

**IN RESPECT OF THE APPEAL AGAINST THE DECISION OF
HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT
OF**

**LAND AT HATFIELD AERODROME, OFF HATFIELD ROAD,
HATFIELD, HERTFORDSHIRE**

PLANNING INSPECTORATE REF: APP/M1900/W/24/3346607

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY REF: PL/0232/21

**Paper submitted by former Rule 6 parties now third parties at
the request of the Planning Inspector**

Landscape Visual Impact Assessment

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The parish council's assessment has focused on the Country Park and the visual impacts resulting from quarrying there being few alternative open spaces locally.

It's a former historic aerodrome so its broadly flat and level.

The trees found growing naturally reflect those found elsewhere in the parish of Colney Heath.

- 1.2 The central area where natural seeding has taken place its predominantly the species with lighter windblown seeds the willow and poplars rather than the heavier seeds such Oak. The oak haves naturally self-seeded nearer to existing areas of mature trees predominantly around the edges. This results each area having its own unique character.
- 1.3 The Country Park is considered to be well screened from most external viewpoints due the surrounding mature trees and hedgerow, its only when viewed from more central locations that the surrounding building become more visible, Hatfield Business Park, Smallford hamlet and University buildings.
- 1.4 From visual impact consideration the park can be divided into five areas, the northeastern (area 9) and western open areas (area's 1, 3), cattle grazing area including the Linear Park (areas 2,4,5,6), the northern course grass and shrubby (area9) and Home Wood (area 8). The northeastern area (area 9) is well outside of the proposed quarry area so any visual impacts should be very limited.
- 1.5 The visual impacts on Linear Park and cattle grazing (areas 2,4,5,6) areas change as you travel in a westerly direction. At east edge of this area, the Linear Park the possible visual impacts are quite low but increase as you progress in westly direction the west edge of cattle field adjoins the lagoons and bunds so the visual impact significantly adverse in early stages of construction reducing as the mitigation measures establish but becoming again significantly adverse during restoration.
- 1.6 The central open area (area 1,3) near Smallford will significantly adversely impacted throughout most stages from the construction of bunds and lagoons until post final restoration.
- 1.7 The visual impact on northern rough grass and shrubby (area 9), the proposed location of the processing area will change during the life of the quarry depending upon the selected viewpoint. During the early stages the impact will be significantly adverse from all viewpoints, reducing from some viewpoints as the mitigation planting establishes. The visual impact will significantly increase when viewed from a more central locations as the central hedge is removed for phase C. The visual impact will be significantly

adverse from all viewpoints during and post restoration until the landscape plantings and grass establish.

- 1.8 Home Wood (area 8) there is a level of doubt on the visual impacts from this area if the existing hedge is retained the visual impacted will be reduced, but if the hedge which is within the quarry site area is removed the visual impact from the wood with significantly increased due the open nature of wood along much of its length boarding the processing site.
- 1.9 The adverse soil conditions on site this is likely to result in slow and poor establishment of the landscape plantings, this also due to locally native species being generally slower growing and the poor drainage on site from the existing soils and also from the clay buttresses used around the phases used to manage the bromate plume.

Methodology used

- 1.10 In technical terms the Country Park and the Linear Park are two separate areas, but to the average user they appear as one area so both areas have been included in this assessment.
- 1.11 The application of is for 11 phases of which 9 are active quarrying one a construction and the other a reinstatement phase.
- 1.12 Country Park contains several core walking routes together with many sub-routes users use.
- 1.13 Due to the complexity of the visual impacts from the different phases, multiplicity of routes and time scale involved an area assessment approach has been used with illustrative photos rather the more formal identified locations.

Summary of Assessments

Visual impact Assessment											
Area	Phase										
	Current	Construction	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Reinstate	5yrs post
	0 year	2 years	6.5yrs	11yrs	15.5yrs	20yrs	24.5yrs	29yrs	33.5yrs	35.5yrs	40.5yrs
1 Wooded by A1057											
2 By sports field											
3 Smallford end open area											
4 Semi shrubland											
5 Grazing area											
6 Linear Park											
7 Northern area											
8 Home Wood		?	?							?	
9 Northeastern Open area											
A Site entrance											
B Popefield Farm											
C Jove Gardens											
D BT Trials site				??							??

'?' The drawings do not provide a level of certainty as to the exact location of the path and if any shrubs required removal, the visual impact from Home Wood could be reduced if the dense shrubs growing along the boundary are retained.

'??' The visual impact would be significantly greater if the landowner of BT Trial site was to prevent access through their land so walkers would then have to use the formally designated route.

Visual impact assessment key	Indicator colour	
Good - broadly as is now		
Minor – some harm resulting in a less attractive landscape		
Moderate harm – resulting in damaged landscape which unattractive to users		
Significant harm – resulting in significantly damaged landscape which is unattractive to users		

Basis of calculation

Each phase quarrying lasts 4.5 years

Reinstatement of each phase lasts 4.5 years

Initial construction lasts 2 years

Final clearance and reinstatement lasts 2 years

Percentage of the Country Park attractive to users												
Area	Area	Percentage of the park attractive to users (good condition or minor harm levels only)										
		Phase										
	Ha.	Current	Construct	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Reinstat	5yrs post
		0 year	2 years	6.5yrs	11yrs	15.5yrs	20yrs	24.5yrs	29yrs	33.5yrs	35.5yrs	40.5yrs
1 Wooded by A1057	16.88	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2 By sports field	2.51	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%
3 Smallford end open area	13.22	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4 Semi shrubland	14.85	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%
5 Grazing area	44.47	100%	80%	80%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	0%
6 Linear Park	9.01	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
7 Northern area	33.23	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
8 Home Wood	15.39	100%	80%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
9 Northeastern Open area	28.32	100%	00%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	!00%
Area available to users (ha.)	177.88	177.88	85.30	85.3	88.38	99.7	99.7	99.7	114.55	114.55	88.3	88.3
Percentage		100%	47.9%	47.9%	49.7%	56.0%	56.0%	56.0%	64.4%	64.4%	46.9%	46.6%

This includes area 9 this only correct if this area remains undeveloped.

Ellenbrook Country Park description

- 2.1 The Country Park is on part of former De Havilland historic aerodrome so its broadly flat and level area within the Vale of St Albans. The aerodrome closed in September 1994 since then there has been some landscaping and planting to together with significant level of natural seeding of trees and shrubs.
- 2.2 The Country Park was proposed as part of S106 agreement following the construction the Hatfield Business Park and the associated homes. The redevelopment of the aerodrome was started in late 1990s by Arlington then the development arm of BAE Systems.
- 2.3 Most of the former aerodrome infrastructure has been removed except for a short length of taxiway which now forms a vital access path and small building or hut.
- 2.4 The site is enclosed on most sides by mature hedgerows and trees the boundary with the Business Park has been extensively planted and now offers a reasonable level of screening. On the northern side of the site is an area mature woodland.
- 2.5 The average user of the Country Park would form the opinion that it's an enclosed area of varied landscapes, which I feel would fairly describe the site. The differing areas or landscapes within the Country Park have been assessed separately below.
- 2.6 The trees found growing naturally reflect those found elsewhere in the parish of Colney Heath. The central area where natural seeding has taken place its predominantly the species with lighter windblown seeds the willow and poplars rather than the heavier seeds such Oak. The oak haves naturally self-seeded nearer to existing areas of mature trees predominantly around the edges. The poor drainage of the soils found in much of the park this also influences the plant species found within the park. This results each area having its own unique character. The different species impact on the visibility in the area and beyond the due to if its evergreen or deciduous, density of branches in the winter months as to level of screening and their ultimate size and rate of growth.
- 2.7 The different tree and shrub species add to the varied character of the landscape and so its visual attractiveness and the different wildlife and flora it supports which all add to experience of the landscape.
- 2.8 Access to the Country Park, only two PRow run through the site currently Colney Heath 14 and 62. Under permitted rights the land owner allows people to walk in the Country Park this is within the terms of the S106 agreement.

