

## **UPDATED TECHNICAL NOTE: PRELIMINARY LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL**

### **LAND AT MILTON MANOR FARM, ASHFORD ROAD, CHARTHAM, CANTERBURY CT4 7PP**

#### **Introduction**

1. David Williams Landscape Consultancy (DWLC) were instructed by Quinn Estates Limited in May 2020 to undertake a preliminary landscape and visual assessment of the land at Milton Manor Farm, Ashford Road Canterbury CT4 7PP and to advise on the landscape and visual issues which might affect the possible future development of the Site for mixed – use residential development, including retention of the existing farm complex for Commercial Uses, a Public House, Retirement Village or self-build units, 'parish housing' and further self-build housing plots, referred hereinafter as 'mixed – use development as proposed' and to prepare an indicative landscape constraints plan for the Site.
2. DWLC were subsequently requested to update this Technical Note following discussions with Canterbury City Council planning team and their concerns regarding the potential landscape and visual impacts of the developing the Site for the uses proposed. In response to these concerns the developable area of the Site has been reduced to those areas which are previously developed land (PDL) and land immediately adjoining the PDL. In addition, this Note has been updated to include information from the current Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal October 2020.
3. The aim of the appraisal is to assess the landscape characteristics of the Site and its surroundings, to identify its potential to accommodate mixed – use development as proposed and to highlight the landscape and visual issues that would need to be addressed as part of the next stage of the project.
4. The approach taken to this assessment was one which accords with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) and included undertaking a field survey of the Site and surrounding area and a review the background information available, including the:
  - a) Ordnance Survey Explorer Map – Sheet 138 and 150;
  - b) National Planning Policy Framework February 2019,
  - c) National Planning Policy Guidance March 2014;
  - d) The Adopted Canterbury District Local Plan July 2017;
  - e) Canterbury City Council - Interactive Planning Map
  - f) The Natural England National Character Area Profiles published in April 2014 – NCAP No.113 - 'North Kent Plain' and NCAP No.119 – 'North Downs';
  - g) 'Landscape Assessment of Kent' 2004;
  - h) 'Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal' October 2020 where relevant;
  - i) Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019 - Second Revision April 2014;
  - j) Historic England / National Heritage List for England' (<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>);
  - k) Historic Ordnance Survey mapping and aerial photographs (Google Earth / Bing Maps / <https://maps.nls.uk/> );

- l) Aerial photographs (Google Earth / Bing Maps / <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Chartham,+Canterbury+CT4+7PP/>)
  - m) Magic website (For Schedule Ancient Monuments/ Listed Buildings / Landscape Designations).
5. In preparing the original Technical Note , it has not been possible to undertake a site visit / survey due to the Covid-19 outbreak and lockdown. However, the author of this assessment has been involved in the adjoining site, Land at Cocking Farm, Thanington, since mid-2016 and is very familiar with the Site and surrounding area. Once the Cocking Farm development commences and is completed then the landscape context of the Site will change.
6. This Technical Note represents the results of the landscape and visual assessment of the Site and its surroundings. The main part of this note describes the landscape and visual characteristics of the Site and this is followed by an outline of the landscape and visual issues relating to the Site and its potential development for mixed – use development as proposed, with a final section setting out the conclusions of the assessment.

### **The Site and its Surroundings:**

7. The Site forms an irregular shaped parcel of land of approximately 12.27 hectares (30.32 acres) comprising areas of open grass and parkland, Milton Manor Farm complex to the north of Milton Manor Church and Brett Aggregates works and gravel storage areas (previously developed land - PDL) to the west of the Church. The Site is crossed by four public rights of way – Public Footpath No's. CB464, CB487, CB488 and CB541.

The Site



### **Aerial Photograph of the Site (Source: Google Maps)**

8. The Site is located within open countryside occupying part of the River Stour valley bottom and north facing lower valley side. The Site is located to the south of the A28, Ashford Road

and Milton Manor Road roundabout and west of Milton Manor Road, which becomes Cockering Road to the south of the Site.

