Land East of Memorial Hall, Links Avenue, Brundall

Proof of Evidence on Landscape and Visual matters

PINS Reference: APP/K2610/W/19/3239986
Application Reference: 20171386

Prepared on behalf of Quantum Group

August 2020
Land East of Memorial Hall, Links Avenue, Brundall

Proof of Evidence on Landscape and Visual Matters of Matthew D Chard BA (Hons), Dip (Hons), MAUD, CMLI

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

1.1 My name is Matthew Dermot Chard and I am the Partner leading the specialist Landscape Planning and Design Group of Barton Willmore LLP. I am responsible for all landscape projects undertaken throughout the UK by the London office.

1.2 I hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree and Postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture and a Master of Arts in Urban Design from the University of Greenwich. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute.

1.3 I have over 25 years post qualification experience in townscape and landscape planning, design and environmental matters. I have provided professional advice on townscape, landscape and visual impact assessment, and detailed design of a wide variety of developments throughout the UK. These include both small scale and strategic scale residential, commercial, mixed use, industrial developments, infrastructure projects, mineral extraction; power generation and transmission schemes and recreation proposals for government departments, local authorities, public and private companies. I have dealt with sites within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks, Strategic and Local Gap and other local designations.

Background

1.4 An application for a hybrid planning permission was originally submitted in August 2017. The proposal has been amended twice since its original submission for development on Land east of Memorial Hall, Brundall (the 'Appeal Site'). Full permission is sought for phase 1 (23 dwellings) and outline permission for up to 147 further dwellings, open space, and associated development. The description of development is as follows:

"Outline planning application with the details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination, with the exception of Phase 1 for which details of all matters in relation to the 23 dwellings within that Phase are provided. Development to comprise: up to 170 dwellings (Use Class C3), and a community/sports pavilion (Class D1 and D2 use), a Country Park, formal and/or informal outdoor sports provision, access, and other earthworks and engineering works. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans."

1.5 This is referred to as the 'Proposed Development' throughout my evidence.

1.6 Broadland District Council refused the hybrid planning permission despite a recommendation for approval from Officers in their Committee Report dated 10 July 2019 (Ref:20171386) (CD 3.1), which included agreement with the conclusions of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted with the application from the Broads Authority (CD 1.8). The BDC's
Conservation Officer (Arboriculture and Landscape) acknowledged that the loss of a section of hedgerow to allow construction of two access roads and three private drives would not be considered significant from a landscape perspective, and that the choice of species listed (a mix of native and non-native) for landscaping is acceptable. BDC's Design Officer also identified that:

"The initial phase has a sense of open space at the north and south end and the scheme has maintained clear lines of site fronting the footpath to the south looking north over the valley. This is reinforced by a comprehensive landscaping scheme maintaining wide margins in front of the dwellings. Whilst some care will need to be taken with the choice of hard landscaping particularly to the central area of paving, the layout of the scheme is acceptable in design terms, it fulfils the aim of keeping vistas open through the site, provides open shared space and routes through the site. No objection to the layout as proposed. Minor amendments are required to the overall appearance of the house types. The use of consistent forms, detailing and materials give a visual coherence to the proposal which is welcomed. This approach should inform later phases." (Underlining my emphasis)

1.7 Officers accepted at para 5.68 of the Committee Report that development would impact on views enjoyed by existing residents bounding the site but concluded that the loss of a private view is not a material consideration. The need to protect and enhance gaps between settlements (as identified in Policy EN2 of the BDC’s Development Management Development Plan Document 2015) (CD 4.1) was also considered with the conclusion that, given the site is enclosed on three sides by existing residential development and the frontage of the site on Brundall Road would not be developed, it is not considered that the development would result in visual coalescence between Brundall and Blofield (para 5.71). Para 5.73 states that whilst it was considered that development would “result in an impact on the openness and rurality of the appeal site and would be to the detriment of the existing character and appearance of the area and conflict with GC4 and EN2 of the DMPPD and Policy 1 of the JCS”, it is also acknowledged by officers that “the site is not designated for its landscape value and the development would not result in a visually intrusive urban extension being contained by residential development to three sides. Important landscape features can be retained and protected from development and an appropriate layout can be secured at reserved matters stage”. In conclusion it is reported that “the development would not result in visual coalescence with Blofield and Officers therefore consider that the landscape impact of the development would not be sufficiently harmful to justify refusal”.

1.8 Concern was initially raised by BDC’s Conservation Officer (Historic Environment) in relation to the Important View from the end of Links Avenue towards Blofield Church as identified within
Figure 4 of the Brundall Neighbourhood Plan (BNP) and recognised within Policy 3 of the BNP (CD 4.4), in terms of proposed development blocking and encroaching on the visual vista from the end of Links Avenue and the field boundary immediately to the east of the Memorial Hall towards the Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield. However, as a result of amendments to the scheme layout pushing development back slightly at its north-western and rounding /softening its edge, and the preparation of two annotated wireline photomontages (refer to my Illustrative material – Document B - Photographic Material) which demonstrated that this wouldn’t be the case, the BDC Officer is reported as advising in the Committee Report that:

“Given the open nature that will be retained across much of the site, it is considered that although there will be some change to the setting of the church, this will not be harmful, although it will still be important that the perimeter of the area of housing is well-designed to integrate the development into the landscape successful.” (Underlining my emphasis)

1.9 Local support for the scheme resulted in nine letters of support on the original submission and 71 letters of support on the amended plans. These letters supported the fact that:

- The plans are well designed;
- It is a natural expansion of the village and causes no harm to the character;
- It will provide much needed sports and recreational facilities;
- A pedestrian link will be provided;
- The views will be retained;
- The new recreational space and a country park is a great community benefit;
- The scheme provides much needed housing;
- The Appeal Site is close to public transport links;
- Close to village centre and amenities; and
- Having previously objected to the proposal the respondent now sees this will be a positive addition to Brundall.

Scope of Proof of Evidence

1.10 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) were commissioned by Quantum Group (the ‘Appellant’) in July 2017 to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the Proposed Development. I have been involved on this project since that time, including overseeing the preparation of the LVIA submitted with the planning application for the scheme and the landscape layout of the Proposed Development. Accordingly, I am familiar with the Appeal Site and its surroundings and have examined the relevant plans and documents for the purposes of this Inquiry.
1.11 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this Inquiry in this Proof of Evidence is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true professional opinions.

1.12 My evidence should be read in conjunction with that of Mr Robin Meakins (Planning witness) Ms Joanna Burton (Heritage Witness) and Mr Roberts (transport).

1.13 All of the Plans, illustrative visualisations and street scene elevations/sections referred to and which accompany my Proof of Evidence are included within my Illustrative Material: Document A - Plans and Drawings.

1.14 Since the preparation of the LVIA in July 2017 and the submission of the application in August 2017, we have undertaken an updated winter site visit in March 2020 to determine the relationship of the Appeal Site with its surroundings in winter conditions, and its visibility within the wider landscape and townscape. This is included within my Illustrative Material: Document B - Photographic Material.

**Methodology - Overview**

1.15 I have considered the likely effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity, using a methodology based on the principles set out in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment), 3rd edition, 2013.

1.16 The LVIA methodology used in the preparation of this Proof of Evidence is detailed in Appendix 1 of the originally submitted LVIA (CD-1.8) but is also included at my Appendix 1 for ease of reference. The LVIA methodology identifies the value and susceptibility of landscape and visual receptors to determine their sensitivity to the type of development proposed. The likely magnitude of effect experienced by these receptors as a result of the Proposed Development is then considered and combined with the receptor's sensitivity, to identify a significance of effect.
2.0 APPEAL SITE CONTEXT

Location

2.1 As demonstrated by Figure MDC-1: Appeal Site Context Plan, the Appeal Site is located in the northern part of Brundall, within an indent in the existing settlement pattern, such that the Appeal Site is bordered to the east, south and west by Brundall's defined settlement limit.

2.2 The Appeal Site is bordered by:

- The Run Dike and the Norfolk Premier Golf Club to the north;
- Brundall Road, residential properties adjacent to Highfield Avenue and the Westfield Mission Church to the east;
- Residential properties adjacent to Westfield Road, Deacon Close, Meadow View and Links Avenue to the south; and
- Brundall Memorial Hall, playing fields, Public Right of Way (PRoW) FP2 to the west.

Topography and Hydrology

2.3 As demonstrated by Figure MDC-2: Topographic Features Plan, the main hydrological feature within the area is the River Yare, which is located approximately 600m to the south-west of the Appeal Site. The meandering course of the River Yare forms a broad and shallow valley at approximately 2m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) between the southern edge of Brundall and Surlingham. Streams and drainage ditches are frequent features within this valley floor.

2.4 The northern edge of the River Yare Valley extends across the central part of Brundall's settlement pattern, forming a ridgeline along Strumpshaw Road and The Street at approximately 15m AOD, before rising to more elevated land to the west of the Appeal Site at Apple Tree Farm, at 25m AOD.

2.5 From this ridgeline, the landform then falls across the northern part of Brundall's settlement pattern to the Run Dike valley (between 2-5m AOD). The Run Dike valley extends southwards from the A47 and then courses eastwards to Bay Bridge and under Brundall Road, at which point the watercourse divides, continuing in part eastwards to Braydeston Hall, but in the main south-east to the River Yare.

2.6 To the north of the Run Dike the landform rises across Blofield to form a ridgeline at approximately 25m AOD.
Approximately 650m north-west of the Appeal Site, the raised embankments of the A47 Dual Carriageway span the Run Dike valley and form a notable contrast to the surrounding undulating landform. In contrast the Yarmouth Road follows the profile of the landform, such that it falls towards the Run Diike.

The Appeal Site is therefore in a generally low-lying area and within a localised valley system, which as demonstrated by the Visual Appraisal limits the inter-visibility between the Appeal Site and the wider landscape beyond the local ridgelines that surround the Appeal Site.

Settlement, Infrastructure and Land Use

Brundall

As noted, the Appeal Site is indented within Brundall’s settlement pattern, such that existing built form extends northwards to the east and west of the Appeal Site.

Brundall’s settlement pattern includes 1950’s and 1960’s single and two storey brick detached properties with pitched roofs, along with more contemporary two storey properties, set within a series of cul-de-sacs and closes.

Properties in the northern part of Links Avenue are bungalows, orientated west/east, i.e. away from the Appeal Site, with mature garden vegetation along their northern boundaries.

Properties on Meadow View are 1980s detached two storey residences, either red or pale brown brick, with off-street parking. Whist detailing to the facades is limited, the properties have alternating brick courses, often below windows or across boundary walls. Roofs are dark red tiles and a relatively shallow pitch. The orientation of the properties is varied, with some north/south (towards the Appeal Site) and others east/west (away from the Appeal Site).

Properties on Westfield Road are separated from those on Meadow View by a distance of 25m. This area consists of amenity landscape, including for small scale play equipment. The properties to the east of this amenity area on Westfield Road reflect the vernacular of those on Meadow View, being two storey detached brick properties with off-street parking, orientated north/south, towards the Appeal Site. The remaining properties along Westfield Road are bungalows, orientated north/south with mature hedging or fencing adjacent to the Appeal Site.

Deacon Close extends northwards from Westfield Road and consists of a cul-de-sac of six bungalows, with steeply pitched large roofs (which have been converted with dormer or single windows in the façade) to enable an additional storey within the roof space.

Properties on the west side of Highfield Avenue consist of a mixture of detached two storey brick properties; brick and white rendered two storey properties, and fully rendered two storey...
semi-detached properties. Whilst there is the intermittent bungalow within this group, the residential pattern is consistent overall, with these properties having established gardens, off-street parking and dark red tiled roofs.

2.16 Inset from Highfield Avenue is Golf Links Road, which forms part of the eastern edge of the Appeal Site. To the north of this road, between the edge of the Appeal Site and the rear of properties on Highfield Avenue, is Westfield Mission Church, a single storey red brick building, with a dark tiled roof and white rendered arch on the main façade. To the north of the Church is a two storey detached residential property, with a pale yellow/cream render and dark tiled roof.

2.17 Brundall Memorial Hall to the south-west of the Appeal Site is a two storey building, stepping down to one storey on its southern side. The eastern façade of the Memorial Hall has two emergency access doors but no fenestration. The building has a wide pitched aluminium roof, with a combination of pale pink render and dark stained timber façade. To the north and east of the Hall are play areas and car-parking.

2.18 Properties to the west of the Appeal Site within Lackford Close and Grovebury Close consist of two storey red or pale brick properties with dark red tiled roofs, with narrow frontages to facilitate off-street parking. Overall, this area has well established garden vegetation with mature trees.

**Blofield**

2.19 The village of Blofield is 1km to the north-east of the Appeal Site. The southern part of Blofield consists of predominantly single and two storey red brick detached properties which extend south along Brundall Road, to the extent that it forms a near continuous ribbon of existing built form between Brundall and Blofield.

2.20 As demonstrated by Site Context Photograph 6, there is inter-visibility between residential properties in Blofield and Brundall when travelling along Brundall Road. The sense of separation and perceived identity between Blofield and Brundall is therefore very subtle given the limited distance between the settlements and the existing intervisibility. The sense of separation as experienced from along Brundall Road is demarcated by the valley floor and Bay Bridge (below which the Run Dike flows).

**Norfolk Premier Golf Club**

2.21 The land use to the north of the Appeal Site consists of the northern part of the Run Dike corridor, comprising a flat, low-lying area of reeds and mature trees.
2.22 To the north of the Run Dike corridor is the Norfolk Premier Golf Club, situated across rising landform and consisting of a driving range, clubhouse and a nine hole golf course. The golf course exhibits large scale 'cut and fill' landform and has a manicured appearance as a result of intensive management for recreation.

Agriculture

2.23 To the north-east of the Appeal Site, the land use consists of agricultural fields of various sizes divided by hedgerows and intermittent tree belts, situated across undulating landform which rises westwards from the Run Dike.

2.24 Agricultural barns are also located in the eastern part of the Appeal Site, with an access track to Brundall Road.

Infrastructure and Ancillary

2.25 There is a small scale pumping station located in the eastern part of the Appeal Site, with an access track to Brundall Road and the junction with Highfield Avenue.

2.26 The Scout's Hut is located south of this access track, also at the junction of Highfield Avenue, Brundall Road and Blofield Road and consists of a single storey shed, rendered white, except for the eastern end which is red brick.

Vegetation

2.27 With reference to Figure MDC-1: Appeal Site Context Plan, the surrounding agricultural fields consist of hedgerows and intermittent trees. There are also clusters of mature trees across Brundall's settlement pattern.

2.28 There is no ancient woodland within the Appeal Site.

2.29 The Run Dike, to the west and east of the Appeal Site and its associated drainage ditches consist of fen meadow or low-lying wet grassland dominated by reeds and other herbs and grasses, as well as being bordered by hedgerows, with mature isolated trees and linear woodland along its course.


2.31 The Norfolk Premier Golf Club consists of predominantly mown grass and young tree planting, with a young tree belt planted along the eastern edge adjacent to Blofield.
2.32 The residential areas surrounding the Appeal Site have a well vegetated character, due to the combination of mature garden vegetation of mature roadside vegetation, particularly adjacent to Brundall Road and Highfield Avenue.

2.33 There is also mature vegetation bordering the PRoW networks to the west of the Appeal Site and Golf Links Road.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW), Access and Recreation

2.34 As demonstrated by Figure MDC-1: Appeal Site Context Plan, there are a network of PRoW across Brundall and between Brundall and Blofield, many of which are along the road networks as follows.

