

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL

LAND ADJACENT TO 1 GABLES WAY, BATH ROAD, COLTHROP, THATCHAM

REF 21/02130/OUTMAJ

OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR COMMERCIAL B2 (GENERAL INDUSTRIAL) AND/OR B8 (STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION) DEVELOPMENT TOGETHER WITH ANCILLARY OFFICE SPACE AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, CAR PARKING, SERVICE YARDS AND ACCESS. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: ACCESS

Consultation response dated March 2022

A. Introduction

The proposals were reviewed and a site visit was undertaken to surrounding public accessible areas to assess views and the overall landscape character of the area.

An initial inquiry had been made by the applicant within 2020, with planning pre-app advice provided by West Berkshire Council, date 8th December 2020. Additional landscape advice was then provided for the 20/00140/PREAPP with landscape comments dated June 2021.

B. Submissions

The following documents have been assessed as part of this report:

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, August 2021, by the Richards Partnership
- Illustrative Landscape Masterplan, Drwg: 20-11-PL-201 rev B, 26/07/2021, by the Richards Partnership
- Proposed Parameter Plan, Drwg 04, 10/2021, by Morsewebb Architects
- Appendix A - LVIA Methodology, August 2021 by the Richards Partnership
- Appendix B - LVIA Winter Viewpoints, August 2021 by the Richards Partnership
- Appendix C - LVIA Photomontages, August 2021 by the Richards Partnership
- BS5837 Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Tamla Trees, July 2021

C. The site and context

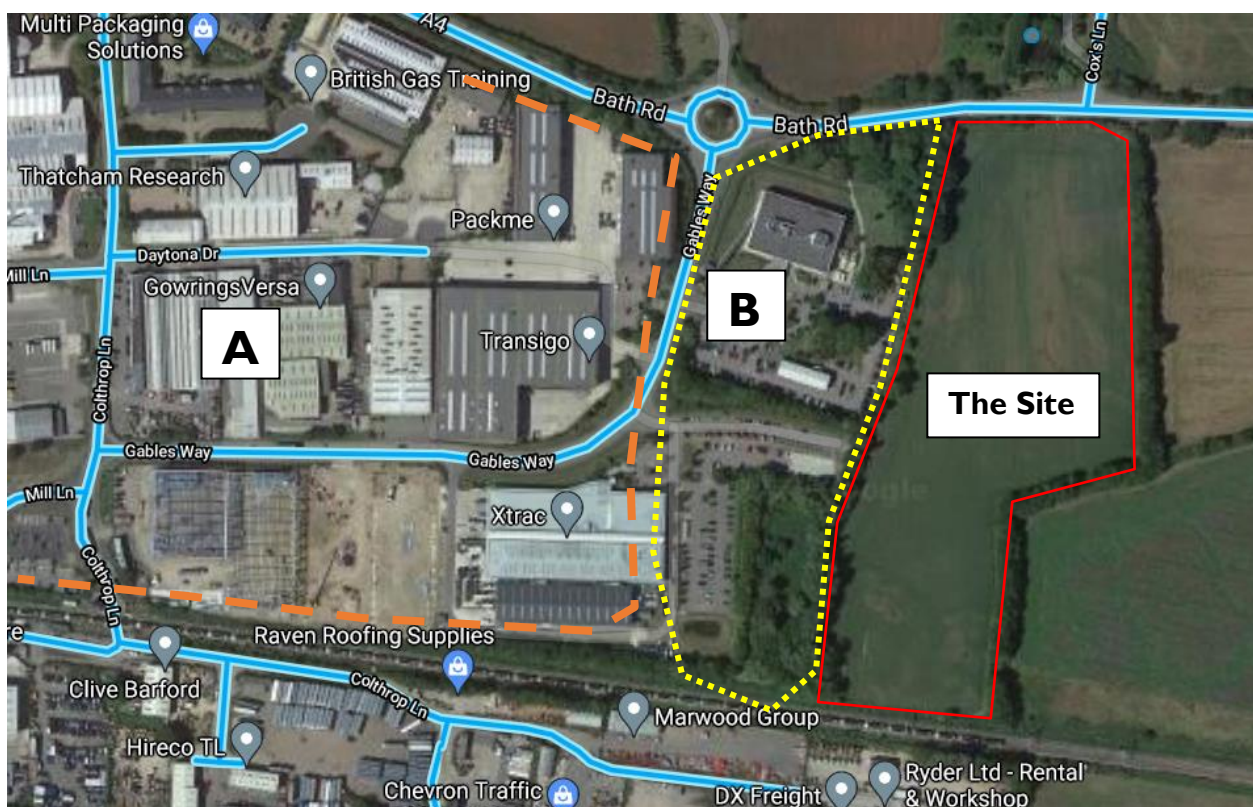
The site lies within the Kennet Valley, 1.4km to the south of the boundary of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