2.9 Subarea Assessments

- 1) Wooded area between Smallford and University Sprots field beside A1057
- 2) Wooded area between University Sprots field and Taxiway
Open area Smallford end
- 3) Semi shrubland area between the taxiway and grazed areas

- 4) Grazing areas
- 5) Linear Park
- 6) Area between the central open area and the northern boundary (proposed processing area)
- 7) Home Wood
- 8) Area east of Home Wood to the Hatfield Business Park.

External assessments

- A) Hatfield Road – entrance area
- B) Popefield Farm
- C) Jave Gardens and Lawrence Close
- D) Former BT Trials site



Soil types.

- 2.10 While soils do not form part of the formal visual impact assessment, they do assist the reader to understand with plant growth and species and therefore the visual impacts.
- 2.11 No formal detailed assessments of the soil have been undertaken, these assessments have been by field walking and observations. We also know from the applicant's data the broad subsoil profile.
- 2.12 The bedrock is chalk overlaid with two mineral layers of sands and gravels these two layers are separated by boulder clay layer. The mineral layer is overlaid with layer clay-silt running into the topsoil, this results in poor drainage over much of the site with winter flooding in some locations. This significantly influences the species of plants which can grow in the area and the rate of growth.
- 2.13 Most of the plants found in the Country Park are able to grow in or tolerate the wet soils observed, some plants also show stunted growth due to winter waterlogging this is expected in areas of poor drainage, in some locations plant death was also recorded most likely due to waterlogging.
- 2.14 The proposed landscape planting selection appear to a standard planting mix resulting two issues, some of species selected are not locally native. And more importantly unsuitable for growing wet clay soils, this is likely to result in poor plant establishment and poor after growth if they succeed in establishing therefore the proposed mitigation will fail to be effective in the short to medium term.

The soil Ph is averages 6.5 which is typical of the area.

The technical aspect of the drainage is reviewed in the CHPC footpath assessment document.

Baseline understanding

- 2.15 This assessment has been undertaken on the understanding the sand and gravel will be transported to the processing site shortly after quarrying, the submitted plans and documents clearly show the storage areas and indicate the maximum height (5m) these mounds will obtain.
- 2.16 Any high and long-term store of quarried sand and gravels outside of the processing area could result in the change in my assessment to increased level of visual impact and harm to other parts of the site. Any 'overnight' short term mounds lasting days not months would not cause me to change my assessment.



This image is an example to the visual impacts resulting from the storage of what appears to be worked minerals. This image was taken at Fairlop quarry Hainault Road Romford on 25th August 2025 which is also operated Brett (camera data Nikon D3400 with 100mm lens which equate to 66mm at full frame).

Storage of topsoil, subsoil and interburden

- 2.17 Any mounded storage of these soils will have significant visual impact, so for clarity this is the basis of our assessment using SLR Development Description 3 –

The wording throughout the document is inconsistent sometimes 'mounds' are used other times 'bunds' given the quoted profile and location they would appear to be the thing.

- 2.18 The perimeter bunds will be constructed at an early stage and sown with grass seed, so they become grassed over (not contained in this document but stated elsewhere including drawing HQ 3/7).

Soils from the entrance and internal access road will be placed in storage mounds on the periphery the site (bunds). 3.17

Soils from the processing site will be place in storage mounds to north, east and west of the plant site (bunds) 3.23

Recharge lagoons - soils stripped from the footprint of the lagoons together with a small adjoining area will be places into storage around the periphery of application site (bunds) 3.25

Any overburden will be places into storage around the periphery of application site (bunds) 3.25

Soil and overburden stripping, will be places into storage mounds around the periphery of application site with maximum height of 3m for topsoil and 4-5m for overburden (bunds) 3.32-3.34, 3.43

Any surplus overburden would be used directly, or temporarily stockpiled in the working area pending placement, within the base of the mineral void following extraction of the LMH. 3.43

3.47 For the initial strip, the interburden would be temporarily stockpiled within the workings pending placement into the worked out void. In subsequent strips, the interburden would be placed directly into the void. The LMH would be extracted, again using a 30t or 40t hydraulic excavator, with the excavator sitting on a platform slightly above the mineral. This clearly states it's for the initial strip indicating for later strips this will not apply

- 2.19 If planning permission is granted, I recommend that a planning condition is considered to prevent the long-term storage of quarried materials outside of the processing site, this would also reduce double handing which would have benefits in reducing noise and dust resulting the additional handling of the quarried material.
- 2.20 Given the need to construct bunds around the site and proposed working method in this assessment I have not included any allowance of large-scale storage of the over burden or interburden in this assessment other than that proposed for the construction of bunds. The material required to construct the bunds should come from the lagoons, processing site and first phase (A) soil stripping. Soil stripping from later phases should be used to infill the previous phase so limited soil storage should be required, any additional soil storage that is required should be in close proximity of active working area. Any change from this would require a reassessment of the visual impacts.
- 2.21 Within the planning conditions the location of any required non mineral storage mounds should be agreed in advance taking into account the visual impacts this should include any medium to longer term mounds but exclude

those lasting only days. However, the proposed 5m height limit for overburden and interburden is a concern and a lower height of 3m, I would consider more appropriate for this site which is broadly flat and with much of existing trees and shrubs being lost during the site clearance in advance of site establishment and or quarrying. A lower height of all bunds would be compliant the NPPF in reducing the negative impacts on openness of the Green Belt para 155.

1 Wooded area between Smallford and University Sprots field beside A1057

Map



Approximate area 16.88ha.

Description

- 3.1 This area runs along the edge of the Country Park beside the A1057, the Popefield Farm complex of grade 2 listed buildings and barns which project

into the wooded area. The area nearest to Smallford the western end has a dense area of most likely resulting from landscape improvement planting of trees and shrubs, the eastern end also contains a significant number of trees and shrubs but appears to be naturally grown from local trees etc. The central area near Popefield Farm is less densely covered with trees and shrubs. All areas have small open glades of grassland which adds to the character of this area.

Topography

- 3.2 The land is flat with a slight slope from up from east to west at about 74m near the University sports field to about 77m at the Smallford end. There is limited height difference across the site. A low bank (1.5m) run along the site boundary with Popefield Farm, this offers limited screening.

Plant species

- 3.3 All the trees and shrub species are deciduous. The large rectangular area to the west includes Hawthorn, Oak, Ash, Sloe, Willow and crab apples. Some trees and shrubs in this area are suffering from die-back the reason is unclear its possible from waterlogging as the ground is very wet or an unidentified plant disease.
- 3.4 The central area to the rear of Popefield Farm again is all deciduous species including Hawthorn, Willow, Sloe, Blamble, and Oak. Walking from the central area the plant density increases at first then about 50m from Popefield Farm then plant declines again nearer to the farm.
- 3.5 The area adjoining the University sports field also contains deciduous species which are broadly similar to the other areas. The area approaching the main road about 100m has a sign warning of unsafe land conditions and to keep out of the area.
- 3.6 The maturity of the oldest trees and shrubs is about 25-30 years old with ongoing regeneration of newer plants. Wildflowers are only present in areas where the grass species are less vigorous.

Current visual impact

- 3.7 Paths and PRow - no formal paths currently run through this area an informal path runs from the central open area to Popefield Farm.
- 3.8 This area currently offers a dense but undulating in both height and depth screen of the main road A1057, at no point along this area is the road visible. Glimpses of Popefield Farm are visible from the centre section of this area which add to the visual interest of the walks.
- 3.9 This wooded or semi wooded area acts as a good background to views across the wide central open area.

