
Land at Upnor Road, Upper Upnor, Medway: Technical Addendum to the LVIA

Prepared on behalf of Esquire Developments Ltd

September 2020

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ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Figure 1: Site Context Plan

Figure 2: Site Appraisal Plan

Figure 3: Hogmarsh Valley ALLI Plan

Site Context Photographs

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overview

- 1.1 This Technical Addendum to the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared to provide further explanatory information with respect to the Hogmarsh Valley ALLI and to provide justification as to how the Proposed Development has been designed to respond positively to both this local landscape designation under 'saved' Policy BNE34 of the Medway Local Plan and to take cognisance of the local landscape character of the locality.
- 1.2 The following illustrative material supports this Technical Addendum to the LVIA:
- Figure 1: Site Context Plan;
 - Figure 2: Site Appraisal Plan;
 - Figure 3: Hogmarsh Valley ALLI Plan; and
 - Site Context Photographs.

2.0 PURPOSE OF AN ALLI

2.1 Areas of Local Landscape Importance, or ALLI for short, are swathes of land that are meant to enhance the local amenity experience and environmental quality, while simultaneously providing an attractive setting to both the urban area and the surrounding villages. The ALLI are also considered to be significant not just for their landscape importance, i.e. the way in which they contribute to providing an attractive setting, but also for four other important functions, namely (as set out in the Local Plan):

- As green lungs and buffers, which help to maintain the individual identity of both urban neighbourhoods and rural communities;
- As green corridors or linkages, that enable communities to reach and access the wider countryside;
- As fringe land, which potentially may face pressures of urban sprawl; and
- As habitats for wildlife, while also enabling safe passage of wildlife from the wider countryside into the urban environment.

2.2 The above aspects are laudable and have formed the bedrock to the design development process as we have sought to deliver a landscape-led solution (adhering to Policy S4) that brings about an appropriate sensitive and sympathetic naturalistic edge to the developed area that celebrates the locality, and enhances the environmental quality of the Hogmarsh Valley by adding to the health, sustainability and biodiversity of the ALLI itself.

2.3 The policy basis for designated ALLI also makes clear that each ALLI may not deliver the important functions as set out above. Furthermore, it is inevitable that each parcel of land within a given ALLI may contribute to a lesser or greater degree in providing an attractive setting to development and/or in contributing to the aforementioned important functions.

2.4 Crucially, 'saved' Policy BNE34 does not preclude development but sets out that development will only be permitted if "*it does not materially harm the landscape character and function of the area*" or "*the economic and social benefits are so important that they outweigh the local priority to conserve the area's landscape*". The latter is beyond the scope and expertise of this Technical Addendum to the LVIA. However, Policy BNE34 also goes on to state the following:

"Development within an Area of Local Landscape Importance should be sited, designed and landscaped to minimise harm to the area's landscape character and function."

3.0 WHY THE HOGMARSH VALLEY

3.1 Some 16 ALLI have been designated across the administrative area of Medway Council, with the Hogmarsh Valley 'location and character' described within the Local Plan as follows:

"Undulating, open farm land and distinctive wooded hilltops extending north from Frindsbury and Medway City Estate to Chattenden."

3.2 The following functions are specified for the Hogmarsh Valley ALLI:

- ***"Forms a green buffer separating and providing an attractive green backdrop for the built-up areas of Medway City Estate, Frindsbury, Wainscott, Lower and Upper Upnor and Chattenden;***
- ***Provides an attractive setting for a major gateway within the borough – the Medway Towns Norther Relief Road, contributing towards a positive image of Medway;***
- ***Connects all ALLIs at Chattenden Ridge, Deangate Ridge and Cockham Farm Ridge; and***
- ***Provides an attractive setting for Manor Farm and Upnor conservation areas."***

4.0 THE CHARACTER OF THE HOGMARSH VALLEY

4.1 The Medway Local Plan sets out that the council is in the process of preparing a landscape and urban design framework, to provide a clear, practical and robust design framework for physical change. While such a framework is not currently published, the Medway Landscape Character Assessment (published in 2011) provides helpful guidance for landscape planning matters. 17 key themes are drawn-out that relate to the area, those of relevance to the development proposals are paraphrased and renumbered below:

- i) Maintaining separation and openness between rural settlements and retaining a strong sense of local distinctiveness and rural character within countryside areas, while also seeking a positive role and function for all landscapes;
- ii) Protecting distinctive and prominent landscape features, including the views from the Thames and Medway estuaries and across the marshes; and green backdrops, escarpments, wooded ridges and open farmed hills;
- iii) Repairing and restoring those damaged landscapes where a loss of local distinctiveness is most threatened, with typical adverse impacts noted as large pylons and industrial structures, piecemeal and random small scale development, insensitive boundary treatments and a suburbanisation of the countryside;
- iv) Strengthening and reinforcing the landscape structure;
- v) Ensuring that the edges of new and existing urban and rural settlement blend comfortably with the surrounding countryside;
- vi) Strengthening and reinforcing local distinctiveness and identity, by balancing and prioritising conflicting land uses and creating sustainable landscapes;
- vii) Improving the accessibility and connectivity with the wider landscape;
- viii) Strengthening the landscape character and biodiversity value by improving the wildlife habitat network;
- ix) Valuing the functions that the ALLI deliver; and
- x) Judging development proposals against the recommended actions and guidelines within the Landscape Character Assessment.

4.2 A Hogmarsh Valley Landscape Character Area (LCA) is identified within the study, with the LCA noted as being of "*poor*" condition and or "*moderate*" sensitivity. The following characteristics are outlined for the LCA:

- ***"Broad valley with open, gently rolling arable farmland and distinctive elevated woodland backdrops – at Tower Hill, Beacon Hill and Chattenden Ridge; landscape forms a green buffer, a distinctive gateway and green backdrop to Medway Towns;***

- *Hogmarsh stream runs along valley floor and includes small pockets of marshland; area predominantly situated within tidal flood zone and has flood alleviation/storage potential; Whitewall Creek remains a distinctive natural feature but distinctiveness eroded by surrounding urban infrastructure;*
- *Provides a distinctive and attractive setting for Manor Farm and Upnor Conservation areas;*
- *Detracting features include: Transport corridor A289); eastern edges of urban settlement at Wainscott; sewage treatment works and military infrastructure (RSME sites at Wainscott and Tower Hill – Gundolph pool);*
- *Distinctive views across river towards Chatham Historic Dockyard and covered slips; development at Medway City Estate is a detracting feature in many views from lower ground;*
- *Retains rural character but coherence and overall integrity disrupted by urban fringe and military infrastructure land uses; unsympathetic boundary treatment features and neglected pockets of land; and*
- *Pockets of tranquillity at Islingham Farm; Manor Farm and Frindsbury Barn (Grade 1 listed) and around fringes of Upper Upnor”*

- 4.3 While the Hogmarsh Valley LCA and the Hogmarsh Valley ALLI are not identical in their coverage, they do broadly cover the same geographic extents and the characteristics outlined for the LCA are of relevance to the ALLI. The Hogmarsh Valley is a stretch of the Medway landscape that overlooks successive field drains navigating the network of undulating arable fields that reach from Lochat Road in the north to the Medway Tunnel in the south.
- 4.4 This landscape is framed by the built-up area of Wainscott to the west (which has an abrupt and stark settlement edge that is defined by the busy A289 dual-carriageway) and extensively wooded hilltops to the north and east. The industrial area of Medway City Estate lies to the south. The bottom of the Hogmarsh Valley lies at a height of between 5m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and 10m AOD, with the settled area of Wainscott overlying this gently rising landform that frames the valley to the west, with the lowest reaches of the developed area lying at approximately 7m AOD.
- 4.5 In contrast, the northern and eastern sides of this incision in the landscape rise more dramatically, obtaining heights in the order of some 50m AOD in the north and north-east near Chattenden, and 25m AOD around Upnor and Tower Hill, presenting much steeper gradients framing the valley to the east. It is this steep nature of the underlying landform flanking the valley to the east that has likely led to wooded escarpments, as arable farming on steep slopes can be unviable.
- 4.6 The fields that do persist within the valley tend to be irregular in nature and generally decrease in scale from north to south. Boundary treatments to the fields vary, ranging from dense treebelts and hedgerows, to gappy scrub planting and ditches. As a consequence the bottom

of the Hogmarsh Valley is an insular yet generally open landscape that contrasts with its surroundings, as it is contained by expansive built-up areas (such as Chattenden, Wainscott, Upnor and Medway City Estate) and woodland escarpment and hilltops. Notwithstanding this, there are pockets of development and infrastructure throughout the ALLI, including in the vicinity of the Site itself, the A289 dual carriageway; the A228 dual carriageway; a farm complex off Woodfield Way; a former quarry; the Sewage Treatment Works; and a row of housing along Castle Street (the sole location where housing resides on the upper eastern slopes of the valley) adjoining the Site.