9. The Site lies approximately 3.5 kilometres from Canterbury city centre, 3.7 kilometres from Canterbury World Heritage Site (Canterbury WHS) and about 800 metres from the existing edge of Thanington on the A28. To the west of the Site is the Canterbury to Ashford railway line and Stour Valley Industrial Estates, which lies either side of the A28, Ashford Road, with Howfield Manor Hotel and Howfield Farm depot on Howfield Lane to the north with the village of Chartham Hatch lying approximately 1.8 kilometres to the north-west of the Site. To the south west, approximately 1.5 kilometres from the Site is the village of Chartham, and its Conservation Area, occupying parts of the valley floor with the built up areas of Shalmsford Street and St Augustine's occupying the undulating valley sides to the south of Chartham.
10. The landscape close to the Site varies considerably reflecting the variety of land uses in the surrounding area. The farmland consists of medium to large sized irregular shaped fields in arable, pasture and fruit growing, orchard use with the larger fields occupying valley sides to the east and south of the Site. Pasture and grassland uses together with areas of woodland and scrubland land surrounding a number of former gravel workings (restored and landscaped in the late 1970's) lie within and on the River Stour Valley floor with orchards and fruit growing areas lying on the south and east facing slopes of the Stour Valley.
11. To the east of the Site occupying higher ground is Larkey Valley Wood (SSSI, LNR and Ancient Woodland) with the land to the north of Milton Manor Road, extending up to the edge of Thanington is allocated for residential development excluding the grounds of Milton Manor House (as part of Policy SP3 – Site 11 – Land at and adjacent to Cockering Farm, Thanington) with Cockering Road beyond to the north east.
12. To the north of the Site and Stour Valley lie open farmland / countryside, occupying the south facing sloping of the valley, and the A2 / London to Dover Road. Beyond the A2 are the north western parts of Canterbury and small linear settlements of Upper Harbledown and Rough Common which are situated to the north of the A2050 western approach to the City. The landscape to the north of the Site consists predominantly of areas of fruit orchards and woodlands (including Bigbury Wood, Howfield Wood and No Mans Orchard Local Nature Reserve) occupying elevated ground which provides visual containment within the wider landscape to the north of the Site. Blean Wood also lies to the north of Upper Harbledown and the A2 / London to Dover Road.
13. To the west of the Site is the Stour Valley and Ashford Road, with areas of low lying open countryside and farmland occupying the valley floor and side slopes. Also within the valley floor are extensive areas of gravel workings and lakes and areas of commercial uses either side of the A28 extending towards the village of Chartham, and Shalmsford Street.
14. To the south and east of Cockering Road lie areas of open farmland and woodland occupying undulating topography forming part of the dip slope to the Kent Downs which extend southwards towards the villages of Petham and Street End. The landscape consists of areas of predominantly arable fields subdivided by tall hedgerows and woodlands including Larkey Valley Wood (Nature Reserve) and Iffin Wood together with a network of local lanes and farm tracks serving scattered farmstead and enclaves of residential development on New House Lane and Iffin Lane. The boundary of the Kent Downs AONB lies approximately 1.9 kilometres to the south of the Site at St Augustine's.

15. The topography of the area is dominated by the Stour Valley, its undulating side slopes and ridgelines aligned in a south west to north east direction to the north and south of the Site. The low-lying land within the Stour Valley lies at between 5 to 10m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) with the land gently rising to an area of high ground between 50 to 105 metres AOD to the south of the valley within the Kent Downs AONB whilst to the north of the River Stour Valley to a low north east to south west ridgeline at about 80 metres AOD.
16. The Site lies on the lower valley slopes and is gently sloping between an elevation of about 10 to 45m AOD with the lowest part of the Site situated in the northern corner adjoining the Ashford Road and Milton Manor Road at about 12m AOD with the land rising to the south and east to the eastern corner, adjoining Milton Manor Road, at about 40m AOD.
17. In terms of vegetation, tree cover within the landscape is good and comprises woodlands, belts of trees within the River Stour Valley and subdividing fields, parkland trees within the Site, hedgerow trees and areas of orchard planting. To the north and north west, tree cover is primarily provided by shelter belts, orchards with extensive areas of woodland occupying the ridgeline including Howfield Wood, Bigberry or Bigbury Wood, and No Mans Orchard whilst to the north east and east, tree cover comprises belts of trees and wooded areas around Milton Manor House and following the A28, Ashford Road, and Larkey Valley Wood occupying higher ground and providing enclosure and containment in the landscape.
18. To the south of the Site tree cover is less pronounced with open arable fields extending along the valley sides whilst to the south and west, tree cover comprises belts of trees and wooded areas within the River Stour Valley surrounding gravel workings and a few woodlands, The Rough and Landane Wood on the valley sides.
19. The Site lies within the administration area of Canterbury City Council and parish of Thanington Without Parish Council with a small part of the south western portion of the Site lying with Chartham Parish.

## **Findings:**

### **Landscape Character:**

20. The Site forms an irregular shaped parcel of land comprising areas of open grass and manicured grassland, Milton Manor Farm complex to the north of Milton Manor Farm and Brett Aggregates works and gravel storage areas (PDL) to the west of the farm. Milton Manor Farm comprises a number of timber barns, which have been refurbished for office use, Robert Brett House, a grade II listed building, and adjoining Annexe and Church Barn, with other outbuildings, car parking areas, and Hurst Cottage, Milton Bungalow and garden areas to the east and a small Milton Manor Church (Chapel of St John the Baptist) a grade II\* listed building, to the south west. In addition to the west of farm complex is a large modern barn and aggregate works / gravel storage areas containing a number of utilitarian buildings associated with Brett Aggregates operations.
21. Access to the Site is via a wide tarmac access road, with speed humps, served off the Ashford Road and Milton Manor Road roundabout with the A28 Ashford Road crossing the River Stour immediately to the west of the roundabout before turning southwards to following the north side of the River Stour Valley. There is a low level electricity distribution line on pole crossing the eastern parts of the Site.



