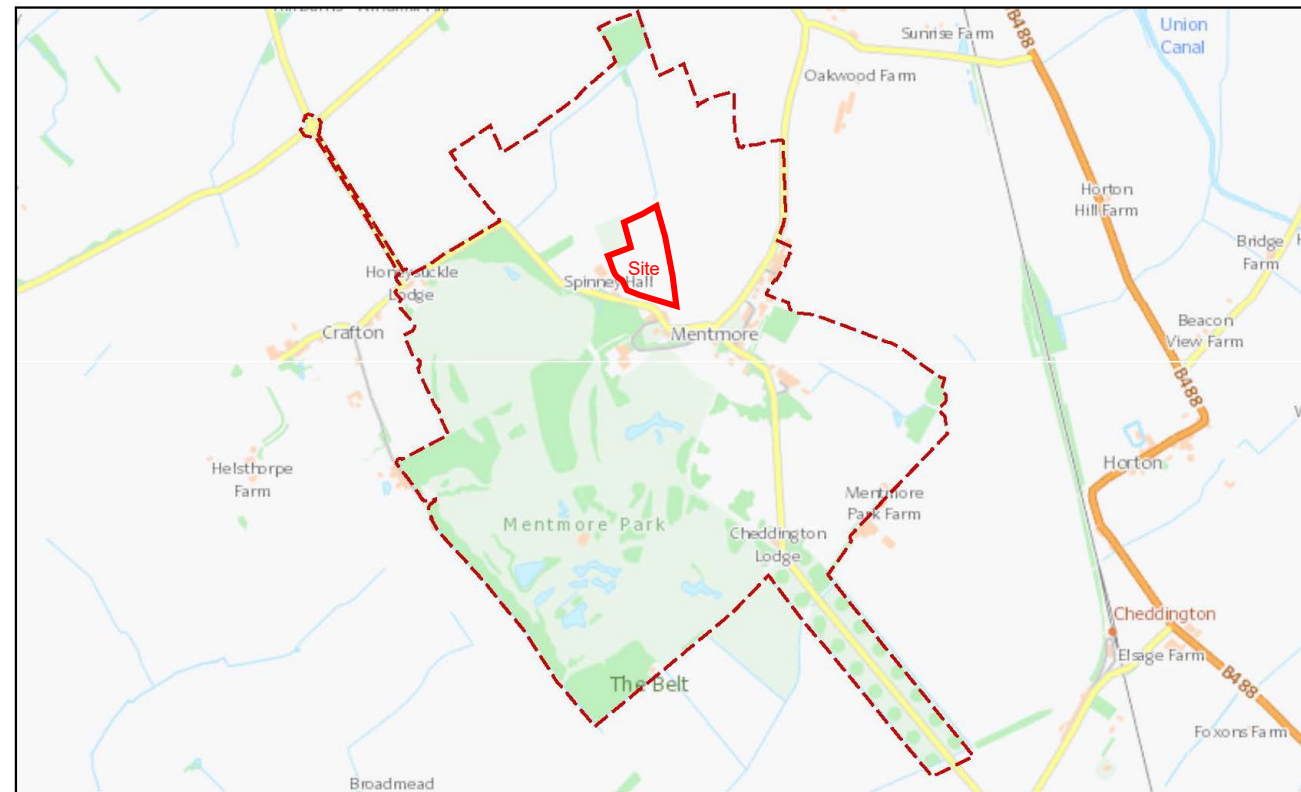


Figure 04: Mentmore Conservation Area

1.23 Mentmore has been settled for a significant period of time, evidenced by the presence of Roman and Anglo-Saxon finds and sites, and features of medieval and post-medieval period up to 1840. St Mary's Church dates from medieval times but was heavily restored in the nineteenth century. The other main building of note prior to 1840 was the 17th / 18th century Manor House at the western end of The Green. By 1850 the village consisted of a few cottages on The Green and along the roads to Wing and Cheddington. The Rothschild family significantly changed this situation. Between the 1840s to 1870s Baron Mayer Amschel de Rothschild carried out extensive land acquisition and employed Joseph Paxton in 1850 to design the mansion, garden and parkland for Mentmore Towers. When Mayer died in 1874, Mentmore was inherited by Hannah, who continued to develop the estate according to her father's vision. This included the removal of the hunting stables, kennels and other

buildings, to create the main drive from The Green. The village was designed around the east side of The Green, leaving the north-west side open with a view over the valley to Wing, Wing Park and Ascott. By the time of Hannah's marriage to 5th Earl of Rosebery in 1878, the character and framework of the village and park had been established. The outlying estate was sold by the Rosebery estate in 1944, including the Site, and in 1977 the remainder of the land was sold including the mansion, park, gardens and much of the village. The park was developed into the current golf course, large club house and car park.