The site measures 5.053 of a hectare and covers one arable field. The LVIA provided a description of the site which I largely agree with in parts.

The site area is elongated in shape with Bath Road frontage measuring circa: 120m. The depth of the site is circa 385m. The site is also located on the Kennet Valley floor, with the Bath Road located at a slightly higher level of between 1-2m (as stated within the LVIA). The levels of the site then further descend from 68.32m AOD in a north - south direction across the site to the southern boundary at 63.85m AOD.

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The boundaries of the site, as described within the LVIA state that the eastern boundary was planted about 20 years ago as three rows of trees (measuring across 5m). This eastern boundary is now (at the northern end) a mix of 2-3 intermittent rows reducing down to a single row at the southern end. As viewed on site there is little undergrowth within the eastern tree belt permitting low level views from the east (PRoW) through into the site. The site boundary to the west abuts a more robust tree line, which concludes at the northern end (adjacent the Bath Road) as a small woodland copse, with a number of trees with TPOs. At the southern end, the western site boundary aligns a row of trees, with a balancing pond further beyond to the west, with more trees, before an adjacent car parking area within Colthrop Industrial Estate. As shown within the LVIA's site photos, in particular View B (LVIA page 17), this western treed boundary provides a good screen to Colthrop Industrial Estate from the wider landscape to the east. Additionally, Viewpoint F (LVIA page 19), illustrates a view from within the site north up to the Kennet Valley side, with Colthrop Industrial Estate to the west screened from view.



Aerial photo showing different landscape characters of Colthrop Industrial Estate. Area B has a more treed character compared to Area A. Area B collectively also acts as a buffer/screen to the open landscape to the east where the site is located

D. Landscape context and character

The LVIA, stated the site does not lie within any designated landscape. West Berkshire do not follow a designated landscape approach, partly because a landscape does not have to have a designation to be valued locally. All landscapes across West Berkshire have some degree of value and all development should therefore respond positively to the identified character and valued qualities inherent in that local landscape.

The LVIA referenced the National Character Area 129: *Thames Basin Heaths*, within which the LVIA then referenced the Kennet Valley. The Kennet and Avon Canal are listed within NCA:129 as a landscape attribute and subsequently managed as a recreational corridor with a rich natural and cultural heritage.

The LVIA referenced the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (WBLCA) 2019, where the site lies within Landscape Character Area LVI: *Kennet Lower River Valley*. The site is also visible from another LCA to the north: *LCA WH4: Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic*. The WBLCA, besides

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listing the key characteristics for each LCA, also provides an analysis of the landscape character under the headings of Valued Features and Qualities, Detractors which then concludes with a Landscape Strategy for each LCA; the LVIA did not reference this analysis or the Landscape Strategy. This part of the LCA is important as they highlight within each LCA what is valued and what are potential forces of change or detractors. With regard to the LCA:LVI, under the heading of Valued Features and Qualities, this lists the Kennet Valley River corridor which it states includes important habitats, is strongly rural, sparsely settled and also a destination for recreation, with PRow abundant and well used, which would also include the towpath. Detractors for this LCA, also describe the effect of the past and present impact of industrial use...*especially with the spread of commercial and industrial land use onto the valley floor*, (which is where the site is located). With regard to LCA WH4: *Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic*, which is located just north of the Bath Road, under the heading of Valued features and Qualities this lists the importance of where open locations can provide views south to similar woodland and heathland mosaic forming the southern side of the Kennet Valley.