- PRoW Brundall FP1 connects Brigham Close in the west of Brundall with Highfield Avenue, via Brundall Memorial Hall, and crosses the southern edge of the Appeal Site;
- PRoW Brundall FP2, lies immediately adjacent to and abuts the western edge of the Appeal Site and connects The Street to PRoW Postwick FP6; and
- Postwick FP6 which connects with PRoW Brundall FP2 to link with Yarmouth Road.

Designations

2.35 The Appeal Site is not covered by any national or local landscape designations.

2.36 The northern extents of the Broads National Park are approximately 450m south-west of the Appeal Site, beyond the settlement of Brundall.

2.37 Broadland Special Protection Areas (SPA), Broadland Ramsar, The Broads Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Mid Yare National Nature Reserve (NNR), Yare Broads and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are located approximately 650m to the south of Appeal Site, on the southern side of the River Yare.

2.38 Brundall Church Fen Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located and on the north side of the River Yare, approximately 500m south-west of the Appeal Site

Conservation Areas (CA) and Listed Buildings

2.39 The Appeal Site is not within or near to a Conservation Area, Registered Historic Park or Garden (RPG) or Scheduled Monuments (SM).

2.40 The Appeal Site does not contain any Listed Buildings.

2.41 There are a number of listed buildings within Brundall and Blofield, the closest of which is The Gables, approximately 150m south of the Appeal Site.
2.42 The Grade I listed Church of St Andrew and St Peter is located approximately 600m north-east of the Appeal Site in Blofield and as demonstrated by the Visual Appraisal is visible from PRoW Brundall FP 2 and the Brundall Memorial Hall.

**Published Landscape Character Assessment**

2.43 Published Townscape and Landscape Character Assessments that apply to the Appeal Site and its surroundings include assessments at national and borough level, and which are further supported by guidelines for managing future change. The extents of these character areas as defined in the respective published assessments are shown on Figure MDC-3: Landscape Character Plan. The Appeal Site is covered by a number of published landscape character assessments, which identify key characteristics and recommend landscape guidelines. These are summarised below with the relevant extracts included in Appendix 2 & 3: (Published Landscape Character Extracts).

National Character Area (NCA) Profile: 80 The Broads (NE449), April 2015

2.44 At a national level, the Appeal Site is covered by NCA Profile: 80 The Broads, which consists of an agricultural landscape based on a long history of drainage to allow grazing. The key characteristics of NCA 80: The Broad's which are considered relevant to the Appeal Site and its immediate surrounds:

"Woodland cover is generally sparse, especially in the marshland area. Small areas of mainly deciduous woodland occur around the broads. Carr woodland and willow pollards are typical of the wetter areas, while broadleaved woodland is present as copses and plantations on higher land."

2.45 Brundall is noted as an area experiencing extensive modern boatyard/marina developments.

Broadland District Council Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (September 2013) (CD 8.26)

2.46 The District Landscape Character Assessment provides guidance for the application of relevant development plan policies and other planning guidance in the consideration of development proposals. The relevant key issues in relation to development planning are summarised as:

"Built development - expansion of suburban character and pattern; use of standardised housing designs/inappropriate building methods/materials/details that ignore local vernacular; expansion of industrial, leisure and retail developments on settlement edges; pressure on open character of countryside gaps;"
Settlements in their landscape setting - relationships between settlement core and landscape severed by settlement expansion; new development unsympathetic to original settlement pattern and relationship with landscape; poor relationships between settlement and landscape/key views/landmarks/other landscape features.”

2.47 At a district level the Appeal Site is covered by the Tributary Farmlands Landscape Character Type (LCT) D: Tributary Farmlands and within the Landscape Character Area (LCA) D4: The Blofield Tributary Farmland. Brundall’s existing residential area is within LCA F3: Reedham to Thorpe.

Landscape Character Type D - Tributary Farmlands (LCT D)

2.48 The Appeal Site is covered by Landscape Character Type D - Tributary Farmland for which the key characteristics considered relevant to the Appeal Site and immediate surrounds are:

- "The Witton Run is a tributary of the River Yare near Blofield;
- Shelving and gently undulating landform, which is cut by small tributary valleys;
- Dispersed but evenly distributed settlement pattern;
- An intricate network of narrow, winding rural lanes often bounded by banks or ditches;
- Medium to large scale arable farmland;
- Pockets of remnant parkland;
- Tributaries elusive - evident but usually hidden within the landscape by topography and trees; and
- Mixed settlement and architectural character.”

2.49 The visual character of LCT D - Tributary Farmlands is summarised as:

"There are gentle variations in the topography of this Landscape Character Type, where a series of small tributary valleys cut through the underlying topography and form landscape and nature conservation features. These tributary corridors are subtle features, which are often barely perceptible to the eye within views across the landscape.

This landscape has a predominantly rural character, which is heightened by the dispersed settlement pattern of small to large linear and medium to large nucleated settlements. It is accessed via a series of small, often narrow lanes, which are often bounded by banks or ditches. Small ponds are also a feature of fields, within this predominantly arable agricultural landscape.

Pockets of parkland add further visual interest, and introduce an ordered, human influence. Typical views from the edges of this Landscape Character Type, are often into adjacent river valleys, however in several places, views are limited by small clumps of trees, or subtle variations in topography.”
2.50 The key forces for change are noted as:

- "Potential farm diversification, resulting in conversion of agricultural buildings to houses and recreational facilities;"
- "Potential loss of mature hedgerow field boundaries as a result of agricultural intensification;"
- "Small-scale, incremental development within villages, which may be inconsistent with local built character and materials;"
- "Potential wind turbine developments;"
- "Extension of road corridors and introduction of visually intrusive road signs and visual clutter; and"
- "Potential loss of small ponds and extraction sites due to infill."

2.51 With regards to the Landscape Condition and Strength of Character of LCT D - Tributary Farmlands, the assessment notes:

"In places, hedgerows are well managed and continuous, whilst in other places, a gappy and less well managed character is apparent. As a result, overall condition is considered to be moderate. In certain places, recognisable sense of place is strong, as a result of views to landmark features such as churches and into adjacent Landscape Character Types. Overall strength of character is considered to be moderate, although several of the small villages retain their traditional form and exhibit a range of varied local materials."

LCA D4: Blofield

2.52 LCA D4 is a large area extending between the Yare and Bure River Valleys, between Brundall in the south and Pedham in the north. The LCA includes for numerous settlements, including Blofield and road infrastructure, and the A47.

2.53 The Appeal Site therefore forms part of the southern edge of this LCA, which is described as an area of gently undulating landform, varying field sizes and mainly of arable land use, resulting in limited woodland cover. Isolated churches are also noted as distinct / memorable features within an otherwise simple, working landscape. As a result of the landform, the visual character summary states:

"Views are contained by rolling slopes, providing a variety of close horizons. Church towers and woodland create memorable features in these views."

2.54 With regards to settlement pattern within the LCA:

"There is often an abrupt transition between the housing developments and the surrounding agricultural land."
2.55 The inherent landscape sensitives of area D4 Blofield are:

- "Distinctive topography with a strong mosaic of rolling arable fields, intact hedgerow and mature woodland within the grounds of old houses and lining tributaries;
- Strong rural character with a recognisable sense of place;
- Concentration of isolated churches, halls and farmsteads amid woodland around Burlingham; often using distinctive combinations of traditional buildings materials within buildings;
- Landscape setting of historic halls and churches;
- Landscape setting of hamlets and villages;
- Characteristic views to features, such as church towers surrounded by woodland;
- Relatively strong sense of tranquillity away from major transport routes; and
- The Witton Run is a tributary of the River Yare SSSI near Blofield. Within a 2km section of the tributary south of Little Plumstead there are four CWS (No. 1421, 1422, 2071, and 2058) Landscape Policy."

Landscape Character Area F3: Reedham to Thorpe

2.56 A very small part of the Appeal Site's southern edge is included within this character area. Brundall is noted for:

"Many of the settlements have been influenced by modern development growth, such as Brundall, who's [sic] nucleated settlement form following transport routes alongside the Yare Valley have outweighed the extent of the historic core. This is largely due to its connections across the Broads landscape, to Norwich and eastern parts of Norfolk."

2.57 The following sensitives are identified for LCA F3:

- Mosaic of arable fields, pockets of pasture and woodland, providing a diverse and interesting landscape character;
- Mature landscape structure including substantial blocks and belts of carr woodland, copses of mature trees and intact hedgerows, providing an interesting visual mosaic;
- Subtle features of the historic landscape, such as remnant hedgerows, which are not protected, and are vulnerable to change and loss;
- Landscape setting of historic houses, halls and churches;
- Sparse settlement in the form of ancient linear hamlets and isolated farmsteads. Their landscape setting and cohesive building materials is vulnerable to unsympathetic additions or extensions, which would disrupt the largely intact built character;
- Nucleated market towns with a strong historic core;
- Distinctive low wooded horizons;
- Strong sense of place;
- Characteristic views across the farmland to landmark churches, often isolated and amid woodland;
- Potential loss of small pits and extraction sites due to infilling.

Published Landscape Guidelines

*NCA Profile: 80 The Broads (NE449), April 2015*

2.58 The relevant Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) in relation to the Proposed Development are:

"Improve opportunities to enhance people’s enjoyment of the area while protecting high levels of tranquillity by conserving intimate Broadland valleys and extensive coast and marshland views, which contribute to sense of place, and conserve and promote the geodiversity, archaeology and historical evidence of past human settlement and landscape change." (SEO4)

Broadland District Council Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (September 2013)

*Landscape Character Type D - Tributary Farmlands (LCT D)*

2.59 The overall summary of the assessment states that:

"Protecting landscape features and patterns that contribute to landscape diversity, including enhancing their quality, character and function where necessary, should be a key aim for planning and land management policy in Broadland."

2.60 The management strategies and objectives for LCT D are:

"The overall strategy for the Tributary Farmland Landscape Character Type should be to conserve and restore the hedgerow network; and conserve the tributary river corridors as important landscape and nature conservation features. Plantings to enhance hedges should be appropriate to the specific local character of the Landscape Character Areas."

2.61 The specific management objectives for LCA D are:

- "Seek opportunities for the creation of all types of grassland and woodland, especially mixed habitats of grassland and scrub woodland;
- Seek opportunities for connectivity with Hockering Wood (outside the District);
- Seek opportunities for the enhancement and creation of wetland habitats, such as wet meadows and wet woodland;"
• Seek opportunities for buffering the Rivers Wensum, Bure and Tud, through catchment sensitive farming;
• Conserve priority habitats of wood pasture and grassland (based on the existing parks at Salle, Heydon and Blickling);
• Seek to conserve and enhance the landscape structure within the area, including blocks and copses of woodland, mature parkland trees and intact hedgerows; and
• Seek to conserve and enhance the mature landscape structure in central and eastern parts, including blocks of woodland, which contributes to a small-scale and intimate character."

D4: Blofield

2.62 The following Landscape Planning Guidelines for LCA D4: Blofield are:

• “Seek to conserve the simple, predominantly rural character;
• Seek to conserve the landscape setting of historic halls and churches;
• Seek to conserve the pattern of isolated churches, historic halls and farmsteads;
• Seek to conserve the landscape setting hamlets and villages;
• Seek to promote use of local materials within villages;
• Seek to conserve the recognisable sense of place;
• Seek to conserve the relatively strong sense of tranquillity within central and northern parts of the area;
• Resist new development that would mask the area’s distinctive topography;
• Seek to ensure that new development does not reduce the vertical significance of important historical architectural features within the landscape, such as church towers; and
• Seek to conserve and protect the tributary valleys for their biodiversity particular the Witton Run, a tributary of the River Yare SSSI near Blofield."

Local Character Assessment

2.63 To provide a finer level of detail and to address the landscape considerations/themes set out in the guidance at borough level, Barton Willmore LLP conducted a localised landscape character assessment, derived through desk-based assessment and on-site field work. As a result, a number of local landscape character areas (LLCA) have been identified via the field work and are illustrated on Figure MDC-4: Appeal Site Appraisal Plan. These LLCA comprise:
**LLCA 1 Run Dike**

2.64 This is a narrow watercourse extending from the Yarmouth Road southwards in a generally linear alignment, to then flow eastwards and below Brundall Road to Braydeston Hall. The watercourse is bordered by reeds, scrub and mature trees.

**LLCA 2 Agricultural**

2.65 This character area is located to the west and south of the Run Dike and consists of arable and pasture land usages across undulating or rising landform. The agricultural land use has also resulted in a large scale field pattern, bordered by hedgerows and intermittent mature trees, with no rare or distinctive landscape features within the fields themselves, such that they are a common feature within the landscape.

**LLCA 3 Recreational Valley Sides**

2.66 This consists of the golf course and the Memorial Hall, both of which represent recreational uses to the north and south of the Run Dike valley. Additionally, both have introduced built form and land re-profiling to facilitate the recreational land uses.

**LLCA 4 Residential**

2.67 This consists of the residential areas immediately bordering the Appeal Site, which comprise a mixture of 2 storey detached brick properties and bungalows.
3.0 PLANNING POLICY

3.1 A summary of the planning policies of relevance to townscape (landscape) and visual matters are set out within this section.


3.2 The relevant policies in relation to the Appeal Site and the Proposed Development are summarised below.

3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was first published in March 2012, was updated and published in July 2018 and most recently revised in February 2019. The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Development proposals must also be in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan and policies set out in the NPPF, including those identifying restrictions with regard to designated areas, such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Green Belt.

3.4 The NPPF states that “the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development”, with Paragraph 8 going on to state that to achieve this, the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental. The environmental objective is described as: “to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.

3.5 Paragraph 38 relates to decision making and states: “Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”.

3.6 Under the heading of Section 8: ‘Promoting healthy and safe communities’, the NPPF states that “Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places” through amongst other things “the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, and layouts that encourage walking and cycling”
(para 91c). Under ‘Open Space and recreation’, it states that “access to a network of high quality open spaces and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities”. Paragraph 97 subsequently states that:

"Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use."

3.7 Paragraph 98 refers to protecting and enhancing public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks.

3.8 Section 11 is concerned with making effective use of land, with Paragraph 117 stating: “Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions...”.

3.9 Paragraph 118 states that planning policies and decisions should: “encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside; and recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production...”.

3.10 Paragraphs 124-132 focus on achieving well-designed places and promote good design of the built environment. This approach is enshrined in Paragraph 127, which states:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

• Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
• Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
• Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting,
while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.

3.11 Section 15 of the NPPF relates to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, with Paragraph 170 setting out that planning policies and decisions should look to achieve the above by “protecting and enhancing valued landscapes” and “recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside”.

Planning Practice Guidance

3.12 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was first published online in March 2014 and provides detailed guidance to support the NPPF. The PPG was last updated on 1st October 2019 and replaces the previous guidance on ‘Design: Process and tools’, with the National Design Guide which sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice to be read alongside this guidance.

3.13 Under the heading Design: process and tools, sub-heading ‘Planning for well-designed places, (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 26-001-20191001) the PPG states that, as set out in paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework, permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Good design is set out in the National Design Guide under the following 10 characteristics:

- Context (enhances the surroundings)
- Identity (Attractive and distinctive)
- Built form (a coherent pattern of development)
- Movement (accessible and easy to move around)
- Nature (enhanced and optimised)
- Public Spaces (safe, social and inclusive)
- Uses (mixed and integrated)
- Homes and Buildings (Functional, healthy and sustainable)
3.14 Further guidance is outlined within the 10 characteristics in the National Design Guide. Those of relevance to design and townscape/landscape and visual matters include:

- C1: Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context;
- C2: Value heritage, local history and culture;
- I1: Respond to existing local character and identity;
- I2: Well-designed, high quality and attractive;
- I3: Create character and identity;
- B1: Compact form of development;
- B2: Appropriate building types and forms;
- B3: Destinations
- N1: Provide high quality, green open spaces with a variety of landscapes and activities, including play;
- N3: Support rich and varied biodiversity;
- P1: Create well-located, high quality and attractive public spaces;
- P2: Provide well-designed spaces that are safe;
- P3: Make sure public spaces support social interaction;
- L1: Well-managed and maintained.