22. The short northern boundary of the Site adjoins the A28, Ashford Road and is defined by low post and timber rail fencing and is open with views extending northwards along and over the River Stour Valley to a wooded, treed horizon formed by trees within the valley or trees and wooded area occupying the ridgeline near the A2 and Harbledown some distance from the Site.
23. The eastern boundary of the Site follows an irregular alignment. The northern section of the eastern boundary adjoins Milton Manor Road and is defined by an open section of low post and timber rail fencing up to a point opposite the entrance to Milton Manor House with the fencing continuing southwards to a point just beyond Public Footpath No. CB 488. Adjoining the fence line and this section of the boundary is a low 2 to 3 metres high earth bank and shrub and tree planting lying adjacent to the fence line curtailing open views into and across the section from a section of Milton Manor Road. Just beyond Footpath No. CB 488, the eastern boundary turns westwards to follow the edge of a wooded area towards Milton Manor Church and its junction with Public footpath No. CB 464 and is defined by a belt of trees including Beech, Hawthorn, Pine, and sycamore species up to about 12 to 15 metres in height, which provides some containment and enclosure to this part of the Site. At Footpath No. CB 464, the boundary then turns south westwards and is formed a section of track and by a tall hedgerow and trees to the west of the track up to south eastern corner of the Site. The hedgerow provides some limited containment and enclosure to the Site with a short section at the southern end open allowing views into and out of the Site.
24. The short southern boundary of the Site also follows a track up to the River Stour and bridge crossing the river. Adjoining the track on both sides are areas of trees and shrub / hedgerow planting, up to about 10 to 12 metres in height, and this planting provides containment to this boundary. Immediately to the south of this boundary of the Site is a small water treatment works.
25. The western boundary of the Site follows the alignment of the River Stour up to the A28 Ashford Road and bridge crossing. The adjoining the southern section of this boundary is a belt of mature trees predominantly Ash and Willow species, up to about 12 to 15 meters in height, and these trees provide strong containment and enclosure along this boundary limiting views into and out of the Site. The adjoining northern section of the boundary there are also groups and individual trees comprising Ash, Sycamore, Elm, Oak and Willow species up to about 15 metres in height, although due to the spacing of the trees there are views into and out of the Site across the River Stour Valley.

#### *Landscape Character Assessments*

26. The Site and adjoining farmland to the south and east lie on the northern fringes of National Character Area Profile (NCAP) No.119 – North Downs with NCAP No.113 – North Kent Plain to the north and west and “Stour Valley West” Landscape Character Area (LCA Area F6) as defined by the latest Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (LCABA) October 2022. The Site is identified as lying on the northern edge of and within LCA F6–: Stour Valley West, which follows the River Stour from the centre of Canterbury westwards to the district boundary with the Stour Valley Sides LCA Area F1 and Harbledown Fruit Belt LCA Area H1 to the north and north west whilst to the south west is the Stour Valley Sides LCA Area F1 again with the Chatrham and Shlmsford Downland LCA Area I3 immediately to the south of LCA Area F1 whilst to the south east is the Nackington Farmlands LCA Area H4.

27. The 2020 LCABA describes the River Valleys landscape character type (LCT - F) as being distinguished by the Great Stour River and Little Stour River valleys, comprising the flat floodplain and rising slopes above the course of the rivers. There are a variety of land uses including floodplain grazing, pasture, arable, and orchards. There are small villages on the higher ground, and some modern development close to Canterbury. The LCT is subdivided into eight LACs.
28. The 2020 LCABA goes on to describe the location of the Stour Valley West LCA as lying to the south-west of Canterbury City. It is defined by the flat river floodplain of the Great Stour River and associated waterbodies. It extends from the settlement edge of Canterbury City at Thanington to the district boundary in the west, and identifies the key characteristics of the area as follows:
- *“Flat alluvial floodplain of the Great Stour River, on chalk geology, with river terrace deposits on higher valley edges.*
  - *Great Stour River meanders across the floodplain with floodplain ditches and open lakes providing wetland habitats, including priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh and wet woodland forming an important biodiversity corridor.*
  - *Wetland tree species associated with the river and ditches, with small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland surrounding the water bodies and along railway embankments.*
  - *Poor soils result in medium-scale wet meadows predominantly in use as grazing land, interspersed with occasional larger arable fields.*
  - *Past and current gravel workings and industrial activities have altered large areas of the valley, including creation of large open waterbodies.*
  - *Settlement concentrated in nucleated historic settlement of Chartham, with industrial/commercial development extending along the A28 Canterbury Road.*
  - *Major transport routes, including the A28 Canterbury Road and Canterbury to Ashford railway line run through the valley.*
  - *Good network of PRow crossing the valley and running along the valley floor, allowing recreational access.*
  - *Small scale landscape with a strong sense of enclosure from dramatic steeply rising valley sides and woodland”.*
29. The 2020 LCABA assesses the natural, cultural and perceptual influences of the area and identifies the Key Sensitivities and Values of the LCA as follows:
- *“The open flat river floodplain with the meandering Great Stour River and open lakes has a strong sense of place.*
  - *Ecologically important wetland habitats including priority chalk river, habitat floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland, designated locally as the Great Stour Ashford to Fordwich LWS forming part of an important biodiversity corridor.*
  - *Historic pattern of grazing meadows retained by traditional network of ditches still in use today.*
  - *Rural grazing marsh and floodplain provide important setting to historic Chartham and Canterbury City. At Chartham many distinctive buildings are listed, and the valley forms a setting to the Conservation Area.*
  - *Recreational value from PRow following the Great Stour River including Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath and cycle route.*
  - *Glimpsed views to Canterbury Cathedral along the valley provide a sense of place.*