1.24 The identity of Mentmore village is inextricably linked with the Mentmore estate, in particular the ownership by the Rothschild family. Views of Mentmore Towers forms a prominent feature at the end of the Mentmore spur to the east, dominating the surrounding landscape for miles, but is largely invisible in views from Mentmore village to the north, including the Site. Views within the village are largely focused along the roads, due to the linear nature of development. Bends in the roads, creates a visual focus on buildings such as the church, vicarage and Church Cottage. The open space of The Green is framed by the main street and lines of lime trees, but still allow long distant views of Wing Park and Ascott Park (refer to Viewpoint 6). One of the main views is approaching Mentmore from Wing, where the northern side of the ridge is prominent, and the tops of Mentmore Towers are visible above the pleasure ground trees. The other key designed view towards the village is from the railway. The Site is not discernible in these views. It is noted that the rural Vale of Aylesbury is of the highest significance in the much wider setting, particularly views from the Wing and Ascott scarp to the north (approximately 3kms) and from the 15 mile long Chiltern scarp to the south (approximately 6.5kms+). These were key influences in the siting of the mansion and park and provide a major positive contribution to the setting of the heritage asset. It should be noted that at these distances, the proposed development would be barely discernible as a change from the Wing and Ascott scarp and not visible from the Chiltern scarp. A series of figures are provided within the Review indicating the key historic views relating to Mentmore Park and the wider Conservation Area. Only two are relevant in the context of the Site, that of View 15 Village Green and View 16 Wing Park & Wing Park Road. As referred to above, there would be no view of the proposed development from Wing Park Road and Wing Park. The view from the Village Green is represented by Viewpoint 6 of this LVS (refer to Section 7) and a view towards the Village Green is represented by Viewpoint 8. The Review refers to 'other views', including views from the road within Mentmore overlooking the Site as represented by Viewpoint 7.

1.25 The Review goes on to advise that the rural setting of Mentmore park and village enhances its significance by placing it within its historic landscape context and retaining the links with the wider communities of the Vale of Aylesbury and other Rothschild properties in the Vale. Particular reference

is made to the significant inter-connected views visually linking Mentmore with Ascott Park and the Chiltern scarp to Mentmore. As the intervisibility was deliberate, this forms a major contribution to the setting of the heritage asset. The remodelling of many of the settlements in the Vale of Aylesbury by the Rothchilds as estate villages, the survival of a variety of historic features, and the overwhelming rural nature of the landscape, limited visual and rural intrusion, are also identified as providing a major positive contribution to the setting of the heritage asset or are particularly noteworthy.

- 1.26 A number of key buildings are identified, including the Stables, which collectively command attention, together with the half timbered gables and tall chimneys of Stable Cottage. The Stables (collection of buildings including The Mews, Archway Lodge, Stable Yard House, Grooms Cottage and yard) and Stable Cottage were built in the 1870s for Baron Mayer de Rothschild and served the mansion, with Stable Cottage accommodating stable staff. The Review notes that a domestic stable block and yard formed a key element, with the riding house reflecting the particular equine interest of successive 19th century owners. These buildings form an important part of the significance of the heritage asset and provide an important contribution to the public approach to the village. The Stud House is also noted as a local building of note, providing the groom's house for Mentmore Stud, as is Mentmore Stud itself (now Howell Hill Close) built between c.1914-1920, with its significance relating to being a substantial former stud buildings erected by the Estate. The former buildings of the gas and electricity works are also noted as forming peripheral parts of the estate. These were located to the south-west of the Site, with the gas house and gas works now converted to the current Coach House and Spinney Cottage.
- 1.27 The Review sub-divides the Conservation Area into thirteen character areas, with the Site being located in Character Area 12: North Park. The Area is described as 'ornamented agricultural land' with little designed tree planting and containing a 20th century cricket ground and farmstead nearby. The main function of the Area is to provide a setting for the public roads from Wing and Leighton Buzzard. It features in views from the approach to the village from Leighton Buzzard and panoramic views from The Green. Whilst it is noted that the Area has survived intact, it is also noted that many of the trees and some of the field boundaries have been removed, and the land is now managed as arable farmland rather than pasture. It should be noted that the latter does not apply to the Site, which has remained as grassland used for horse grazing. The significance of the Area is defined as forming the setting for the northern village approaches and views over it from The Green. The historical significance is assessed as being High-Medium and the level of survival of the historic fabric is assessed as Medium.

Effect of the Proposed Development

- 1.28 The Site lies outside of the Registered Park and Garden with woodland and tree belts along the north-eastern boundary of parkland, preventing any intervisibility with the proposed development. Consequently, there would be no change to the character or views from the parkland.
- 1.29 The proposed development would result in a change to the North Park part of the Conservation Area and in some views from the public roads. The proposed stable block and arena would be located adjacent to the KBB Logistics warehouse and straw barns, and the Leyland cypress hedge along the boundary, and adjacent to the cricket ground. The proposed development would thereby be located in a part of the Conservation Area that has already been influenced by 20th century modifications to the landscape. The stables would be of a smaller scale than the warehouse and straw barn, and of a similar scale to the cricket pavilion. The proposed stables and arena would be located on the low largely flat ground at the foot of the ridge slope, helping to minimise the awareness of the change. They would be located in positions where there is no or limited evidence of the existing ridge and furrow. The stables would have no effect on the ridge and furrow. The arena would result in the loss of some subtly defined ridge and furrow, adjacent to the cricket ground, where the ridge and furrow has been removed.
- 1.30 There has been a strong equine history within Mentmore, through the daily activities of the Rothschild family, with the presence of the large stables for Mentmore Towers, Stable Cottage and the Groom's Cottage, but also through the influence of the Earl of Rosebery, with the continuing use of Crafton Stud and the building of the large Mentmore Stud. The Conservation Area Review recognises the importance of a number of equine buildings in life of Mentmore Towers and the particular equine interest of successive 19th century owners and the important contribution to the public approach to the village. Horse grazing has typically formed part of the wider agricultural landscape, with the fields in the Site have been used for keeping horses over many years. Stables and arenas / manèges also form part of the setting of the Conservation Area. Consequently, the proposed development would be consistent with the character and history of the Conservation Area.
- 1.31 The designed views of Mentmore Towers would not be affected by the proposed development, nor the focus on the key buildings when passing through the village and in approaching Mentmore from Wing. As illustrated by Viewpoint 6, views on the western edge of The Green would be affected by the proposed stable block but would appear as a small scale distant feature located at a lower level at the foot of the ridge, set amongst a cluster of buildings. No other key view identified within the Review would be affected, other a negligible effect on long distance from the north-west and north from Ascott House and Park looking towards The Green. There would be an effect on road users