3.15 The ‘Natural environment’ section of the PPG was updated in July 2019. Under the sub-heading ‘Green infrastructure, Paragraph 5 focuses on the way in which natural capital green infrastructure can add to communities including, “…enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes…”. This approach to achieving biodiverse communities is enshrined in Paragraph 6, which states:

"Green infrastructure can help in:

- Achieving well-designed places;
- Promoting healthy and safe communities;
- Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change; and
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment”.

3.16 Under the heading of ‘Natural Environment’, sub-heading ‘Landscape’[1], Paragraph 37 in the PPG supports the use of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to “demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape”. The PPG additionally makes reference to Natural England’s guidance on undertaking landscape character assessment “to complement Natural England’s National Character Area Profiles”.
Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and Norfolk (adopted March 2011, amendments adopted January 2014) (CD4.3)

3.17 The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) has been developed by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) (of which South Norfolk Council is a member) and sets out the overarching strategy for growth across Norwich, Broadland and South Norfolk. It identifies key locations for growth and sets out policies to ensure that future development is sustainable.

3.18 Brundall is noted for a limited provision of recreational facilities and it is a Key Service Centre for small to moderate new housing allocations. With regards to the future growth of Brundall, it is noted that:

"It is important to prevent coalescence with the neighbouring large village of Blofield."

3.19 Policy 1 - Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets, notes that development will need to be:

- "energy efficient;
- provide for recycling of materials;
- use locally sourced materials wherever possible;
- be located to minimise flood risk, mitigating any such risk through design and implementing sustainable drainage;
- minimise water use and protect groundwater sources;
- make the most efficient appropriate use of land, with the density of development varying according to the characteristics of the area, with the highest densities in centres and on public transport routes;
- minimise the need to travel and give priority to low impact modes of travel;
- be designed to mitigate and be adapted to the urban heat island effect in Norwich; and
- improve the resilience of ecosystems to environmental change."

3.20 Additionally, development in areas that are not protected by international or national designations will:

"contribute to providing a multifunctional green infrastructure network, including provision of areas of open space, wildlife resources and links between them, both off site and as an integral part of the development..."

3.21 Policy 2 - Promoting Good Design, states that all development will respect local distinctive, including as appropriate:

- "the historic hierarchy of the city, towns and villages, maintaining important strategic gaps;"
• the landscape setting of settlements including the urban/rural transition and the treatment of ‘gateways’;
• the landscape character and historic environment, taking account of conservation area appraisals and including the wider countryside and the Broads area;
• townscape, including the city and the varied character of our market towns and villages;
• provision of landscaping and public art;
• the need to ensure cycling and walking friendly neighbourhoods by applying highway design principles that do not prioritise the movement function of streets at the expense of quality of place;
• the need to increase the use of public transport, including through ‘public transport oriented design’ for larger development;
• designing out crime;
• the use of sustainable and traditional materials;
• the need to design development to avoid harmful impacts on key environmental assets and, in particular SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites.”

3.22 Policy 14: Key Services Centres (KSC) identifies that Brundall is a KSC and is close to the Broads and development must ensure that there is no detrimental impact to the Broadland SPA, Broadland Ramsar and Broads SAC.

Development Management DPD (adopted August 2015) (CD4.1)

3.23 The policies set out within the Development Management DPD intend to further the aims and objectives set out within the NPPF and JCS.

3.24 Policy EN2 – Landscape states that in order to protect the character of the area, development proposals should have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment SPD and, in particular, consider any impact upon as well as seek to protect and enhance where appropriate:

"i. Gaps between settlements;

ii. Visually sensitive skylines, hillsides and valley sides and important views including the setting of the Broads Area;

iii. Nocturnal character;

iv. Conservation Areas;

v. Scheduled Ancient Monuments;

vi. Historic Parks and Gardens; and

vii. Green spaces including natural and semi-natural features as well as geological/geomorphological features which make a
significant contribution towards defining the character of an area."

3.25 Policy EN3 – Green Infrastructure states that:

"All development will be expected to maximise opportunities for the creation of a well-managed network of wildlife habitats; and

Residential development consisting of five dwellings or more will be expected to provide at least 4 ha of informal open space per 1,000 population and at least 0.16ha of allotments per 1,000 population."

3.26 Policy GC4 - Design states with regard to new development that:

"Development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design and avoid any significant detrimental impact. Schemes which are of an innovative nature of which reduce reliance on centralised, non-renewable energy sources will be particularly encouraged. Proposals should pay adequate regard to:

i. the environment, character and appearance of an area;

ii. reinforcing local distinctiveness through careful consideration of the treatment of space through the development, the appearance of new development, the scale of new development and the landscaping;

iii. Meeting the reasonable amenity needs of all potential future occupiers;

iv. Considering the impact upon the amenity of existing properties;

v. making efficient use of land and resources;

vi. Being accessible to all via sustainable means including public transport;

vii. Creating safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety;

viii. incorporating appropriate infrastructure linking to the surrounding area;

ix. The creation of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities; and
x. Minimising resource and energy consumption and how it is located and designed to withstand the longer term impacts of climate change.”

Site Allocations DPD (adopted May 2016) (CD 4.2)

3.27 The western part of the Appeal Site is identified as BRU3: Land east of Memorial Hall and allocated for recreational open space. The ‘Guidelines for development’ state:

- "It will need to comply with relevant policies in the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework;
- Vehicular and pedestrian access from Links Avenue with adequate car parking provision via the existing access;
- Contributions may be required for a pedestrian crossing scheme at The Street / Braydenston Avenue;
- Adequate landscaping and green infrastructure should be provided with a particular emphasis on retaining existing trees and hedging where possible;
- A sustainable drainage system (SUDS) should be provided to serve any development;
- Pollution control measures will be required to mitigate the impacts of any development on the Witton Run and Source Protection Zone (3);
- Further investigation in respect of archaeology may be required;
- The open space will be for formal recreation uses, such as playing pitches, together with more informal recreation such as walks, jogging track etc."

Brundall Neighbourhood Plan 2016 to 2026 (adopted May 2016) (CD 4.4)

3.28 The plan covers the period up to 2026 and now forms part of the development plan for the District and is one of the main considerations in determining any future planning applications submitted in Brundall.

3.29 With reference to the Brundall Neighbourhood Area Plan, the majority of the Appeal Site, including the proposed residential area is within the Brundall Parish Boundary.

3.30 Brundall is noted as a rural village, surrounded on all sides by a mixture of agricultural land (arable and pasture) and the Broads to the south. In relation to the Appeal Site, the Plan notes:

"To the north and east of the village separating Brundall from Blofield is an area of low-lying land known variously as Run Dyke, Witton Run or the Lackford Run. This channel drains into the River Yare and is surrounded on both sides by arable and wet grazing land."
3.31 The vision statement for the village is:

"Our vision for Brundall is to remain a high-quality rural village surrounded by tranquil open countryside and the Broads landscape where people want to live, visit, work and engage with a vibrant and thriving community."

3.32 The environmental objectives to achieve this vision are:

- "To improve links between the village and surrounding countryside including the Broads;
- To protect and enhance the existing landscape and wildlife areas around the village; and
- To protect and enhance the local distinctiveness in the built and natural environment and to protect the setting of designated heritage assets."

3.33 With reference to the Walking and Cycling Routes Plan, PRoW Brundall FP1 and PRoW Brundall FP2 are identified as existing routes; with potential proposed routes extending across the north-western edge of Brundall from Postwick Lane to PRoW Postwick FP6 (an orbital route).

3.34 Policy 2: Walking and Cycling Routes states:

"The Plan seeks to provide Brundall with an improved and joined up network of high quality footpaths and cycleways to help residents and visitors move around more easily and safely on foot or bicycle and reduce the reliance on the private care for local trips.

Specifically the plan supports the provision of a continuous orbital route and comprehensive high quality network around the village..."

3.35 With reference to Figure 4: ‘Important views’, there is an identified view from Brundall Memorial Hall, north-east, across the Appeal Site, with the supporting text stating:

"specifically, views to the north east across agricultural land from the busy Memorial Hall community facility and path connecting Links Avenue and Golf Links Road towards Blofield and its prominent Grade I Listed Church of St Andrew and St Peter are considered important."

3.36 Policy 3: ‘Important Views’ seeks to protect and enhance the remaining views across open landscapes, stating:

"The Plan seeks to protect and enhance the views to the north east from the Memorial Hall and to the south from St Michaels Church and views of the Braydeston Hills to the north from Brundall as indicated in Figure 4."
Any development or alterations to an area within these views must ensure that key features of the view can continue to be enjoyed including distant buildings, areas of landscape and the juxtaposition of village edges and open agricultural countryside.

3.37 However, the supporting photograph to depict the view is not taken from Brundall Memorial Hall, as per the location on figure 4, but from the junction of PRoW Brundall FP1 and FP2.

3.38 Policy 4: ‘Enhanced recreation provision’, supports the provision of new and expanded recreation facilities in the village. The ‘site adjacent to Memorial Hall’ is noted as providing a logical focal point for future ‘formal’ recreation provision, with options including a football pitch and multi-use games area.

3.39 Policy 5: ‘Enhanced provision for older people’ identifies a need for the enhanced provision of housing for older people, although there is an indication that the preference will be for such enhanced provision to be on brownfield sites.

Broadlands Place Shaping: A Guide to Undertaking Development in Broadland

3.40 Whilst this document does not reference Brundall specifically, it is a reference document for new developments and highlights the importance of Green Infrastructure and biodiversity.

3.41 Section 2 of the Guide outlines the importance of undertaking character assessments, in combination with Broadlands Landscape Character Assessment (2007), highlighting that new developments should not sever the relationship with an existing core of a settlement, and avoid the problems associated with a development being unsympathetic to its settlement pattern and landscape. Specifically, landscape character assessment ensures development:

- "uses land efficiently and is sympathetic to its physical and social context;
- Reduces the developments carbon footprint and improves biodiversity;
- Develops a place which is attractive, safe, convenient and healthy; and
- Fosters sense of place and local distinctiveness."

3.42 Church towers are noted as landmarks within the 'Landmarks, vistas and focal point' section.
4.0 APPEAL SITE APPRAISAL

4.1 The Appeal Site is illustrated on Figure MDC-4: Appeal Site Appraisal Plan, and my winter Appeal Site Appraisal Photographs A – F which demonstrate the characteristics and features of the Appeal Site. A site visit was undertaken in February 2016 and March 2020 to identify the existing landscape features and character of the Appeal Site, the relationship to the existing settlement pattern and the inter-visibility from within the surrounding landscape.

Landscape Appraisal

4.2 With reference to Figure MDC-4: Appeal Site Appraisal Plan, the Appeal Site covers 17.4 hectares (ha) and consists of:

- Two agricultural fields across the southern part of the Appeal Site, which are open in character and divided by a hedgerow, the eastern field being substantially larger than the western field;
- An agricultural grassland strip, with a hedgerow and individual mature trees forming its southern boundary. Within this strip are a pumping station and agricultural barns, both with access to Brundall Road;
- Golf Links Road, a narrow access strip bordered by mature hedges; and
- Part of the Run Dike corridor consisting of reeds and intermittent mature trees, forming the northern part of the Appeal Site.

4.3 As the Appeal Site forms part of the southern side to part of the Run Dike valley, there is a general fall in the landform across the Appeal Site, from its southern edge (between 15-18m AOD), northwards to the hedgerow dividing the fields from the semi improved grassland (between 5-8m AOD). The landform then falls very gradually across the semi-improved grassland to the banks of the Run Dike (c.3-4m AOD).

4.4 The north-east part of the Appeal Site, consisting of single storey barns, hardstanding and unmade tracks is situated at c.3.5-4.5m AOD. The barns are a mix of steel and timber clad buildings, considered to be in poor condition.

4.5 The sewage pumping station is situated at c.4.5m AOD with an unmade track connecting it to Brundall Road. There are overhead electrical lines between the substation and the golf course, as well as across the western edge of the Appeal Site.

4.6 Site Appraisal Photograph A is taken from the southern edge of the Appeal Site, along PRoW Brundall FP1. The view demonstrates the agricultural land use of the southern part of the Appeal Site, resulting in an open field pattern. The extent of boundary vegetation bordering these fields and within the Run Dike is also visible and includes for mature trees and...
hedgerows. The image also demonstrates the valley landform in which the Appeal Site is situated, via the fall towards the Run Dike and the rising landform to the north of the Appeal Site, to a localised ridgeline at the Norfolk Premier Golf Driving Range. The proximity of existing residential properties to the Appeal Site is also evident, as well as the extent of the residential settlement pattern to the west and east of the Appeal Site, which encloses the Appeal Site in relation to the wider landscape. The Brundall Memorial Hall is visible to the left of the view.

4.7 Moving to the central part of the Appeal Site, Site Appraisal Photograph B is taken from the northern edge of the western agricultural field. The view demonstrates the residential edge bordering the Appeal Site, across the ridgeline crossing this part of Brundall, and as result encloses the Appeal Site from the wider landscape to the south. The view demonstrates that the residential character of the built form bordering the Appeal Site consists of a variety of two storey and bungalow properties and that the orientation of these properties varies between being aligned directly with the Appeal Site, or at right angles to it, as well as varying boundary treatments of fencing and vegetation.

4.8 Site Appraisal Photograph C demonstrates the change in land use and landscape character between the agricultural fields and the vegetated/grassland belts within the Run Dike corridor. The tree lined hedgerow and step in landform forms a divide between the two land uses. The view also shows the enclosed nature and limited inter-visibility with the surrounding residential properties from within the Run Dike corridor.

4.9 Moving to the eastern part of the Appeal Site, Site Appraisal Photograph D demonstrates the contained nature of this field by boundary vegetation, including the hedgerow which divides the two fields and the limited inter-visibility with the wider area.

4.10 Site Appraisal Photograph E is taken from the western part of the Appeal Site and demonstrates the view eastwards from the northern edge of the western agricultural field within the Appeal Site. The character of the northern part of the Appeal Site is evident consisting of a generally flat rectangular area of grassland and ruderal vegetation and part of the Run Dike, consisting of reeds and mature trees. The Norfolk Premier golf course and driving range can be seen, with existing residential settlement apparent on the surrounding skyline in Brundall and Blofield.

4.11 Site Appraisal Photograph F shows the view available from the south-western corner of the Appeal Site at the junction of PRoW FP1 and FP2, with open views towards Blofield across the Appeal Site and the wider open landscape and the intervisibility with the church of St Andrew and St Peter in Blofield. These views are strongly influenced by the presence of the golf course and existing housing apparent on the skyline beyond.
Summary

4.12 The southern part of the Appeal Site consists of two fields of different sizes, divided by a hedgerow, which have an open character, although one that is influenced by the proximity to the residential settlement and infrastructure elements such as the overhead lines in the western part of the Appeal Site.

4.13 This agricultural land use is also reflected in a strip of semi-improved grassland to the north of the two fields, along with barns at the eastern edge of the Appeal Site. These existing buildings are considered to be in poor condition. To the south of these barns there is a pumping station.

4.14 The fen marshland of the Run Dike forms the northern part of the Appeal Site and consists of a well vegetated area, contrasting with the open character of the fields.

4.15 These land uses reflect the fall in the landform across the Appeal Site, from south to north. The landform then rises to the north of the Appeal Site, such that the Appeal Site is enclosed in relation to the wider landscape.

4.16 There is inter-visibility between the Appeal Site and surrounding residential properties, although this varies depending on the orientation of the dwellings, the extent of garden vegetation and whether they are two storey or bungalow properties.