Visual impact in the event of quarrying

- 3.10 Paths – the central area paths will be diverted through this area to allow phases A, D, F and G, the proposed new walking route is broadly along the southern boundary.
- 3.11 The visual impacts resulting from the quarrying will be considerable and long lasting on this area. The construction of the access roadway will result in the loss of a considerable number of trees beside main road and either side of the access roadway. This will be shortly followed by the construction of the bunds which will require wide haul routes to be driven through this area of woodland. Once constructed the bunds will require time to establish and grass over so in the early years they will have a negative visual impact on the area.
- 3.12 Most of this area is within the proposed quarrying area so will be destroyed by quarrying during phases A, D, F and G. Phase A being the first phase to be quarried and phase G the last phase to be worked so the impacts will be over the entire life of the quarry.
- 3.13 The reinstatement plan states that phase A will be reinstated during phases B and C but will suffer considerable harm when the bunds are removed post quarrying.
- 3.14 Phase D is within this area will suffer during the construction of the bunds, followed by short time gap to approximately mid-way through quarrying when it will be quarried. It be reinstated and having barely recovered and will be then harmed again by the removal of the bunds.
- 3.15 The area within phases F and G will suffer early in from the construction of roadway and the bunds. Then these areas will remain largely unaffected until quarrying commences on these phases. It's unclear if any reinstatement will commence on phase F until the final reinstatement starts so the visual impact is likely to be prolonged.
- 3.16 Popefield Farm a grade 2 listed building to the north has an approximate 20m gap of a grass bank about 1.2m high and parking area between the building and the boundary of the site. At this location the boundary of the site is mostly grass glades with Hawthorne shrubs growing within them, the tree and shrub density is lower here than elsewhere along this boundary. The boundary to the east is approximately 40m again grass with several large trees growing in it.
- 3.17 Conclusion this semi wooded area adjoins the main open area at the Smallford end of the site so for most of the quarrying period any harm caused to this area will be visible from a wide area, along the entire length of the proposed quarry site. This due to the construction access road, bunds and the quarrying process then the removal of bunds and other related infrastructure. During much of this period the proposed paths will be in close proximity to the harmed area so the visual impact will be significant. CHPC path assessment provides a finer phase by phase assessment of the impact on each path. The level of harm would be significantly adverse over most of the quarrying stages.

Images



Aerial image looking east from Smallford Popefield Farm can be middle top boundary of the image taken 19th August 2024.



Woodland area looking from the central area towards Popefield Farm



Edge of the woodland looking north from near A1057.

2 Wooded area between University Sports field and Taxiway

Map



Approximate area 2.51ha.

Description

- 3.18 The area within the Country Park is at the Hatfield end, a narrow-tapered strip between the former taxiway and the University sports field. There is evidence of landscape planting at the eastern end nearest to Hatfield the other areas appear to be naturally self-seeded and is of more open in character resulting in views to and from the sports field.

Topography

- 3.19 At the eastern end its about 74m raising to 75m at the western end, again the land is relatively flat. The area is slightly above the adjoining sports field.

Plant species

- 3.20 All the woody plants in this area are deciduous, the area contains Sloe, Oak, Crab Apple, and Common Dogwood. The oldest trees are 15-20 years old with on-going natural seeding at the western end.

Current visual impact

- 3.21 Paths and PRow – There are no PRow in this area, the permitted route of the former taxiway adjoins this area and forms the main access route to the Country Park from Hatfield.
- 3.22 The eastern end offers good screening of both the sports field and the main road A1057 beyond. As you travel west the level of screening decreases to a point that in places the sports field is fully visible with the main road beyond. The vehicles on the A1057 are only noticeable when they are larger and brightly coloured.

Visual impact in the event of quarrying

- 3.23 Paths – The taxiway will be blocked by bunds and lagoons, and the path will be diverted across and along this area to form part of the southern path to bypass the quarrying.
- 3.24 The eastern end is unlikely to change, but from midway along the change is likely to be significant. The proposal is for the current route to turn left beside the sports field this will result in the loss of screening along the section resulting views through a chain link fence of the sports field with the main road beyond. This is significant visual urbanising of the sector of the path.
- 3.25 The main taxiway will be blocked by bunds with a lagoon beyond this will result in a significant scar until the grass and landscape recover which be visible with minutes of entering the Country Park from Albatross Way and will remain visible until the user is past the active working areas.
- 3.26 The removal of the bunds and the landscaping of the lagoons will cause a significant level of harm during the final restoration phase.

Images



Wooden area near University Sports field from the taxiway looking east towards Albatross Way entrance.

3 Open area Smallford end

Map.



Area approximate area 13.22ha.

Description

- 3.27 This area can be divided into three clear identities the large hay field the area nearest to Smallford, the central area currently used for tipping rubbish and either side of tipping area are areas of unmanaged grassland containing some small shrubs growing in it mostly Hawthorn.

- 3.28 This is large wide-open space with many paths crossing the area surrounded by trees and hedgerow mostly of good maturity. Its only when users are further away from Smallford that the houses in Smallford become visible.
- 3.29 The central area currently contains area of hardcore and other tipped rubbish which are surrounded by banks. At a recent site visit for future trustees, officers from Welwyn Hatfield BC made it clear that this area must be restored before handing over to the trust.
- 3.30 This together with the taxiway and the central semi shrubland area are the most heavily used parts of the Country Park.

Topography

- 3.31 Broadly level open landscape other than the enclosed area of rubbish as described above.

Plant species

- 3.32 The northern mature deciduous hedgerow includes Oak, Hawthorn Hornbeam and Field Maple the hedgerow is 3-4m with the trees being considerably taller.
- 3.33 The hay meadow area is dominated by courser more vigorous grasses, the unmanaged areas contain some areas of less vigorous grasses where some wildflowers have become established within these areas small number of Hawthorn seedlings area together with an even smaller number of Oak seedlings.
- 3.34 In the area near Smallford in front of Jove Gardens and Lawrence Close is an area on deciduous landscape planting of approximately 20 years establishment.
- 3.35 The centre tipping area contains Willow, Nettles and Birch. Some of the larger trees have died or were suffering from loss of limbs at the time of the assessment, areas of water were recorded within this area which might account for the loss of some of the trees. The oldest shrubs would be about 15-20 years old.

Current visual impact

- 3.36 Paths and PRow – the PRow Colney Heath 14,15 and 62 all pass along the western edge of this area and CH15 also run along the northern edge of part of the route. The main east-west informal permitted paths all pass through this area.
- 3.37 This central area has strong rural open character with only the buildings visible from this are those of the university, these are visible on the skyline to the east and are visible from most of this area. Most of the boundaries are of mature hedgerow and trees only small gap near Lawrence Close prevents the full encirclement of this area by these hedges.

- 3.38 The central tipping area is a minor distraction to the area with entrance at far end nearest Hatfield, the foliage and shrubs assist in this area blending in with the landscape.
- 3.39 At the eastern end of the rooflines of Lawrence Close become visible these are only distraction which led the visitor from believing they were in open countryside well away from any town or city.

Visual impact in the event of quarrying

- 3.40 Paths - the route PRoW 14 and 62 remain broadly unchanged, but they will be behind bunds and screens. PRoW 15 for the first part the route follows PRoW 14 and 62 as it does now then is diverted to the side and rear of the processing area.
- 3.41 This area will be impacted by every stage of the proposed quarry, from the initial construction of the access road to the final reinstatement the level of impact will differ depending on which stage the work is at.
- 3.42 The initial establishment work will require the removal of section of hedge beside A1057 to gain access, the traffic on the A1057 will then become visible to the users of the Country Park giving an urbanising influence. The next stage of the construction will of access road and acoustic screening will create large scar along the entire western boundary which will take the landscape several years to recover and the proposed mitigation measures to grow, however the impact from lorry and vehicle movements will last for the duration of the quarry.
- 3.43 The construction of the bunds and lagoons will only be intermittently visible depending upon location and as the landscape has recovers this should diminish with time.
- 3.44 Between phases A and B a new bund appears beside the access road (Updated Public Access Strategy) this will have significant impact on the visual appeal of this area. Phase C will have moderate impact on this area, then following the phases the visual impact will be significant.
- 3.45 The removal of the bund during phase G will open the western end with sightline across the active quarrying area.
- 3.46 The final reinstatement stage, the impact will also be significant due the removal of infrastructure and the bunds which during their construction would be screened by the existing trees and shrubs. These now having been removed will leave the area from which the bund must be removed from and the required roadways required to undertake the task fully visually exposed.