using the public roads approaching Mentmore from the north and for a short section on passing the Site, when travelling towards Wing. This would be mainly experienced by motorists and cyclist as a moderately distant and fleeting experience. It is very unlikely that road users would be aware of change arising from the arena, due to it being flat with no vertical features, and in a distant part of the view. The stables would appear as a modest new built feature in keeping with the rural character and equine history of the land and history of Mentmore. Similarly, the proposals would also not adversely affect North Park, with the significance of the Area being retained largely unaffected in relation to the setting of the northern village approaches and views over it from The Green. The open panoramic views would be retained, and any discerned change would be consistent with the existing land use, rural character and equine history of Mentmore. The proposed hedge management and planting of new hedges and hedgerow trees would also help to restore some of the hedgerow removal that has taken place within the North Park Area, as well as help integrate the cricket pitch into the surrounding agricultural setting that forms the primary character and setting of the public roads from Wing and Leighton Buzzard.

6 Landscape Character

Introduction

- 1.1 It is important to note that landscape character assessments can be undertaken at a range of scales. It should also be noted that boundaries are only indicative of the change between areas and therefore when working at a Site scale, especially close to boundaries between character types or character areas, it is important to determine which landscape the Site more closely relates to, based on its characteristics. In addition, it is important to note that while drawn with a line on a map, areas close to boundaries are often better thought of as an area of transition, and where the local landscape may display some of the characteristics and sensitivities of both character areas.
- 1.2 Effects on landscape character can be both direct, i.e. on the character area/landscape type that the Site is located within, and indirect, i.e. changes to characteristics or perceptions of character that occur beyond the boundary of a character area/landscape type. In addition, effects on landscape character may be positive or negative, i.e. strengthening/enhancing the characteristic patterns and features, or eroding and losing features that contribute to landscape character.

National

- 1.3 In the mid-1990s, English Nature and the Countryside Commission jointly produced The Character Map of England, a single map that identified and described 159 Joint Character Areas (JCA) covering the whole of England. Each distinct area was defined following consideration of its landscape,

biodiversity, geodiversity, and cultural and economic activity. The boundaries of the areas followed natural rather than administrative boundaries. The various volumes of the Map were published between 1998 and 2000.

- 1.4 More recently, Natural England has undertaken a review of the JCAs in order to fulfil, in part, responsibilities set out in the Natural Environment White Paper 2011, Biodiversity 2020, and the European Landscape Convention 2007, creating National Character Area (NCA) profiles that are based on the original JCA profiles.
- 1.5 The Site falls within the north-western part of National Character Area (NCA) 88 Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire Claylands.

District

- 1.6 Landscape character at the district scale is set out in the Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment, May 2008. The Site is identified as lying within the southern part of Landscape Character Area (LCA) 8.3 Ouzel Valley Catchment (refer to Figure 05).