4.17 The rural character of the Appeal Site is considered to be lessened by the proximity to these properties, audible vehicular noise and the inter-visibility with the golf course, the latter of which has also eroded the 'natural' setting to the Run Dike corridor due to the extent of engineered earth works.

HDA Tree Survey Report and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (CD 1.12)

4.18 To summarise aspects of the HDA report, in respect of the existing tree cover:

- 6% is Category A;
- 60% is Category B;
- 33% is Category C; and
- One tree was identified as Category U.

4.19 Category A trees included oak and beech trees and were located in the main hedgerow crossing the Appeal Site east to west.
4.20 Category B trees included groups of beech and oak, as well as field maple and are located along the western edge of the Appeal Site, intermittently along the southern boundary and in the eastern part of the Appeal Site.

4.21 Category C trees included birch and hawthorn and were also located in the eastern part of the Appeal Site, including around the pumping station.

_HDA Enviro Ecological Report (CD 1.11)_

4.22 To summarise from the HDA Enviro Ecological Report (submitted as part of the Application), the desk study has confirmed that the Appeal Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations; nor are there habitats of international, national, regional, county or district nature conservation importance within the Appeal Site.

4.23 The habitats of highest nature conservation value located within the Appeal Site is the section of the Run Dike flowing along the northern site boundary and its associated fen meadow habitats, considered to be of high local nature conservation value, forming part of a wider network of riparian and wetland habitats across the surrounding landscape.

4.24 The hedgerows and mature trees bordering the agricultural fields are considered in combination to be of low local nature conservation value. Although these habitats are not botanically diverse and are relatively limited in extent, they provide potential habitat for a range of species, enhance the nature conservation interest of the site and in combination further contribute to the network of habitat linkages facilitating the movement of wildlife around the site and surrounding countryside.

4.25 The arable fields with bare ground and buildings within the east of the Appeal Site have been assessed as being of less than local / negligible value in their own right.

**Site Features**

4.26 From the above analysis the Appeal Site is considered to exhibit the following landscape features:

- Agricultural fields - which are considered to be a common feature, being exhibited in the wider landscape;
- Hedgerows and trees - which are largely intact although exhibit varying condition;
- Fen Meadow - forming the vegetation adjacent to the Run Dike; and
- Built form - barns and the pumping station, which are utilitarian in character.
5.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

5.1 A visual appraisal has been undertaken in winter months to determine the relationship of the Appeal Site with its surroundings and its approximate extent of visibility within the local townscape from publicly accessible locations. There is very limited visibility of the Appeal Site from the surrounding area, owing to containment provided by built form, landform and vegetation as demonstrated by photographs of the site included in my Winter Site Context Photographs 1-12, with viewpoint locations shown on Figure MDC-5: Visual Appraisal Plan.

5.2 The visual appraisal demonstrates that the visual envelope of the Appeal Site is extremely localised and limited to the immediate surrounding roads and fixed residential receptors on Meadow Close and Westfield Road, the northern end of Links Avenue, Kingston Lane and Cromwell Road, and properties on Highfield Avenue. Transient receptors are affected on Public Footpath 1 along the southern boundary of the Appeal Site and from the open parts of Public Footpath 2 abutting the western boundary and in the vicinity of the Memorial Hall. The northern end of Public Footpath 2 as it connects with FP6 is largely contained within a vegetated walk even in winter months resulting in largely enclosed views being experienced.

5.3 In winter conditions (worst case scenario), there is a varied range of visibility from the surrounding road networks as a result of the existing intervening built forms, the varying extents of existing vegetation and the Appeal Site's existing boundary treatments, including truncated, glimpsed and partial views.

5.4 SCP 1, taken from PRoW Brundall FP 2 to the west of the Appeal Site demonstrates the open views towards the grass and vegetated belts of the Run Dike in the northern part of the Appeal Site; however only partial views are possible of the western agricultural field due to intervening mature tree and woodland vegetation adjacent to PRoW Brundall FP2, and the hedgerow north of the western part of the Appeal Site. The Appeal Site is seen in the context of existing residential properties on the Meadow View, Westfield Road and Highfield Avenue.

5.5 SCP 2, taken from further south on PRoW Brundall FP 2, adjacent to Links Avenue and the Brundall Memorial Hall, demonstrates the open views possible through gaps in the Appeal Site's western perimeter hedgerow and tree belt, across the western agricultural field. The elevated position allows partial views of the western residential edge of Blofield, filtered through the intervening vegetation, however due to the undulating landform wider views into Blofield are screened with the exception of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Peter which forms a focal point on the skyline. This view is representative of the defined ‘important view’ from Brundall Memorial Hall in Policy 3 of the Brundall Neighbourhood Plan. The view also demonstrates the
south/north orientation of Brundall Memorial Hall and the single small window facing towards the Appeal Site.

5.6 SCP 3, is taken from Links Avenue and demonstrates the glimpsed view of the south-eastern corner of the Appeal Site seen at the northern end of the road, with the Brundall Memorial Hall apparent in the frame.

5.7 SCP 4, taken from Westfield Road, south of the Appeal Site demonstrates that even the majority of the Appeal Site is shielded from view by intervening buildings, and due to the sloping landform to the south, the ground plane of the Appeal Site is substantially screened.

5.8 SCP 5, taken from PRoW Brundall FP1/ Golf Links Road immediately south-east of the Appeal Site is representative of the partial views of the eastern part of the Appeal Site and demonstrates that, further east, the majority of the Appeal Site is screened by Westfield Mission Church. It also shows that from PRoW Brundall FP1 within the Appeal Site, open views across the agricultural fields and the wider landscape to the north are possible.

5.9 SCP 6, taken from Brundall Road on the approach to Brundall from Blofield, north-east of the Appeal Site, demonstrates the partial view through the boundary vegetation on the north-eastern extent of the Appeal Site. Visibility is limited to the immediate farm buildings and working area, with views of the agricultural field barely perceptible through the intervening vegetation and existing built form.

5.10 SCP 7, taken from a car park off St Andrew's Way is representative of views towards the Appeal Site from the south-western edge of Blofield. Partial views of the western field are possible, however these views are filtered by intervening hedgerow vegetation within the Appeal Site, individual and grouped trees surrounding Run Dike, and young tree planting within Norfolk Premier Golf 9 hole course and on Blofield's residential edge.

5.11 SCP 9 demonstrates views available from the Norfolk Premier Golf Course, with areas of artificial elevated landform affording open views to the south where the Appeal Site is clearly visible at a distance of at least 150m. The Appeal Site is notably seen surrounded by existing built form in Brundall, with houses on Westfield Road and Meadow View punctuating the skyline.

5.12 SCP’s 8, 10, 11 and 12 demonstrate the extents of glimpsed views of the eastern part of the Appeal Site as seen from on Yarmouth Road and A47 Dual Carriageway, north and north-east of the Appeal Site. However, the majority of the Appeal Site is screened by the undulating landform and intervening vegetation, forms a minor component of the view, and is seen in context of surrounding residential properties on Meadow View, Westfield Road and Highfield Avenue.
Visual Summary

5.13 At close range to the Appeal Site, there are open and glimpsed views from the Brundall Memorial Hall, PRoW Brundall FP2 and residential properties immediately west of the Appeal Site; Westfield Mission Church, residential properties on Highfield Avenue and glimpsed views from Brundall Road east of the Appeal Site; PRoW Brundall FP1 and residential properties on Westfield Road and Meadow Close immediately south of the Appeal Site.

5.14 From mid-distance locations to the north of the Appeal Site, including the south-western residential edge of Blofield, PRoW Postwick FP6, Yarmouth Road, A47, the Appeal Site is predominantly screened by the combination of intervening landform, vegetation and built form. From longer distance views, the Appeal Site is screened by the combination of vegetation, landform and existing built form.

5.15 Overall the Appeal Site has a localised and limited visual envelope and is therefore considered to be visually well contained in relation to the surrounding landscape, and where visible is seen in the existing context of residential properties and existing infrastructure.
6.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Development Proposals

6.1 The Proposed Development is detailed in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) that accompanies the planning application (updated DAS dated April 2018 (CD 1.4) which in summary comprises the following as shown on Figure MDC-11: Proposed Illustrative Layout and Figure MDC-12: Proposed Landscape Strategy Plan showing:

- A new neighbourhood for Brundall set within a generous Country Park landscape with views over parkland and countryside;
- Significant Green Infrastructure along the northern boundary to protect and enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the Run Dike corridor;
- Substantial new native tree planting and new or enhanced habitats to act as a transition between the northern edge of Brundall and open landscape further to the north;
- New planting to create wildflower movement corridors with connections to habitats within the neighbouring landscape; and
- Informal recreation space with easily accessible pedestrian routes and passive surveillance.

Design Rationale

6.2 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal has informed the iterative design process, so that landscape and visual measures are embedded within the scheme design and the Development Parameter Plans which form the Application Drawings, such that:

- New built development has been consolidated to the central and south-east parts of the Appeal Site, as illustrated on Figure MDC-6: Development Parameters Plan 26007/07, so as to enable the focus of the Proposed Development to provide new recreational and ecological zones across the northern part of the Appeal Site as shown on Figures MDC 9 and 10 (Development Parameters Plan 26007/08 and 26007/09);
- The key landscape structure of existing hedgerows and vegetation have been retained along the central part of the Appeal Site, as a divide between the residential area and the Run Dike (area 1 on Development Parameter Plan 26007/08 (MDC 10) and along the eastern edge of the Appeal Site and as a divide between the existing 2 fields (areas 3 and 4 on Plan 26007/08);
- The foul sewer constraint has been incorporated as a new recreational zone as shown on Figure MDC-10 (area 2 on Development Parameter Plan 26007/08);
- Recreational usage and a viewing corridor towards the Church of St Andrew and St Peter in Blofield through the formal outdoor sports zone on the western edge of the
Appeal Site has been incorporated as shown on **MDC-9** (Development Parameter Plan 26007/09);

- The proposed built form elevations reflect the scale and mass of surrounding properties;
- The Planning Layout Phase 1 (Drawing PL01) incorporates new tree planting along the access road; the retention of the existing hedgerow; new landscape areas within the core of the layout and along the southern edge as part of a new amenity space; and
- The Street Sections (PL02) illustrate a range of façade treatments which provide an aesthetic quality to the built form, as well as aiding in softening its massing.

6.3 In terms of building heights, the illustrative masterplan consists of predominantly two storey housing, with maximum building heights of 11m above finished ground level. The maximum height of structures and buildings are defined on **MDC 6**: Development Parameter Plan 2 and are measured from finished ground level, which itself is controlled by Development Parameter Plan 1.

6.4 The Appeal Site will contain a variety of different building types and sizes, consisting of detached, semi-detached, and terraced housing. In addition, the development of the Appeal Site will include the provision of a mixture of affordable and higher value ‘Later Life’ purpose-built retirement housing. This could incorporate both apartments and bungalows into the scheme, helping to address Policy 5 of the Brundall Neighbourhood Plan by providing an additional stock of homes for older people within the village.

6.5 A range of building typologies will enable the development of diverse and attractive character areas which respond to topography, site features and density requirements. Buildings can be grouped to create hard or soft edges, strong or weak enclosure, continuous or fragmented façades, steady or syncopated rhythms, and everything in between so that visual richness in the street scene and a strong individual identity for the new neighbourhoods can be created.

6.6 At appropriate stages in the design and planning process post permission (i.e. at reserved matters stage), the use of different architectural approaches to each typology will add a further layer of visual richness (as seen at 4.0 Character Analysis).

6.7 In terms of proposed density, it is envisaged an average density of 20 - 40 d/ha can be applied to development areas of the Appeal Site. The main road through the site forms a loop and could have a higher concentration of terraced houses. The lower density band of 15 - 30 d/ha including semi-detached and detached properties could be used to front open space or create softer edges to the countryside.

6.8 Within these density bands there will be scope to vary the density within individual plots to achieve variety of built form across the overall site. It is not expected that all of the Appeal Site will be built to a single density as that would create a monotonous built form. There will
be a minimum average density of 20 dph across the Appeal Site, with a likely average density of 35 dwellings per hectare.

6.9 High quality design will reflect locally characteristic landscape features, and reflect or complement traditional materials within the locality, to reinforce a distinctive sense of place. Opportunities will be provided for the design and placement of public art which is proportionate and sympathetic to the local setting to enhance the individual identity of the new neighbourhood.

Landscape Strategy

6.10 The landscape strategy aims to create an attractive setting for the Proposed Development to assist in absorbing and assimilating the built form into the surrounding context through the retention of existing landscape features, where possible, and the creation of new landscape features where these assist with improving the character and visual amenity of the locality.

6.11 The proposed planting seeks to introduce new features that are characteristic of the wider landscape as identified in the Landscape Character Assessments at national and district levels. In addition, the proposed planting also seeks to protect and enhance the visual amenity of local visual receptors where possible.

6.12 Key objectives included within the landscape strategy can be summarised as follows:

- Maintain existing characteristic landscape features and views, as far as possible, and reinforce with planting and spaces which complement the distinctive patterns and materials of local landscapes and built form;
- Develop an enhanced network of green infrastructure to connect with adjacent wider landscape features, and to provide an appropriate landscape framework to accommodate built form;
- Design tree planting and ornamental shrub planting to soften and assimilate built form, to deliver distinctive and legible spaces, and to create an attractive public realm;
- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity of existing habitats through appropriate positive management, and provide new habitats and planting of high ecological value to extend and connect opportunities for wildlife;
- Provide open green spaces for public recreation, with inclusive access to via convenient walking and cycling routes, to promote healthy lifestyles and to mitigate against the effects of climate change; and
- Integrate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into the Appeal Site to mitigate the effects of flooding and to maximise their potential as biodiverse and attractive landscape features.
6.13 A multifunctional framework of connected natural and semi-natural spaces will incorporate retained landscape features and include additional planting, open green spaces and sustainable drainage systems throughout the site for a variety of social, economic and ecological benefits as part of a network of green infrastructure within the wider landscape.

6.14 A substantial landscape buffer along the northern boundary of the Appeal Site will protect the landscape and biodiversity value of the Run Dike corridor and will provide a belt of green infrastructure with additional native tree planting and new or enhanced habitats as a transition between the northern edge of Brundall and open landscapes further to the north. Uses will include a country park for public recreation and ecological area for conservation and education.

6.15 Habitats of highest nature conservation value within the Appeal Site associated with the Run Dike corridor in the north will be retained and enhanced through management and provision of complementary habitats such as new wetland in association with the site-wide surface water drainage strategy. The Proposed Development area is currently dominated by intensively farmed arable fields which are of limited ecological value in their own right. Opportunities for wildlife will however be maintained through the retention of hedgerows, with limited removal for access, and provision of new habitat of high ecological value such as species-rich native tree, shrub and hedgerow planting, meadow grassland and wetland features.

6.16 Informal recreation space features and new structural planting is located within a well-contained area of the Appeal Site to avoid impact on the amenity of the wider landscape setting. New informal recreation space will complement existing play and sports facilities associated with the Memorial Hall and will be easily accessible and passively surveyed from adjacent residential areas.

6.17 Green links extending into and through the residential area help integrate the development with its surroundings and will include streets, local parks and incidental open spaces with tree and shrub planting.

6.18 Soft landscaping provides an attractive setting for areas of built form and for pedestrian or cycle access, while new planting will create wildlife movement corridors with connections to habitats within the neighbouring landscape.

6.19 Landscape proposals will minimise water use through the use of low water demand planting selected to suit local environmental conditions, including species resilient to the long-term effects of climate change.