E. Relevant policy and documentation

The proposal within the LVIA, should be assessed against the following policies, adopted documents and statements:

National Planning Policy Framework: NPPF 2021

Section 2 para 8 (c), Section 12 para 130, Section 15 para 174, 175 and 176

Local Plan Policy: West Berks Core Strategy 2006-2026 DPD

Policies CS14, CS19, ADPP 1, ADPP 3 and ADPP 5

Other documents

North Wessex Downs AONB: Position Statement 2019 on setting of the AONB
Quality Design SPD: Part 1: Achieving Design Quality

G. Views of the site

The applicant produced a plan with 9 groups of views of the site. Winter photos were also produced as recommended at the Preapp stage. The groups and individual photos are as follows:

Views from Bath Road. These were provided within the LVIA as Photo viewpoint 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. As shown within the summer views the Bath roadside vegetation channels views down the road (west-east and east - west) and not until you are adjacent the site are there views into the site, which are also from an elevated (1-2m) position. The intervening roadside hedgerow includes a lot of dead elm. Within the last 6 months this hedgerow has been significantly cut back, allowing more open views down and across the site. The adjacent built edge of Colthrop Industrial Estate isn't visible within these views, but screened behind the well-established small woodland copse and tree belt which aligns the western site boundary.

Views from the east on PRow (MIDG/8/1: These views were illustrated by Viewpoint 10 and 11. As shown within these views towards the site, the existing buildings within Colthrop Industrial Estate are not visible, with the LVIA photos highlighting the buildings to the south of the railway, which forms a very small part of the wider view. These views are very rural in character, with large arable fields, hedgerows and Orchard Cottage visible as a isolated dwelling. The eastern site boundary hedgerow is visible as a relatively robust continuous tree line.

Viewpoint 12: From the east from the railway bridge (Brimpton Road), there is a view across the Kennet Valley floor to the valley side, the site is not visible, due to screening by the existing eastern site boundary treeline. Again, a very small part (not really significant) of a building within the Colthrop Industrial Estate is just visible. This view is rural in character with arable fields, leading across to the valley side and up to a low wooded horizon. Colthrop Manor is visible (Grade II listed); also, other isolated dwellings on the valley floor are visible, including Meadow Thatch Cottage and Orchard Cottage. This view is rural in character with few visual detractors.

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Viewpoint 13 from the towpath, south of the site: Views from the towpath can be obscured by canal side vegetation, which then contrast with the more open and framed views (where permitted) across to the Kennet Valley side, where woodland forms the horizon as part of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

Views from within Colthrop Industrial Estate are represented by Viewpoint 14. The site isn't visible, from within the industrial estate. Where there would be views towards the site (eastwards) these views are obscured by the western boundary vegetation, and trees and buildings within the eastern part of Colthrop Industrial Estate.

Views from the north on the Kennet Valley side (Viewpoints 15, 16 and 17): A feature of LCA WH4: *Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic*. is the good network of Public Rights of Way. Views from PRoW THAT/1/1 aligning from Cox's Lane across to Colthrop Manor allow a number of good views down across the Kennet Valley. Within some of these views as shown within the LVIA photos the buildings within Colthrop Industrial Estate are particularly visible as an area of contrast (white) against the seemingly well wooded valley floor (dark green) – see photo LA1 and LA2 below. Viewpoint 17 is of particular note, as the site is visible within the context of Colthrop Manor farmstead, also within this view only a fraction of the Colthrop Industrial Estate is visible. The view is largely development free and extends across the Kennet Valley floor to the southern Kennet Valley side.



Photo LA1 – east of Colthrop Manor from Public Right of Way (May 2021)

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Photo LA2 - Taken from Cox's Lane (May 2021). This shows the site separated from the existing white roofs of Colthrop Industrial Estate by a semi-woodland belt which aligns the western site boundary

Views from Cox's Lane (to the north of the site) (Viewpoints 7, 8, and 9). As Cox Lane ascends the Kennet Valley side, there are views down across the Kennet Valley floor, viewed as well-wooded. Where there are views of the existing Colthrop Industrial Estate, this area reads as a contrasting area of pale grey-white tones, which contrasts with the adjacent areas of woodland (dark green). The site is also separate from this area of pale tones by the wooded western boundary to the site (see photo on next page LA3).