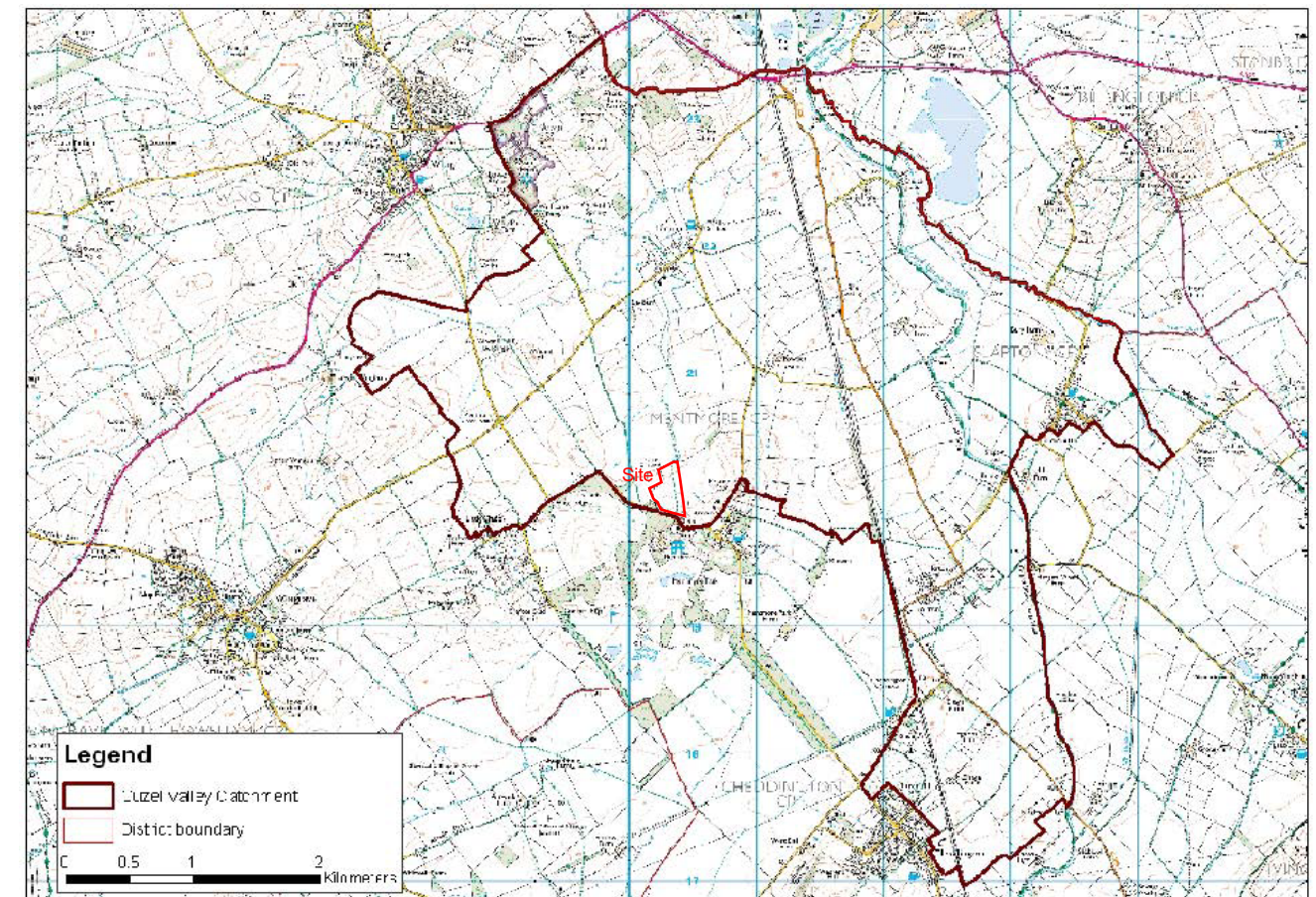


Figure 05: LCA 8.3 Ouzel Valley Catchment

1.7 The landscape is defined by a wide shallow valley falling to the River Ouzel. A largely arable landscape, with meandering streams fed by ditches. There is sparse woodland cover, typically associated with parkland and local settlements. Ascott House and parkland, and the Grand Union Canal that traverses the landscape are noted as distinctive features. Pastoral farmland is primarily associated with the canal. Grassland is almost entirely improved. Where present, fields are bound by well-trimmed hedges with occasional mature hedgerow trees. The landscape includes Iron Age, Roman and medieval settlements, 18th century enclosure around Ledburn, 19th century parliamentary enclosures, Ascott House, the historic orchards at Cheddington and large prairie fields at its core. No specific mention is made to the influence of Mentmore ridge or Mentmore Towers. The landscape condition is assessed as **Moderate** with a sensitivity of **Moderate**, with the guideline of **Conserve and Enhance**. The landscape guidelines for LCA 8.3 include: support for the replanting of hedgerows, management of hedgerows and infilling of gaps; the management of hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes; establishment of hedgerow trees; and maintaining the connectivity of habitats.

Area of Attractive Landscape

1.8 The Site lies on the eastern edge of the Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL) 3: Quanton-Wing Hills (refer to Figure 06). This is a local landscape designation for Buckinghamshire. It's value and what makes it special is set out in the document 'Defining the special qualities of local landscape designations in Aylesbury Vale District', March 2016. The Statement of Significance for the Quanton-Wing Hills is stated as follows:

Undulating hills and ridges with distant panoramic views across the strongly rural and picturesque landscape, including to the Vale of Aylesbury to the south. Together with the Brill-Winchendon Hills they form a series of low, generally open limestone hills with hilltop settlements, between the foot of the Chilterns escarpment and the dip slope of the Cotswolds. The prominent hills form a backdrop to many views in the district. Nucleated villages create texture, a sense of history, variety and rhythm. The strong sense of history is present in the many Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and landscape features such as ridge and furrow and irregular enclosed fields.