Images



Central area looking northwest towards Smallford from near taxiway.



Central area looking west towards Smallford from path between Smallford and the taxiway.

4 Semi shrubland area between the taxiway and grazed areas

Map



Approximate area 14.85ha.

Description

- 3.47 This area has good paths on three sides the concrete taxiway to the south and to the west and north a path of crushed concrete and gravel. The centre of this area was the end of the former runway and sign together with poles

which indicate its former location and storyboards inform visitors of the history of the site. The area changes between grassland with intermittent trees and shrubs to wooded areas with glades. The paths in this area are among the most popular in the Country Park.

Topography

- 3.48 Broadly flat, the area to the north area has noticeable ridges running across it which can make walking for some challenging. Crushed Concrete is visible in places centred around the area of the former runway. Near former taxiway is large pile of crushed concrete which we understand should be removed prior to the Country Park being transferred to the trust.

Plant species

- 3.49 The tree and shrubs species are deciduous as found in other areas of the Country Park. These include Willow, Hawthorn, Sloe, Wild Rose, Oak, and Ash. The area where shorter grass species grow support a wider range of wildflowers but in most areas the range is quite limited.
- 3.50 The age range of the trees and shrubs is very varied ranging from the early years following the closure of the aerodrome to natural reseedling which is still ongoing.

Current visual impact

- 3.51 Paths and PRow – this area has no formal PRow but has several permitted paths including the key former taxiway route.
- 3.52 This is rural setting with limited views beyond to Country Park in some locations the views are limited to just 100m. Thorough out there are hints of the site's importance as former aerodrome with signs, the taxiway and markers showing the location of former runway.
- 3.53 The visual experience is very varied from walking through a tree lines tunnel to the more open areas.

Visual impact in the event of quarrying

- 3.54 Paths – all the current paths will be closed at least during the early stages of the quarry. The key north-south route will run through the grazing field to the east. The former taxiway will be diverted along the southern boundary.
- 3.55 This area will be destroyed during the first phase of construction when the bunds, lagoons and haul road are constructed and the main access routes from Hatfield diverted so Country Park users will not be able to experience this area again.
- 3.56 Phases A and B adjoin this area so these too will have significant visual impact on this area. In the early years this area will be areas of moved soil across most of the width of the site at this location. The bunds will take several years to grass over and become established which will reduce the

visual impact when viewed from Hatfield. When viewed from Smallford direction for first 15 or so years visitors will be look at areas of quarries or moved soil. Its only after about 15 years that this will start to recover following reinstatement, however views to Smallford will still be looking across areas of active quarrying.

Images



The semi shrubland zone looking towards Hatfield at the point of the end of the former runway.



The semi shrubland area looking south from the northern path.

5 Grazing areas

Map



Approximate area 44.47ha.

Description

- 3.57 This area contains two fields both enclosed with fences and currently used for the grazing of cattle. Both field area footpaths running across them. The southern field nearest the taxiway has fewer trees and shrubs but contains several low mounds of soil which form a vital part of the wider landscape screening.
- 3.58 The northern field is flat but more densely covered with trees and shrubs and brambles in the area near Home Wood.

Topography

- 3.59 This area is broadly flat other than the mounds of soil in the southern field.

Plant species

- 3.60 This southern area is also dominated by deciduous tree and shrub species which include Birch, Alder, Willow and Hornbeam. The oldest trees are quite large so are likely to date from the closure of the aerodrome in the mid-1990s.
- 3.61 The northern field is similar age, but the tree and shrub densities are much higher and slightly different species are found all are deciduous and include Hawthorn, Willow Wild Rose, Sloe and Ash. Some the wetter areas support sedges.
- 3.62 The more heavily grazed areas tended to support a wider range of wildflower species which adds visual interest to the Country Park.

Current visual impact

- 3.63 Paths and PRow – no formal PRow run through this area. Several permitted paths run through this area paths which pass through the centre of this area, one from the former taxiway and the other from the Linear Park both leading to Home Wood. The other route is path which in front of Home toward Barlow and Salisbury Village residential area.
- 3.64 Due to the screening around the edge of park these areas feel very rural. But due to the change in the geometry of the sightlines being of greater distance, the buildings of the Business Park and the University become visible on the skyline.

Visual impact in the event of quarrying

- 3.65 Paths – the only significant change be the new path running north-south on the east side of the lagoon and bund.
- 3.66 The southern field is the most sensitive to impacts from the proposed quarrying, the proposed bunds and the lagoons will be on this field, the relative low number of trees mean that they will be visible for a many years following their construction giving strong industrialising influence until the landscaping mitigation starts of come into effect.

- 3.67 It has not been possible to fully assess the impacts on the path from Barlow (a housing area within Hatfield Business Park) to the corner of Home Wood other than its marginal. The growth of trees should offer an acceptable level of screening onto the main area. However, if these trees are damaged or removed much of the working area will be visible resulting in greater visual impact.

Images



The southern grazing field showing the raised banks, taken from the footpath between the two fields.



The southern grazing field taken from field gate near the taxiway.

6 Linear Park

Maps



Approximate area 9.01ha

- 3.68 The principles for the design of this were defined in Hatfield Aerodrome SPG 8.15 and it's considered that the current design reflects those principles.

Description

- 3.69 This is semi formal area running between the entrances from Albatross Way and Barlow. The area contains a gravel path running along the entire length of the linear park, two areas of water, landscape planting which screens the homes in Salisbury Village and the main area of the Country Park. One of the areas of water is small lake the other is the Ellenbrook stream which drains the site. At the northern end of this section is the formal area with seats of the Hatfield Aerodrome Memorial.

Topography

- 3.70 The accessible areas are broadly level, the ground does dip down to the two areas of water, but these are generally not accessible due to the deep water which is signed as being dangerous. A slightly raised bank runs along the length of the park between the water and the main Country Park.

Plant species

- 3.71 All the trees and shrubs in this area are deciduous species so offer a lower level of winter screening. The wetland areas are dominated by wetland species which includes Willow and Poplar with several aquatic species growing in the lake.
- 3.72 The screen between the Linear Park and the dwelling of Salisbury Village contains trees of Oak, Ash, and Hornbeam and shrubs including Hazel, Field Maple and Damson. These form an effective screen between the homes and the park.
- 3.73 The plant species on bank between the Linear Park and the main Country Park are all deciduous species including Hazel, Guelder Rose, Shoe, Common Dogwood Whitebeam and Poplar.
- 3.74 The landscape planting in this area is of approximately twenty-five years maturity.

Current visual impacts

- 3.75 Paths and PRow – no form PRow run through this area, but two permitted paths run north-south the nearest to Salisbury Village and the Business Park is gravel and other paths is a grass path.
- 3.76 The current landscape offers a good level of screening from the nearby developments however this might be of a lower level during the winter months due to foliage loss. The meandering path results in the area offering an interesting landscape to explore. This results in a good but safe feeling edge of town semi-rural landscape.
- 3.77 The route along the bank between the Linear Park and the Country Parks starts with a very linear sightline but opens out about two thirds of the way along to look over the grazing fields.

Visual impact in the event of quarrying

- 3.78 Paths – no change

Overall, the proposed quarry should have little impact on this area as it is well screened other than a short section at the northern end of the park. Any additional loss of trees or increase in height soil mounds could change this assessment.

Images



Linear Park from the path in the central sector.



Linear Park path looking south from near the Hatfield Aerodrome memorial.

7 Area between the central open area and the northern boundary (proposed processing area)

Map



Approximate area 33.23ha.

Description

- 3.79 The northern boundary adjoins some of the old lagoons for the Cemex site, the western end of the boundary is gappy mature hedgerow, then changes to mature dense hedgerow and trees at the point PRow 15 enters the Country Park. The east boundary is dense woodland. The southern boundary is mostly mature hedgerow with trees, the eastern end contains several short gaps in the hedgerow. The western boundary is hedgerow 2-3m tall. The field is mature grasses with varying levels of tree and shrubs growth resulting in glades differing sizes.