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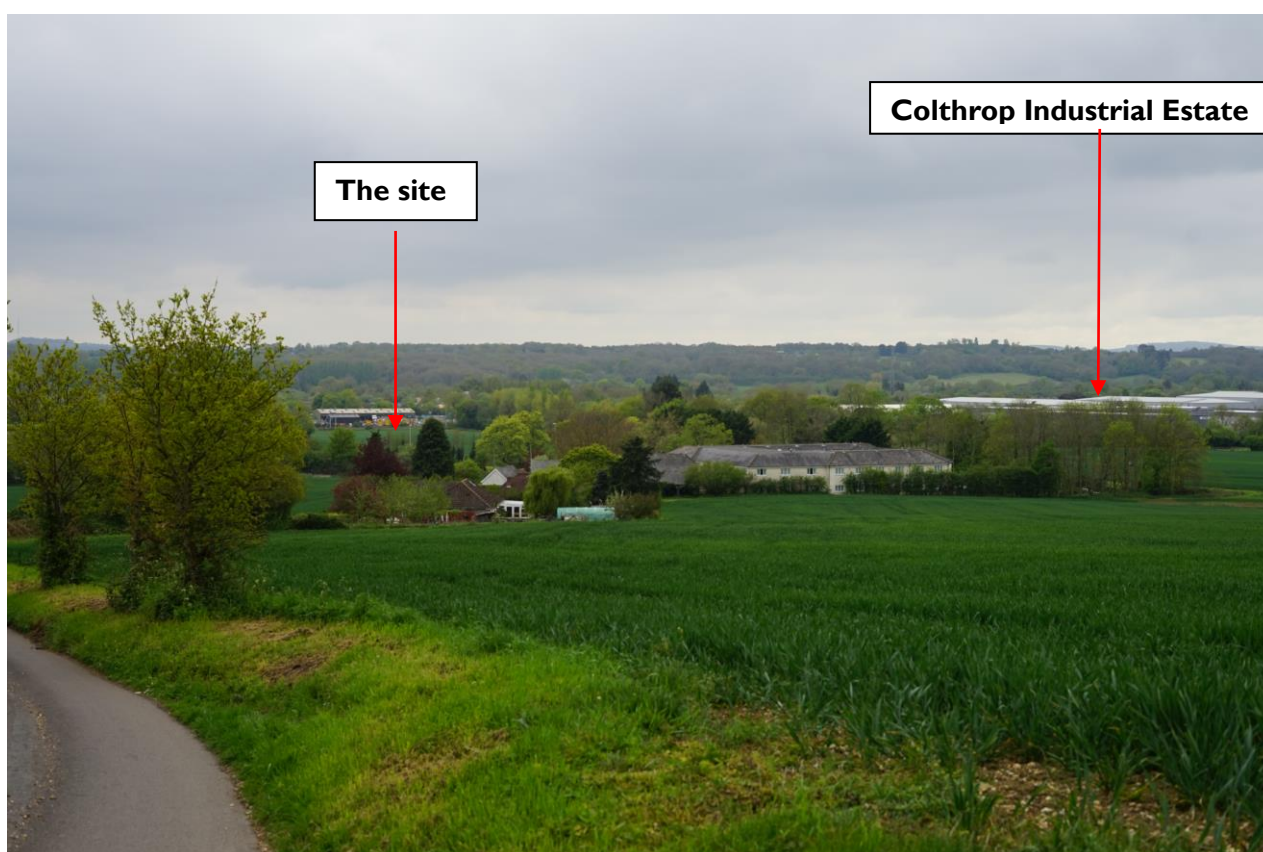


Photo LA3 – north of Colthrop Manor (May 2021). The site forms part of the wider seemingly undeveloped wooded valley floor of the Kennet valley

To summarise the key points about the visibility are as follows:

- The existing wooded western boundary of the Colthrop Industrial Estate provides relatively good screening of the existing buildings within the adjacent estate from the wider landscape to the east
- The eastern site boundary is reasonably robust as an intermittent rows of trees
- Views of the site from the Bath Road are predominantly adjacent, but are also down onto and across the whole of the site to the southern site boundary. Recent roadside hedgerow trimming has allowed these views to be particularly open
- The type of large-scale pale buildings within Colthrop industrial estate can be particularly visible from the Kennet Valley side, due to the contrast of their pale colour against the dark adjacent treed and wooded areas
- There are views which the site forms part of from the towpath across to the Kennet Valley side and the wooded horizons within the AONB

F. Key landscape issues

As stated within the pre application advice (June 2021) the key issues for this application are as follows:

- Impact on the rural views from the slopes (Kennet Valley side) above Thatcham and north of the A4
- Impact on the setting of the barn at Colthrop Manor (Grade II Listed barn), as seen in context from PRow further to the north
- Visual Impact on the Kennet and Avon Canal and recreational value
- Impact on 'gateway', approach to Thatcham and A4 corridor
- Impact on trees and TPO trees to the west of the site
- Impact on the landscape character of the site and surrounding area, direct and indirect
- Impact on individual landscape elements (i.e., landform, trees, areas of grass on the site)

etc), which is separate from the impact on the landscape character of the site. This should also include the features found on the boundary of the site

- Impact of the increase in light pollution, in particular on the wider landscape
- Impact of the construction phase
- Visual impact on the adjacent open countryside and intervisibility
- Impact on the setting of the AONB

H. Assessment of the Scheme – and summary of key points

H1 Description of proposals

A summary of the proposed application for which this LVIA is based on is as follows:

- New vehicular point of access off the Bath Road at the western end. This will also include the Bath Road being realigned slightly northwards to permit space for the right-hand turn and also 30m-line of roadside hedgerow removed
- Spine road into the site along the western edge
- Three buildings as shown on the parameter Plan:
 - North of the site: Area 1: One building up to 10.5m ridgeline, footprint 32x78 = 2496m²
 - Middle site: Area 2: One Building up to 17.5m ridgeline, footprint 83x120m = 9960m²
 - Southern site: Area 3: One Building up to 15m ridgeline, footprint 68x90 = 6120m²

Hard and Soft Landscaping:

Overall, there is very little proposed tree planting within the central part of the site, which is dominated by hard areas (for vehicular parking and manoeuvres) and buildings. Tree planting is concentrated towards the boundaries as follows:

- Eastern boundary shown to be widened to a width of between 10-25m
- Additional tree planting also proposed along western edge adjacent the attenuation drainage
- Proposed 10-12m width of tree planting adjacent the Bath Road
- Attenuation drainage scheme along western site edge, including open basins, concluding at two basins on adjacent southern site boundary

H2 Direct Impacts and impacts on landscape character of the site

The proposed development will result in the direct loss of an arable field and 30m of roadside hedgerow. This will be replaced with three large scale buildings, an access road, car parking and general hard surface for vehicle access, manoeuvres and parking. The eastern boundary will be supplemented and extended in width of up to 25m, but the majority of the eastern site boundary will be extended to around 10m. I agree with the LVIA, that the sensitivity of the site is medium and that the impact on the site features and landscape character will be substantial adverse.

H3 Visual Impacts

The LVIA included a visual impact table with the results of the visual assessment (LVIA: Section 7). The LVIA also included a methodology outlining their approach. The LVIA did not produce a Zone of Visual Influence; this is usually the starting point for a visual assessment, although overall the LVIA included key local viewpoints within their assessment as recommended at the preapp stage.

Views from Bath Road (Ref LVIA: Group A and Group B): The new site entrance is proposed 30m wide. This will permit a framed open view into the site across to the buildings within Area 2 and Area 3. This will result in a high magnitude of change and with the LVIA's own methodology a moderate adverse visual effect. Further along the Bath Road, at locations adjacent the site due to the existing poor-quality intervening hedgerow, at Year 1 the effect will also still be moderate adverse visual effect. By Year 15, this effect will have slightly lessened, due to the growth of the proposed tree planting. I therefore disagree with the LVIA assessment on views from the Bath Road, as they have not taken into account the new entrance and the poor-quality existing hedgerow, therefore the effect will be more than minor adverse at Year 1 and negligible at Year 15 as the LVIA has stated, it will be as described a lot higher.

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Views from Cox Lane (Group C): I agree with the LVIA that from higher elevations the proposed development would form an additional built element in the view. This additional built element would also be seen separated from the existing Colthrop Industrial Estate, by the mature western semi-wooded belt which aligns the western site boundary. At the junction of Cox Lane with the Bath Road, the proposed development would replace a view across the Bath Road through the existing field entrance to the site and across open countryside (no views of Colthrop Industrial Estate to the right). I agree Cox Lane should have a medium sensitivity, but the magnitude of change would be a lot higher, (than as reported within the LVIA) resulting in a substantial adverse visual effect. By Year 15, views at the junction would have improved due to the proposed planting within the northern site boundary, but the views from elevated locations will be difficult to mitigate due to the proximity and height of the proposed buildings and would stay as moderate/substantial adverse.