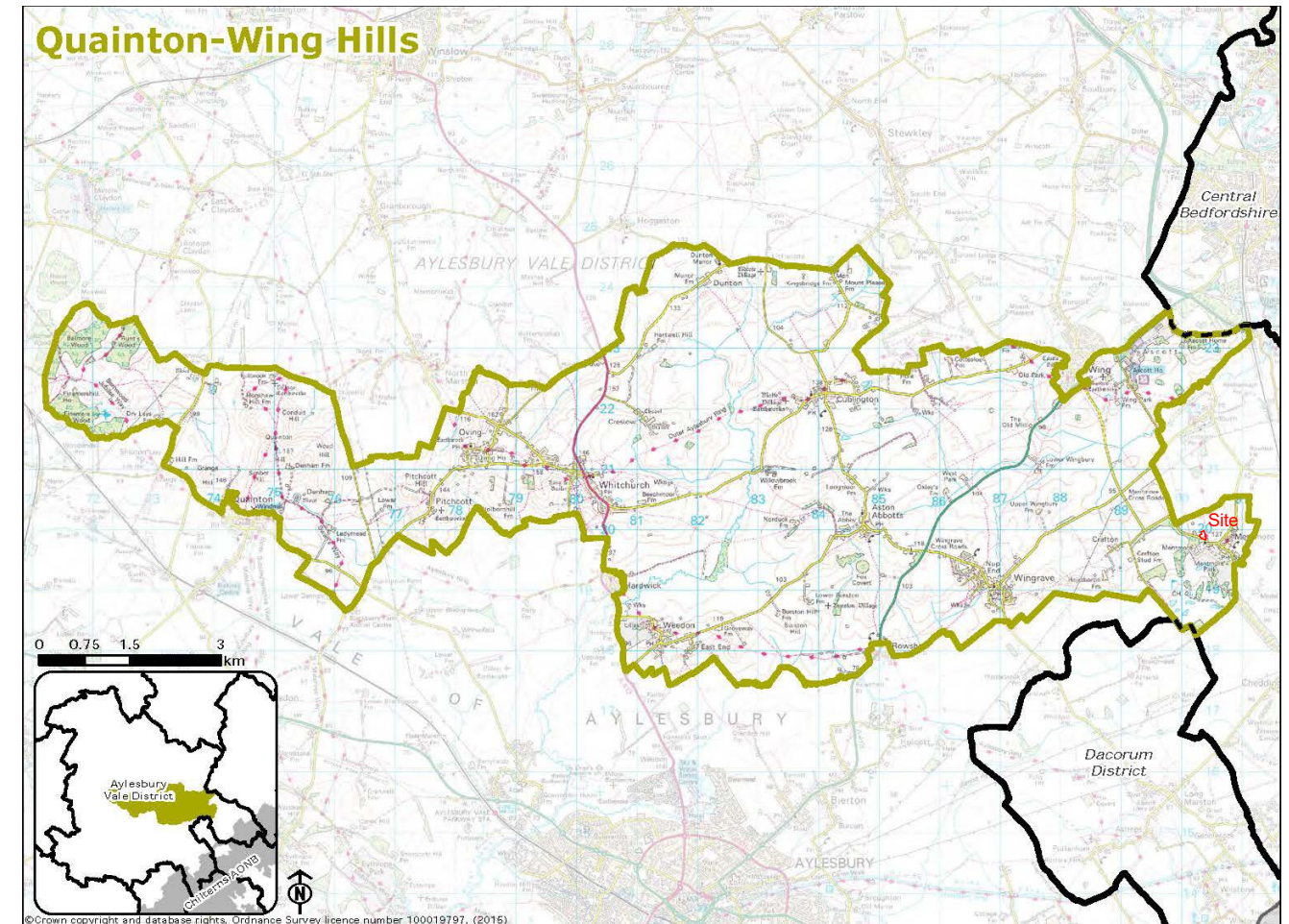


Figure 06: AAL3 (Extract from Defining the special qualities of local landscape designations in AVD)

1.9 Whilst the Statement of Significance summarises the main special qualities of the AAL, it is also noted that there is a strong sense of rural tranquillity, openness with a coherent landscape character. Public rights of way and the road network enable views and appreciation of the landscape. Reference is made to the importance of a series of hills and ridges, and villages, which extends from Finmere in the west to Mentmore Park in the east and includes villages such as Crafton and Mentmore. The landscape is primarily defined by the foot of the slopes to the south of the AAL, the more pronounced hills to the north and the higher quality landscape to the south of the former Wing aerodrome. Reference is also made to there being a strong sense of history in the AAL, including the presence of the Mentmore Towers Registered Park and Garden, the large number of scheduled monuments and Conservation Areas and well preserved ridge and furrow.

1.10 Relevant guidance for landscape management include: maintaining and improving the condition of existing hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes; increasing the connectivity of habitats; and preserving archaeological earthworks and ridge and furrow by maintaining grassland.

Effect of the Proposed Development

1.11 The proposed development would not adversely affect the key characteristics of LCA 8.3 or the special qualities of the AAL. The proposals would result in a small scale change in a part of the landscape assessed as having a medium sensitivity (LCA 8.3). It would not affect the Mentmore ridge, being located at the foot of the ridge, avoiding changes to the landform and being situated in a prominent location. The arena would retain the openness of the landscape and views, by avoiding the use of any vertical features and would be consistent with the presence of arenas / manèges that have occurred within other parts of the local landscape around Mentmore. The proposed stables would introduce a modest scaled new building, with a timber construction and barn character and would form a sympathetic built feature characteristic of the rural landscape. The proposed stables would be experienced in the context of the adjoining much larger scale KBB Logistics warehouse and straw barns and Leyland cypress hedge, thereby minimising changes to the openness of the landscape and the awareness of the presence of a new built form. The proposals would be consistent with the rural character, equine influences and ongoing presence of horse grazing within the Site and would not affect the tranquillity of the landscape. The proposed hedgerow management and planting of new hedges would address a number of the landscape guidelines set out in relation LCA 8.3 and the AAL by retaining and providing new hedgerow habitats, hedgerow trees and improving habitat connectivity, providing a benefit to the landscape. The proposed development would result in a small scale change, affecting a very small geographical part of LCA 8.3 and AAL 3, which can easily be reversed, if required, and would be consistent with the existing land use, history and character of the landscape. Accordingly, the change would result in little effect on LCA 8.3 and AAL 3.