Topography

- 3.80 The field appears relatively flat but has slight slope down to the north and to the east of about 2m. Near the southeast corner are a number of mounds of soil and stone.

Plant species

- 3.81 The hedge at northwest corner, facing the Cemex site contains Hawthorn and Sloe, the next section includes Hawthorn Willow and Sloe. The trees within Home Wood are described in that section but it's important to note that within this field and along that boundary is an almost continuous area of very dense Sloe bushes. The Southern boundary includes Willow, Ash, Sloe and Hawthorn.
- 3.82 The main field area is unmanaged grass with Oak, Hawthorn, Willow growing in it of wide range of maturity from 25 years to new seedlings. The more vigorous wildflowers have grown in places, but in area where the grass is shorter or less vigorous a wider range of wildflowers have become established.
- 3.83 Sedges are found in flat open area near home wood indicating how wet the ground is for much of the year.

Current visual impacts

- 3.84 Paths and PRoW – PRoW 15 currently runs through this area from the centre open area to towards Cooper Green Lane and Cemex conveyor. The area also has several permitted paths, one running east west to the north of central open behind the hedge, another diagonally from the point where RRoW 15 enters the site to Home Wood and the final one along the northern boundary before turning south beside Home Wood.

Visual impacts in the event of quarrying

- 3.85 Paths – PRoW 15 will be diverted along the west boundary before turning the long the northern boundary to the point it currently enters the site. Users currently use the former BT trials site roadway rather than the formal PRoW path. While users are able to use the roadway on the BT site the visual impacts would be reduced by the trees and the hedges during the summer months, However, during the winter months the hedges and trees would offer significantly less screening. The current roadway is only available while the landowner allows access which not guaranteed.
- 3.86 In the event of users being unable to use the BT site they would have to use the official route between the hedgerow and the quarry for just over half of the path they would be beside the main access roadway until it turns into the processing area. The roadway is then bund in front of the processing area replace the road. The roadway and the gap into the processing area would have a significant industrialising influence on the area.

- 3.87 The site plans indicate that the path along the northern boundary then running beside Home Wood will be much closer to the boundary. This would result in greater inter visibility between this field and Home Wood. Which would be beneficial to users of the path in this field but detrimental to walkers in Home Wood.
- 3.88 The lower part of this field will be destroyed when the processing site is constructed. Due to the gentle slope down to the processing area the bunds will be less effective in screening the working area.
- 3.89 At the first inquiry a late document was introduced showing a bund running broadly east west to the south of the processing area, in the current application this is not shown. This of significant concern as it opens the entire processing area up and very significantly changing the visual impact of this area the lack of this bund would be also contrary to Hatfield Aerodrome SPG which requires screening.
- 3.90 Following construction of the bunds will take time to recover and grass over, so in the early years the visual impact to those walking along the northern area paths will be significantly impacted. Even with the bunds grassed over from an angle the machinery and mounds of materials will be visible giving an industrialised landscape. During phase 'A' a large, cleared area appears in the southwest corner of this area has minimal screening.
- 3.91 From Phase D onwards one of the main east-west paths runs beside the processing area again from an angle the bunds will offer little or no screening. During phase E a new bund/mound appears in front of the processing area this again will several years to grass over. The processing area will require significant work to restore it to a satisfactory level this will take time to achieve and the landscape time to recover. Therefore, one must conclude that the visual impacts will be significant throughout most of the life the quarry.

Images



Looking from the northern boundary towards Home Wood



Just north of central open area looking east Home Wood is seen on the left.

8 Home Wood-Round Wood area

Map



Approximate area 15.39ha.

Description

- 3.92 This area is outside of the proposed quarry site but is beside the processing area. It forms a key part of the local landscape and has been proposed by some as an alternative area for users of the Country Park during quarrying. This contains a mixture of mostly mature deciduous trees with undergrowth in

some areas. The central area has small pond and network of paths leading to it. The southern corner has series of glades offering wider range of habitat for plants and animals. The southwest side contains several ditches and streams which feed into Home Culvert.

Topography

- 3.93 Most of the wood is fairly level, the southwest corner slopes down towards Home Culvert. Several drainage ditches run through the wood these feed into streams which drain the area. The pond is nearly central but slightly to the east and about 1-1.5m below the surround soil level.

Plant species

- 3.94 All the trees and shrubs in this area are deciduous species including Hornbeam Oak, Ash, Willow, Sloe, Birch, Field Maple, and Sycamore. The evidence indicate that the eastern, southeastern and western boundaries had hornbeam hedges or trees planted along these boundaries.
- 3.95 The forest floor differs across the area in some areas its clear with no or very few plants growing below the trees in other areas and particularly in more glades Bracken and Brambles have become established. The more open areas of the forest floor support range of native bulbs including Blue Bells, Snowdrops and native Daffodils.
- 3.96 All the boundaries of the wood have dense shrubs growing along them where there is good light, on the western side of the wood these are mostly Sloe shrubs growing in the neighbouring field.
- 3.97 The maturity of the wood is aged from over 100 years to new seedlings filling gaps where older trees had died. Across some of the of the wood there is a higher level of early tree death than one would normally expect to observe with about 20% of the mature trees have died. This could be down to a number of factors including honey fungus (*Armillaria mellea*), waterlogging or soil compaction or combination of multi factors. This might issues going forward to the overall health of the wood and its screening potential.
- 3.98 There is a concern over ability of the wood to accommodate significantly higher visitor numbers without them causing harm to the trees and wildflowers. This was discussed with Justin Thomson of Macgregor Smith - Landscape Architects during a site visit and he also shares this concern.

Current Visual impact

- 3.99 Paths and PRoW – no PRoW run through Home Wood, but numerous permitted paths cross through the wooded area.

Visual impacts in the event of quarrying

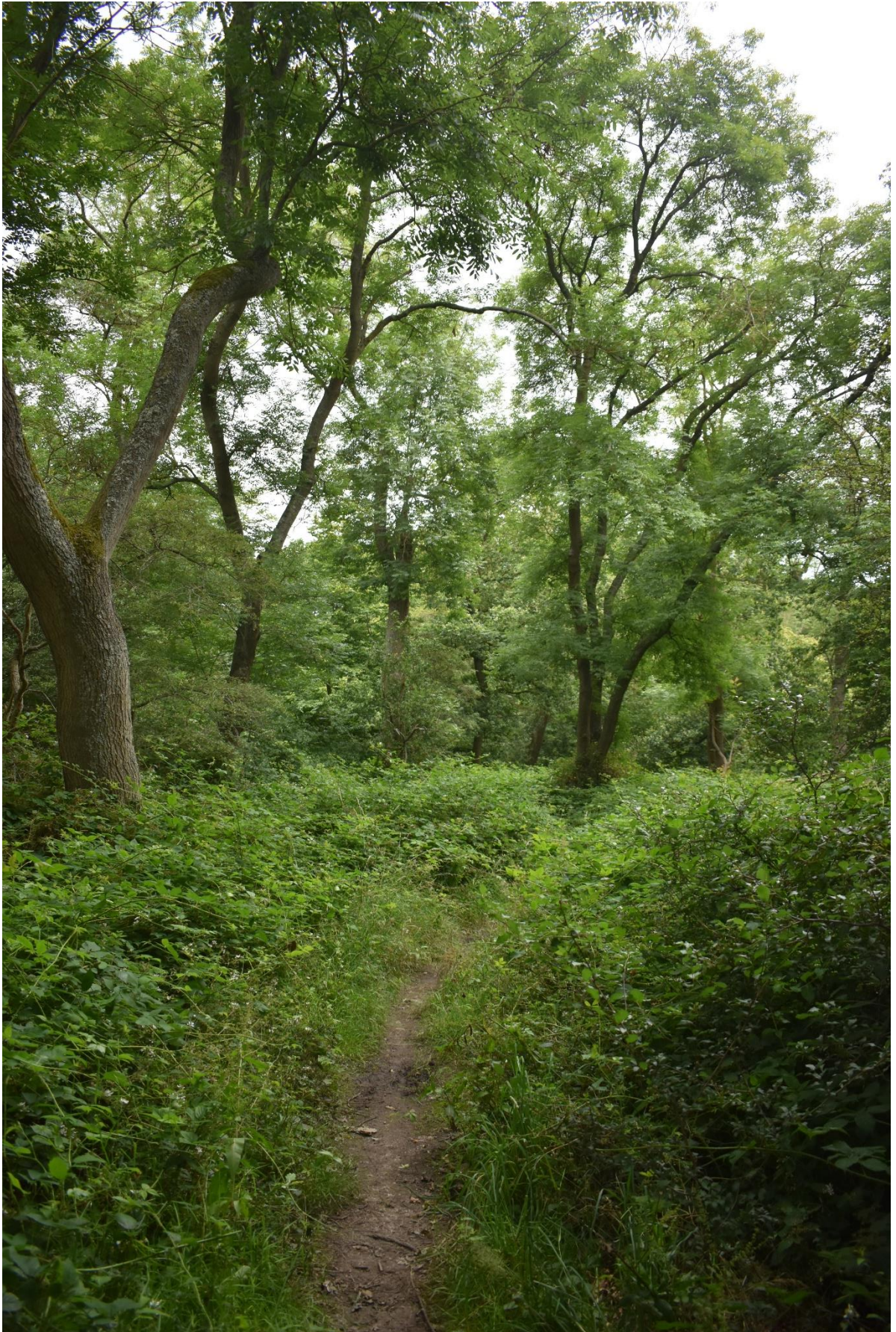
- 3.100 Paths –The site plans indicate that the path along the northern boundary and then beside Home Wood will be much closer to the boundary in our assessment 'Area between the central open area and the northern boundary'.

