
Appendix A – Strategic Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Summix

[plans-

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1.0 Description of land parcel

1.1 Location

- 1.1.1 The Summix land parcel (referred to as the site) is located approximately 3km from the south-eastern edge of Worcester (see plan HDA 1), and is within Wychavon District, and therefore the South Worcestershire Development Plan area. The land parcel adjoins the recently completed Worcestershire Parkway Railway station to the west, and forms the eastern half of the Worcestershire Parkway Strategic Growth Area.
- 1.1.2 The Bristol-Birmingham Main Line railway marks the western edge of the site, while the Cotswold Line railway, which intersects with the Bristol-Birmingham Main Line at Worcestershire Parkway, cuts east-west through the centre of the site. Egdon Lane (B4084) and Evesham Road (A44) define the eastern extent of the site. The site surrounds the village of Stoulton within the southern portion of the site, with Pershore Road (also numbered B4084) running diagonally through the site connecting Stoughton to Worcestershire Parkway station to the north-west, and the M5 and Worcester beyond.
- 1.1.3 The site sits between the Severn Valley to the west, and the Avon Valley to the east. Further to the west is the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and to the south-east, beyond the River Avon, lies the Cotswolds AONB and Bredon Hill. Nearby to the north-west of the site is Spetchley Park, while to the south-west is Stonehall Common.

1.2 Site Description

- 1.2.1 The site predominately consists of rolling lowland agricultural land, contained in part by higher ground to the east and west (see plan HDA 2). A number of watercourses flow through the site, including Stoulton Brook which flows west to east through the middle of the site then turns southwards towards the south-east boundary. Another watercourse flows west to east approximately 500m to the south of

Stoulton Brook and runs southwards to join the brook to the north-east of Stoulton village, and a further minor watercourse flows south-eastwards to the west of Stoulton and joins the Stoulton Brook to the south of the site. These watercourses and their tributaries form a landscape of minor valleys across the site, rising to local high points, most notably to the north-east of Mucknell Abbey, at Upper Wolverton, and around Stoulton.

1.2.2 The site's physical attributes vary across its extent, with three noticeably different areas within the site, defined in part by the watercourses (see plan HDA 3). For the most part, the three areas correlate with the Landscape Types and Landscape Description Units of the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment (as discussed in Section 2 below), and are identified in this Strategic Landscape and Visual Appraisal as:

- **North-west:** low-lying land to the north and west of Mucknell Abbey, stretching north from the watercourse located 500m south of Stoulton Brook, across Stoulton Brook, to the northern site boundary, and west from the abbey to the Bristol-Birmingham Main Line railway along the western site boundary.
- **East:** rising ground between the eastern site boundary and Stoulton Brook, stretching north to Chapel Cottage, south to Windmill Hill, and including Mucknell Abbey in the west.
- **South:** land gently rising from watercourses, stretching south from the watercourse located 500m south of Stoulton Brook, and west from Stoulton Brook in the east. The area continues south across the Cotswold Line railway, the B4084 and central parts of the site, to the Bristol-Birmingham Main Line railway along the western site boundary, between Worcestershire Parkway railway station in the north and Wadborough to the south.

The three areas of the site are identified on plan HDA 3 and are described in turn below.

North-west

1.2.3 The north-west portion of the site consists of rolling lowland, approximately 35-45m AOD, rising slightly from the watercourse located 500m south of Stoulton Brook, which marks the southern edge of the area. Stoulton Brook flows from west to east to the north of the tributary to the south, with the land between the two watercourses forming a slightly elevated east-west band of land to the west of Mucknell Abbey. A further minor tributary to the north, flows south-east to join the Stoulton Brook to

the north of Mucknell Abbey, passing a small lake to the east of the tributary, near the confluence with Stoulton Brook.