7 Views and Visual Receptors

1.12 From publicly accessible locations, the Site is mainly visible from the Public Footpath MEN/3/1 that crosses through the Site and forms part of the Outer Aylesbury Ring, as well as the public road approaching and passing through Mentmore from the north. Private views are also possible from some of the neighbouring residential properties within Mentmore.

1.13 Eight viewpoints have been used within this LVS to illustrate the views of visual receptors from publicly accessible locations from different geographical locations (Viewpoints 1-8). These have been selected based on locations of more sensitive receptors and where changes to views are most likely. The location of the Viewpoints is shown on Figure 07 in Appendix 1 and the views are illustrated by panoramic photographs in Appendix 1. Viewpoints A and B are also included in Appendix 1 to illustrate the character and landscape features within the Site and views out of the Site.

1.14 A brief description of each of these Viewpoints and the likely effect on visual receptors arising from residential development within the Site are described below.

1.15 **Viewpoint 1:** the view illustrates the experience of walking along the Public Footpath MEN/3/1 (Outer Aylesbury Ring), crossing through the Site. Panoramic views are possible across the vale towards Wing, Ascott Park and Ledburn. Characterised by a strongly rural landscape, formed of open arable fields, partially contained by hedges and occasional hedgerow trees. The skyline is defined by the rising land of the Wing and Ascott ridge, woodland, trees and houses on the ridge. In the foreground the Mentmore ridge slopes fall away to the north. Ridge and furrow are a notable feature in both fields within the Site, but more evident in the western field and diminishes towards the fringes of the northern and western part of the eastern field.

1.16 The proposed arena would be a discernible new feature but being located on the in mid-distance on flat ground at the base of the slope, with no vertical features, there would be little awareness of its presence. The proposed stables would be located in a peripheral part of the view, adjacent to the Leyland cypress hedge, and would be seen in the same context of the existing warehouse and straw barns, and the cricket pavilion, being of a similar but slightly large scale. The stable block would form a new small scale feature, experienced in the context of an existing cluster of buildings. It would appear as a new built feature that is consistent with the rural view and existing use of the land. The timber construction and barn appearance would provide a sympathetic built feature typical of the rural landscape. The proposed hedgerows along the boundary of the cricket pitch would strengthen the presence of hedgerows in the view, helping to restore this feature with the agricultural landscape. The proposed development would not affect the openness of the view, enabling the panoramic view to continue to be appreciated.

1.17 **Viewpoint 2:** having descended the ridge slope walking along the Public Footpath MEN/3/1 (Outer Aylesbury Ring), the walker reaches the flat ground within the northern part of the Site. Looking west towards the location of the proposed development, the view is composed of the grass fields and the cricket pitch in the fore to mid ground, with the backdrop formed by the woodland of Mentmore Towers. The straw barn, Leyland cypress hedge and cricket pavilion form notable features in the view. The stable block would form an evident new feature in the view, set against the backdrop of the Leyland cypress hedge, providing a similar scaled feature to the cricket pavilion but providing a more characteristic rural barn appearance. The arena would also be visible as change of surface treatment but would make little discernible difference to the appreciation of the view, being set on the lower flat ground. In this location there is little visible discernible presence of ridge and furrow within the northern part of the eastern field. The proposed arena would have little meaningful effect on the appreciation

of ridge and furrow. The proposed hedge would extend the fragmented section of hedge along the cricket pitch to form a more notable feature within the view.

- 1.18 **Viewpoint 3:** the view represents the fleeting experience of passing motorists and walkers accessing the Outer Aylesbury Ring. The view is similar to Viewpoint 1 but more elevated and more of a northerly view. The stable block would be experienced on a very similar alignment and context to the cricket pavilion, introducing a new feature of a similar scale. The stable block would be set back against the Leyland cypress and would not affect the openness of the view and appreciation of the panoramic view over the surrounding agricultural landscape. It would be seen as forming a feature that is consistent with the history and character of the view. The arena would be discernible as a change of surface but would have little effect on the view, due to being located on flat ground within a more distant part of the view.
- 1.19 **Viewpoint 4:** walking or riding along Public Bridleway MEN/6/1, this is the first point on leaving Mentmore where there is a potential view of the proposed development. The viewer experiences a view of the grass field, straw barns, cricket pitch and pavilion in the foreground and a backdrop of Mentmore Ridge and the trees and woodland along the public road though Mentmore and within Mentmore Towers parkland. The grass fields within the Site, form part of the mid ground. The proposed stable block would be obscured by the Leyland cypress hedge and the arena would be barely discernible as a change, being located on the lower flat ground and partly obscured by the cricket pavilion and intervening vegetation.
- 1.20 **Viewpoint 5:** the view is experienced by walkers on the Public Footpath MEN/3/1 (Outer Aylesbury Ring) to the north of the Site, just before the view becomes obscured by a hedge and woodland to the north. Mentmore ridge, residential properties on the ridge and the trees and woodland of Mentmore Towers parkland form distinctive features of the view. The grass fields on the higher ground to the south of the Site are also evident features. The KBB Logistic warehouse and straw barns are also notable features on the lower ground, set against a backdrop of woodland. The proposed stable block would be visible as a small scale feature, set against the backdrop of the Leyland cypress hedge. It would appear as a discernible new feature but would make little difference to the appreciation of the wider view. The arena would not be discernible as a feature.
- 1.21 **Viewpoint 6:** view from the western edge of The Green / village green looking north-west over the Site and vale, towards the Wing and Ascott ridge. In summer, the foliage on the trees and hedge along the road would partially constrain the view, limiting to framed views over the distant landscape. Similarly the lime trees in the foreground, when in leaf, would curtail much of the view from the part