3.101 If the shrubs in the adjoining field are removed during construction, it would open the sightlines out of the wood onto the processing area. The visual impact to users in the western side of the wood be noticeable during construction of the processing area and until the bunds grass over and then following quarrying while the processing area is cleared and while the grassland establishes.

Images



Pond area in Home Wood



A glade area in Home Wood

9 Area northeast of Home Wood to the Hatfield Business Park.

Map



Approximate area 28.31ha.

Description

- 3.102 This area is beyond the proposed quarry site but forms a part of some walking routes. The furthest part of this area is some distance from Hatfield, Ellenbrook and Smallford so may be unsuitable for some park users. There is no public car parking at the Coopers Green Lane end of the park.
- 3.103 The boundary is trees and or mature shrubs with centre open grass area intermittent views of the building of Hatfield business park are visible from the site. A tarmac path runs from Home Wood to Cunninham Avenue through the southern part of this area. Other paths are grass showing only moderate levels of use.

Topography

- 3.104 A slight slope down from south to north, however the site appears level and flat. There is no visible water course on this part of the Country Park however its likely that the stream running through the Linear Park continues into the wooded area adjoining the business park.

Plant species

- 3.105 The main central area is hay meadow, mostly of coarse grasses with few wildflowers visible at the time of the assessment, however it had recently been cut for hay. The field margins are generally similar to the main field area. But in some places where the grasses are less vigorous some wildflowers have become established this particularly noticeable in some of smaller glades within the wooded areas.
- 3.106 The boundary with business park is all deciduous species including tress of Ash, Poplar, Willow and Oak and shrubs of Hawthorn and Common Dogwood. There is some evidence this is former landscape planting however there has also been additional natural regeneration the main trees within this area are considered to be 20-30years old and average to about 100m deep.
- 3.107 Again, the short boundary with Cooper Green Lane is all deciduous species including Oak, Ash and Hawthorne. In front of the tree boundary is a narrow area of unmanaged grass with a few shrubs growing in it mostly Hawthorn is area is approximately 10-20m deep.
- 3.108 The boundary to the northwest is more varied again containing all deciduous species varying in width from 50 to 200m. This is best described was grassland with trees and shrubs forming a series of glades and more open grassland. Oak is the dominate tree then Ash with dominate shrub being Hawthorn the trees are considered to be about 30 years old with signs of continued regeneration. In areas where the grass is less vigorous wildflowers are flourishing. To the rear are the more mature boundary trees and the area of Home Wood to the west. Without active management the character of this area will be lost.

Current visual impacts

- 3.109 Paths and PRow – this area has no PRow running through it, the area has several permitted routes from end of Linier Park to Cooper Green Lane, Barlow's to Home Wood and Home Wood to Coopers Green Lane.
- 3.110 This is large broadly contained open area with long views within the area and some but intermittent views into and from the grazing area, area 5 and Linear Park area 6. The area is surrounded by mature trees and hedgerows on the west, north and east sides which offer reasonable to significant level of screening to the buildings or countryside beyond. The buildings of the business park are well screened in summer but less so in winter following the loss of foliage. The screening will continue to improve as the mature continue to grow and mature.

Visual impact of the quarry

- 3.111 Paths – No changes are proposed.
- 3.112 Providing no significant changes are made to the land between this area and the proposed quarry the quarry should have no direct visual impact on this area. This is currently only used by a limited number of people any significant additional usage could result in harm from the erosion of paths which mostly grass and harm to the wildflowers which includes several orchid species.

Images



Looking north towards Cooper Green Lane form just beyond the Hatfield aerodrome memorial.



Looking south from Coopers Green Lane

External Site Assessments

A - Hatfield Road site entrance area

Map



Description

- 4.1 The A1057 is approximately 7m wide with narrow footpath typically 600mm wide on the southern side of road. Beside the footpath for some of its length is a drainage ditch with field hedge beyond. At Smallford the hedge is trimmed but towards Ellenbrook the hedge is not managed so is best described a mature hedge. At the Smallford end the farm fields beyond the hedge are visible.
- 4.2 On the northern side of the road the area near the Garden Centre is landscaped which appears to be maintained by them. From the boundary the Garden Centre where the footpath enters the application site there is an almost continuous mature hedge for about 800m to university sports field, with small gap for the entrance to Popefield Farm. Behind the hedge is an area of landscape planting but this is only currently visible from within the application site.

The A1057 has several slight bends so not possible to view its entire length.

Topography

- 4.3 The ground is broadly level with some ponds to the western side of the entrance to Popefield Farm. The grass verge is slightly raised above the road surface.

Plant species

- 4.4 The northern hedgerow is mainly deciduous species with oak and ash being the dominant trees and with field maple and hawthorn being the dominant hedging species with a few hollies, common dogwood and sloe shrubs. Sloe is more common towards Hatfield end of the hedgerow.

Current visual assessment

- 4.5 The visual impact differs according to the direction of travel. On leaving Smallford one quickly experiences a country road with no views to the north and limited views to the south on to farmland until almost into Ellenbrook due the bends in the road.
- 4.6 On leaving Ellenbrook the visual impression is a country road with limited views on either side. As you approach Smallford the road becomes straighter, and the public house and garage become visible, and the views open out over farm fields.

At no point are there any views over the proposed quarry area.