- 1.2.4 The area is predominantly agricultural farmland, with medium to large scale arable fields. The largest field, to the north-west of Mucknell Abbey, includes a single wind turbine. To the west of Mucknell Abbey, there is a pastoral field subdivided into paddocks for horse keeping. Watercourses are often edged by riparian woodland, including along Stoulton Brook, which connects to a significant area of plantation woodland within the northern site boundary. Elsewhere, tree cover includes individual mature trees and small tree groups. Fields are generally contained by a relatively intact network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- 1.2.5 The area is unsettled to the north of Stoulton Brook. To the south of Stoulton Brook, the area includes Norton Fields Farm, and Hillfarm House with its associated agricultural and equestrian land uses. The area adjoins the boundary vegetation and grounds of Mucknell Abbey to the south-east, and the recently constructed Worcestershire Parkway railway station, to the south-west. The Crucible Business Park is on the opposite side of the Bristol-Birmingham Main Line to the west. Mucknell Lane off Pershore Road (B4084) runs east-west along the top of the landform between Stoulton Brook and the watercourse to the south, and serves as access to Norton Fields Farm, Hillfarm House, and Mucknell Abbey to the east. Elsewhere vehicular access is limited to farm tracks.

East

- 1.2.6 The eastern portion of the site sits on topography rising to local high points and a general ridge line along the eastern site boundary, up to a height of approximately 60m AOD. Valley spurs containing tributary streams of Stoulton Brook cut generally east-west into the rising landform, creating an area of more complex undulating topography, with steeper slopes than those within other parts of the site.
- 1.2.7 The eastern part of the site consists of an irregular small to medium scale pattern of predominantly small arable fields with occasional pasture and areas of woodland. Stoulton Woods is a significant area of woodland to the south-east of Stoulton in the south-east corner of the site, and there are further notable blocks of woodland north-east of Upper Wolverton. Stoulton Brook which edges the area, is frequently lined with riparian vegetation including mature woodland and tree groups, scrub and wetland habitats. Field boundaries are generally well structured with frequent, intact hedgerows and hedgerow trees. There are several tall poplar shelter belts along boundaries around Upper Wolverton, and there is significant tree cover along the Cotswold Line railway which crosses through the area. The

site also includes two orchards identified as traditional orchards which are located at Upper Wolverton, and to the east of Stoulton Woods, south of Windmill Hill.

- 1.2.8 The small-medium scale field pattern, combined with the well vegetated landscape structure and complex topography, provides greater enclosure and intimacy than the larger scale, more open and flatter parts of the site.
- 1.2.9 The area includes the recently constructed Mucknell Abbey, traditional farmsteads with associated agricultural buildings and small businesses, including Upper and Lower Wolverton Farms, and Windmill Farm, accessed by short rural lanes off Evesham Road (A44) and Egdon Lane (B4084). There are also several dwellings and other properties located along the two main roads to the east.

South

- 1.2.10 The southern portion of the site rises gently from the watercourse located 500m south of Stoulton Brook in the north and other watercourses in the south, to form a low plateau up to approximately 45m AOD. A minor valley feature and stream extend into the area to the west of Stoulton and provide some variation to the otherwise subtle landform.
- 1.2.11 The area consists predominately of arable fields, with a much larger and more open field pattern overall than other parts of the site due to intensive farming, loss of field boundaries and a lack of woodland. An exception to this general field pattern is the land south and west of Stoulton, where there are a small number of parcels of land, close to the village which include pasture partially enclosed by tree belts and hedgerows.
- 1.2.12 Although a simpler landscape than other parts of the site, the southern portion of the site retains some landscape structure. There are hedges maintained to relatively low height along roads which cross through the area, several intact boundary hedgerows along the fields between the watercourse located south of Stoulton Brook and Pershore Road, and significant vegetation along the Cotswold Line railway. Trees mark the route of the stream to the west of Stoulton, and a few individual mature trees remain along former field boundaries.
- 1.2.13 The area borders Stoulton and Hawbridge, but settlement within the southern part of the site is limited to Wadborough Park Farm and a small, dispersed group of dwellings on the eastern edge of Abbotswood including Ash Villa, Walnut Tree Cottage and 3-4 Abbotswood Cottage. Unlike other parts

of the site, the southern sector is crossed by a number of transport routes, including Pershore Road (B4084), Wadborough Road, Stoughton Road, and the Cotswold Line railway.