of The Green further to the east. In winter the view is more open, with the trees and hedge having only a limited restriction on the view. The arena would not be discernible within the view. The proposed stable block would be discernible as a small scale distant feature set against the Leyland cypress hedge. The stable block would be experienced as a similar scale feature to the cricket pavilion, forming a perceptible feature but would have little effect on the appreciation of the view. It would be experienced as part of a cluster of buildings in the distant and providing a built character that relates to and is consistent with its rural context and current use for horse grazing.

- 1.22 **Viewpoint 7:** road users entering Mentmore from Leighton Buzzard, rise the ridge and experience this open view over the landscape, including the Site. The trees along the road would partially obscure views in summer. Panoramic views are experienced of the Mentmore ridge and the trees and woodland on the edge of Mentmore Towers parkland, and the arable farmland and grassland fields of the Site, extending across the vale towards the Wing and Ascott ridge. The KBB warehouse and straw barns form noticeable features in the view, with the cricket pavilion being a perceptible feature. The arena would not be a discernible feature within the view. The stable block would form a perceptible new small feature, seen as part of the existing cluster of buildings, set against the backdrop of the Leyland cypress hedge. It is unlikely that passing motorists and cyclists would be aware of the change due to the orientation of travel and scale of change, and if they were, it would have little influence on the appreciation of the wider panoramic view.
- 1.23 **Viewpoint 8:** view experienced by walkers using the short Public Footpath MEN/2/1 to the north of Mentmore. The view is towards Mentmore ridge, with the ridge and associated woodland and trees on the edge of Mentmore Towers parkland forming a distinctive feature on the horizon. The straw barns are evident as a feature on the lower ground at the base of the ridge. The cricket pavilion is also discernible as a small distant feature. The proposed stable block and arena would be obscured by a hedge in the mid-distance and would not affect the view.
- 1.24 The proposed development would have limited effect on visual receptors from publicly accessible locations and would not affect the openness and appreciation of the available panoramic views. The arena would have little effect on views, being located on a flat low lying location, and incorporating no vertical features. Where the stable block would form a perceptible or evident feature of the view, it would be experienced as a sympathetic built feature that is consistent with the rural landscape and the history of the local Mentmore landscape, as well as the exiting equine land use. It would appear as a modest scale new feature, typically within peripheral parts of the view, which would not be intrusive to the view.

1.25 There would also be little effect on views from residential properties within Mentmore, due to: the orientation of the dwellings and windows; the presence of intervening vegetation; and variations in level. The residential properties of Coach House, Spinney Cottage and Spinney Hall, immediately adjacent to and overlooking the Site, would have views of towards the proposed stable block largely obscured by the existing Leyland cypress hedge.

8 Summary and Conclusion

1.26 The assessment provides an appraisal of the suitability of the proposed stable block and arena within the north-western corner of a Site formed by two fields of grass used for horse grazing. The proposed stable would be constructed of timber and would have the built character of a barn. The arena would be used only for dressage and would be free of all fences, jumps and any other vertical features. Both would be located at the base of the Mentmore ridge, on low lying flat ground, within a peripheral part of the Site, adjacent to a cluster of buildings that includes the KBB Logistics warehouse, some large straw barns and a cricket pavilion, and next to the cricket pitch. The stable block would have a similar scale to the cricket pavilion. The proposals would also include new mixed native hedge planting, including hedgerow trees, along the boundaries of the cricket pitch. This would enable a habitat connection to be made with the existing hedge along western boundary of Spinney Hall and the Site and the hedge along the northern boundary of the eastern field within the Site. The latter hedge would also be managed and improved with infill planting.

1.27 The proposed development is located within the Mentmore Conservation Area and adjacent to the Mentmore Towers Registered Park and Gardens. Due to the presence of woodland around the Mentmore Towers parkland, there would be no effect on the character and views from within the Registered Park and Garden. The Site is located within the recently extended part of the Mentmore Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Review identifies that the Site is located within the North Park Area. The proposed development would be located on the low lying ground at the foot of the ridge, set in a part of the Conservation Area that has already been modified by 20th century development that includes the cricket ground and larger scaled buildings. The proposed stable block and arena would reflect the equine history of Mentmore and Crafton and the particular equine interests of the owners of Mentmore Towers, Crafton Stud, Mentmore Stud and riding school, as well as ongoing successive use of the land within the Site for keeping horses. The Review identifies a number of equine related buildings used in the life of Mentmore that are of significance to the Conservation Area. There are also other stables and arenas that fall within the setting of the Conservation Area that reflect the equine heritage of the area. The proposals would have little or no effect on the key views identified within the Conservation Area Review. Where these views are

affected, they would be mainly experienced as a distant small scale change and/or fleeting influence on travelling along the public road through Mentmore. The proposed stable block would be located in a part of the western field where there is no remaining ridge and furrow. The arena would result in the loss of some subtly defined ridge and furrow adjacent the cricket pitch but would have little effect on the broader appreciation of the more well defined retained areas of ridge and furrow. The proposed hedge management and planting of new hedges and hedgerow trees would also help to restore some of the hedgerow removal that has taken place within the North Park Area, as well as help integrate the cricket pitch into the surrounding agricultural setting.