- *Small scale landscape with strong sense of enclosure created by the enclosing valley sides”.*

30. The assessment then sets out a number of Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities as follows:

*“Landscape Management*

- *Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest of wetland habitats, the Great Stour River and associated lakes by managing scrub encroachment. Explore opportunities for further wetland habitat creation within the floodplain, linking the existing floodplain grazing marsh.*
- *Protect ancient woodlands and existing woodland priority habitat. Enhance improved grassland to bring them to species rich grassland of priority habitat quality.*
- *Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of chalk and neutral grassland, wetland, river floodplain, chalk scarp and wet woodland.*
- *Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as restoring the traditional drainage pattern where possible. Encourage the restoration and management of extensive wetland grazing and enhance the pastoral valley floor setting of the Great Stour River.*
- *Seek to remove detracting features from the valley, including replacing/removing post and wire fencing where practicable.*
- *Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended.*

*Development Management*

- *Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings and their rural floodplain setting, particularly within the Chartham Conservation Area.*
- *Conserve the open landscape and avoid the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements, which are prominent in the open valley landscape.*
- *Assess new building proposals within adjacent urban and suburban areas to ensure that an attractive and integrated edge is formed with this rural and open recreational landscape. This is important for existing edges as well as the new strategic allocations at Cockerling Farm. Design of this development on the adjacent slopes should consider views from the valley and views to and from the city. Physical access into the Larkey Valley Woods SSSI (within I3) should be minimised to avoid an increase in visitor numbers.*
- *Soften the retail and industrial development to the east, roads and railway corridors with appropriate deciduous woodland including wetland species and wetland trees, avoiding planting on areas of existing biodiversity interest.*
- *Conserve the undeveloped character of the landscape, ensuring it continues to play a role in providing a setting to Chartham and an approach to Canterbury City.*
- *Continue to provide and promote opportunities for wider public access from the heart of the city, while also managing recreation pressures. Retain a natural and informal character to existing and new features, including a muted colour scheme for car parks, footpaths and interpretation.*
- *Restore the quality of views to Canterbury Cathedral by mitigating the impact of the built-up areas and ensuring planting does not obscure views”.*

31. Given the above, the introduction of mixed – use development as proposed within the Site would, however, need to be designed to take account of the above assessment, as far as possible although some the land management guidelines are not directly relevant to the development of the Site as proposed and the development would result in a notable change to the character of the Site which is to be expected on a 'greenfield' site.

**Visibility:**

32. As mention above, there are four public rights of way across the Site including:
- Public Footpath No. CB 464 extends along the south eastern boundary of Site before crossing the eastern parts of the Site to cross Milton Manor Road before continuing north eastwards following edge of woodland within and on the edge of Milton Manor House to connect to Thanington and housing on Stranger's Lane. Part of this footpath forms part of the Lost Landscape – Chartham promoted route. There are open and restricted views into and across parts of the Site from a short section of this footpath but views from the section of path to the Milton Manor Road are effectively screened by intervening vegetation;
  - Public Footpath No. CB 487 extends north west to south west across the southern parts of the Site from Footpath No. CB 464 to connect to Ashford Road via a bridge over the Canterbury to Ashford railway line. Part of this footpath forms part of the Lost Landscape – Chartham promoted route. There are open and restricted views into and across parts of the Site from a short section of this footpath but views from the section of path to the west of the River Stour and Canterbury to Ashford railway line are effectively screened by intervening vegetation adjoining the river or railway or intervening development to the east of Ashford Road;
  - Public Footpath No. CB 488 extends from Footpath No. CB 464 along part of the eastern boundary to the Site to cross Milton Manor Road at the eastern corner of the Site before crossing open countryside and Cockering Road to connect to Byway 467 within Larkey Valley Wood. Part of this footpath forms part of the Lost Landscape – Chartham promoted route. There are open and restricted views into and across the eastern parts of the Site from a short section of this footpath but views from the section of path to the Milton Manor Road are effectively screened by intervening vegetation; and
  - Public Footpath No. CB 541 starts at the Ashford Road adjoining the River Stour bridge to cross the northern corner of the Site and then following the eastern boundary close to Milton Manor Road to connect to Footpath No. CB 464 at its crossing with Milton Manor Road. This footpath is not part of a promoted route. There are open and restricted views into and across parts of the Site from this footpath but views from the section of path adjacent to Milton Manor Road are substantially screened or curtailed by intervening vegetation within the Site.
33. Other public rights of way in the locality are mainly to the north and west of the Site and include:
- Public Footpath No. CB 463A which extends southwards from the Ashford Road and River Stour road bridge near the north western corner of the Site to follow the western side of the River Stour to connect to Station Road in Chartham.