1.3 Public rights of way

1.3.1 A network of public rights of way, including parts of the Millennium Way, Botany Bay Lane, and other footpaths and bridleways, traverse the local landscape and provide walking access across the majority of the site (see plan HDA 5).

1.3.2 The Millennium Way is a 100 mile-long walking route which begins along the River Avon near Pershore, to the south-east of the site. The route passes through Stoulton, and into the site, it crosses under the Cotswold Line railway, then rises on high ground at Upper Wolverton, before leaving the site to the east and continuing through Henley-in-Arden, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa, until reaching Middleton Cheney in Northamptonshire.

1.3.3 Botany Bay Lane is an ancient droving route which crosses east-west through the northern part of the site and is identified by a number of public bridleways designated along its route. The route travels westwards from Evesham Road, north of Upper Wolverton, leaves the site under the Bristol-Birmingham Main Line railway, and continues north-west outside the site over Drovers Bridge and on towards Worcester.

1.3.4 The Millennium Way and Botany Bay Lane connect with a network of other public footpaths and bridleways across the site and beyond. Routes are located on figure HDA5 and include a number of footpaths which encompass areas of high ground, and link into Stoulton. Footpath 515(C) crosses high ground to the north-east of Mucknell Abbey, while several footpaths and bridleways circle the elevated land on which the abbey itself is located. Footpath 523(C) climbs onto high ground near Upper Wolverton, footpaths 548(C) and 524(C) run east-west along Stoulton Brook, and Footpaths 502(C) and 558(C) cross the south part of the site.

1.4 Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations

1.4.1 There are no landscape designations of national significance within the site (see plan HDA 4), however the Cotswolds AONB is approximately 7km to the south-east of the site, and the Malvern Hills AONB is approximately 12km to the west.

1.4.2 Cooksholme Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located adjacent to the site on the western side of the Bristol-Birmingham Main Line railway, between Worcestershire Parkway railway

station and Abbots Wood Junction. Although outside the site, the SSSI's Impact Risk Zone extends across the railway and into the western edge of the site. There is no ancient woodland within the site, however Narrow Wood is a strip of ancient and semi-natural woodland which adjoins the southern-most corner of the allocation.

- 1.4.3 The grade II* listed park and gardens associated with Spetchley Hall are within 1km to the north-west of the site, and consists of a deer park, a 19th century landscape park, and 19th century and early 20th century gardens. Spetchley Hall itself and the nearby Church of All Saints are grade II* listed buildings, and there are a number of grade II buildings within the vicinity of Spetchley Hall.
- 1.4.4 Stoulton conservation area borders the site to the south and covers the eastern portion of the village. The relatively small conservation area is centred on Church Lane and includes the grade II* listed Church of St Edmund, and several grade II listed buildings including The Old Vicarage, Manor Farmhouse, Maltings, a house adjoining The Lodge, and Mount Pleasant. The western part of Stoulton has several grade II buildings outside the conservation area, including The Court House, Manor Cottage, 1-3 Boxbush Cottages, and The Old Forge.
- 1.4.5 Within the site, there are two grade II listed buildings, consisting of Lower Wolverton Farmhouse, and a Barn at the adjacent Upper Wolverton Farm. There are also a number of grade II listed buildings close to the site boundary, in particular near the eastern edge of the site. These include Low Hill House and Prospect House, both at Low Hill adjacent to the north-east corner of the site, Greenacres at Egdon, Breach Farmhouse to the north of the Cotswold Line railway, and three properties at Windmill Hill including Windmill Hill Farmhouse, The Thatch, and a pair of attached cottages known as Woodbine Cottage and Rosemary Cottage.
- 1.4.6 Approximately 2km to the north-west of the site is an ancient monument on Crookbarrow Hill, consisting of the remains of a motted castle and medieval agricultural remains.