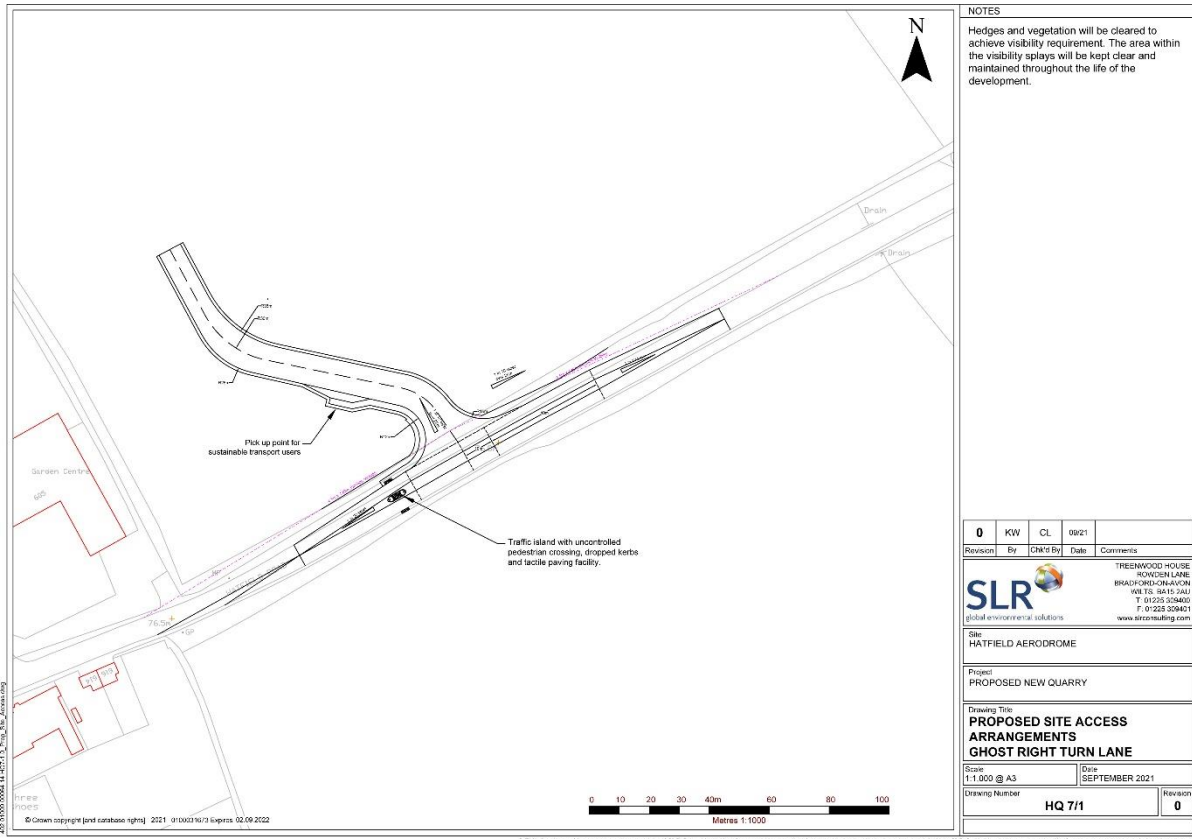
Visual assessment in the event of quarrying

- 4.7 The harm caused by the construction of access road and splay's will have significantly adverse visual impact on the views on A1057 in both directions. The views across the site will remain adverse until sometime in phase B when a bund appears which should reduce the visual impact once the landscaping (seeding) becomes established. The visual harm from removing the hedgerow to create the splays will have visual impact to users on the road the impact should reduce in time as the remaining hedge regrows or new planting becomes established.
- 4.8 The visual impact will increase to adverse phase G and during restoration when the bund is removed peaking at significant adverse while quarry is near the road and visible from the road.
- 4.9 Any turning circles or parking areas near the road not shown on any current drawing would increase the negative visual impacts.

Image



St Albans Road A1057 looking from Smallford to wards Ellenbrook taken 22nd October 2024.



4.10 Draft Planning conditions

Visibility splays

14. Prior to the commencement of the site preparation works, as shown on drawing HQ 3/7R Initial Site Establishment, visibility splays measuring 4.5 x 120 metres shall be provided on both sides of the proposed site access on Hatfield Road where it meets the highway. The visibility splays shall be maintained free from any obstruction between 600mm and 2m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway at all times.

16. Prior to the commencement of the development, including the works shown on drawing HQ 3/7R Initial Site Establishment, a Traffic Management Scheme shall be submitted and approved in writing by the MPA, to include:

- (i) a detailed plan to show the site layout between the junction with the public highway and the weighbridge, including the weighbridge, to include sufficient provision for queuing vehicles to stand clear of the highway b. a loop road to return HGVs to the public highway.*

B - Popefield Farm

Map



Google image showing Popefield in the centre surrounded by grass area with the site beyond.

Description

- 4.11 The farm buildings all grade 2 listed surround a central turning circle, the barns are to the north of the circle while dwellings are to the east and the south. The barns are separated from the garden by a wide gavel area running the entire length of the barn. The access road runs along the western boundary. The southern boundary is mature hedgerow adjoining the A1057 road which is separated from the buildings by a narrow area of lawn.
- 4.12 To the east of the building is large area of lawn with short section of hedgerow nearest to the road but finishes broadly in line with buildings. Beyond the rear gavel area is an area of lawn with a low bank then on the application site an area of rough grass and shrubs of varying maturity.

Topography

- 4.13 The area is broadly level there some ponds near the road. Running along most northern boundary is low bank which approximately 2m high at the western end quickly reducing to about 1m for the remaining length.
- 4.14 The landowner did inform me of on-site flooding in recent years following heavy rain this would align to the evidence noticed on other trees and shrubs in the close proximity which were considered damaged due to waterlogging.

Plant species

- 4.15 The western boundary hedge is deciduous of Ash, Hawthorn, Elm, and Cotoneaster it is generally of poor condition and offers limited screening. There is no screen planting along the northern boundary, naturally sown trees and shrubs are mostly Oak, Ash and Hawthorn grow on the application site in rough grassland. The eastern boundary is similar to the northern boundary except for the short length of hedgerow from the road to midway in the garden which is of Hawthorn. Several large trees are growing in the lawn area including Oaks, a Crab Apple and a Silver Birch.

Current visual assessment

- 4.16 The buildings are screened from the road A1057, the landscape surrounding the buildings is lawn gradually transforming to varied landscape of the trees and shrubs due to profile its gradual transformation from managed landscape to semi managed landscape without claustrophobically enclosing the buildings, so the building which are grade 2 listed farm building relate well to their setting.

Visual assessment in the event of quarrying

- 4.17 The bulk of the existing larger trees and shrubs are within the quarry and bund areas so will be lost in the early stage of work leaving the smaller trees and shrubs in rough grass area surrounding the buildings.
- 4.18 Given the known soil conditions and recent history of wet winters in England two outcomes are possible –

Any landscape planting will establish poorly and fail to make satisfactory growth resulting in limited screening and views looking directly into the active quarry area for many years. This is considered the most likely outcome so the visual would range from adverse to significantly adverse depending on which phase is being quarried.

If the winters are drier than in recent years, the landscape planting will establish and enclose the buildings in an almost woodland like setting enclosing the building and garden reducing views to wider landscape. This will also reduce views from the Country Park and the visual setting of these listed farm buildings. The visual impact would still be graded as adverse.

Images



Rear of Popefield farm looking northwest from the gravel area, the low bank is visible.



Rear of Popefield farm looking northeast form the gravel area

C - Jove Gardens and Lawrence Close

Map



Area 4.11ha.

Description

- 4.19 Two recently constructed adjoining developments with homes at the western end of the site an area of open space at the eastern end. Jove Gardens is currently screen from the Country Park by old hedgerow which has gap in it then newer landscape planting which is within the Country Park.
- 4.20 Lawrence Close is screened from the Country Park by the soil bund with fence on top, two areas of trees offer some screen at both ends but there is a gap in the middle.

Topography

- 4.21 Both developments are broadly level but Lawrence Close the northern site has raise bank along the eastern boundary with wooden fence running along its length. There is a gap in the bank at the southern end which allows the footpath through.

Plant species

- 4.22 The old hedgerow is Oak trees with Hawthorn, Elder, and Sloe hedging. The newer landscape planting includes Birch, Poplar, Hazel, Willow and Wayfaring Tree this planting is approximately 20 years old.