6.20 A Landscape and Biodiversity Management Strategy (LBMS - Appendix 5) has been prepared to demonstrate that the longer-term management and maintenance of the existing and proposed planting and open spaces has been considered as part of the scheme proposals. The
LBMS summarises the key principles of the landscape and ecology proposals, which are to be incorporated into later detailed proposals, and set out a broad management framework.

6.21 The resulting Landscape Strategy Plan (Figure MDC-12) illustrates the different landscape character areas proposed for the Proposed Development. This includes 1. Ecology Zone, 2. Country Park, 3. Woodland Gateway, 4. Informal Play, 5. Residential and 6. Central Green.

1. Ecology Zone

6.22 Existing trees, hedgerow, scrub, fen meadow and watercourses are to be retained, managed and sensitively enhanced to increase biodiversity and to maintain the function of this area as a foraging and commuting corridor for wildlife, with links to surrounding habitats. The fen meadow will provide an attractive setting for adjacent recreational and residential landscapes, although public access will be restricted in order to limit disturbance of wildlife and associated impacts.

2. Country Park

6.23 A semi-natural linear park, potentially incorporating SuDS attenuation basins, will create a transitional character and biodiverse habitat between the wetland ecology to the north and the residential areas to the south. Existing wet pasture/grassland will be managed as meadow to encourage a floristically diverse sward. Existing hedgerows will be gapped up and positively managed to retain this characteristic and punctuated by intermittent groups of native trees and shrubs to filter views between the development and the existing residential and recreational uses to the north of the Appeal Site. Public recreational access will be provided via informal paths or boardwalks according to local ground conditions, and interpretive signs installed to explain the purposes of the park and prohibit antisocial uses.

3. Woodland Gateway

6.24 Denser tree planting within the main entrance area to the north-east of the Appeal Site will provide increased visual screening and structural containment, to reinforce the separate identities of Brundall and Blofield, and extend and link with the existing character of tree belts further to the east. Woodland trees planted within meadow grassland will create a distinctive gateway feature, and containment for the eastern end of the Country Park, whilst allowing glimpsed views through beneath the canopy.

4. Informal Play

6.25 Meadow and amenity grassland with intermittent clusters of native canopy trees will provide a setting for informal recreation. Planting within this western area of the Appeal Site is to be selected and placed to maintain and enhance important views from this location towards the
north east, encompassing Blofield and the Church of St Andrew and St Peter, through careful framing with grassland and trees. Informal play will be sympathetically integrated into the wider open space through sensitive placement, landform remodelling and planting. Robust, attractive equipment and surfaces will complement and extend the existing sports and play amenities provided by the Memorial Hall.

5. Residential

6.26 Private frontages and rear gardens are provided for all residences, featuring a high standard of hard and soft landscaping including tree, hedge and shrub planting, to create an appropriate setting for built form and to integrate the new development within its local surroundings. Pedestrian/cycle access routes will permeate the Appeal Site and serve as attractive, sustainable transport corridors incorporating connections with existing Public Rights of Way and other public thoroughfares. Integration of access with hedgerow and tree planting and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will create biodiverse green/blue links with connections across the Appeal Site to surrounding green infrastructure.

6. Central Green

6.27 Clustered specimen trees set within mown amenity grassland will create a focal public space for the new residential area. Opportunities will be provided for informal recreation, including a children’s play area, and a landmark feature will signal a distinctive identity for this local neighbourhood.

6.28 In terms of access and movement including enhanced connectivity and permeability the development has been designed to provide a clear hierarchy of permeable routes. The local street network provides direct links along desire lines, connecting residents to both existing and new areas. Pedestrian, cycle and vehicular movement will be integrated. All routes will be overlooked and well-lit to ensure safety. Landmark features will help people to navigate within the new neighbourhood. The movement network will connect to the existing urban fabric to provide an integrated community.

Phase 1

6.29 In terms of the detailed layout of Phase 1, the following principles have been adopted. These include a strong frontage along the main spine road; larger properties overlooking the Run Dike and country park; the creation of a mews area with generous landscaping at the heart of Phase 1; wide openings into the mews area to allow for landscaping and views from the country park to the open space to the south; strong frontage around the mews to create a sense of place; open space at the south of Phase 1 to create a buffer to existing dwellings and accommodate existing services; retention of existing trees wherever possible and viable to
create an attractive landscape setting to the proposals; retention and management of the existing hedge at the west of Phase 1.

6.30 In terms of specific landscape measures, at the entrance to the scheme avenue tree planting within the verge along the principal carriageway will provide a sense of progression and formality to the scene. Hedged frontages and native tree planting will soften the appearance of proposed and existing built form and combined with wildflower planting, will provide an appropriate transition to the wider landscape to the north.

6.31 In terms of the Mews it is proposed that a green framework of wide, informal verges featuring tree, shrub and bulb planting will soften and screen the vehicular access and parking areas within this shared surface mews. Private frontages are to be simply planted with a palette of evergreen ornamental shrubs, reflecting the intimate quality of this space.

6.32 Avenue tree planting will continue along the principal carriageway with greater regularity and formality, signalling the approach to the core residential area. Retained native hedgerow will be restored to provide an appropriate rural boundary between private frontages with ornamental fruit trees and the wide wildflower grassland verge.

**Design Rationale**

6.33 From the above the following design rationale is considered appropriate to successfully integrate new development within the Appeal Site and local townscape, as well as responding positively to the identified policies and published character studies.

*Access*

6.34 The Appeal Site is within a townscape characterised by a mixed built form typology interspersed with publicly accessible spaces. The Appeal Site will enable additional connectivity and permeability to the wider countryside providing the ability to enhance public access and connectivity to the surrounding townscape as well as increasing the recreational value of the Appeal Site.

6.35 New built form within the Appeal Site will reflect the surrounding townscape, which is predominantly two storey modern built form / residential properties. This exhibits a consistent scale of building, as well as pitched roof profiles. Therefore, new built form will similarly propose a massing which is consistent in its scale and roof profile.
Enhance the Local Landscape Edge/ Townscape Structure

6.36 The massing of the new built forms will be softened by being set within a sympathetic and sensitive robust landscape setting, including for 'greening' of the built form through a well-considered amenity landscape scheme.

6.37 The layout will incorporate high quality materials and detailing within the external surfaces to improve the perception of the public realm which is currently discordant with varied poor quality and deteriorating timber fencing.

6.38 Sports provision will ensure subtle colouring to finished surfaces and fencing to enable its assimilation and integration into the local landscape.

6.39 The layout will minimise the extent of visible car-parking through soft landscaping and increase the publicly accessible spaces within the Appeal Site.

6.40 The introduced built form and sports facilities are to be set within a robust landscape strategy that enhances the green infrastructure and biodiversity linkages both within the Appeal Site and into its immediate surrounding townscape.

6.41 The introduced built form and sports facilities are to be set within a robust landscape strategy that enhances the green infrastructure and biodiversity linkages both within the Appeal Site and into its immediate surrounding townscape.

6.42 While there will be an initial loss of a limited length of hedgerow, the Proposed Development includes for a substantial extent of new tree planting, including the provision of appropriate native and ornamental trees within the development area, as well as large swathes of new planting and landscaping comprising coppice planting and proposed shrubs, with particular concentrations within the Country Park and Ecology Zone parts of the Appeal Site.

6.43 It is therefore clear from my Figure MDC-12: Landscape Strategy Plan – that there will be a substantial enhancement to the overall green infrastructure network and the overarching character of the landscape/ edge of town, being that of a well-treed and landscaped area, thus adding to the abundance of trees in the borough.

Summary

6.44 The Proposed Development seeks to deliver enhanced sporting and recreational community facilities in the Appeal Site, alongside new public open space in the form of a country park and enhanced habitat and ecology area, together with residential housing. This triple approach secures a sustainable, inclusive future for the Appeal Site, the benefits of which underpin national and local planning policy, with the built aspects of the Proposed Development
facilitating the delivery of a viable long-term effective solution of the recreational open space and sports provision for the community.

6.45 People of all ages will be able to use the sports facilities, including clubs, schools and residents, for a wide range of sports. Approximately ten hectares of the Appeal Site will be offered to be transferred to the community, via the LPA free of charge and with a fitting out and maintenance dowry up to £900,000. The ten hectares will comprise a 7ha country park and a 3ha neighbourhood green. Should the community (via the LPA) not want to take ownership then the site owner will create a management company to take on the responsibility. In addition, the residential development site itself will contain the policy requirement of green infrastructure that will be delivered through the reserved matters. The detail of the proposition and legal mechanisms is set out in the accompanying S106 agreement.

6.46 Pedestrians and cyclists will be able to pass freely through the Appeal Site as shown on Figure MDC12: Landscape Strategy Plan, connecting PRoW 2 to Brundall Road. These people will benefit from enjoying a route through the country park consisting of new amenity and wildflower grassland, substantial shrub and tree planting, and a new area of wetland habitat delivering biodiversity enhancement measures as set out above. This publicly accessible area will form a transition between the northern edge of Brundall and the open landscape further to the north which comprises the golf course. I would anticipate this to be a welcome addition to the area. In addition, the hard and stark built up edge boundary treatment that currently exists flanking PRoW 1 will be replaced by a more coherent and unified boundary treatment.

6.47 The Proposed Development seeks to build upon and enhance the positive contribution that the Appeal Site makes to the local area in relation to these factors by maintain and improving the open space for publicly accessible formal and informal sports recreation, and through habitat creation to result in a net gain in the biodiversity value of the Appeal Site.

6.48 In addition, the views across the open field are to be integrated within the design of the Proposed Development, with the intention to enhance the composition of these views and improve the visual amenity experience for those within and passing through the area.

6.49 Furthermore, enhanced connectivity within and through the Appeal Site is to be delivered to assist with pedestrian convenience, while opening up space to be accessible to the public is also proposed for the Appeal Site.

6.50 The material choice set out for the Proposed Development (to be brought forward as part of the reserved matters) should be simple, unified and consistent across the Appeal Site and the surroundings.
6.51 The Proposed Development seeks to ‘give back’ to the community by opening up the area to be publicly accessible, while providing for sport recreation opportunities and the enhancement of ecological features.

6.52 Increased and enhanced pedestrian permeability through the Appeal Site is a key element that the Proposed Development seeks to achieve and accords with other objectives of the development plan, as Mr Meakins confirms in his Proof of Evidence.
7.0 LIKELY LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

7.1 This section summarises the likely effects of the Proposed Development on the Appeal Site and visual receptors, as well as the response to the published landscape character assessments and relevant policies. The detailed commentary on these landscape and visual effects are outlined in full in Appendices 4A and 4B, including the sensitivity of the identified receptors.

7.2 The assessment is undertaken for the following operational stages of the development:

- Year 1 as illustrated on the Parameter Plans during winter; and
- Year 15 as illustrated on Illustrative Layout B3.

7.3 These two scenarios are considered to be appropriate in presenting a 'worst' and 'best' case scenario for the Proposed Development. Illustrative Layout : Option B3 as shown on Figure MDC-11 has been assessed as it represents the aspirations of the Parish and includes for additional built form within the western part of the Appeal Site, as well as the access via the existing amenity landscape between Meadow View and Links Avenue, which is reflected on Figure MDC-8 : Development Parameter Plan 5 - Primary Movement Corridor (dwg. 26007/10).

7.4 The construction stage is not assessed as this is temporary; but evidently this phase would result in adverse effects to the Appeal Site and existing views due to the works required to re-profile landform, construct roads and housing as well as accommodate construction activity via construction compounds. The retained vegetation illustrated on the Development Parameter Plans would therefore be retained and protected during the construction phase via the necessary tree protection measures outlined in the Arboricultural Report.

Effects on Landscape Features

7.5 In terms of landscape features, the Proposed Development will lead to effects in two ways: adverse effects resulting from the loss of existing landscape features associated with the introduction of new built form, highways and changes associated with public open space, and beneficial effects associated with the introduction of new, characteristic landscape features and enhanced management of existing features as set out in the LBMS.

7.6 The landscape features identified on the Appeal Site, against which effects have been assessed are listed below:

- Open Fields;
- Hedgerows;
- Trees; and
- Run Dike Corridor.
7.7 In relation to Open Fields, the Proposed Development would result in a Moderate Adverse effect at Year 1, with negative impacts arising due to the introduction of built form on approximately 40% of the area, where it would fundamentally alter the open character of the fields and be replaced with new, locally characteristic residential settlement. On the remaining 60% of the area represented by this receptor, the Proposed Development will introduce areas of wildflower and amenity grassland, together with new tree planting, resulting in beneficial impacts on the character of the fields, but nonetheless altering their perception and land use from agricultural to recreational. As a result, the receptor would be subject to a partial deterioration. At Year 15, the establishment of proposed planting would increase the level of beneficial impacts, however, due to fundamental change experienced by the receptor, the effect would remain Moderate Adverse.

7.8 The Proposed Development will have a limited effect on Hedgerows due to their widespread retention, with only localised removal to facilitate access. Furthermore, the Proposed Development includes substantial new hedgerow planting, including ‘gapping up’ of existing hedgerows. On this basis, the effect at Year 1 will be Minor Adverse. Following establishment of proposed hedgerows, and enhanced management of existing features as set out in the LBMS, the overall quantity and quality of the receptor would be substantially increased, resulting in a Moderate Beneficial effect at Year 15.

7.9 As stated in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment the Proposed Development will not require the removal of any trees. Furthermore, the Proposed Development includes substantial tree planting that will contribute significantly to the extent and quality of the receptor. On this basis, the Proposed Development will result in a Negligible Beneficial effect at Year 1, rising to Moderate Beneficial at Year 15 following establishment, and enhanced maintenance in accordance with the LBMS.

7.10 With respect to the Run Di ke corridor, which would be incorporated into the proposed Country Park and set aside as an ecological zone with characteristic tree planting, the Proposed Development will lead to a Minor Beneficial effect at Year 1. Following establishment of tree planting and enhanced management of the existing receptor in accordance with the LBMS, the effect will be Moderate Beneficial.

7.11 **Effects on Landscape Character**

7.12 The anticipated effects of the Proposed Development on the character of the study area has been assessed with respect of the following receptors:

- The Appeal Site and its immediate vicinity;
- Landscape Character Areas identified in published landscape character assessments at National and local level; and
• Local Landscape Character Areas established through field work as part of this assessment.

7.13 In relation to the Appeal Site and Its Immediate Vicinity, the Proposed Development will change the land use of the Appeal Site, with the introduction of built development, the outdoor playing area and country park on land that is currently used for agriculture, resulting in the opportunities for recreation on the Appeal Site being substantially increased. The proposed planting strategy will increase the quantity, quality and variance of the Appeal Site’s vegetative cover and proposed built form will reinforce local character through appropriate and sensitively designed scale, massing, building form and materiality. As such, the Proposed Development will lead to a Negligible Beneficial effect at Year 1, rising to Moderate Beneficial at Year 15 following establishment of proposed planting.

7.14 The Proposed Development will lead to Neutral effects at Year 1 and Year 15 on National Character Area 80: The Broads. This is as a result of the extensive scale of the NCA and the relatively small size of the Appeal Site. Furthermore, as the NCA already contains substantial areas of residential settlement together with a wide range of landscape types, the Proposed Development would not materially alter the character of the NCA.

7.15 With respect to local published landscape character assessments, the Proposed Development will result in a Neutral effect on LCA D4: Blofield at Year 1 due to the retention of existing landscape features and provision of extensive areas of open space. It will also introduce new built form that will reinforce local character through its appearance, such that it will not be an incongruous feature in the area. Furthermore, the Proposed Development will retain views of historical architectural features through the use of strategic open space. As such, the Proposed Development is considered to respond positively to the management guidelines set out for the LCA. Following establishment of planting at Year 15, whilst there will be an improvement in the overall level of beneficial effect, the significance will remain neutral.