2.0 Landscape Character and Sensitivity

2.1 Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.1.1 The site lies within the Severn and Avon Vales National Character Area (number 106). However, the National Character Areas cover large geographical extents, and therefore the degree to which their descriptions are appropriate to a localised assessment can be limited. The Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment was published in 2012, prior to Natural England's current Landscape Character

Assessment guidance, however it remains a useful framework for considering the landscape character of the site.

2.1.2 The primary divisions of landscape used in the Worcestershire are known as Landscape Description Units (see plan HDA 3), based on similarities in topography, geology, soil type, land use, tree cover and settlement pattern. Variations within the Landscape Description Units are identified as Land Cover Parcels with additional criteria of spatial character, indicative ground vegetation, field boundaries, enclosure pattern, tree cover pattern and additional characteristic features.

2.1.3 The study then groups the Landscape Description Units based on their commonalities into 22 Landscape Types across Worcestershire. The Landscape Description Units are also grouped together to reflect perceived common cultural unity, into Regional Character Areas, as sub-divisions of the National Character Area. The site is entirely within the Mid-Worcestershire Forest Regional Character Area.

2.1.4 When listed hierarchically from largest to smallest, the four divisions set out in the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment are as follows:

- Regional Character Areas (largest)
- Landscape Types
- Landscape Description Units
- Land Cover Parcels (smallest)

2.1.5 For the purposes of this Strategic Landscape and Visual Assessment, the Landscape Types which cover the site are appraised, and the more detailed Landscape Description Units and Land Cover Parcels considered as appropriate.

Landscape Types

2.1.6 Two Landscape Types cover the site, as follows:

- **Principal Timbered Farmlands Landscape Type**, which correlates to the portion of the site identified as north-west and east in Section 1.2 above.
- **Wooded Estatelands Landscape Type**, which correlates to the portion of the site identified as south in Section 1.2 above.

2.1.7 Tables 1 below appraises the presence of the key characteristics of each Landscape Type within the site, and their condition.

Table 1: Appraisal of Landscape Type key characteristics

Landscape Type: Principal Timbered Farmlands (north-west and east portions of the site)	Key Characteristics	Representativeness and Condition
Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hedgerow boundaries to fields 	The majority of field boundaries have intact mature hedgerows, with this key characteristic being generally representative of the Type within the site.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ancient, wooded character 	A combination of scattered tree groups, linear riparian woodland and occasional large blocks of woodland and plantation provide a relatively wooded character generally, particularly to the east. However, none of the woodland is identified as ancient and this key characteristic is representative to a lesser extent to the north-west where larger field sizes reduce the influence of the nearest significant tree cover.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notable pattern of hedgerow trees, predominantly oak 	There is an intact network of mature hedgerows along the majority of remaining field boundaries and along roads, including mature oak hedgerow trees, across the area. However, some field amalgamation, particular to the west, has resulted in the loss of boundaries over time and therefore associated boundary hedgerows,
Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organic enclosure pattern 	The area has an irregular pattern of fields and hedges consistent with a sense of organic enclosure, although this key characteristic is represented to a lesser degree to the west where there are some larger field sizes, and therefore a reduced sense of enclosure compared to the east.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small-scale landscape, hedgerow trees creating filtered views 	The majority of the area covered by the Type is considered to be a small to medium scale landscape, although there are larger parcels of land to the north-west. The openness of views varies depending on elevation and tree cover. Nevertheless, hedgerow trees frequently filter or frame views, particularly within the east portion of the site.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brick and timber building style of old properties 	Properties are principally traditional farmsteads, consistent with this key characteristic.
Tertiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed farming land use 	The area within the site covered by the Type is predominantly rural farmland, although arable fields dominate other types of farming land use such as grazed pasture.