- 4.7 In light of the above it is apparent that for the most part, the mix of farming and woodland land uses in the ALLI results in a green buffer that provides visual relief from the built-up nature of Wainscott, Medway City Estate, Upnor and Chattenden. In particular, the wooded backdrop of the higher ground in the east is a distinctive quality, while elevated views out across a lower-lying farmed landscape sets itself apart from the more urbanised areas. In this regard there is an inherent value to the ALLI as this contrasting land use helps to provide an attractive setting to this gateway location, notwithstanding that is not without its visual detractors including the major dual-carriageways that traverse the area and the stark urban edges that frame the valley.
- 4.8 In addition, it is of note that the farmland itself is not considered a distinctive quality and nor are the boundary features that contain the farmland. Similarly, while the reed/marsh landscape that runs with the Hogmarsh Stream along the valley bottom (outside of the Site) does exhibit a scenic quality and impart a sense of intimate character where it is contained by vegetation, it is also not a distinctive feature being typical of many watercourses. However we recognise that the change in character in the land immediately west of the site offers the opportunity to increase biodiversity and green infrastructure within the western lower slopes of the site and thereby forms part of the landscape strategy to increase the habitat of the valley floor and build on this local characteristic within the site.

5.0 GUIDELINES FOR THE HOGMARSH VALLEY

5.1 The Landscape Character Assessment sets out the following guidelines for the Hogmarsh Valley:

- *"Seek to strengthen landscape structure by appropriately sited tree and hedgerow planting particularly alongside roads; soften and screen urban fringes; seek to retain views of wider landscape and screen detracting features;*
- *Seek to realise GI vision of multi-functional landscape providing improved accessibility of urban population into countryside; improved links between settlements; recreational value and health benefits; flood alleviation and storage; create a spatial strategy that encapsulates a realisable vision for this valley working with landowners, stakeholders and partners;*
- *Enhance role of Hogmarsh Stream as distinctive landscape feature and potential off-road route from town into countryside; linking Medway City Estate, Chattenden and wider countryside;*
- *Explore access, biodiversity, landscape enhancement and flood alleviation opportunities for Lower Hogmarsh Valley, working in partnership with EA, landowners and other stakeholders;*
- *Seek to protect and repair fragmented landscape; strengthen field pattern network, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, wider field margins; plant woodland copses and shaws;*
- *Realise 'gateway' value of A289 along full extent, particularly at key arrival nodes – e.g. Four Elms and Whitewall Creek roundabouts; strengthen and reinforce landscape structure with landscape enhancements; 'gap up' hedgerows and improve boundary treatments where inappropriate;*
- *Seek where possible to screen RSME sites, Sewage Treatment Works and views of Medway City Estate to mitigate against adverse landscape impacts; seek enhancements that provide greater respect for locally distinctive landscape character and overall landscape quality in longer term plans for these areas;*
- *Ensure that future development plans for this area respect landscape context; protect openness and retain views of prominent green woodland backdrop; enhance setting of Whitewall Creek as distinctive landscape feature;*
- *Protect and enhance distinctive landscape setting for Frindsbury Barn and surroundings as viewed from A289 and wider countryside; seek to unlock value from Frindsbury Pit as a natural feature in the landscape; area to north west of disused pit subject to Village Green proposal; and*
- *Protect woodland surround, separation and natural rural setting of the Upnors.*