7.16 LCA F3: Reedham to Thorpe would experience a Negligible Adverse effect at Year 1 as a result of the removal of the existing area of amenity landscape, including the localised loss of existing vegetation. Due to the relatively small area of the LCA affected, the changes would be broadly imperceptible. At Year 15, the establishment of proposed planting would mitigate more fully for the loss of vegetation, resulting in a Neutral effect.

7.17 In relation to Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs), the following effects have been identified:

7.18 LLCA 1 Run Dike will be subject to a Minor Beneficial effects at Year 1 due to the retention of the area as an ecological zone native, locally characteristic native tree planting. Following
establishment of this tree planting at Year 15, the LLCA will be subject to a Moderate Beneficial effect.

7.19 With respect to LLCA 2: Agricultural, the Proposed Development will result in a change from unremarkable agricultural land to built form on approximately 40% of the LCA, with the remainder set aside as open space with enhanced recreational value. The Proposed Development would not be an incongruous feature in the context of existing built form, and it would provide a more organic northern settlement boundary. Nonetheless the Proposed Development will result in a partial deterioration as a result of the loss of agricultural land, with an associated Moderate Adverse effect at Year 1. Following establishment of substantial proposed planting at Year 15, the effect will reduce to Minor Adverse.

7.20 In terms of LLCA3: Recreational Valley Sides, the Proposed development will lead to indirect effects on the setting of the LLCA due to their proximity and the introduction of built form on the Appeal Site, which will not be perceived as an incongruous feature in the wider landscape due to the strong existing influence of built form. The proposed change in use of the western part of the Appeal Site from arable land to recreational would be seen to reinforce the character of the LLCA due to similar land use and appearance. On this basis, the Proposed Development will lead to a Neutral effect at Year 1, with the establishment of proposed planting providing enhanced softening and integration of new built form leading to a Minor Adverse effect at Year 15.

7.21 LLCA 4: Residential will experience very limited direct adverse effects due to the change of a small area of amenity landscape to an emergency access provided as part of the Proposed Development. However, beneficial effects on the setting of the LLCA will also be introduced by the Proposed Development in terms of sensitively designed built form, which will be seen to reinforce locally characteristic vernacular, and the provision of extensive new recreational land adjacent to the LLCA. On this basis, the LLCA will be subject to a Negligible Beneficial effect at Year 1, rising to Minor Beneficial at Year 15 following establishment of proposed planting.

Effects on Visual Receptors

7.22 Users of PRoW FP2 (SCP 1), which extends along the western boundary of the Appeal Site, will experience partial views of new built form on the eastern part of the Appeal Site, seen at a distance of approximately 250m, with the foreground largely composed of the proposed Country Park and ecological zone. New housing would be apparent but would not be an uncharacteristic feature within the view due to the strong influence of existing settlement in the landscape. On this basis, the Proposed Development will result in a Minor Adverse effect at Year 1. Following establishment of proposed planting, including substantial tree planting in the Country Park, and within and around new housing, the Proposed Development will be
integrated within the landscape and will be seen as a cohesive part of the existing settlement. As a result, the effect will be Minor Beneficial at Year 15.

7.23 In views from Brundall Memorial Hall (SCP 2), experienced by visitors and people travelling on the southern section of PRoW Brundall FP 2, the proposed formal playing area on the majority of the western part of the Appeal Site will occupy the foreground, with new built form seen partially at a distance of 150m. The important view of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Peter would also be retained. On balance, the Proposed Development will lead to a Minor Adverse effect at Year 1, reducing to Negligible Adverse at Year 15 following establishment of proposed planting and enhanced integration of new built form.

7.24 Visual receptors on Links Avenue (SCP 3), and further south on The Street will not have views of new built form due to screening provided by intervening housing, with only a channel view of the south-westernmost corner of the Appeal Site available at the northern end of Links Avenue. This, in combination with the limited changes proposed in the part of the Appeal Site visible will result in Neutral effects at Year 1 and Year 15.

7.25 In views from Westfield Road (SCP 4), the removal of the existing amenity area, and replacement with an emergency access would be seen at close range, with the majority of built form screened by intervening houses. Residents of Westfield Road whose properties abut the Appeal Site will experience close range views of new built form in place of open views across the Appeal Site. Residents of properties on Meadow View that abut the Appeal Site will have close range views of recreational open space, with oblique views of new built form to the north-east. On balance, this receptor group will experience Moderate Adverse effects as a result of the introduction of new built form, with the sensitive design of the Proposed Development reducing the level of adverse significance. Following establishment of proposed planting at Year 15, new built form will be further integrated within the landscape, together with beneficial effects on views of the western part of the Appeal Site due to the introduction of recreational open space, resulting in a Minor Adverse overall effect.

7.26 Users of PRoW Brundall FP 1 (SAP A) will have close range views of new built form in the place of open views experienced on the eastern part of the Appeal Site, whilst to the west the retention of an extensive area of open space in the form of recreational land will retain the openness of views. The Church of St. Andrew and St. Peter will remain visible from the western extent of the PRoW. On balance, the effects at Year 1 and Year 15 will be Moderate Adverse.

7.27 Residents of houses to the south-east of the Appeal Site and visitors to the Westfield Mission Church (SCP 5), will experience partial, close range views of new built form, with partial screening provided by existing boundary vegetation, such that ground floor views are likely to be less affected. Nonetheless, the Proposed Development will result in Moderate Adverse
effects at Year 1, with the significance of effect reducing to Minor Adverse at Year 15 following establishment of proposed planting within an around the area of proposed housing, which will integrate and soften views of built form.

7.28 In views from Brundall Road (SCP 6), proposed built form will be substantially screened by intervening built form and vegetation, with primarily the eastern end of the Country Park and the primary access road visible in the foreground. The existing farm buildings apparent in the view will be removed. The changes will not be readily perceived nor uncharacteristic in the existing view, such that the effect will be Neutral at Year 1. Following establishment of proposed planting, including substantial tree planting around the proposed access road, the effect will be Minor Beneficial.

7.29 Residents on the south-western edge of Blofield (SCP 7) will largely not have views of proposed built form due to intervening vegetation. Where views are possible, built form will be seen at a distance of 500m in the context of existing residential properties around the Appeal Site, and would therefore not materially alter the composition of available views. On this basis, the effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development will be Negligible Adverse at Year 1, and Neutral at Year 15 following establishment of proposed planting and associated enhanced integration of proposed built form.

7.30 People travelling on Yarmouth Road (SCP 8) will have distant (>500m) views towards the Appeal Site, with the Proposed Development largely screened by intervening landform and vegetation. Where views are available, the eastern part of the Appeal Site containing proposed residential development will be only partially visible and seen in the context of existing built form in Brundall. The most apparent part of the Appeal Site will be the westernmost extent of the Country Park/Recreational Area, where the limited extent of proposed changes will not materially alter the view. On this basis, the Proposed Development will lead to a Negligible Adverse effect at Year 1, reducing to Neutral at Year 15 following establishment of planting and associated integration of new built form within the landscape.

7.31 Users of the Norfolk Premier Golf Course (SCP 9) will experience open views of the Proposed Development at a minimum distance of 150m. Proposed built form will be seen in the context of existing settlement in Brundall and would not be an uncharacteristic feature. The Country Park and formal playing area will also be seen to reinforce the existing recreational character of the area apparent in the views. On this basis, the Proposed Development will lead to a Negligible Adverse effect at Year 1, reducing to a Neutral effect at Year 15 following establishment of proposed planting and enhanced integration and softening of new built form.

7.32 In views from PROW Postwick FP 6 (SCP 10), new built form will be substantially screened by intervening hedgerow, with views of the proposed formal playing area seen in filtered views at
a distance of over 600m. The overall change in the composition of views will be virtually imperceptible and the resultant effect will be Neutral at Year 1 and Year 15.

7.33 Due to substantial existing roadside vegetation along the A47 (SCP11 & 12), there are limited opportunities for views toward the Appeal Site, and receptors will be unlikely to perceive the Proposed Development at a distance of approximately 700m and at an oblique angle to the direction of travel. Therefore, Neutral effects are anticipated at Year 1 and Year 15.

Response to Published Landscape Character Studies

NCA 80: The Broads

7.34 In response to NCA 80: The Broads, the Proposed Development would not adversely impact the stated characteristics of woodland cover around wetland areas. The Proposed Development would respond positively to the Statements of Environmental Opportunity by improving opportunities to enhance people’s enjoyment of the area through the new public access and recreation across the Appeal Site.

Landscape Character Type D - Tributary Farmlands

7.35 In response to Landscape Character Type D - Tributary Farmlands the Proposed Development has conserved the hedgerow network across the Appeal Site, as illustrated on Development Parameter Plan dwg.26007/08; as well as conserving the tributary river corridors as important landscape and nature conservation features by the change in land use to a country park, as illustrated on Figure MDC-9 (Development Parameter Plan dwg. 26007/09).

7.36 Furthermore, as the northern part of the Appeal Site is proposed as a recreational and ecological zone, this is considered to respond positively to the stated opportunities for the:

- creation of all types of grassland and woodland, especially mixed habitats of grassland and scrub woodland;
- the enhancement and creation of wetland habitats, such as wet meadows and wet woodland; and
- conserving and enhancing the landscape structure within the area, including blocks and copses of woodland, mature parkland trees and intact hedgerows.

7.37 The Proposed Development would also retain views to the Church of St. Andrew and St. Peter in Blofield, retaining the stated 'strength of character' of Type D through retaining views to churches.
Landscape Character Area D4: Blofield

7.38 In relation to the inherent landscape sensitivities of Area D4, the Proposed Development will retain the hedgerows and mature woodland, especially lining tributaries. The Country Park is considered to reinforce a sense of place adjacent to the Run Dike corridor and on this northern part of Brundall.

7.39 The architectural detailing for the Phase 1 part of the Application as illustrated on dwg. PL04 consisting of a mixture of brick with black timber boarding; render; pantiles and plain clay tiles is considered to reflect distinctive combinations of traditional buildings materials. The layout of the Proposed Development also retains a view from Brundall Memorial Hall to St. Michaels Church, Blofield.

7.40 The Proposed Development will respond positively to the stated landscape planning guidelines for D4 by:

- Conserving the simple, predominately rural character adjacent to the Run Dike;
- Promoting the use of local materials within villages;
- Conserving the recognisable sense of place through new recreational and country park usages; and
- Ensuring that new development does not reduce the vertical significance of important historical architectural features within the landscape, such as church towers by retaining a viewing corridor from Brundall Memorial Hall as well as the new built form reflecting the scale and mass of the existing built form within Brundall.

Response to Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (CD 9)

7.41 With the introduction of a Country Park and new landscaping across the Appeal Site, the Proposed Development is considered to respond positively to NPPF Paragraph 7 and the environmental role of sustainable development and helping to improve biodiversity.

7.42 The iterative design process has taken account of the differing roles and character of different areas both within and surrounding the Appeal Site (NPPF para. 17) to recognise the value of the Run Dike corridor and retain and enhance this within the layout as a new Country Park for recreation and ecology.

7.43 Additionally, with the Appeal Site being inset from Brundall's settlement pattern the Appeal Site is considered to be in a sustainable location, with the provision of residential, sport and Country Park land uses presenting a local strategy to improve health and cultural wellbeing.
7.44 The Phase 1 detailed layout demonstrates that the new built form would be set within a high quality landscape design with the architectural detailing responding positively to local character to reflect local identity and result in a visually attractive design.

7.45 As demonstrated, the Appeal Site is not subject to any national designations; however the layout has retained the valued hedgerow and tree structure and the fen meadows. The layout has enhanced the recreational value of the Appeal Site, as well as provided for opportunities to enhance the ecological and biodiversity value.

   *Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and Norfolk (adopted March 2011, amendments adopted January 2014)*

7.46 The Proposed Development would not result in coalescence with Blofield. This is because the built form would be set within the existing landscape framework of hedgerows and trees to the west of Highfield Avenue. From along Brundall Road there is already inter-visibility between existing properties in Brundall and Blofield, as demonstrated by Site Context Photograph 6. The new built form would not be visible from this location and the extent of new planting would increase the vegetation coverage within this part of the landscape, retaining the existing perception of settlement identity between Brundall and Blofield.

7.47 In relation to areas which are not protected by international or national designations, the Proposed Development will contribute to providing a multifunctional green infrastructure network through the sports provision and country park. As such, the Green Infrastructure is an integral part of the development layout.

7.48 In response to Policy 2 - Promoting Good Design, the layout and proposed architectural vernacular has respected local distinctiveness, as well as the landscape setting of Brundall and the transition between the proposed residential area and the wider landscape, through the provision of a country park.

   *Development Management DPD*

7.49 In line with Policy EN2 - Landscape, the design and LVIA have had regard to the relevant published landscape character assessments. The design has:

   - Protected the gap between Blofield and Brundall;
   - Protected views to the Church of St. Andrew and St. Peter; and
   - Enhanced the recreational value of the Appeal Site through the provision of a formal sports zone and country park.
7.50 The extent of recreational and ecological zones illustrated on the Development Parameter Plans respond positively to Policy EN3 - Green Infrastructure and maximising the opportunities for the creation of well managed habitats.

7.51 The landscape assessment has demonstrated that the Proposed Development would avoid any significant detrimental impact through the layout and massing of the proposed built form in relation to the surrounding character areas. The country park is considered to reinforce the sense of local distinctiveness by establishing greater recreational connection to the Run Dike corridor, along with the proposed façade materials reflecting local vernaculars and new landscape planting including native species.

Site Allocations DPD

7.52 The Proposed Development retains the majority of the western part of the Appeal Site as Open space, in response to the allocation of BRU3: Land East of Memorial Hall. In relation to the guidelines, the illustrative layout includes for car parking provision as well as adequate landscaping and green infrastructure, including the retention of existing trees and hedgerows and the provision of SuDS. Additionally, the open space could accommodate playing pitches (as a result of the level change illustrated on the Development Parameter Plans) and more informal recreation with the country park.

Broadlands Place Shaping: A Guide to Undertaking Development in Broadland

7.53 The importance of Green Infrastructure and biodiversity is addressed through the country park provision and the extent of new landscaping illustrated within the Phase 1 part of the Appeal Site, such that the layout represents an attractive sense of place and would be locally distinctive.

7.54 Similarly the layout retains views to the Church towers in Blofield, such that this is retained as a landmark within views.

Brundall Neighbourhood Plan

7.55 The improved recreational value of the Appeal Site would enable improved linkages between Brundall and the surrounding countryside. The country park would protect and enhance the existing landscape and wildlife areas around the village, as would the retention of the key vegetation within the Development Parameter Plans.

7.56 The important local view from Brundall Memorial Hall to the Church of St. Andrew and St. Peter would be retained by the formal sports provision in the western part of the Appeal Site. The additional recreational facilities within the western part of the Appeal Site would respond to
Policy 4: Enhanced recreation provision, and establish a formal recreational area and logical focal point for a variety of sports.

7.57 In relation to landscape effects, the assessment identified that the Proposed Development will introduce new built form and a change of land use to the Appeal Site, combining new public access with new recreational facilities, a country park and residential properties.

7.58 These features will improve the recreational and educational value of the Appeal Site, the scenic quality, the association with the wider landscape and townscape and the function of the Appeal Site within the local community. The new country park will provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancements with a new landscape structure across the Appeal Site and within the built form, via ornamental planting.
8.0 RESPONSES TO REASONS FOR REFUSAL AND STATEMENT OF CASE

Reason for Refusal 1

"The development would result in the introduction of built form and infrastructure associated with residential development. This would impact on the openness and rurality of the application site and result in significant harm to the rural character of the landscape including views from the public footpath to the south of the site. This would be to the detriment of the existing character and appearance of the area and conflict with policies GC2, GC4, and EN2 of the Development Management DPD, Policy 2 of the joint Core Strategy and Policy 3 of the Brundall Neighbourhood Plan".