1.28 The Site is also located on the eastern edge of the local landscape designation of the Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL) 3: Quanton-Wing Hills and the southern part of Landscape Character Area (LCA) 8.3 Ouzel Valley Catchment. The proposed development would not adversely affect the key characteristics of LCA 8.3 and special qualities of the AAL. The proposals would be consistent with the rural character and equine history of the landscape and the Site and accord with being set within a living rural landscape that has been characterised by humans over many years. The proposed building would provide a sympathetic timber barn appearance, located in a peripheral part of the Site that has already been influenced by the existing KBB Logistics warehouse, straw barns, Leyland cypress hedge, cricket pavilion and cricket pitch. The lack of vertical features in the arena would also help to retain the openness of this part of the landscape. The proposed hedgerow management and planting of new hedges would address a number of the landscape guidelines set out in relation LCA 8.3 and the AAL by retaining and providing new hedgerow habitats, hedgerow trees and improving habitat connectivity, providing a benefit to the landscape.






1.29 The proposed development would have a limited effect on visual receptors in a localised context. Effects on visual receptors would primarily be on those walking along Public Footpath MEN/3/1 (Outer Aylesbury Ring) through the Site. In these views there would be little awareness of the arena. The stable block would appear as an evident small scale new feature set against the backdrop of the Leyland cypress. This would be seen as part of a cluster of other buildings and experienced as consistent feature with the land use and visual experience of this part of the landscape. Views of the stable block would also be possible from the road when passing through Mentmore and from the western edge of The Green. This would be seen as a distant small scale feature, with limited influence of the view. The openness and expanse of the panoramic views overlooking the Site would essentially be unaffected by the proposed development.

1.30 The proposals would have little effect on the landscape and visual receptors and, where change is experienced, would be appropriate and in keeping with the landscape and visual context of the Site.

Appendix 1: Figures and Viewpoints



Key

-  Site Boundary
-  Public Footpath
-  Public Byway
-  Outer Aylesbury Ring
-  Viewpoint Location

B22022 - Stable Cottage, Mentmore

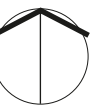
Viewpoints

Figure 07

Scale: NTS at A3

March 2022

Drawn: GF Checked: GF



Viewpoint 1



Viewpoint 2



Camera and sensor	Sony (ILCE-7M2)	Weather & lighting	Sunny and clear
Lens	Sony 50mm (SEL50F18F)	Date	16/03/2022
Horizontal Field of View	90°	Camera Height	1.6m
Vertical Field of View	27°	Eye Level AOD	1.6m

B22022 Stable Cottage, Mentmore

Viewpoint: 1 and 2
Context Only Panorama

Dwg. No: VP01 Date: 16/03/2022
Drawn By: GF Checked By: GF

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Viewpoint 3



Viewpoint 4



Camera and sensor	Sony (ILCE-7M2)	Weather & lighting	Sunny and clear
Lens	Sony 50mm (SEL50F18F)	Date	16/03/2022
Horizontal Field of View	90°	Camera Height	1.6m
Vertical Field of View	27°	Eye Level AOD	1.6m

B22022 Stable Cottage, Mentmore

Viewpoint: 3 and 4
Context Only Panorama

Dwg. No: VP02 Date: 16/03/2022
Drawn By: GF Checked By: GF

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Viewpoint 5



Viewpoint 6



Camera and sensor	Sony (ILCE-7M2)	Weather & lighting	Sunny and clear
Lens	Sony 50mm (SEL50F18F)	Date	16/03/2022
Horizontal Field of View	90°	Camera Height	1.6m
Vertical Field of View	27°	Eye Level AOD	1.6m

B22022 Stable Cottage, Mentmore

Viewpoint: 5 and 6
Context Only Panorama

Dwg. No: VP03 Date: 16/03/2022
Drawn By: GF Checked By: GF

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Viewpoint 7



Viewpoint 8



Camera and sensor	Sony (ILCE-7M2)	Weather & lighting	Sunny and clear
Lens	Sony 50mm (SEL50F18F)	Date	16/03/2022
Horizontal Field of View	90°	Camera Height	1.6m
Vertical Field of View	27°	Eye Level AOD	1.6m

B22022 Stable Cottage, Mentmore

Viewpoint: 7 and 8
Context Only Panorama

Dwg. No: VP04 Date: 16/03/2022
Drawn By: GF Checked By: GF

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Viewpoint A



Viewpoint B



Camera and sensor	Sony (ILCE-7M2)	Weather & lighting	Sunny and clear
Lens	Sony 50mm (SEL50F18F)	Date	16/03/2022
Horizontal Field of View	90°	Camera Height	1.6m
Vertical Field of View	27°	Eye Level AOD	1.6m

B22022 Stable Cottage, Mentmore

Viewpoint: A and B
Context Only Panorama

Dwg. No: VP05 Date: 16/03/2022
Drawn By: GF Checked By: GF

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