6.0 CONTRIBUTION OF THE SITE TO THE HOGMARSH VALLEY

- 6.1 The Site forms a small component of a wider area of open, gently undulating agricultural land of the Hogmarsh Valley, which extends to the west, north-west and north of the Site. In this regard the arable fields are a nondescript and unremarkable feature in the landscape mosaic, save for the fact that they form part of the open area between Upnor and the built-up areas of Wainscott and Frindsbury to the north-west and west.
- 6.2 In contrast, the area immediately to the south, east and north of the Site comprises an area of elevated wooded land, including Tower Hill and Beacon Hill. Due to the elevated nature of the upper slopes of the Site and the adjoining land, these areas provide a distinctive wooded backdrop compared to the lower farmed slopes when viewed from the north-west, west and south-west, serving to define the edge of the Hogmarsh Valley that contrasts with the harsher urbanised edges to the west and south. The parcel of land to the immediate north-west of the Site, which is formed of ruderal and riparian vegetation has a more intimate and distinctive quality to the Site, being associated with the Hogmarsh stream itself.
- 6.3 Due to the topographical variation and sloping aspect of the Site, there is a visual connection with the landscape to the west and north-west, with panoramic views obtained from higher ground to the east and south. Nonetheless, due to the north-western boundary of the Site perceptibly corresponding with the 5m AOD contour line and subsequent flat/level area of land beyond, there is a clear physical distinction with the wider landscape, both in views from the Site and views back towards the Site, and instead the sloping compartment of the Site more readily relates to Castle Street.
- 6.4 The dwellings on Castle Street predominantly comprise late 20th century red-brick and rendered detached and semi-detached properties, albeit with some earlier 19th century cottages and short terraces surviving on the eastern side of the street. These predominantly two-storey built forms occupy ground above the Site and as such are readily apparent from the majority of the Site, thus strongly influencing its character. In addition, the Whitewall Creek Sewage Treatment Works is located in proximity to the south of the Site and is apparent from elevated parts of the Site.
- 6.5 Crucially, compared to the rest of the eastern flank of Hogmarsh Valley, the housing on Castle Street already demonstrates a residential characteristic in this location, whereas the remaining areas of the Hogmarsh are free from such a concentration of built form, i.e. this area of development at Castle Street is the sole location where a harsh edge of settlement populates the upper eastern slopes of the Hogmarsh Valley and is a notable detracting element.

- 6.6 As previously outlined, the Hogmarsh Valley is characterised by agricultural fields and a wooded skyline backdrop. The valley bottom tends to be more intimate in nature, and is reflected by the hedgerow containment and a more riparian/ruderal environment with reed/scrub vegetation commonplace. However, this character is not evident within the Site itself although it is present within the parcel of land that adjoins the Site to the north-west. As noted previously the proposed development recognises this change in character and will create and expand this ruderal character into the western lower slopes of the site.
- 6.7 Views of the Hogmarsh Valley from the north and south demonstrate that the agricultural field structure is 'carved' out and experienced visually as geometric indentations into the landscape. The visual experience one obtains of the differences in character is therefore dependant on locality, as in the north the fields are generous in size – whereas those to the south near to the quarry are smaller in scale. This difference in experience is clearly appreciated from the overbridge over the A289 at Wainscott.
- 6.8 The more degraded parts of the Hogmarsh Valley are seen directly in front of the Site itself - these include tennis courts and associated floodlights, substantial non-native coniferous hedgerow, the large grass field that accommodates frequent car boot sales and model aeroplane enthusiasts, and informal and unauthorised informal golf practice. Therefore, while there are no notable detractors within the Site itself, its character is influenced by detracting elements in its immediate context in addition to the Sewage Treatment Works and the harsh edge of Castle Street, and the Site is appreciated in this degraded context.
- 6.9 Open panoramic views within the Site itself are also obtained back across the Hogmarsh Valley towards the A289 and the built up edge of Wainscott from the upper slopes, together with views to All Saints Church to the south-west, and as such there is clearly both a physical and visual connection with the wider Hogmarsh Valley from within the Site.
- 6.10 In light of the above it is apparent that the Site makes a contribution to the Hogmarsh Valley ALLI insofar that it provides a relief from built form and as a consequence functions as a green lung/buffer that forms part of a wider swathe of land that separates Wainscott from Upper Upnor. Its unbuilt nature also, to a degree, helps to form an attractive setting to the gateway to the area as it contrasts with the more built-up areas.
- 6.11 However, in terms of the constituent elements of the Site the vegetation and agricultural land are not rare or uncommon features in the context of the wider valley landscape and there is no real notable sense of wildness or tranquillity within the Site owing to the influence of an intervisibility with the aforementioned detracting features in the setting of the Site. Neither does the Site particularly evoke a strong scenic quality, again due to the presence of detracting features, although the wooded skyline/backdrop to the Site is a distinctive element of the

eastern flank of Hogmarsh Valley. In addition, the Site is also not currently publicly accessible and therefore it offers no recreation value.