Views from east (Ref LVIA: Group D): Views from the PRoW (Viewpoint 11): I agree with the LVIA that the proposed development will introduce... *a notable urbanising element which would break the skyline.* Which I would further add would also be particularly more visible within the leafless winter months. The LVIA assessed this PRoW with a medium sensitivity and a medium magnitude of change, I would disagree with this, the magnitude would be a lot higher, which would result in a substantial adverse visual effect at Year 1.

Views from the towpath adjacent the Kennet and Avon Canal: I agree with the LVIA that the towpath would have a high sensitivity, as an important routeway adjacent the canal with a high recreational value. The adjacent canal side vegetation provides containment in places and frames a number of views across the open landscape to the Kennet Valley side, enclosed by the low wooded horizons which forms part of the North Wessex Downs AONB. A photomontage was not included within the LVIA, however a photomontage had been submitted at the pre-app stage. This existing view for this photomontage, shows open countryside leading across to a wooded horizon, with a small part of an existing building. The photomontage then shows the introduction of buildings which become the key focus now in the view, this will result in a high magnitude of change, resulting in a substantial adverse visual effect, not a moderate adverse visual effect as reported by the LVIA.

Views from the PRoW adjacent Colthrop Manor (Group E): These views look down from the Kennet Valley side across the Kennet Valley floor to a well wooded horizon on the southern Kennet Valley side. These views are strongly rural with development on the Kennet Valley floor well screened/integrated, except for the large-scale buildings within Colthrop Industrial Estate which due to their scale, colour and expanse contrasts with the seemingly wooded character of the valley floor. In some views the proposed development will be seen within views of the existing Colthrop Industrial Estate, although separated by the western semi-wooded boundary, extending industrial development eastwards along the Kennet Valley floor. The LVIA reported the sensitivity of these PRoW as having a high sensitivity, which I agree with, however, I disagree with the reported magnitude of change as low, the magnitude of change would be higher as the change in view by the LVIA's own methodology would result in being clearly visible and not integrating well with existing landscape features, largely to contrasting colour. The photomontage has coloured the proposed buildings as a pale green to replicate adjacent fields (?), however a suitable colour as seen from the valley side to mitigate the building into the surrounding valley floor, will not be the right colour to use on the facades when seen against the sky from viewpoints on the valley floor.

H4 *Indirect Impacts on the wider landscape*

The LVA did not include an assessment on the impact of the development on the landscape character NCA 129: *Thames Basin Heaths*. Although this NCA covers a large area, the Kennet River Valley is listed as important landscape attribute, where the proposed development will have an adverse impact directly on the site, the landscape character of the site and will be visible from adjacent areas within the Kennet Valley. This will result in an adverse effect on the landscape character of the Kennet Valley and the NCA 129: *Thames Basin Heaths*.

The LVIA included an assessment on the LCA LVI: *Kennet Lower River Valley*, based on the loss of an arable field as a percentage on the overall LCA area, this result was assessed as minor adverse, I disagree with

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this assessment as it would be a lot higher. This is also not the recognised way of undertaking the assessment as the site as part of the overall area of the LCA. As already stated, the LVIA did not acknowledge the Valued Features and Qualities, Detractors and the Landscape Strategy as part of their assessment. Furthermore, the LVIA has over empathized the fact that the site is adjacent the existing Colthrop Industrial Estate, although this might partly be the case, the boundary of the existing Industrial Estate is well treed and partly wooded, which largely screens the buildings from the wider character area, the new buildings will be visible in comparison. As listed under detractors for LCA:LVI *...spread of commercial and industrial land use onto the valley floor*. The proposals will further exacerbate this detractor. The landscape strategy for this LCA: LVI lists conserving the distinct identities of individual settlements, conserving the overall sparsely settled character in the valley, seek to avoid unsympathetic linear development, conserve the role that the valley floor plays in the setting of settlements. The site in itself has a short road frontage, but it does extend beyond a well-established wooded boundary of the existing Colthrop Industrial Estate, for this reason depending on how the site is developed will affect the degree and severity of the impact on the landscape character of LCA:LVI. Presently due to the scale of the proposed buildings, lack of space for an effective outer eastern boundary treatment, the proposals will result in an adverse effect on the landscape character of the LCA LVI: *Kennet Lower River Valley*, which as assessed within the LVIA will be far more than minor adverse. The LVIA also subdivided the survey area into local landscape character areas and identified the site to be within their named Midgham Marsh Meadows and Arable Land, where they stated the site proposals would result in a moderate adverse effect on the landscape character of the adjacent area to the site.