Landscape Type: Principal Timbered Farmlands (north-west and east portions of the site)	Key Characteristics	Representativeness and Condition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispersed settlement pattern 	The area has limited settlement, representative of the dispersed settlement pattern key characteristic.

Landscape Type: Wooded Estatelands (south portion of the site)	Key Characteristics	Representativeness and Condition
Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large discrete blocks of irregularly shaped woodland 	The area within the site covered by the Type has very limited intact woodland, likely due to intensive agriculture, and therefore this key characteristic is unrepresentative of this part of the site.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed farming land use 	The area consists of rural farmland, although arable fields dominate over any of types of farming use.
Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolling topography with occasional steep-sided hills and low escarpments 	The southern part of the site has relatively subtle rolling topography forming a small plateau, falling towards watercourses at its edges. This key characteristic is only partially representative as there are no steep-sided hills or low escarpments in the area.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-regular pattern of large, hedged fields 	There is a pattern of large, semi-regular fields across the south part of the site. Intact field boundary hedges are limited due to intensive farming, although hedgerows remain along several field boundaries to the north, and boundaries along roads are general vegetated with hedges, albeit it intensively maintained to low heights.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woodland of ancient character 	There is very limited woodland, of ancient or otherwise character. This key characteristic is unrepresentative of the part of the Type within the site.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrete settlement clusters often in the form of small estate villages 	Settlement within the area is limited and therefore this key characteristic is partially consistent with the south part of the site. Settlement within the area consists of a single farmstead and small dispersed group of dwellings, rather than clusters such as small estate villages.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium distance framed views 	There are middle distance views across the large-scale landscape. Views are often open with limited framing due to less frequent hedgerows compared to other parts of the site. However, vegetation along roads and railways shortens views. This key

		characteristic is therefore partially representative of this part of the site.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large country houses set in parkland and ornamental grounds 	There are no instances of this key characteristic within the south part of the site.
Tertiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	N/A

2.1.8 The Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment also sets out landscape guidelines for each Landscape Type, including general guidelines for woodland, trees and hedgerows. Guidelines for the Principal Timbered Farmlands Landscape Type are as follows:

- Maintain the tree cover character of hedgerow oaks, and enhance the age structure of the hedgerow oak population.
- Conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species.
- Seek to bring about coalescence of fragmented relic ancient woodlands.
- Encourage the planting of new woodlands, reflecting the scale, shape and composition of the existing ancient woodland character, favouring oak as the major species.
- Conserve and restore tree cover along water courses and streamlines.
- Seek opportunities to enhance tree cover along highways and other non-farmed locations.
- Conserve and restore the pattern and composition of the hedgerow structure through appropriate management, and replanting.
- Conserve the organic pattern and character of the lane networks.
- Maintain the historic dispersed settlement pattern.

2.1.9 Relevant guidelines for the Wooded Estatelands Landscape Type include:

- Conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species.
- Promote new large scale woodland planting.
- New woodland planting should be of native broadleaved species, favouring oak as the dominant species and relate to the scale and spatial pattern of the Landscape Type.
- Conserve and restore the hedgerow pattern, particularly primary hedgerows and hedgerow tree cover.

- Seek to ensure hedgerow linkage to all woodland blocks, for visual cohesion and wildlife benefit.
- Conserve and restore parkland including historically correct ornamental planting and with an emphasis on arable reversion.
- Conserve the integrity of estate villages and their associated tree cover.

