REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE REPRESENTATION FOR
DAVENTRY SOUTH WEST SITE HO1

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Version May 2018
1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd has been appointed by Daventry District Council (DDC) to consider a representation submitted by Nexus Planning on behalf of High Cross Farm Ltd and Drayton Lodge to Daventry District's Emerging Draft Local Part 2 Consultation.

1.2 The representation appraises the relevant landscape evidence base documents and proposes a refinement to the Local Plan's Green Wedge boundary adjacent to HO1 to the south west of Daventry.

1.3 The representation recommends the extension of HO1 by 3.7 hectares beyond its south western boundary into the proposed Green Wedge. HO1 and the proposed extension will be referred to as the 'Proposed Site' in this report and would cover 53 hectares.

1.4 In support of High Cross Farm Ltd and Drayton Lodge representation, a Landscape and Visual Appraisal note was prepared by Define, Chartered Landscape Architects during January 2018.

1.5 Policy HO1 allocates the Daventry South West site for residential development of a minimum of 800 dwellings and a two form entry primary school, a local centre, an integrated transport network and structural green space and wildlife corridors that retain existing landscape features.

1.6 Policy ENV3 protects Green Wedge designated areas in order to protect the identity, character and setting of settlements within the areas that fringe Daventry and Northampton.

1.7 This report provides a summary and analysis of the representation with reference to the landscape evidence base in preparation of the Local Plan. The report considers whether the proposed amendment to the Green Wedge boundary is justified in the light of the representation.

Daventry Landscape Commission

1.8 The following outlines landscape evidence base documents for the Draft Local Part 2 carried out by TEP between October 2016 and September 2017 (with relevance to the representation):

- Core Task 1 – this involved a review and update of the existing evidence and landscape character assessment. The existing evidence comprises the Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Suite (2005); Daventry Infrastructure Studies – Green Infrastructure and Landscape Technical Report (2008) and the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study (2009).

- Core Task 4 – this part of the commission required consideration of the pressure for development to the fringes of Daventry and Northampton and the potential impact on land currently providing recreational space.
Another aspect to cover was the smaller settlements near to the urban fringe and the potential harm to their character by urban expansion or coalescence.

- Core Task 5 – using the findings from the core tasks, appropriate wording for criteria based policies against which to consider proposals affecting valued and sensitive landscapes was prepared.
2.0 Summary of Representation

2.1 A summary of the matters highlighted in the representation is provided below under the following headings:

- Introduction;
- Baseline; and
- Appraisal.

Daventry South West: Landscape and Visual Technical Note

Introduction

2.2 The technical note appraises the landscape and visual aspects of potential development of Daventry South West HO1 and an additional area of approximately 3.7 ha which would require an amendment to the Green Wedge boundary. The technical note describes the baseline condition of the surrounding landscape character and visual amenity, and considers how proposed development would relate to this baseline condition.

2.3 The proposed site comprises approximately 53 hectares of agricultural land, woodland and agricultural farm buildings associated with Drayton Lodge and Malabar Farm.

2.4 The site is composed of varied field patterns that are generally enclosed by well clipped hedgerows. There is a mosaic of spinneys and woodlands on elevated land to the south of the site which contributes to the distinct wooded hilltop character that is typical of the area.

Baseline

2.5 The site is in the Staverton Hills landscape character area which is characterised by undulating hills that rise above the surrounding landscape to the immediate south of Daventry. The hills form a distinctive edge that screens Daventry from the wider landscape. Woodlands and spinneys are often at the summit of hilltops and contribute to the distinctive character of the hills.

2.6 The site is mainly composed of arable and pastoral fields that are enclosed with hedgerow field boundaries and occasional ditches. Stepnell Spinney on the southern edge of the site forms part of a distinctive skyline in views and is a designated Local Wildlife Site. Within 1km of the site there are a number of other named woodlands and spinneys including Staverton Wood located to the southwest on the summit of Big Hill, which contain ancient woodland and ancient replanted woodland.

2.7 The technical notes identifies seven main receptor groups that would have potential views of the site. These are:

- Pedestrian users of Stefen Way footbridge;
- Road users of A361;
- Road users of A425;
- Users of footpath along Brown Road;
- Users of Jurassic Way National Trail; and
- Users of Borough Hill.

2.8 The technical note considers the settlement separation between Staverton and Daventry through assessing representative viewpoints along key routes between the two settlements. It considers that the most relevant routes for considering settlement separation is the A425 between Daventry and Staverton and the Jurassic Way.

Appraisal

2.9 The technical note appraises the likely sensitivity and magnitude of change on landscape character, landscape resource, visual amenity and settlement separation in respect of the development proposals. The appraisal assumes that the development would comprise two and three storey buildings, predominately residential. Approximately 60% of the site would be developed with the remainder of the land retained for existing landscape features and open space. The appraisal refers to magnitude of impact when considering the landscape and magnitude of change when considering views.