- 6.12 Across the Site there is no real perceived difference in character between the upper and lower slopes, comprising sloping arable farmland, save for the increased ability to perceive the wider landscape from the more elevated reaches of the slopes. These elevated parts of the Site are also by their very nature more visible from the surroundings in turn, with the upper slopes seen against the distinctive wooded green backdrop, as is the case for any eastward views across the Hogmarsh Valley. The difference with the views towards the Site being that the stark edge of Castle Street at the head of the slope is a prominent visual detractor.

7.0 HOGMARSH VALLEY DESIGN RESPONSE

- 7.1 As previously outlined, the Site itself comprises two open arable fields that are common features in the Hogmarsh Valley, and the Site does not exhibit any rare or distinctive landscape features apart from the fact that the elevated slopes allow for views in and out of the wider valley. However, detracting features existing in the direct line of sight of the Site from where most views are obtained. The proposal provides an appropriate design response to those parts of the Site that are distinctive (i.e. the availability of views in and out and of the wooded vegetated backdrop) and further seeks to create a more sympathetic transition by enabling the more intimate and distinctive elements that currently lie outside the Site to instead permeate into the lower-reaches of the Site and enhance the space.
- 7.2 The following table sets out the key attributes of the Site and the ALLI and/or the relevant prescribed guidelines for development, along with the design response embedded within the Proposed Development as part of a landscape-led solution to positively address the Hogmarsh Valley ALLI designation and the locality.

Table 7.1: Hogmarsh Valley Design Response

Attribute / Guideline	Design Response	Delivered
<i>Landscape Character Key Themes – Medway Landscape Character Assessment</i>		
Maintaining separation and openness and seeking a positive role and function for the landscape	A separation distance of over 500m will be retained between the Site and the edge of Wainscott, while the orientation of the underlying landform of this open intervening landscape will be reinforced to retain the perception of two distinct locations.	Yes
Protecting distinctive and prominent landscape features including green backdrops and wooded ridges	The scheme has been developed to ensure that the scale and distribution of the development proposed retains views towards the Site and the wooded backdrop of Tower Hill. This woodland cover will also be increased and reflected along the wider boundary treatment within the southern part of the Site. Key semi-mature and extra heavy tree planting is proposed within the interior of the Site, to create an instant sylvan appearance to the slope.	Yes
Repairing and restoring damaged landscapes including insensitive boundary treatments	Planting proposals through the Site will enable a more naturalised edge to the built-up area to be delivered rather than the currently insensitive and abrupt edge that is provided by the existing Castle Street development. These have dual roles for landscape mitigation and biodiversity enhancement.	Yes
Strengthening and reinforcing the landscape structure	Reinforcement of boundary vegetation is provided within the landscape strategy, to strengthen the existing vegetation whilst also creating some areas of visual buffer. New structural planting is delivered throughout the Site, including the provision of new mixed native hedgerow planting to the rear boundaries of introduced dwellings, new informal street tree planting along the streetscape, and provision of scrub and shrubs. Native ground cover will also be provided in addition to the	Yes