Current visual assessment

- 4.23 Paths and PRow – PRow CH 63 runs through Jove Gardens from Oaklands Lane to the Country Park. Lawrence Close also has HCC sign indicating a PRow runs through the development again from Oaklands Lane to the Country Park however this second route is not shown on the Hertfordshire definitive PRow map.
- 4.24 Currently views are limited across the Country Park from both Jove Gardens and Lawrence Close by the hedgerow and the existing landscape planting. Lawrence Close also has soil bund with wooden fencing on the top of it which reduces views across the Country Park. The deep landscape planting which blocks the sightline onto the Country Park from the gravel path which leads to the Country Park in both developments.

Visual assessment in the event of quarrying

Paths – No change is anticipated.

- 4.25 The level is visual change is judged to be low-medium due to the existing planting, bund and screen for both developments, it's possible that intermittent sightings of taller vehicles may be visible the from the upper story rooms. This impact on Jove Garden is likely to be greater due to the lack a soil bund and the impact from the proposes acoustic screen.

Image



Lawrence Close looking towards Ellenbrook Country Park

D- Field of former BT trials site

- 4.26 This area is outside of the Country Park and under different ownership but adjoins the proposed processing area so any public access beyond the public footpaths cannot be guaranteed.

Map



Approximate area 13.44ha.

Description

- 4.27 The field is beyond the quarry site but shares a boundary with the application site. It's known locally as BT trials site, some of infrastructure from its former use is still found on the site mostly as car parking area and roadway. The field is not maintained so long grass has become established together with some

tree and shrub seedlings. The definitive PRow map shows the public footpath (Colney Heath 62) running in along the boundary with the site the application side of a hedge, however this footpath is very overgrown and is very rarely used, most walkers use the tarmac roadways on this site.

Public footpath Colney Heath 1 runs along the western boundary of this field.

Topography

- 4.28 This area is broadly level and flat except at the extreme northern end then its slightly above the adjoining field (the proposed processing area) by 1-2m. The beyond the hedgerow which separate this from the adjoining field the land slopes down to Oaklands Lane by 2-3m.

Plant species

- 4.29 The field is unmanaged grass with seedling Oak, Wild Rose, and Hawthorn seedlings in differing quantities across much of the field.
- 4.30 Both footpaths are edged by deciduous hedges which appear to be landscape plantings of alternating blocks of Hawthorn Hazel, Sloe, Willow and Wayfaring Tree The path adjoining the site is only edged on the western side and also contains intermittent trees of Lime, Hornbeam and Ash, the hedges are 2-3m tall.

Current visual assessment

- 4.31 Paths and PRow – PRow CH 1 runs across the centre of this area. People use the existing tarmac roadways as an alternative to CH 62 and to access the Country Park.
- 4.32 This field has strong rural feel but the rooflines of some of houses of Smallford are visible and the tower at the Cemex site is also visible the landscape planting on the Cemex site is up to 60 years maturity.

Visual assessment in the event of quarrying

Paths – see below

- 4.33 While users are able to use the roadway on the BT site the visual impacts would be reduced by the trees and the hedges during the summer months, However, during the winter months the hedges and trees would offer significantly less screening. The current roadway is only available while the landowner allows access which cannot be guaranteed.
- 4.34 In the event of users being unable to use the BT site they would have to use the official route between the hedgerow and the quarry for just over half of the path they would be beside the main access roadway until it turns into the processing area. The roadway is then bund in front of the processing area replace the road. The roadway and the gap into the processing area would have a significant industrial influence on the area.

Images



Looking from the boundary with the application site towards Smallford.



Taken from the roadway adjoining the boundary towards Cemex site.

Appendix 1

Tree and Shrub species within the local landscape – Colney Heath Parish

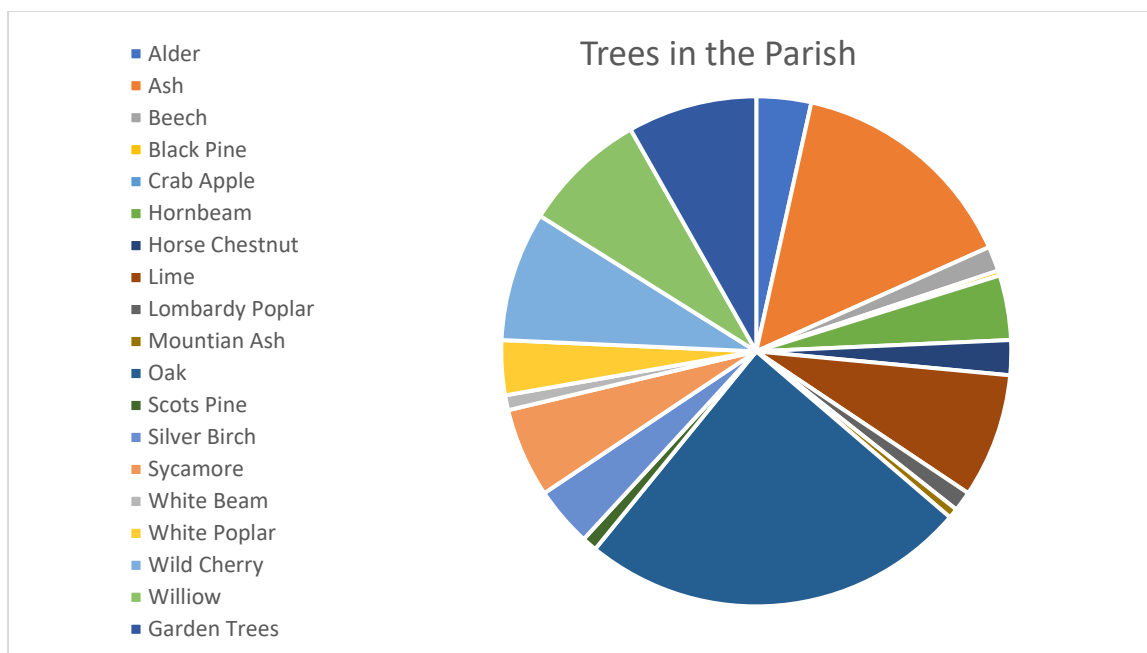
Methodology used

The assessment was made based on number of locations the trees were observed rather than individual tree counts due the large area surveyed. No correction has been made for the numbers of plants in an area in even when it was observed the dominant species.

Tree – normally single stem supporting branch framework well above ground level

Shrub – multi stems from or near ground level with no single dominant stem.

Trees			
Common name	Botanical name	No. Assessments recorded in	% of Assessments recorded in
Alder	<i>Alnus</i> spp.	11	3.51
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	47	15.02
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	5	1.6
Black Pine	<i>Pinus nigra</i>	1	0.32
Crab Apple	<i>Malus</i> spp,	7	2.24
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	13	4.15
Horse Chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	7	2.24
Italian Poplar	<i>Populus nigra Italica</i>	4	1.28
Lime	<i>Tilia</i> spp.	14	4.47
Mountain Ash	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	2	0.64
Oak	<i>Quercus</i> spp.	78	24.92
Scots Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	3	0.96
Silver Birch	<i>Betula</i> spp,	12	3.83
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	18	5.75
White Beam	<i>Sorbus avia</i>	3	0.96
White Poplar	<i>Populus alba</i>	11	3.51
Wild Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	26	8.31
Willow	<i>Salix</i> spp.	25	7.99
Garden Trees		26	8.31



Shrubs			
Common name	Botanical name	No. Assessments recorded in	% of Assessment recorded in
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	4	4.14
Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus</i>	1	0.29
Common Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	11	3.14
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	3	0.86
Elm	<i>Ulex spp.</i>	16	4.57
Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	31	8.86
Gaulder Rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	2	0.57
Goat Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	13	3.71
Hawthorne	<i>Crataegus spp.</i>	112	32.0
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	30	8.57
Holly	<i>Ilex quaifolium</i>	11	3.14
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	9	2.57
Osier Willow	<i>Salix viminalis</i>	1	0.29
Sloe/Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	81	23.14
Spindle Bush	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	3	0.86
Wayfaring Tree	<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	5	1.43
Wild Rose	<i>Rosa carina</i>	17	4.86