Landscape Character

2.10 In terms of landscape character, the majority of hedgerows, trees and Stepnell Spinney would be retained to help assimilate the proposed development into the landscape and protect the well-treed character that is typical of the LCA.

2.11 The overall magnitude of impact of proposed development on the landscape is considered to be Medium-High, and would include both adverse (the replacement of open land with development) with beneficial elements (the reinstatement of the historic Solitude Spinney which will strengthen the well-treed character that is typical of the LCA). However, when considering the overall magnitude of the impact to the wider Staverton Hills LCA is considered to be Low-Medium.

Landscape Resource

2.12 As part of the landscape resource, the landscape statement proposes the reinstatement of the historic 'Solitude Spinney', near to the eastern edge of Site HO1, with native woodland planting which would reference the historic woodland pattern and enhance the site's landscape resource with ecological and amenity benefits.
2.13 On balance, the overall magnitude of impact is reported to be Medium, and would include both adverse (the replacement of open land with development) with have beneficial elements (the reinstatement of an historic spinney and the overall strengthening of the underlying landscape structure).

Views

2.14 The sensitivity and magnitude of change from the potential development on the visual receptors has been judged as follows:

- Pedestrian users of Stefen Way footbridge have medium-high sensitivity and there would be medium-high magnitude of change.
- Road users of A361 have low sensitivity and there would be a negligible magnitude of change.
- Road users of A425 have medium-high sensitivity and there would be a medium magnitude of change.
- Users of footpath along Browns Road have low sensitivity and there would be a low magnitude of change.
- Users of Jurassic Way National Trail have a high sensitivity and there would be a negligible magnitude of change.
- Users of Borough Hill have a high sensitivity and there would be a low magnitude of change.

Overall Visibility

2.15 In terms of overall visibility, natural landform and vegetation visually contain immediate and long range views from the site and with distant views towards the site received from the elevated positions on Borough Hill, some 3km distant.

Existing Landscape Features and Proposed Mitigation

2.16 The masterplan proposes the retention and enhancement of existing field boundaries, drainage corridors, tree and spinneys as integral components of the proposed green infrastructure running through the site.

2.17 In terms of mitigation, Solitude Spinney, introduced at paragraph 2.12, would be reinstated as an historic spinney on a knoll in the site.

2.18 In addition, a network of open spaces would be retained on the site and enhanced with planting, wetland areas and a sustainable drainage network. The technical note considers that after 15 years establishment the proposed planting and open spaces will enable the proposed development to be assimilated into the Ironstone Hills LCT, with minimal negative consequences and a number of positive landscape contributions.
Settlement Separation

2.19 The technical note considers that existing landscape features contribute to strong settlement separation between Staverton and Daventry, this includes the wooded range of hills (Big Hill, Fox Hill and Newnham Hill). Further, the wooded areas, hedgerows and hedgerows trees to the edge of Staverton visually contain the village.

2.20 Due to the screening effect of vegetation and landform, the Jurassic Way National Trail routed north of Staverton has no views towards the Proposed Site.

2.21 The A425 routed between the two settlements is the more relevant route for considering the separation.

2.22 The technical note reports that the lack of intervisibility between the settlements is a combination of topography (in particular the localised crest of a hill along the A425 that limits views southwards to Daventry) and vegetation.

2.23 Development on the Proposed Site would reduce the physical separation between Daventry and Staverton to around 1,000m. The note states that due to the intervening topography and vegetation, the ‘gap’ where neither the identity of Daventry and Staverton are perceived remains at around 400m.

2.24 The technical note considers the location of the actual ‘gap’ in the separation between the identities of Daventry and Staverton lies some distance to the west of the proposed Green Wedge allocation, from which the identity of Daventry can be perceived. It considers that the more robust, and actual zone protecting the identity of the settlements is land occupied by Staverton Clump and Big Hill to the south of the A425, and Staverton Golf Course to the north of the A425.

2.25 The technical note refers to paragraph 5.6 of the Daventry Local Plan Landscape Evidence Base Part D, which confirms that precise boundaries can be refined to take into account the definition of settlement confines for the emerging Part 2 Local Plan, as well as detailed site layouts on planning applications and appeals.
3.0 Analysis of Representation

3.1 TEP has reviewed the scope and content of the technical note in respect of the proposed amendment to the Green Wedge boundary next to HO1.

3.2 As part of the review, TEP undertook a site visit on Thursday 19th April 2018 and analysis of the representation is outlined below. Further consideration of settlement separation is presented in Chapter 4.0.