Part of this footpath forms part of promoted routes in Kent including Walks in East Kent – Chartham, the Lost Landscape – Chartham route, Stour Valley Walk recreational route, Pilgrims Cycle Trail and Great Stour Way. There are open and restricted views into and across parts of the Site from a short section of this footpath but views from the section of path to the south of the Site are effectively screened by intervening vegetation.

- Public Footpath No. CB 456 which extend north eastwards from Ashford Road to cross orchards before crossing Howfield Lane and extending through Howfield Farm and crossing orchards to connect to Tonford Lane and the A2, Dover Road some distance to the north of the Site. The northern section of Footpath No. CB 456 from Howfeild Lane to Tonfield Lane forms part of Walks in East Kent – Chartham and Stour Valley Walk recreational route. This footpath needs to be checked but based on existing knowledge it is anticipated that views from the footpath will be restricted transitory views towards the Site from a short sections of this footpath with the Site not forming a major part of the views.
  - Byway No. CB 469 which lies to the east and south east of the Site and extends southwards from Cockering Road through Larkey Valley Wood to cross open farmland and downland to connect to St Augustine’s and The Downs. The Byway needs to be checked but the route is situated on slightly elevated ground on the valley side and it is anticipated that there will be open and restricted views across the River Stour Valley with parts of the Site evident in some views.
34. To the north of Ashford Road and the Milton Manor roundabout the footpath and cycle route adjoining the River Stour is not designated as a definitive public right but forms part of the Pilgrims Cycle Trail and Great Stour Way extending along the river into Canterbury. There are open and restricted views towards the Site from a short section of this footpath but views are severely restricted by the embankments adjoining the Ashford Road and Milton Manor Road roundabout and the open parts of the Site are not perceived although the roof tops of 2 storey building adjoining Ashford Road may just be seen.
  35. In addition to the above, there are transitory views towards the Site from short sections of the A28, Ashford Road immediately adjoining the Site, a section of Cockering Road to the east and south east near Rattington Street on the edge of Chartham and partial transitory distant views obtained from an elevated section of Howfield Lane to the west otherwise there are no views towards the Site from roads and network of public rights of way in the area.
  36. Based on the desk top study and existing knowledge of the Site and locality, the open parts of the Site are only perceived from near distance transitory views from a short section of the A28, Ashford Road and Milton Manor Road near the roundabout, from a short sections of Public Footpath No. CB464, CB487, CB488 and CB541 within the Site and short section of Footpath No. CB463A to the north west of the Site, resulting in some adverse impact to views and in transitory longer distance views from a short section of Cockering Road and possibly Byway No. CB469 to the south resulting in minimal adverse impact to views, due to panoramic nature, extent and distance of the views with large parts of the Site screened the by the tall hedgerows and trees along the eastern boundary of the Site.
  37. Elsewhere the Site is generally screened and contained in the landscape in near, middle and long distance views due to its boundary vegetation of hedgerows and trees and the intervening framework of hedgerows and trees / woodlands within the landscape surrounding the Site, resulting in minimal adverse impact. However, the introduction of areas of

landscape planting within and on the edges of any proposed development and on the Sites boundaries would minimize the likely visual impacts on local and longer distance views.

38. Open views of the northern parts of the Site are evident in transitory views from a short section of Ashford Road and slightly longer section of Milton Manor Road and Public Footpath No. CB 541 where the Site is perceived as open sloping ground and manicured grassland with group of trees and views of the Milton Manor Farm complex of buildings sitting amongst trees and backdrop of trees. From sections of Milton Manor Road to the south of Footpath No. CB464 views into the Site are curtailed by the earth bounds and tree planting along this edge of the Site and therefore the open eastern, central and southern parts of the Site are not seen nor contribute to the character or visual appearance of the area when seen from this section of road.
39. There are also open panoramic views from open sections of Cockerling Road to the south looking across the River Stour Valley, and towards the Site, to rising ground to the north east of Canterbury forming the treed horizon. The open arable fields and Cockerling Road form the prominent feature in the views with the roof tops of the Milton Manor Farm buildings just perceived amongst trees, which also appear to occupy most of the valley floor. The open parts of the Site are also screened from view although the introduction of 2 storey buildings within the elevated eastern parts of the Site between the farm complex and Milton Manor Road may be seen through gaps in the boundary vegetation.
40. To the west there are open and restricted views from a 400 metre section of Public Footpath No. CB463A looking eastwards although in the majority of the views only the northern open parts of the Site perceived between individual or group of trees with occasional glimpsed views of the Milton Manor Farm complex and rising ground and trees forming the skyline to the east of the Site. In addition, to the east, there are partial views towards the northern parts of the Site from an elevated section of Howfield Lane where the elevated parts of the eastern portion of the Site and vegetation along Milton Manor Road can be perceived.
41. The previously developed land with the Site i.e. storage areas associated with Brett Aggregates operations are well contained and screened in views from most areas around the Site and have little or any influence on the visual appearance of the Site in local views.
42. The assessment indicated that apart from the vantagepoints referred to above, there were no other middle and long distance views (i.e. views in excess of 500 metres) towards the Site where the Site is readily perceived.
43. On the basis of the initial visual assessment, it is considered that the northern and eastern parts of the Site are visually sensitive to change and the introduction of built development as proposed in this portion of the Site would be very evident in local views from adjoining short sections of the Ashford Road and Milton Manor Road and Public Footpaths (No's. CB541 to the east and CB463A to the west), having a moderate to major impact on views, and if the proposed development was to be located on the higher eastern parts of the Site it may be perceived in the few long distance viewpoints from elevated locations to the west on Howfield Lane and to the south on Cockerling Road and possibly Byway No. CB469 although it is likely the proposed development would have a limited / minimal (negligible / low) impact on views.
44. The southern parts of the Site are less sensitive as these areas of the Site comprise PDL and are relatively well contained and enclosed by existing hedgerows, trees and blocks of trees within the Site and any development within this part of the Site would only be seen in local