As per the LVIA's methodology, as stated by the LVIA assessment (page 13) a moderate adverse landscape effect equates to... *development would cause a noticeable deterioration to the quality and character of the existing landscape resource; conflicts with the character of the existing landscape; have a negative impact on some characteristic features or elements and diminish the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area.*

I Conclusion

The site is set 1.4km from the boundary of the North Wessex Downs AONB. As stated within ADPP5, new development will need to conserve and enhance the local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the AONB whilst preserving the strong sense of remoteness. There is no intervisibility with areas within the AONB and the site. However, there are views from the towpath adjacent the Kennet and Avon Canal towards the wooded skyline within the AONB, the proposed development will intrude into these views.

As stated within Policy CS 14: *New development must demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area.* The design for the buildings has not been included, with just footprints and proposed heights submitted. Primary mitigation measures have been suggested to reduce the visual impact of the building by proposing a suitable colour for the facades, however the buildings will still be visible against the skyline from the east and introduce a concentrated area of buildings into the landscape as viewed from elevated areas on the Kennet Valley side. Due to the scale of the development, this makes the proposal particularly visible within the surrounding local landscape. Some tree planting has been proposed to screen the buildings; however, this will be inadequate against the scale of the development with the photomontages misleading as it is unlikely the tree growth rate will be as shown resulting in the buildings still very prominent within the views beyond Year 15.

Policy CS19 considers the conservation and enhancement of the local Landscape Character Areas of West Berkshire. The site is located within LCA LVI: *Kennet Lower River Valley* and visible from the adjacent LCA WH4: *Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic*. LCA: LVI recognises that commercial and industrial land use within the Kennet Valley floor has been a landscape detractor, while a key valued feature and quality of LCA: LVI is the strong rural, agricultural and sparsely settled character, even due to its proximity to the major settlements of Newbury and Thatcham. Public Rights of Way are also abundant, with the towpath adjacent the Kennet and Avon Canal. Trees on the western edge of Colthrop Industrial Estate are well established and with a lower density style of development within the western area of the estate this provides a softening/buffer and a screen to the wider landscape. The proposed development is overdevelopment of the site, with inadequate room for mitigation and at a scale which will adversely impact on the surrounding landscape character. Based on this, the proposals will be seen extending

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commercial development further along the valley floor, but more so its influence over a wider area than as existing, which would not comply with this policy.

NPPF 2021 paragraph 8 states achieving sustainable development includes the environmental objective to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land and improving biodiversity. Paragraph 130 (c) states decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Para 174 states decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Para 176 states great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in ... Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas. As shown the development proposals fail to achieve any of these objectives.

The proposal is therefore contrary to the NPPF 2021 Section 2 para 8 (c), Section 12 para 130, Section 15 para 174, 175 and 176 to Local Plan policies, CS14, CS19 and ADPPI, ADPP3 and ADPP5 as stated above.

J. Recommendations

In its present form the development on the site represents over development of the site, with the scale of the buildings, areas of hard standing and layout not permitting adequate mitigation measures to reduce the adverse visual and landscape effect to an acceptable level, on the relatively well intact adjacent rural landscape character of the Kennet Valley. The site could have potential for commercial development if the following guidance, (but also not limited to) is used to develop a revised proposal:

Adjacent the Bath Road: As shown the adjacent area of Colthrop Industrial Estate is set back from the Bath Road by a 35m (adjacent the roundabout), with the eastern corner of the building which is the closest to the site, set back further just over 50m from the Bath Road. This has allowed a robust woodland copse to be retained on the corner, which provides a good landscape buffer for the industrial estate to the wider landscape to the north and east.

Recommendation: Set buildings back to allow adequate space to propose northern part of the site as woodland planting to build on and extend existing wooded edge of Colthrop Industrial Estate character.

Visibility of buildings from wider Kennet Valley floor: As shown within the photomontages the buildings will be visible from the wider landscape, with views from the PRow to the east and the towpath to the south.