Landscape Description Units

- 2.1.10 The Landscape Types are subdivided into a total of four Landscape Description Units within the site. The Landscape Description Units broadly reflect the differing physical attributes across the site, and correlate with the areas identified as north-west, east and south in Section 1.2 above.
- 2.1.11 The Principal Timbered Farmlands Landscape Type includes three Landscape Description Units within the site as follows:
- **Spetchley Principal Timbered Farmlands** Landscape Description Unit, which correlates to the north-west portion of the site as described in Section 1.2 above.
 - **Stoulton Principal Timbered Farmlands** Landscape Description Unit and a small part of the **Drakes Broughton Principal Timbered Farmlands** Landscape Description Unit, which together correlate to the east portion of the site as described in Section 1.2 above.
- 2.1.12 The Wooded Estatelands Landscape Type includes a single Landscape Description Unit within the site as follows:
- **Wadborough Wooded Estatelands** Landscape Description Unit, which correlates to the south portion of the site as described in Section 1.2 above.

Land Cover Parcels

- 2.1.13 Land Cover Parcels identify variations in land cover within the Landscape Description Units. Each of the four Landscape Description Units identified above have up to two Land Cover Parcels within the site as follows:
- **Spetchley Principal Timbered Farmlands:** MW107.1e to the north of the wind turbine, and MW107.1b to the south.
 - **Stoulton Principal Timbered Farmlands:** MW80.1d to the north-east of Upper Wolverton, and MW80.1a elsewhere across the Landscape Description Unit.

- **Drakes Broughton Principal Timbered Farmlands:** MW80.2a across the small portion of the Landscape Description Unit in the south-east corner of the site.
- **Wadborough Wooded Estatelands:** MW78g within the western third of the Landscape Description Unit, and MW78l across the remainder of the Unit, surrounding Stoulton and north across the Cotswold Line railway.

2.1.14 A database of land cover information for each of the Land Cover Parcels is included in the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment, listed under physical environment, land use, linear structure, woodland and tree cover, other habitats, special associations, and settlement and built features categories. The SLVA takes account of variations in these factors across the three main areas of the site as appropriate.

Landscape analysis

Topography, drainage and vegetation cover

2.1.15 The proposed new settlement lies within an area of rolling lowland topography, contained in part by higher ground to the east and west of the site (see plan HDA 3). To the north of the Cotswold Line railway the Summix land holding occupies the less elevated land at the centre of the site to the east of the Worcestershire Parkway, and higher ground to the north and east of Mucknell Abbey. Two minor water courses which join as the Stoulton Brook south and east of Mucknell Abbey run through the landscape along with significant riparian vegetation. The watercourses are a common thread to much of the landscape north of the railway and form distinctive landscape corridors through the site. The field pattern and hedgerow network are noticeably linked to the local topography with small and medium sized fields, within a well-defined hedgerow network, on the more complex and elevated slopes to the north and east. A larger, more open field structure is evident to the south and west. The character and appearance of the northern landholding broadly reflects the Landscape Description Units identified in the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment, although the more open and larger scale landscape to the south and west have less of the primary and secondary features which form the distinctive landscape character of the wider area. The principal landscape features of note are the watercourses and the associated riparian woodland and vegetation and the hedgerow and hedgerow tree network.

- 2.1.16 To the south of the Cotswold railway, the topography associated with the Summix landholding is less complex, forming a minor plateau to the west of Stoulton village which itself is located on more elevated land to the east. The village sits within a treed setting in contrast to the land to the west which is an open landscape with few hedgerows and few defining landscape features. A single shallow valley feature runs along the western side of Stoulton, the valley feature defined to some extent by a linear belt of trees and hedgerow. The land holding west of Stoulton is an intensively farmed landscape with few internal boundaries. There is limited tree and hedgerow vegetation to the western boundary which follows the Bristol-Birmingham Main Line railway, whilst a more treed character is evident to the north along the Cotswold Line railway corridor. Land to the north and east of Stoulton has a medium to large scale field pattern, with more evident internal hedgerow structure.
- 2.1.17 The landholding south of the railway has few of the defining features of the wider landscape. It is devoid of woodland, a primary feature of the wider landscape unit and lacks the variation in topography. The settlement pattern whilst nucleated and largely contained is not typical of estate villages and the site landscape does not include large country houses, parkland or ornamental gardens. Its character and appearance is of an open and largely featureless landscape.
- 2.1.18 The overall condition of the landscape is reflected in the relevant LCA guidelines set out above, namely, to conserve the principal landscape features of the Spetchley and Stoulton Principal Timbered Farmlands to the north and to restore and enhance the landscape of the Wadborough Wooded Estatelands to the south. The design principles for development, which are landscape led are set out at section 4 along with the consideration of the visual context of the site.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 2.1.19 The sensitivity of elements within the landscape, which help define the character across the site and surrounding area, is informed by their landscape value and their susceptibility to change. Characteristic features which would be difficult to replace within a reasonable timeframe have a higher susceptibility to development and would be more sensitive, than those which are easily recreated within a short timeframe. The watercourses and their associated riparian woodland, other woodland blocks and lengths of substantial tree and hedge belts are therefore likely to have high sensitivity and should be retained and integrated into the proposals wherever possible. The intactness of the hedgerow and hedgerow tree network varies between each of the three parts of the site, but they are valuable