Response

8.1 The Appeal Site is considered to be appropriate for residential development as it is bounded by existing residential properties to the south, east and west and is thus already inset within Brundall's existing settlement pattern. In this regard it will constitute a logical location for the introduction of new residential built form as the settlement envelope will not increase beyond its current extents.

8.2 Furthermore, the arable fields in which built development will be located are a relatively common feature within the landscape and are not considered to exhibit the same level of landscape value as the Run Dike corridor in the northern part of the Appeal Site, due to their arable agricultural usage and associated lack of diverse vegetative cover.

8.3 The existing level of public accessibility on the Appeal Site, in the form of a single PRoW extending along the southern boundary will be retained, albeit with some diversion at the eastern end to ensure the route will not fall between the rear gardens of houses, and a PRoW along the western boundary of the Appeal Site. However, the Proposed Development will introduce substantial new opportunities for public access, including extensive new informal pathways and areas of amenity grassland in the northern and western extents of the Appeal Site. These aspects, in combination with the built form being set within a robust landscape framework will increase the provision of Green Infrastructure across the Appeal Site; protect and enhance this part of the Run Dike; and respond positively to the guidelines set out in the published landscape character assessments and in relevant policies.

8.4 The existing settlement edge of Brundall on the southern site boundary is not considered to be well contained or defined, following an arbitrary line that does not strongly relate to the overriding settlement pattern. The lack of containment and elevated position of this settlement
edge results in a stark contrast between housing and open land on the Appeal Site, as demonstrated by Site Appraisal Photograph B. As demonstrated by Figure MDC-2: Topographical Features Plan, the Appeal Site is the only part of the northern area of Brundall that does not extend further down the valley of the Run Dike. In this regard the Appeal Site’s use is unrepresentative of the overriding relationship between landform and settlement pattern that is apparent elsewhere in Brundall, resulting in an inorganic appearance to the overall settlement edge that is at variance with the pervading characteristics. The Proposed Development will introduce a new northern settlement boundary, set back between 65m and 100m from the Run Dike, which will be more characteristic in the context of the wider settlement edge, benefitting from better containment and being more organic in form.

8.5 The Proposed Development will avoid any significant detrimental impact through the layout and massing of the proposed built form in relation to the surrounding character areas. The Country Park is considered to reinforce the sense of local distinctiveness by establishing a greater level of recreational activity in proximity to the Run Dike corridor, along with the proposed façade materials reflecting local vernaculars and new landscape planting including native species.

8.6 The Proposed Development is therefore considered to provide the opportunity for beneficial effects to the existing landscape, including habitat enhancements across the Appeal Site with the potential to improve biodiversity. These beneficial effects incorporate the actions of published landscape guidance, such that the Proposed Development can be successfully accommodated within Brundall's existing settlement pattern and the setting of the Run Dike.

8.7 The Council’s Reason for Refusal and Statement of Case are considered in further detail on the basis of a series of themes as follows:

**Nature of Proposed Development**

8.8 The reason for refusal states that "the development would result in the introduction of built form and infrastructure associated with residential development", however it fails to also state that the Proposed Development includes substantial areas of new, publicly accessible open space. It should be noted that out of a total site area of 17.35ha, the area proposed for built form and infrastructure is approximately 6.46ha, with the remaining 10.89ha, equating to 62% of the Appeal Site, provided as new open space in line with the aims of Paragraph 98 of the NPPF.

**Impact on Openness**

8.9 Whilst it is accepted that the Proposed Development will impact upon the openness of the Appeal Site, it should also be noted that approximately 62% of the Appeal Site will be retained
free from built form, thereby preserving, to a degree, the sense of openness perceived from some locations around the Appeal Site. Furthermore, as the Appeal Site is not currently accessible to the public (with the exception of PRoW FP1 on the southern boundary and PRoW FP2 on the western boundary, the Proposed Development will result in substantial new opportunities for the public to pass through and enjoy retained areas of open land, including along the Run Dike corridor.

8.10 It is also considered that the open landscape beyond the Appeal Site to the north, currently occupied by the Norfolk Premier Golf Course, contributes to a considerable degree to the sense of openness currently perceived from the existing settlement edge of Brundall, as demonstrated by Site Context Photograph 2. As this land is not proposed for development (beyond that already implemented as part of the introduction of a golf course) it is considered that a degree of openness will remain perceptible from the western section of PRoW FP1.

8.11 Similarly, in views from the north, (Site Context Photographs 7, 8, 9) the Proposed Development will not result in significant changes to the current perceptible sense of openness.

8.12 On this basis, the loss of openness will only be perceptible from the eastern part of the PRoW that extends along the southern boundary, and for the residents abutting the Appeal Site to the south and east. Therefore, the Proposed Development is not considered to result in significant harm on the openness of the Appeal Site.

**Impact on Rurality / Existing Character**

8.13 The Proposed Development will inevitably change the character of the Appeal Site, from one of agricultural land to residential development and recreational open space. However, the Council’s position that this will result in significant harm to the rural character of the landscape is not supported. The existing character of the Appeal Site is strongly influenced by existing built form that surrounds it on three sides, with existing settlement also perceptible to the north in Blofield.

8.14 The Appeal Site is located in an area between Brundall, Blofield and the A47 that is dominated by the Norfolk Premier golf course and is of a distinctly different character to the wider rural hinterland that surrounds the settlements of Brundall and Blofield. Whilst it is accepted that this area of landscape, including the Appeal Site, displays some rural characteristics in that it contains areas of land in agricultural use with hedgerows, a water course and mature canopy trees, it is not considered to have an entirely rural overriding character. The character of this landscape is more accurately described as transitional and peri-urban due to the presence of the highly managed recreational landscape of a golf course, the containment of this landscape area between two settlements and a dual carriageway and the strong influence of surrounding built form palpable from within the area. This is particularly the case on the main field of the
Appeal Site, where the stark southern boundary is such that the sense of rurality is diminished to a considerable extent.

8.15 It is considered that the part of this landscape displaying the most rural characteristics is the Run Di ke corridor (illustrated in Site Context Photograph 1), which would be protected and enhanced by way of generous set-backs of development from the watercourse (65-100m), the retention of existing high quality landscape features along the watercourse, and the provision of substantial landscape and ecological enhancements, including native tree, scrub, meadow and marginal aquatic planting, along a wide corridor abutting the watercourse. On this basis, the Proposed Development is not considered to result in significant harm to the rural character of the landscape.

8.16 The Council’s Statement of Case (SoC) states at paragraph 4.13:

"Save for some existing agricultural buildings and a pumping station towards the north-east, the appeal site is undeveloped, and 'contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area'."

Response

8.17 Whilst it is agreed that the Appeal Site is largely undeveloped, it is considered that whilst the northern part of the Appeal Site (the Run Dike corridor) does contribute positively to the character of the area, the southern agricultural fields make a less notable contribution. However, their openness is considered to facilitate appreciation of the wider landscape to the north of the Appeal Site. It should be noted that the Proposed Development includes only 6.46ha of new built form, with approximately 62% of the Appeal Site set aside for open space, including substantial landscape enhancements and opportunities for recreational access. Furthermore, the proposed residential built form has been sensitively designed based on an understanding of context and local vernacular and will be seen as a positive feature in the context of the existing settlement, due to its reinforcement of the existing built character through complementary built form, scale and materiality. On this basis the Proposed Development is considered to have the potential to continue contributing positively to the character and appearance of the area.

Published Landscape Character Assessment

8.18 The Council’s SoC states at paragraph 4.14:

"The Council will demonstrate that the proposed development does not have full regard to the Landscape Character Assessment SPD and as such will conflict with policy EN2 of the DM DPD by masking the distinctive topography of the Blofield Tributary Farmland Landscape Character Area, which is a distinctive
Response

8.19 The Proposed Development has been informed by extensive desktop studies of published landscape character assessments at national and local level. The Broadland District Council Landscape Character Assessment SPD (2013) provides guidance for the application of relevant development plan policies and other planning guidance in the consideration of development proposals. This document highlights key issues in relation to development planning including the following relevant points:

- Expansion of suburban character and pattern;
- Inappropriate housing designs that ignore local vernacular;
- Pressure on open character of countryside gaps;
- Relationships between settlement core and landscape severed by settlement expansion;
- New development unsympathetic to original settlement pattern and relationship with landscape; and
- Poor relationships between settlement and landscape/key views/landmarks/other landscape features.

8.20 The Proposed Development is considered to respect the findings of the SPD in that it:

- Will be a logical and well planned extension to the existing settlement in an area bounded by settlement on three sides;
- Will introduce appropriate housing designs that are strongly informed by local vernacular;
- Will not put pressure on the open character of the gap between Brundall and Blofield;
- Will have a strong relationship with the core of the settlement due to proximity and good connectivity with the Memorial Hall and the local centre on The Street;
- Will reinforce the settlement pattern through provision of a more characteristic, organic northern boundary, with a more articulated transition from built form to landscape;
- Will preserve, to a substantial degree, the existing relationship between the settlement and the landscape to the north of the site, including sensitive regard for local landmarks and key views; and
- Will preserve the positive landscape features on the Appeal Site, including existing trees, reedbeds and hedgerows along the Run Dike corridor, enhanced with new, characteristic landscape features of high quality.

8.21 The Appeal Site is located within Landscape Character Areas D4: Blofield, which is identified as having a number of characteristics and sensitivities, and are summarised as:
• Distinctive topography with a strong mosaic of rolling arable fields, intact hedgerow and mature woodland within the grounds of old houses and lining tributaries;
• Strong rural character with a recognisable sense of place;
• Landscape setting of historic halls and churches;
• Landscape setting of hamlets and villages;
• Characteristic views to features, such as church towers surrounded by woodland; and
• Relatively strong sense of tranquillity away from major transport routes.

8.22 Whilst the Appeal Site is located on a sloping arable field with hedgerows lining the Run Dike, it is not considered to have a strong rural character, or a strong sense of tranquillity. The immediate landscape containing the Appeal Site, bounded by Brundall, Blofield and the A47 is considered to have a lower sense of tranquillity and a peri-urban character when compared with the much wider rural landscape beyond the settlements encompassed by LCA D4. For this reason, the published Landscape Character Assessment is not considered to accurately describe the existing character of the Appeal Site and its immediate landscape.

8.23 Notwithstanding the above, the Proposed Development is considered to respond positively to the guidance provided by the Landscape Character Assessment SPD, for which the Proposed Development will:

• Conserve the simple, predominantly rural character adjacent to the Run Dike;
• Promote the use of local materials within villages;
• Conserve the recognisable sense of place through new recreational and country park usages; and
• Ensure that new development does not reduce the vertical significance of important historical architectural features within the landscape, such as church towers by retaining a viewing corridor from Brundall Memorial Hall as well as the new built form reflecting the scale and mass of the existing built form within Brundall.

8.24 From a review of published landscape character assessments and policies, new development is expected to include for Green Infrastructure, high quality design, opportunities for recreation and to respect and enhance the existing landscape character.

8.25 To positively respond to these matters, the following design measures have been incorporated into the Development Parameter Plans, which form the Application Drawings:

• New built development has been consolidated to the central and south-east parts of the Appeal Site, as illustrated on Figure MDC-6 (Development Parameters Plan 26007/07), so as to enable the focus of the Proposed Development to provide new recreational and
ecological zones across the northern part of the Appeal Site as shown on **Figures MDC 10 and 9** (Development Parameters Plan 26007/08 and 26007/09);

- The key landscape structure of existing hedgerows and vegetation have been retained along the central part of the Appeal Site, as a divide between the residential area and the Run Dike (area 1 on Development Parameter Plan 26007/08) and along the eastern edge of the Appeal Site as a divide between the existing 2 fields (areas 3 and 4 on Plan 26007/08);
- The foul sewer constraint has been incorporated as a new recreational zone (area 2 on Development Parameter Plan 26007/08);
- Recreation and a viewing corridor through the formal outdoor sports zone on the western edge of the Appeal Site has been incorporated (Development Parameter Plan 26007/09);
- The proposed built form elevations reflect the scale and mass of surrounding properties;
- The Planning Layout Phase 1 (Drawing PL01) incorporates new tree planting along the access road; the retention of the existing hedgerow; new landscape areas within the core of the layout and along the southern edge as part of a new amenity space; and
- The Street Sections (PL02) illustrate a range of façade treatments which provide an aesthetic quality to the built form, as well as aiding in softening its massing.

**Views from Public Footpath FP1**

8.26 Whilst it is accepted that the Proposed Development will lead to adverse effects on the visual amenity of users of PRoW FP1, it should be noted that these effects will be concentrated on the eastern side of the Appeal Site. The inclusion of substantial open space at the western edge of the Proposed Development will mitigate to an extent the impact on views for this receptor group. Furthermore, whilst existing views to the north from the PRoW do allow open views across the landscape towards Blofield and the A47, the experience of the viewer is also influenced by the presence of existing settlement, which is conspicuous to the south, east and west of the Appeal Site. It is also of note that the wider pattern of PRoW routes in Brundall predominantly extend through the settlement, often following road routes. It would not therefore be uncharacteristic in the context of the existing settlement for PRoW to be incorporated within residential development.

8.27 Notwithstanding the above, views from PRoW have strongly influenced the design and layout of the Proposed Development, with the view (Brundall Neighbourhood Plan Policy 3: Important Views, *View to the north east from the Memorial Hall (SCP 2)*) sensitively respected by way of strategic open space and set back of proposed built form.
Policy


8.29 With regard to Policy GC2 this is not a landscape policy and is therefore dealt with in Mr Meakins Proof of Evidence.

8.30 In relation to Policy GC4 – Design, it should be noted that the Policy requires development to “avoid any significant detrimental impact” (my emphasis underlined) - not that it should avoid any detrimental impact at all.

8.31 Furthermore, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with Policy GC4 and achieve a high standard of design with a focus on avoiding significant adverse impacts. The development has been designed with high regard for the "existing environment, character and appearance" (GC4-i) of the Appeal Site and its wider context, through sensitive layout, massing and distribution of open space and through substantial habitat focused enhancements to the Country Park area.

8.32 The design of built form has been developed based on an in-depth understanding of the character of the existing settlement and is therefore considered to be "reinforcing local distinctiveness" (GC4-ii) with emphasis on the use of locally characteristic architectural vernacular, including proposed materials, building height and form, architectural detailing ad landscape design.

8.33 Furthermore, the Proposed Development is considered to provide a high level of amenity for future occupiers, with the provision of a 7ha country park and a 3ha community green, constituting accessible open space as a fundamental part of the scheme. Therefore, not only does the Proposed Development meet "the reasonable needs of all potential future occupiers" (GC4-iii) but it will also provide considerable amenity provision for existing residents of Brundall at large.

8.34 As set out in the original LVIA and in Chapter 7 of this Proof of Evidence, the Proposed Development has been supported by a robust assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects arising from it. As such there has been consideration of "the impact upon the amenity of existing properties" (GC4-iv).

8.35 In relation to Policy EN2 - Landscape, the Proposed Development is considered to be policy compliant for the following reasons:

• It protects the gap between Blofield and Brundall, as it is located in an area inset within the footprint of the existing settlement of Brundall. The existing gap between Brundall...
and Blofield is principally formed by the Run Dike corridor and the Norfolk Premier golf course. The development of the Appeal Site will therefore not impact on the sense of separation between these settlements.