views from short sections of three Public Footpaths (No's CB464, 487 and 488 and possibly Footpath No. CB463A to the west. The impact of mixed – use development within the southern parts of the Site on views from these routes would vary depend on the nature and extent of the view and development seen resulting in major to low impacts.

45. There would be some (major / moderate) impact on private views from the limited number of properties within the Site Hurst Cottage and adjacent Milton Bungalow, however, the introduction of areas of landscape planting adjoining these properties would minimize the likely visual impacts. There are no other private dwellings close to or adjoining the Site.
46. The nearest private dwelling is Milton Manor House to the east of the Ashford Road / Milton Manor Road roundabout, where there are robust belts of trees and Milton Manor Road providing screening and separation, and dwellings on Howfield Lane, including The Willows Lodge, Russetts, Matunda, Fairlands, West Howfield, Howfield Farm Bungalow, three new dwellings, Shangria-La, Lower Lambrook, Hill Side Bungalow and Howfield House, all of which are separated both visually and physically by industrial and commercial buildings, the A28, Ashford Road, Canterbury to Ashford railway line, the River Stour Valley and areas of vegetation occupying the floodplain. As a consequence of the above it is unlikely that the dwelling listed above will experience any adverse impacts on private views.

**Trees:**

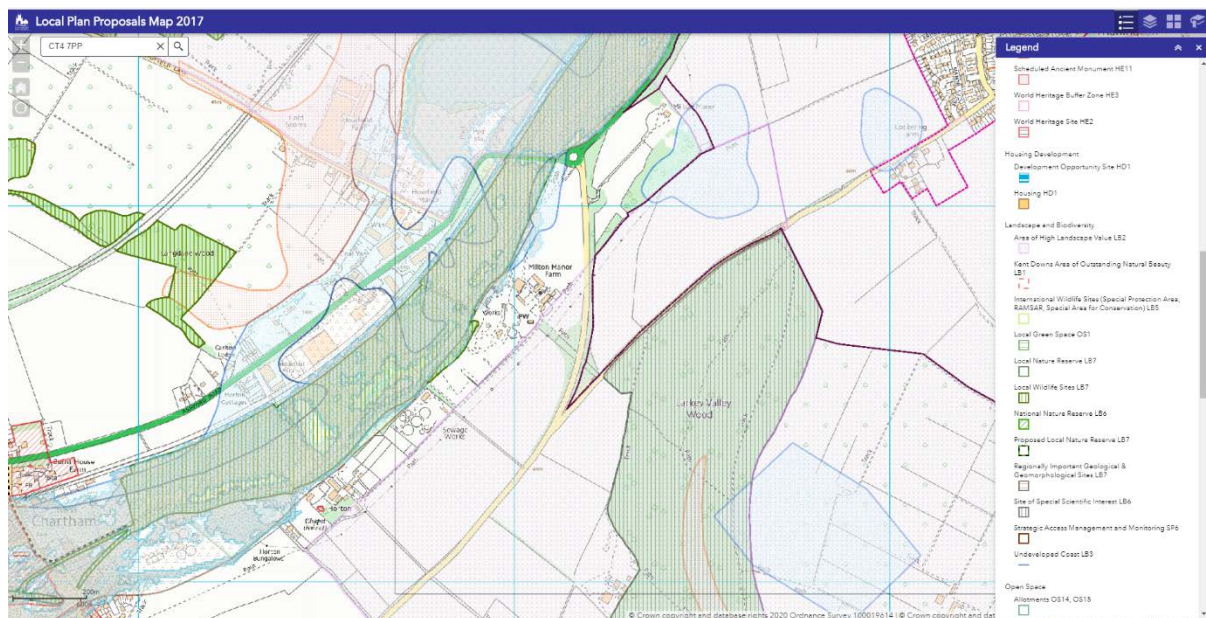
47. There is a good framework of hedgerows and trees within and around the Site, a number of individual trees, groups or areas of trees, and woodlands within the northern and eastern parts of the Site are protected under TPO No.4 / 1959. Given the TPO status of the trees within the Site and contribution they make to local character and visual amenity, it is important to retain them, where possible, and they should form a constraint to development (subject to tree / hedgerow root protection zones and shading areas). The merits or otherwise of retaining groups of trees verses individual trees would need to be assessed and considered based on the results of a detailed tree condition survey and in discussions with the Council at a later date.
48. Trees and other vegetation within the southern parts of the Site are not protected by a TPO, nonetheless it is important in that they are retained, where possible, as they provide screening, contribute to local character and visual amenity, although the majority of the southern parts of the Site devoid of vegetation as it is an operational works areas and therefore free from constraint for this reason.
49. Subject to the area identified for development (see comments below), those hedgerows / trees, groups of trees and wooded areas located within and on the Site's boundaries should be subject to a detailed tree condition survey and the protection distances for these hedges / trees / groups of trees should constrain the developable area where vegetation is deemed worthy of retention.
50. At the appropriate time, a Phase 1 Habitat survey and survey of protected species should be undertaken as ecological features and species within and using the Site should inform the further development of the proposals.
51. There is also an opportunity to increase tree cover and also to manage any new hedgerows, trees and planting areas within and adjoining the Site as well as enhancing the existing wildlife, habitats and species within the Site, create new wildlife habitats and also to manage the ecology, all of which are a benefit.