components of the landscape structure and therefore considered to have a medium to high sensitivity, and are important to retain or replace.

3.0 Visual Context and Sensitivity

3.1 Key views out of the land parcel

3.1.1 Refer to photograph sheets for baseline view descriptions and see plan HDA 5 for view locations.

Table 2: Appraisal of Key Views out of Site from land holding

Location of views (area, route or elevated vantage point)	Relationship with land holding		Design considerations
	View from within land holding?	Land holding falls within view corridor	
1. From footpath 550(C) to north of Whittington Road (B4084) on rising ground towards Old Farm Cottages	N/A	N/A	N/A
2. Botany Bay Lane - bridleway 527(B) between Drovers Bridge and the railway bridge	N/A	N/A	N/A
3. Vicinity of wind turbine bridleway to north 525(C) (no public access to foot of wind turbine itself)	Narrow view corridor associated with Botany Bay Lane. Southerly and westerly views from base of wind turbine.	Large open field in land holding forms foreground and middle ground of view corridor. Distant views towards Malvern Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider immediate setting to walking routes, including the historic droving route. Introduce additional landscape structure to help soften built form and assimilate development into the landscape. Maintain distant views to the Malvern Hills where possible to retain wider context and local identity.
4. Elevated land around Mucknall Abbey including bridleway 510(B), 615(C), 512(C), 513(C), 514(C), 524(C)	Views north, east and west from within east part of the site.	Foreground and middle ground, include views characteristic of the east part of the site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate high points into the landscape strategy to maintain view corridor to the west including distant views of the Malvern Hills. Consider contribution landmark buildings make within the western view corridor. Utilise existing and enhanced landscape structure, such as the riparian veg along Stoulton Brook, hedgerows and tree groups to help soften built form and assimilate development into the landscape.

Location of views (area, route or elevated vantage point)	Relationship with land holding		Design considerations
	View from within land holding?	Land holding falls within view corridor	
4A. Hill to the north-east of Mucknell Abbey including footpath 515(C)	360° views from top of the hill within east part of the site.	Foreground and middle ground, include views characteristic of the east and north-west parts of the site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate high points into the landscape strategy to maintain view corridors to the south and west including distant views of the Malvern Hills and Bredon Hill. • Consider contribution landmark buildings make within the western view corridor. • Incorporate distinctive rural landscape of the east part of the site into the landscape structure as a potential country park to retain southern view corridor, including in views from high points. • Utilise existing and enhanced landscape structure such as the riparian veg along Stoulton Brook, hedgerows and tree groups to help soften built form and assimilate development into the landscape.
4B. South-west slopes of Low Hill including footpath 502(C)	Views south and west from east part of the site.	Includes views of the east, south and north-west parts of the site, including views characteristic of each part of the site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate high points into the landscape strategy for new neighbourhood hub so as to maintain a view corridor to the west, to include the distant views of the Malvern Hills. • Utilise existing and enhanced landscape structure such as the riparian veg along Stoulton Brook, hedgerows and tree groups to help soften built form and assimilate development into the landscape.
5, 5A and 5B. Elevated land west of Stoulton PROWs to east of Stoulton	360° views within south part of the site.	Extensive views across south part of the site, characteristic of the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate higher points, central to the site, into the landscape strategy for new neighbourhood hub or open space so as to maintain view corridors to the south and west, to include the distant views of Bredon and the Malvern Hills. • Utilise existing and an enhanced landscape structure such as the riparian vegetation and hedgerows to help soften built form as seen from the western edge of Stoulton and assimilate development into the landscape. • Retain links to the wider open, large scale landscape via view corridors along public rights of way and open spaces.