Recommendation: Restriction on height: In the present layout the buildings are too tall and too close to the eastern site boundary. They should be set back and reduced in height. This will also allow a wider eastern tree planted buffer to be proposed, which in time will help mitigate any adverse visual effect on the wider landscape to the east.

Views from the Kennet Valley side: The site as shown will extend large scale development out towards the east along the Kennet Valley floor. As shown from views adjacent Colthrop Manor, due to the height and massing, these will intrude into the views of a largely wooded Kennet Valley floor.

Recommendation: Allowing more space within the site for tree planting and suitable roof treatment (green roofs) could reduce the visual effect to an acceptable level.

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Comments based on revised Proposed Parameter Plan (preliminary) Drwg No 004 (23.03.2022)

A revised parameter plan was submitted to the council for comment. The revised plan showed the central area (Area 2) proposed for buildings reduced in height by 2.5m from originally 17.5m down to 15m. No other changes were made to the extent of the proposed three development areas. West Berks Council's original landscape concerns (as set out within the comments above) with regard to height was mainly the visual impact of the development proposals from the locations within the east, the towpath and from the Bath Road. The existing views from the east as described within the applicant's LVIA state...*These views are largely rural with minimal visual distractions. The proposed development would introduce a notable urbanising element which would break the skyline in the early years* (ref LVIA page 72 comments on viewpoints 10 and 11). The LVIA then assessed that the effect at Year 1 would be *moderate adverse effect*, which based on their own methodology is described as *...the development would cause a notable deterioration in the existing view and visual amenity of the receptor*.

The revised plan shows proposed buildings within the central area reduced by 2.5m in height. At this scale of buildings, the reduced height will not be significant, therefore their original visual assessment will still valid.

The revised plan shows a landscape buffer along the eastern boundary, this is keyed as a *min 10m*. However as measured from the scale bar, the green strip measures wider than 10m and actually measures where the text *min 10m* is shown as between 15-20m. A strip of this width should be proposed at the least

As set out within the recommendations above, Area 3 needs to be set back further from the Bath Road to provide a continuation of the already wooded buffer which fronts Colthrop Industrial estate to the west.

Conclusion: Besides the small reduction in height of the central Area 2, none of the other recommendations as stated above were fully addressed and only advised that they could be conditioned. Based on this, the revised parameter plan does not go far enough in reducing the adverse effect on landscape and visual receptors.

Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – Guidance of selection and use of colour un development.

This largely deals with smaller developments within the AONB, but there are some useful references within the document. As proposed an Environmental Colour Assessment would be beneficial to inform reserve matters, once the other recommendations (as stated above) are satisfactorily achieved.

With large scale development of this type, the applicant should also consider the proposed roofline. As seen throughout the country with similar types of development a rounded roof line aids a large-scale development to anchor down into the landscape. However, a rounded roof often has to be higher than a flat roof.

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Submissions

Photomontages: 21:11 Bath Road Thatcham – Building heights

- LVIA Viewpoint 4 from the footpath to the east of the site
- LVIA Viewpoint 16 on the south facing hillside alongside north of Colthrop Manor

The applicant submitted two sheets of photomontages showing the buildings at a height of 15m and 12.5m. As shown at this distance from the proposed development, the difference between the height of a

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building at 15m compared to 12.5m is marginal. However, as shown within the visuals the buildings are still visible and encroach into views where buildings were not overly visible before.

Therefore, to accommodate buildings of this size and scale at this location, the overall visual effect would and could be reduced by paying special attention to the following aspects of the final design:

- Treatment and colour and texture of the building façade and roof: The applicant previously recommended the use of an Environmental Colour Assessment. This would be beneficial to select colours which would help the buildings to integrate into the landscape and overall reduce their visual effect
- Shape of building and roofline: A curved roof line would also reduce the visual prominence of the buildings as seen from the east
- Bath Road interface: Buildings which are visible at this location should be carefully considered, and treated as part of attractive gateway into Thatcham
- Eastern landscape buffer and the distance the building is set back from this eastern site boundary: Adequate space from the edge of the proposed buildings should be allowed for the proposed eastern landscape buffer to thrive. The buffer will need to contain a good mix of native plants to link with the adjacent open countryside
- Internal landscaping with tree planting: Sufficient space should be incorporated into the layout to allow tree planting to be beneficial. This would help breakup the large continuous expanse of the proposed buildings as would be visible from the Kennet Valley side