**Access to the Site:**

- 52. At present, access to the Site is via a wide tarmac access road, with speed humps, served off the Ashford Road and Milton Manor Road roundabout. This access should be suitable to provide access for the potential development options for the Site albeit new internal roads will be needed to connect developed parcel to the main access road.

**Landscape Planning:**

- 53. The Development Plan for the District consists of the 2019 NPPF, the Canterbury District Local Plan July 2017 and Local Plan Proposals Map 2017. The Council are currently reviewing the Local Plan in order to identify locations for future development outside the current urban area and therefore there is an opportunity to promote the land for residential, mixed use development through the Local Plan review process.



**Relevant Extract taken from the Canterbury Local Plan Proposals Map 2017**

- 54. The Local Plan Proposals Map indicates that the Site lies outside the built-up area boundary of Canterbury, and Thanington and within open countryside but part of the Site immediately adjoins the Inset Boundary and Housing Allocation SP3 – Site 11. The majority of the Site is not located within a designated landscape such as AONB, or Area of High Landscape Value (Kent or Swale level) nor any other environmental designation although Robert Brett House and the Church are listed buildings and their settings are a consideration that would need to be taken into account as part of the design of the final development proposals.
- 55. The Proposals Map also shows that the eastern corner of the Site lying on the northern fringes but within the North Downs “Area of High Landscape Value” (AHLV) which extends southwards from Milton Manor Road in this locality to the North Downs AONB, some distance to the south of the Site. To the north of the North Downs AHLV is the Canterbury AHLV which encircles the City. AHLV designations within the Local Plan are subject to Policy LB2 of the plan and Policy LB2 states:



*"The following Areas of High Landscape Value are defined on the Proposals Map and Inset Maps:*

- a. The North Kent Marshes;*
- b. The North Downs;*
- c. Blean Woods;*
- d. Wantsum Channel;*
- e. Canterbury (the valley of the River Stour around Canterbury).*

*Within these areas, development will be considered in relation to the extent to which its location, scale, design and materials would impact on or protect the local landscape character and enhance the future appearance of the designated landscape and its heritage and nature conservation interest. Development proposals that support the landscape character (including settlement character), and have no significant impact upon historic setting, archaeological or nature conservation interests, where relevant, will be permitted.*

*Within the Canterbury AHLV, development proposals should have particular regard to the historic setting of the City and the World Heritage Site".*

56. The North Downs AHLV along with other AHLVs in the district were designated Special Landscape Areas in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan. The explanatory text to Policy LB2 of the Local Plan (paragraph 10.12 (a) on page 240) states:

*"The North Downs AHLV is a landscape designation associated with the Kent Downs AONB. The designation includes land outside the AONB. These areas, associated with the AONB boundary, are deemed to have an important quality that is contiguous with the AONB designation, identified as part of detailed assessment of the existing AONB boundary. These areas will be proposed by the City Council as extensions to the AONB when the boundary is reviewed by Natural England in due course".*

57. The explanatory text (paragraph 10.13 on page 241) goes on to state the following:

*"The Council's objective is to preserve and enhance these distinctive landscapes for their individual recognised archaeological, historical, ecological and landscape character and designations. AHLVs are of special importance because of landscape, archaeological and nature conservation interest, their local amenity value and their importance to the setting of historic, ecological or wider landscape features".*

58. At the time of preparing this appraisal, the proposal to include these areas as an extension of the Kent Downs AONB has not been progressed and it is understood that the Kent Downs AONB Unit have no intention of promoting any changes to the AONB boundary.
59. Given the above, the introduction of mixed – use development within the Site would however, need to be designed to take account of the above AHLV designation, as far as possible.
60. Other relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan are:



- Policy SP1 – Sustainable Development;
- Policy SP3 – Strategic Site Allocations;
- Policy SP5 – Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- Policy DBE1 – Sustainable Design and Construction;
- Policy DBE3 – Principles of Design;
- Policy DBE4 – Residential Space Standards;
- Policy DBE5 – Inclusive Design;
- Policy DBE7 – Public Realm;
- Policy DBE8 – Public Open Space;
- Policy DBE9 – Outdoor lighting;
- Policy HE1 – Historic Environment and Heritage Assets;
- Policy HE4 – Listed Buildings;
- Policy LB2 – Area of High Landscape Value;
- Policy LB4 – Landscape Character Areas;
- Policy LB8 – Landscape Scale Biodiversity Networks;
- Policy LB9 – Protection, Mitigation, Enhancement and Increased Connectivity for Species and Habitats of Principle Importance;
- Policy LB10 – Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands;
- Policy OS11 - Outdoor Space Provision; and
- Policy OS12 – Green Infrastructure.