Daventry South West: Landscape and Visual Technical Note

Baseline

3.3 TEP concurs with the description of the site context and the landscape features in the site.

3.4 TEP considers the selection of visual receptors to be reasonable.

3.5 TEP concurs that the most relevant routes for considering settlement separation are the A425 between Daventry and Staverton and the Jurassic Way National Trail routed from the north of Staverton to the western edge of Daventry.

Appraisal

Landscape Character

3.6 TEP concurs with the magnitude of impact judgements for the site and the Staverton Hills LCA.

Landscape Resource

3.7 With the proposed reinstatement of the historic ‘Solitude Spinney’ and retention of 40% of the site for landscape features and open space, TEP concurs with the judgement there would be an overall Medium magnitude of impact on landscape resource.

Views

3.8 TEP concurs with the sensitivity and magnitude of change judgements for the visual receptors.

Overall Visibility

3.9 TEP concurs with the assessment of the overall visibility of the site from immediate and long range views.
**Existing Landscape Features and Proposed Mitigation**

3.10 TEP concurs with the principles set out for introducing landscape character elements and landscape resource elements for assimilating the proposed development into the Ironstone Hills Landscape Character Type.

**Settlement Separation**

3.11 TEP concurs with the judgement that there would be a negligible effect on views from the Jurassic Way National Trail between Staverton and land to the west of Daventry.

3.12 The analysis of settlement separation from the A425 is provided in Chapter 4.0 below.
4.0 Analysis of Settlement Separation

4.1 The Technical Note considers the most relevant route for considering the settlement separation between Staverton and Daventry is the A425.

4.2 As part of the site visit of Thursday 19th April 2018 TEP took a selection of photographs (the majority from the A425) from some of the same viewpoints as the Technical Note. The comparison of the photographs was necessary as part of the analysis of the representation.

4.3 TEP’s analysis of settlement separation is outlined below and it should be read in conjunction with Figure 1 (HO1 Daventry South West and Green Wedge) overleaf and Figure 2 Photosheets (IN6974.001).

4.4 The analysis has been structured as follows; for each viewpoint, TEP considers:

- Is the relevant existing settlement edge visible?
- Would proposed development on Site HO1 be visible?
- Would development on the proposed extension to Site HO1 be visible?

4.5 In addition, with reference to the Technical Note’s Figure 13: Settlements Setting Plan, TEP considers:

- Whether the physical gap between the settlements would reduce from 1,200m to 1,000m;
- Whether the land highlighted in Figure 13 ensures settlement separation (400m);
- Whether developing Site HO1 would reduce the same settlement separation; and
- Whether developing Site HO1 and the proposed extension would reduce the same settlement separation.
Travelling towards Daventry

4.6 In terms of views from the A425 travelling in a north east direction towards Daventry, TEP's findings are as follows.

**Viewpoint D1**

4.7 The viewpoint illustrates the screening of views towards Daventry due to topography and vegetation.
4.8 The viewpoint also illustrates that neither proposed development on Site HO1, nor development of the proposed extension would be visible.

4.9 However, the Staverton Park Hotel development is apparent in near views to the north.

Viewpoint D2

4.10 This viewpoint is 300 metres from Woodhollow Cottages on the A425. The recognition of the edge of Daventry becomes apparent from this viewpoint with glimpses of the settlement approximately 1km distant. Also in the view is the hedgerow defining the existing western limit of the Site HO1 and the proposed extension to the site.

Viewpoint D3

4.11 This viewpoint is 220 metres from Woodhollow Cottages and shows the existing western limit of Site HO1 and the proposed extension to the Site. Stepnell Spinney also is in the view.

4.12 The viewpoint illustrates that there would be views towards proposed development on Site HO1 and views towards development on the proposed extension to the site.

Viewpoint D4

4.13 This viewpoint is 50 metres from Woodhollow Cottages and shows the proposed extension to Site HO1 (on land sloping down towards the Cottages) and the hedgerow defining the existing western limit of Site HO1. The hedgerow forms the intermediate skyline with Stepnell Spinney.

4.14 The viewpoint illustrates that there would be views towards proposed development on Site HO1 and views towards development on the proposed extension to the site.

4.15 Travelling in a north east direction towards Daventry, the proposed extension to Site HO1 would bring development on the edge of Daventry 200 metres closer (for example when seen from Viewpoints D2, D3 and D4. In respect of Figure 13: Settlements Settings Plan the physical gap between Daventry and Staverton would be reduced from 1,200 metres to 1,000 metres.

Travelling towards Staverton

4.16 Travelling in a south west direction towards Staverton revealed the following.

Viewpoint S1

4.17 The viewpoint is 375 metres from the western boundary of Site HO1. The screening effect of vegetation and topography means that views towards Staverton are not feasible.

4.18 Due to the screening effect of vegetation, both the proposed development on Site HO1, and development on the proposed extension would not be visible.
**Viewpoint S2**

4.19 The viewpoint is 80 metres from the western boundary of Site HO1. The screening effect of vegetation and topography means that views towards Staverton are not feasible.