Attribute / Guideline	Design Response	Delivered
	areas of more natural hogmarsh cover, wildflower meadows and tussocky grassland.	
Ensuring that edges of settlement blend comfortably with the surrounding countryside	The distribution of the built form, in combination with the landscape strategy, has enabled the encroachment of the 'Hogmarsh' valley bottom into the Site, co-located with SuDS features. In addition, mixed native hedgerow planting along boundaries in combination with the provision of street trees ensure that a much softer and sylvan appearance is gifted to the Site from views further afield, resulting in a far more naturalised and softer edge in comparison to the existing very stark edge of Castle Street.	Yes
Strengthening and reinforcing local distinctiveness and identity	<p>The layout and orientation of introduced dwellings and areas of open space has sought to take advantage of the locality and positive views in and out of the Site. In particular, the fingers of open space within the Site, extending up the slope, will enable the Hogmarsh character to permeate through the Site while unimpeded views out back across the valley landscape will also be provided. In doing so there will be a clear recognition and celebration of the locality with the Proposed Development helping to relate to, and create, a distinctive sense of place.</p> <p>With respect to the architecture of the proposals, the choice of materials are intended to be sympathetic to the Medway locality and reminiscent of the typical farmstead typologies found distributed through the wider area (the 'Kentish' vernacular), incorporating black weatherboarding and red hued warm-toned brick. The fenestration will features shutters and barn doors that will further evoke a farmland aesthetic.</p>	Yes
Improving accessibility and connectivity	Development of the Site will enable the provision of new areas of publicly accessible open space and the provision of additional footpath linkages, while also tying in with the existing PRoW network, and the local triangular green to the north with a bus stop, thus enabling the local community to have greater and better access to the Hogmarsh Valley and the wider countryside. In doing so this will improve the accessibility and connectivity of the Hogmarsh Valley as a whole.	Yes
Improving the wildlife habitat network	The landscape strategy incorporates areas of wildlife meadows, tussocky grassland, reeds (including SuDS), scrub, woodland and hedgerows, focussed on improving the wildlife habitat network. The Net Biodiversity calculation demonstrates a significant and substantial 34.8% net gain in biodiversity, overdelivering on the Government request of 10%.	Yes
Valuing the functions that the ALLI deliver	[covered under the relevant section]	n/a
Judgement against actions and guidelines within the character assessment	[covered under the relevant section]	n/a
<i>Functions of the Hogmarsh Valley ALLI – Medway Local Plan</i>		

Attribute / Guideline	Design Response	Delivered
Green buffer separating and providing attractive green backdrop for the built-up areas	Although the Site itself will be developed as a result of the proposal, a green buffer between Upper Upnor, Chattenden, Wainscott and Medway City Estate will remain. The scale of development within the Site, being small in nature compared to the greater scale of other parcels within the valley, ensures that a sufficient buffer and separation is maintained.	Yes
Attractive setting for a major gateway, contributing towards a positive image of Medway	While it is accepted that the Proposed Development will result in the loss of openness in parts of the Site, the disposition of the built form (and building typology adopted, including its density at 14 dph) in tandem with the landscape strategy proposals, will ensure that the gateway to Medway will be enhanced in this locality, as it will represent an improved aesthetic to the existing edge of Castle Street. Simultaneously, distinctive features such as the wooded escarpment and green backdrop will be retained and enhanced as part of the development proposals.	Yes
Connects other ALLIs	The Hogmarsh Valley ALLI will continue to be connected to the other ALLIs	Yes
Attractive setting for Manor Farm and Upnor conservation areas	While a change to the setting, it is considered to represent an improved aesthetic, with the farmland typology helping to convey a somewhat rural identity from Manor Farm and its environs. There is no physical or visual relationship between the Site and Upnor conservation area.	Yes
<i>Guidelines for the Hogmarsh Valley LCA – Medway Landscape Character Assessment</i>		
Strengthen landscape structure; soften and screen urban fringes; retain views of wider landscape and screen detracting features	The landscape strategy incorporates the reinforcement of the boundary vegetation and new structural planting throughout the Site, while the fingers of open space that extend through both the lower and upper slopes of the Site enable the retention of views out from the Site across the wider landscape. Planting through the Site will help to provide additional screening to the Sewage Treatment Works and will also enable a more naturalised and softer edge to the built-up area to be delivered rather than the abrupt Castle Street edge that currently exists, improving the relationship with the Hogmarsh Valley and the current setting of the Site.	Yes
Realise multi-functional landscape, improving accessibility, improving links, enhancing recreational value, flood alleviation and storage	The Proposed Development delivers new footpath connections into the adjoining Hogmarsh Valley, while within the Site itself new areas of open space also enhance the recreational value of the Site and connect into the existing PRoW network. The layout also incorporates new areas of wildlife wetland habitat that doubles as flood alleviation, thus delivering a multi-functional landscape.	Yes
Enhance role of Hogmarsh Stream	Although the Hogmarsh Stream does not lie within the Site, new footpath connections have been allowed for to enhance the recreational role this landscape feature can hold for the local community. In addition, the layout seeks to invoke some of the character of the Hogmarsh Stream by including scrub/ruderal/wetland areas within the lower reaches of the fingers of open space that extend through the Site. Once the Site is built-out and occupied it is the intention for the relevant management	Yes