- It will not have an adverse impact on any visually sensitive skylines, hillsides and valley sides. The skyline experienced looking southwards on the Appeal Site is not considered to be sensitive due to the conspicuous presence of existing built form that is seen punctuating the skyline as demonstrated by Site Appraisal Photograph B. In views from publicly accessible vantage points further north, the Appeal Site is largely screened by intervening landform or vegetation as demonstrated by Site Context Photographs 7, 8 and 9. As such, the valley sides of the Appeal Site are not considered to have a high level of visual sensitivity.

- It protects views to the Church of St. Andrew and St. Peter. Whilst it is acknowledged that in parts of the Appeal Site, the Proposed Development will result in the loss of views of the church, for example, that shown in Site Appraisal Photograph A, these views are not identified as important within the published evidence base.

- The Proposed Development has been laid out in such a way that where ‘important’ views have been identified (e.g. Brundall Neighbourhood Plan Policy 3), views to the church are retained through the provision of strategic open space and set back of development from sight lines. Nonetheless, the nature of these views will change due to the introduction of built form as demonstrated by the photomontages. However, it should also be recognised that existing views of the church are strongly influenced by existing residential built form, as demonstrated by Site Context Photograph 2. The introduction of sensitively designed residential built form, reinforcing local vernacular is not considered to be an uncharacteristic addition to these views.

8.36 Furthermore, due to the introduction of substantial areas of recreational open space within the Appeal Site, views of the church that would otherwise not be obtained (as these areas are currently not publicly accessible) should the Proposed Development not proceed, will instead be experienced from wide areas within the site that are not currently publicly accessible, mitigating the loss of views from the eastern part of PRoW FP1.

- It will protect the green spaces and features that make a significant contribution towards defining the character of an area. Whilst the Appeal Site itself is not currently considered to be a green space and does not make a significant contribution to the character of the area, it does, through its openness, facilitate appreciation of the wider landscape to the north that does contribute significantly to the character of the area. On the basis that the Proposed Development has been designed to allow views to this wider landscape to be maintained from a substantial part of the Appeal Site, it will continue to facilitate this appreciation of the wider landscape. Furthermore, the
Proposed Development would introduce approximately 10ha of new, publicly accessible green space on an area of land that is currently largely not accessible and in agricultural use. This land will be enhanced through the addition of characteristic landscape features including tree planting, wildflower grassland and blue infrastructure. In addition, the Run Dike corridor, which makes a strong contribution to the character of the area, will be retained and enhanced through characteristic native tree, meadow, scrub and marginal aquatic planting as part of the Proposed Development.

8.37 Reason for Refusal 1 subsequently states that the Proposed Development will “conflict with ... Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy” (Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Broadland, Norwich and Norfolk (adopted March 2011, amendments adopted January 2014)

8.38 The Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with Policy 2 of the JCS in that it preserves the landscape setting of the settlement of Brundall, including the “urban/rural transition”. Notwithstanding that the Appeal Site, and the wider landscape between Blofield, Brundall and the A47, is not considered to be entirely rural, and is more accurately described as peri-urban and transitional, the Proposed Development will create an enhanced northern boundary to the settlement through the provision of a country park. This new northern settlement edge would have a stronger relationship with the surrounding existing settlement edge and provide a more organic, gentle transition from settlement to open landscape when compared with the existing stark southern site boundary.

8.39 In relation to Brundall Neighbourhood Plan Policy 3, the Councils SoC states:

'Views towards the grade 1 church of St Andrew and St Peter are identified as important in the Brundall Neighbourhood Plan and policy 3 seeks to protect and enhance the view to the north east from the Memorial Hall. The designated heritage asset is experienced from a range of public vantage points (including Public Footpaths) within and directly adjacent to the appeal site. The Council will argue the appeal proposals will adversely impact on the ability for the public to enjoy the view from the location identified in policy 3 of the BNP and from other public view points within and adjacent to the site. This represents a conflict with policy 3'.

8.40 The Proposed Development is considered to be compliant with this policy as it protects and enhances the view to the north-east from the memorial hall and ensures that key features of the view can continue to be enjoyed. As demonstrated by the photomontage prepared for SCP 2, the provision of substantial areas of open space on the western part of the Appeal Site will ensure the majority of the view remains open, with the strong visual relationship with the Run Dike valley and the open land to the north of the Appeal Site retained. The foreground of the view will change from featureless agricultural land to public open space with substantial landscape enhancements including proposed trees and wildflower meadows, which is
considered to have the potential to improve the composition of the view. Furthermore, whilst introduction of new built form will result in a partial loss in in perceptible openness, it should be noted that existing views from this location are strongly influenced by existing residential built form. The introduction of sensitively designed residential built form, reinforcing local vernacular is not considered to be an uncharacteristic addition to this view.

8.41 It is important that Policy 3 does not prohibit any development to the areas within these important views, but rather requires that any development that does occur must ensure that key features of the view can continue to be enjoyed. Through the establishment of a sensitive visual corridor, and the subsequent set-back of proposed built form from the north-western corner of the housing area, key features of the views of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Peter will be retained and can continue to be enjoyed, in accordance with Policy 3. Whilst it is acknowledged that in other locations of the PRoW network, further east on PRoW Brundall FP 1 for example, there will be an adverse effect on views due to the introduction of built form and the loss of open views, these views are not noted as important within the Brundall Neighbourhood Plan.

**Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**

8.42 The Council’s SoC states at paragraph 4.15 that:

*The Council will argue that there will be adverse landscape and visual effects that will be greater than anticipated by the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*.

**Response**

8.43 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted in support of the Proposed Development was carried out in accordance with industry best practice guidance in the form of the GLVIA Edition 3. It was also prepared with reference to a robust methodology with respect to the identification of value, susceptibility, magnitude and significance of effect which is included at my Appendix 1.

8.44 At Year 1 and in winter, the Proposed Development is assessed as improving the recreational value of the Appeal Site, as well as the opportunities for improved biodiversity through the new Country Park. The key existing vegetation would be retained overall. Whilst the new built form would result in new massing and an evident change from the agricultural character of the Appeal Site, it is considered to provide a high aesthetic quality and detailing, as well as reflecting local scale and massing as demonstrated by the Phase 1 layout. This new built form would be set within a well vegetated landscape framework, including for new amenity spaces and routes, improving the Green Infrastructure of the Appeal Site.
8.45 Visually, the Proposed Development would retain views to the Church of St. Andrew and St. Peter from Brundall Memorial Hall and PROW Brundall FP 2, as the built form is sufficiently offset from the relevant viewing corridor.

8.46 The new built form would be visible from residential properties in Meadow View, Westfield Road and Westfield Avenue. For those properties in Westfield Road, immediately adjacent to the Appeal Site, the new built form would represent a close-range change to the view and the massing on the Parameter Plan would truncate the extent of existing views. For recreational receptors along PROW Brundall FP 2, the mass of the new built form would be visible in the eastern part of the Appeal Site. Whilst the existing view already includes for built form at close range, (adjacent to the PROW and on the skyline) the additional built form would foreshorten the view across the southern part of the Appeal Site and introduce additional massing.

8.47 By Year 15 and in summer, as well as with the establishment of the new planting and the positive landscape management regime outlined within the Landscape and Biodiversity Management Strategy (Appendix 5), the Appeal Site could be brought forward with additional recreational facilities in the western part of the Appeal Site, as well as a reduced density of new built form. The Run Dike corridor would remain protected and enhanced as part of the Country Park and ecological area, forming one of number of new green spaces within the layout.
9.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

9.1 This section also forms my Summary Proof of Evidence.

9.2 An assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development has been undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition.

9.3 An application for a hybrid planning permission was originally submitted in August 2017 for phase 1 (23 dwellings) and outline permission for up to 147 further dwellings, open space, and associated development. Broadland District Council refused the hybrid planning permission despite a recommendation for approval from Officers in their Committee Report dated 10 July 2019.

9.4 The Appeal Site is located in the northern part of Brundall, within an indent in the existing settlement pattern, such that the Appeal Site is bordered to the east, south and west by Brundall's defined settlement limit. The Appeal Site is also located in a generally low-lying area and within a localised valley system, limiting the inter-visibility between the Appeal Site and the landscape beyond the immediate area contained by Brundall, Blofield and the A47 road. The wider vegetation pattern is typically that of hedgerow field boundaries with intermittent trees, belts of woodland with fen meadow grassland and individual trees along the Run Dike, and clusters of mature trees within areas of settlement.

9.5 The Appeal Site is not covered by any national or local landscape designations. The Appeal Site is crossed by PRoW Brundall FP1, with PRoW Brundall FP2 extending along the Appeal Site's western boundary.

9.6 Published landscape character assessments at national and local level have been reviewed and analysed. The guidance provided in published landscape character assessments has informed the design of the Proposed Development. To provide a finer level of detail, a localised landscape character assessment, derived through desk-based assessment and on-site field work has been carried out.

9.7 Relevant national, local and neighbourhood level planning policy has been reviewed, including any relevant evidence base. The Proposed Development has been designed in accordance with the relevant policies for landscape and visual matters.

9.8 The Appeal Site encompasses an area of approximately 17.4 hectares and is principally formed of agricultural fields and an area of riparian vegetation along the corridor of the Run Dike watercourse. It includes limited existing built development in the form of a sewage pumping station and a number of agricultural buildings. The character of the Appeal Site is strongly
influenced by surrounding built form in Brundall and Blofield, together with adjacent recreational uses in the form of the Norfolk Premier Golf Course.

9.9 A visual appraisal has been undertaken which demonstrated that views of the Appeal Site from the surrounding area are limited by a network of vegetation, existing built form, and the undulating topography of the wider landscape, where features such as ridgelines and subtle undulations curtail views towards the Appeal Site. The visual envelope of the Appeal Site is extremely localised and principally limited to the immediate surrounding PRoW, roads and fixed residential receptors abutting the Appeal Site.

9.10 A comprehensive series of mitigation measures has been embedded in the design of the Proposed Development from the outset, with the aim of reducing adverse effects resulting from its introduction. The design of the Proposed Development has evolved as part of an iterative process and has been informed by the findings of the baseline landscape and visual amenity conditions. The design of the Proposed Development has also been informed by extensive coordination with a range of technical consultants, including the architect, highways and drainage engineer, ecologist and arboriculturist, together with extensive consultation with the Local Planning Authority.

9.11 The effects of the Proposed Development on landscape features, landscape character and visual amenity have been identified in accordance with the GLVIA and a robust methodology.

9.12 The landscape features of the Appeal Site will experience effects at Year 1 ranging between Moderate Adverse and Negligible Beneficial, and at Year 15 ranging between Moderate Adverse and Moderate Beneficial. Only one landscape feature will be subject to long term adverse effects.

9.13 In respect of landscape character, effects at Year 1 range between Moderate Adverse and Minor Beneficial have been identified. At Year 15, the effects arising from the Proposed Development will range between Minor Adverse and Moderate Beneficial. The majority of effects are minor, negligible or neutral.

9.14 In terms of visual receptors, the Proposed Development will give rise to effects ranging between Moderate Adverse and Neutral at Year 1, and effects ranging between Moderate Adverse and Minor Beneficial at Year 15. The majority of effects are minor, negligible or neutral.

9.15 The Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with current landscape policy, evidence base, and published landscape character assessments.
The Reasons for Refusal and Statement of Case provided by Broadland District Council have been reviewed and responded to on the basis of a series of themes.

The Appeal Site is considered suitable and appropriate in landscape and visual terms for development as set out in the plans and documents that support the application.

The Proposed Development will provide a new neighbourhood for Brundall, creating a community of sensitively designed, aesthetically pleasing and imaginatively designed homes set in the context of a new generously proportioned country park landscape with views over parkland and countryside towards historic Blofield. Residents of Blofield will also have access to the country park.

The country park has been designed to substantially improve the level of public amenity provision in the area, with formal sports fields, and informal recreation space, together with substantial opportunities for habitat enhancements along the Run Dike corridor and generally throughout the Appeal Site. Furthermore, the parts of the Appeal Site that exhibit the highest levels of landscape quality i.e. the Run Dike corridor, have been respected, retained and enhanced, through generous offsets of built form, enhanced tree, shrub and meadow planting as part of a holistically considered site-wide green infrastructure strategy, and improved management practices for existing and proposed landscape features.

In addition, through the provision of extensive areas of open space within the Appeal Site, views towards the open landscape to the north have been substantially retained, including those views classed as important in neighbourhood planning policy. Viewing corridors have been integrated within the design of the Proposed Development, with the intention to enhance the composition of these views and improve the visual amenity experience for those within and passing through the area.

As a result of the provision of substantial areas of new, publicly accessible recreation land, the wider area will benefit from increased pedestrian permeability.

The proposal respects the existing landform and settlement pattern of Brundall, being located on an area of land that is inset into existing housing and therefore would not extend any further north than the current settlement envelope. Furthermore, the Proposed Development is located on land that displays similar characteristics to that which is already developed to the east and west, where existing housing extends down from the ridgeline towards the Run Dike corridor.

The Proposed Development will also provide an enhanced transition from settlement to the surrounding landscape through the provision of new, organic and visually permeable northern settlement boundary, in a similar geographic and elevational position to that present to the
east and west, and in contrast to the stark and poorly articulated transition that occurs on the southern edge of the Appeal Site, which is particularly conspicuous due to its position on the ridgeline, and which is not reflective of the characteristics of the settlement boundary found elsewhere in Brundall.

9.24 It is acknowledged that there would inevitably be a reduction in the open character of the Appeal Site as a result of the introduction of new residential built form. However, the introduction of these new built forms are balanced with the provision of a new country park and informal recreation area, as well as local parks and green corridor and ecological area. As a result, the spatial composition of the layout retains a predominantly open character. This open character to the Appeal Site is retained by residential development being pushed back from the western boundary to allow for the important viewing corridor to the Church of St Andrew and St Peter in Biofield located to the north-east.

9.25 As noted, the Appeal Site is set within an indentation of the settlement pattern and is already heavily influenced by built form such that the degree of openness perceptually has already been lessened, as built form is always seen in the view and the character of the landscape to the north is one of a golf course and built form on Yarmouth Road. The introduction of new open areas including country park and enhanced recreational facilities represent a substantial improvement in the quality of accessible informal and formal recreational open space and potential ecological value from that which exists at present.

9.26 On this basis, the Proposed Development is considered to have the opportunity to bring about substantial biodiversity enhancement and nature conservation value, incorporating new tree planting and landscaping proposals to introduce variety and interest in line with the aims of Section 11 of the NPPF.

9.27 The Proposed Development will allow the Appeal Site to make a greater positive contribution to the surrounding landscape and townscape, replacing what is currently a large arable field with little permanent vegetative cover and limited recreational value, into a substantial publicly accessible area of green space that adds vitality to the street scene (in accordance with Paragraph 127 of the NPPF).

9.28 Furthermore, the Proposed Development will also enable the Appeal Site to make a greater contribution to the multi-functional network of green infrastructure, with the new linkages created through the Appeal Site and enhancement to the boundary vegetation tying into the surrounding area as shown on Figure MDC-12: Landscape Strategy Plan. These elements of the Proposed Development demonstrate that the integrity of the existing green network is protected and the opportunities available to enhance green infrastructure linkages have been appropriately realised, resulting in a lasting improvement in both the local area and the wider
green infrastructure network. Clearly, the Proposed Development will contribute to the greening of the area through the incorporation of a substantial extent of landscaping.

9.29 On this basis, it is my professional opinion that in conjunction with the biodiversity enhancement through the greening and extension of the green infrastructure linkages including for a country park and ecology zone outweighs the impact on open character brought about by the introduction of new built form.

9.30 Consequently, my evidence demonstrates that the Proposed Development is acceptable in landscape and visual terms and that it responds positively to the relevant policy directions. As a result of the above considerations, I conclude that the Council’s Reasons for Refusal for the application on townscape and visual grounds are wholly unjustified.

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