4.20 There would be views towards proposed development on Site HO1 over the clipped roadside hedgerow. Views towards development on the proposed extension would largely be screened by roadside vegetation, although there would be some limited views towards rooftops.

4.21 The field west of the proposed extension to Site HO1 is visible in the distance.

**Viewpoint S3**

4.22 This viewpoint is west of both Site HO1 and the proposed Green Wedge. There are views west towards woodland, meaning that the settlement edge is not visible.

4.23 However, the building form and parking to the Staverton Park Hotel is in the near view to the north of the road.

**Viewpoint S4**

4.24 This viewpoint is not taken from the A425, but demonstrates the view from the pedestrian bridge over the A45 at the south western edge of Daventry looking towards Staverton, Site HO1 and the proposed extension to the site.

4.25 The screening effect of vegetation and topography means that views towards Staverton are not feasible.

4.26 In the near view is HO1, with the hedgerow defining the western edge of the Site in the middle distance (approximately 510 metres). The field west of the proposed extension to the Site is visible in the distance (included in Green Wedge), sloping up towards Staverton Wood.

**Physical Gap Between Settlements**

4.27 The analysis of viewpoints D2, D3 and D4 confirms that the proposed extension of Site HO1 would bring development 200m closer in the view and therefore the physical gap between the settlements would reduce from 1,200m to 1,000m.

**Land that Ensures Settlement Separation**

4.28 Viewpoints D1 and S4 confirm that both Daventry and Staverton settlement edges are not visible and that settlement separation is 400m presented on Figure 13 of the Technical Note.

4.29 Further, the same viewpoints confirm that both Site HO1 and the proposed extension are not visible and that settlement separation is 400m as presented on Figure 13 of the Technical Note.
4.30 However, the Staverton Park Hotel is a large two storey development with extensive parking and is in the area indicated as ‘land that ensures settlement separation’ on Figure 13 of the Technical Note. Although there is vegetation to the roadside boundary, the Hotel compromises the openness of the land and the perceived separation between the two settlements. It appears as built form between the two settlements.

**Summary**

4.31 Viewpoint D1 has no views towards Daventry's existing settlement edge, Site HO1 and the proposed extension to the site. However, there are near views towards the Staverton Park Hotel.

4.32 Viewpoints D2, D3 and D4 have views towards Daventry's existing settlement edge, Site HO1 and the proposed extension to the site. Travelling in a north east direction towards Daventry, the proposed extension to Site HO1 would bring development on the edge of Daventry 200 metres closer in the view.

4.33 Viewpoints S1 and S2 have no views towards Staverton’s settlement and views towards Site HO1 and the proposed extension to the site tend to be limited by vegetation.

4.34 There are no views of Staverton’s settlement edge from viewpoint S3, however there are near views towards the Staverton Park Hotel.

4.35 The analysis of viewpoints D2, D3 and D4 confirms that the proposed extension of Site HO1 would bring development 200m closer in the view and therefore the physical gap between the settlements would reduce from 1,200m to 1,000m.

4.36 Site HO1 and the proposed extension to the site do not compromise land (400m) that ensures settlement separation. However, Staverton Park Hotel compromises the openness of the same land and the perceived separation between the two settlements. It appears as built form between the two settlements.
5.0 Conclusion

5.1 TEP recognises that landscape character and views is a factor that the Council needs to consider when preparing the Local Plan and allocating sites to meet its development requirements.

5.2 The extension of HO1 would have some adverse effects on landscape character and views. The impact on landscape character would be of moderate magnitude and there is potential for landscape enhancements which would mitigate effects over time. The Council will need to take account of these effects when considering the benefits that may arise from removing land from the currently proposed Green Wedge.

5.3 The effects of the proposed extension to Site HO1 on settlement separation are confirmed in paragraphs 4.31 to 4.37.

5.4 Should the Council decide to change the Green Wedge boundary to the south west of HO1, TEP recommends that Policy H01 is revised to ensure that the proposed mitigation principles identified in the Technical Note accompanying the representation are adequately incorporated. This would ensure development is assimilated into the local landscape and adverse effects on character and views are minimised. This is particularly important as the Technical Note advocates that 40% of the site is to be retained for landscape features and open space.

5.5 The mitigation of views from the A425 is particularly important as the Site is particularly visible from this receptor.
Figure 2 - Photosheets (IN6974.001)
Viewpoint S1 - towards Staverton

Viewpoint S2 - towards Staverton
Viewpoint S3 - towards Staverton

Wooded edge to Staverton

Viewpoint S4 - towards Staverton

Field west of proposed extension to Site HO1

Hedgerow defining western limit of Site HO1

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