Attribute / Guideline	Design Response	Delivered
	company to engage with the custodians of the stream to further facilitate an enhancement of its role.	
Explore access, biodiversity, flood alleviation and landscape enhancement	As outlined previously, the Proposed Development delivers new footpaths, areas of habitat and SuDS features as part of a holistic and landscape-led approach to the delivery of green infrastructure.	Yes
Protect and repair fragmented landscape	Boundary vegetation is reinforced where appropriate, while the new structural planting through the Site is intended to create a softer edge to the developed area and thus mitigate and enhance against the current detracting edge that is Castle Street while also provide further screening to the Sewage Treatment Works.	Yes
Realise gateway value of A289, reinforcing landscape structure and improving boundary treatments where inappropriate	Boundary vegetation is reinforced where appropriate, while the new structural planting through the Site is intended to create a softer edge to the developed area and thus mitigating against the current detracting edge that is Castle Street, along with the provision of a higher quality built form in sympathetic materials and tones.	Yes
Seek to screen views of detractors and seek enhancements that can provide greater respect for overall landscape quality	The provision of new scrub and woodland mix in the south-eastern part of the Site enables a greater depth of woodland that can help further screen the Sewage Treatment Works. Furthermore, new structural planting within the Site can also help soften the appearance of the currently quite stark edge of Castle Street.	Yes
Respect landscape context, protect openness and retain views of prominent green woodland backdrop	The Sites position within the Hogmarsh Valley has been respected, delivering a layout that not only reflects the character of the surrounding area; but a masterplan that exploits the generous views over the Hogmarsh and middle distance character of nearby buildings, such as All Saints Church and the Manor Farm oast houses to the south-west of the Site. Careful design integration of the Hogmarsh, the users experience on PRoW RS125 and residents within the proposed development, as well as Castle Street are at the forefront of the layout. The scheme thereby presents an opportunity to enhance this character, as well as provide softening and mitigating existing built form at Castle Street which currently provides a stark built edge and detracts from the quality of the Hogmarsh setting. The proposed landscape strategy also provides an improved and defensible edge to this part of the valley due to the above measures. It also provides benefits in terms of pedestrian connectivity and permeability, while simultaneously retaining views towards the green woodland backdrop, both towards the Site and from within the Site itself.	Yes
Protect and enhance distinctive landscape setting for Frindsbury Barn and surroundings as viewed from A289	The reinforcement of the existing boundary vegetation to the west will contribute positively to the green infrastructure network, as will the provision of new structural planting throughout the Site, which will simultaneously help to soften the appearance of the introduced built form and create a more sympathetic built-up edge to development in contrast to the stark edge that currently exists at Castle Street. The views of a distinctive wooded green backdrop will be protected and retained.	Yes

Attribute / Guideline	Design Response	Delivered
Protect woodland surround, separation and natural rural setting of the Upnor	Existing vegetation within the Site is retained and enhanced as part of the Proposed Development, while additional structural planting and further woodland planting is incorporated within the design to protect the woodland surround to Upnor.	Yes

- 7.3 It is apparent that the design response delivers on each of these aspects. On the basis of the above, the findings of the LVIA, and the need to make a judgement as to the acceptability of a development proposal against the actions and guidelines within the character assessment, it is concluded that the Proposed Development is acceptable in landscape and visual terms.
- 7.4 In conclusion, the Site is not distinctive in its own right as it comprises two agricultural featureless fields that are common in the context of the wider Hogmarsh Valley ALLI. In this regard, the Site does not have its own outright distinctiveness, nor does it inherently contribute to the distinctiveness of the Hogmarsh Valley as being greater than the sum of its parts, in part due to the scale of the Site in comparison to the wider Hogmarsh Valley, but also due to the lack of any distinctive or rare features or elements within the Site itself.
- 7.5 Taking into account the scale, the topographical nature and the vegetative landscape features within the valley and the relative distinctiveness of the Hogmarsh Valley as a whole, (and with the detracting features that surround the Site including the stark built edge of Castle Street, sewage treatment works and other infrastructure and built form), the proposed scheme layout is an appropriate design response. It will not only protect but also enhance the valley edge and floor in this location through long term positive management and maintenance, with the scheme enabling an extension of the Hogmarsh Stream habitat; delivering a softer more sympathetic edge to the settled area; retaining views towards a wooded escarpment backdrop; increasing the accessibility and connectivity with and through the valley; and establishing new views out from the Site and a means of appreciation of the Hogmarsh Valley.