61. In addition to the above, the Council have published a number of other guidance documents including the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal, dated October 2020 referred to above, The Canterbury District Green Infrastructure Strategy 2018 – 2031 – Main Report and Action Plan 2018 – 2031 (November 2018).

### **Conclusions:**

62. The initial landscape appraisal of the land indicates that the Site is capable of accommodating mixed – use development as proposed with some limited or minimal impacts on landscape character and views. See attached plan – 0415/LSK1-Preliminary Landscape Appraisal / Constraints Plan.
63. The initial appraisal indicates that the central parts of the Site are most appropriate to develop for housing to minimise landscape and visual impacts. These parts of the Site comprise previously developed land and are well contained and enclosed i.e. visually contained areas or moderately well visually contained areas, and would relate well to the Milton Manor Farm development in the centre of the Site. Whilst the development would be perceived in some views from locations to the west and north west, the development would be seen through existing robust screens and the proposed planting would further integrate the development into the Site and surrounding area thereby minimising the change perceived. Development within these parts of the Site would result in 'low to negligible' visual impacts although it is acknowledged there would be a change in character i.e. changed from gravel works, storage areas to mixed – use development as proposed but this change would be restricted to the area within the Site and have 'negligible' impacts on the wider surrounding area.
64. The initial appraisal also indicates that the northern and eastern parts of the Site are the most sensitive areas of the Site. The current proposals keep these parts of the Site free from development and can be retained in open uses as part of the landscape enhancements of the Site and Stour Valley. Similarly the eastern elevated parts of the Site should be kept free from development respecting the AHLV covering this part of the Site and be retained in

open uses as part of landscape enhancements. The retention of these parts of the Site in open uses and as landscape areas will provide the opportunity to further mitigation to be introduced into the Site thereby ensuring the landscape and visual impacts of developing the central parts of the Site are minimised. .

65. In terms of the perception of potential coalescence of Canterbury with Chartham, the introduction of open uses within the northern and eastern parts of the Site and concentrating development within the in the centre of the Site with a higher degree of visual containment and benefit of screening would ensure that the perception of potential coalescence is avoided. In addition, whilst the Site boundary adjoins Milton Road and Cockering Farm development site, which will extend Canterbury to the west, the Cockering Farm development proposal also include substantial areas of open space within the western parts of that Site and this would further add to the significant separation distance which would be maintained to the settlement boundary of Chartham.
66. It is also considered important that the existing hedgerows, trees and wooded areas along all the boundaries of the Site and those within the Site are retained and buffer of open space be provided to set back the developed parcels from these boundaries in order to minimize the impact of the proposed buildings on the trees and retain existing screens which significant reduce views towards the Site.
67. In addition, there is an opportunity to incorporate 'green infrastructure enhancements' within the Site by changing the well maintained manicured nature of parts of the Site to a maintenance and management regime which creates greater biodiversity, provide a belt of tree planting within the northern parts of the Site screening development as well as utilising existing and providing a new footbridge across the River Stour, thereby avoiding the existing busy A28 road bridge, to connect to the Pilgrims Cycle Trail and River Stour Walk, routes which provide pedestrian / cycle links to the centre of Canterbury, and other public footpaths around the Site.

David Williams  
**Director**

**PLANS -** Drawing No. 0415 / LSK1 - Landscape Appraisal / Constraints Plan




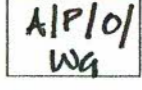
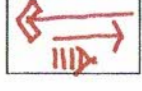










Note: Scaling on the drawing cannot be assured.



**LEGEND**

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  EXISTING TREES / HEDGEROWS (Trimmed / Tall)
-  RIDGES / SLOPES
-  LAND USES (Arable/ Pasture/ Orchards / Workings)
-  VIEWS (Long/ Local/ Restricted)
-  LISTED BUILDINGS
-  PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (Footpaths)
-  EXISTING ACCESS POINT
-  VISUALLY CONTAINED AREAS
-  MODERATELY VISUALLY CONTAINED AREAS
-  LEAST VISUALLY CONTAINED AREAS

Project:  
**LAND AT MILTON MANOR FARM,  
 ASHFORD ROAD, CHARTHAM  
 CANTERBURY CT4 7PP**  
 Drawing Title:  
**LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL  
 /CONSTRAINTS PLAN**

Status: **INITIAL ADVICE**  
 Date: 27-05-2020  
 Project No: **0416**  
 Scale: 1:2500@A1  
 1:5000@A3  
 Drawing No: **LSK1**  
 Drawn by: DHW  
 Revision: ---

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