Location of views (area, route or elevated vantage point)	Relationship with land holding		Design considerations
	View from within land holding?	Land holding falls within view corridor	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain distant views of Bredon and the Malvern Hills to retain wider context and local identity.
6. Millennium Way in the vicinity of Lower and Upper Wolverton Farms 527(C), 519(C)	Views south and west from eastern part of the site.	Includes views of the east, south and north-west parts of the site, including views characteristic of each part of the site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain view corridor to the south, including distant views of the Malvern Hills. Retain and incorporate distinctive riparian landscape of the east part of the site into the landscape structure as part of a potential country park and retain southern view corridor along the Millennium Way.
6A. Millennium Way in the vicinity of the eastern edge of Stoulton	Views north and east from eastern part of the site	Includes views towards Mucknell Abbey and Upper Wolverton, including views characteristic of this part of the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain view corridor to the south-east, including distant views of Bredon Hill. Retain and incorporate distinctive riparian landscape of the east part of the site as part of a potential country park and maintain view corridor north-west towards Mucknell Abbey. Retain immediate agricultural setting to the village
7. Footpath 523(C) between Mucknell Abbey and Lower Wolverton Farm	Views south and west from east part of the site.	Includes views of the site, particularly the east part of the site, including distant and often filtered views of the Malvern Hills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain view corridor along footpath alignment, including distant views of the Malvern Hills. Retain and incorporate high ground adjacent to Mucknell Abbey into the landscape structure as part of a potential country park to retain view corridor west towards the Malvern Hills.
8. B4084 on elevated land north-west of Stoulton	360° views within south part of the site.	Extensive views across southern part of the site, with some views characteristic of the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain sense of open large-scale landscape where possible with view corridors from public rights of way and proposed open spaces. Introduce landscape structure and green corridors to help soften built form and assimilate development into the landscape. Maintain distant views of the Malvern Hills to retain wider context and local identity.
9. Public footpaths between Norton and Pershore Road (B4084) in the vicinity of Wood Hall and avenue access road – bridleway 511(B)	N/A	N/A	N/A

3.2 Key views into the land parcel

Table 4: Appraisal of Key Views into Site in relation to land holding

3.2.1 Refer to photograph sheets for baseline view descriptions and see plan HDA 5 for view locations.

Location of views (area, route or elevated vantage point)	Applicable to land holding?	Potential for views of the land holding	Design considerations
A. Footpaths and noted viewpoints within Malvern Hills	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panoramic views from elevated viewpoints likely to include the land holding, forming a small part of the distant view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development is unlikely to be prominent in the view at such a distance, however the contribution that potential landmark buildings make to the wider landscape should be considered. Existing landscape structure, such as the riparian vegetation along Stoulton Brook, hedgerows and tree groups, along with introduced green corridors should be utilised to help assimilate development into the wider view in-keeping with other settlement in the view.
B. Bredon Hill viewpoint	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panoramic views from elevated viewpoint which include the land holding, forming a small part of the distant view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development is unlikely to be prominent in the view at such a distance, The existing landscape structure and large tracts of woodland, to the south of the site screen much of the site from view. New Green infrastructure should build on the existing landscape framework and integrate development into the wider view in keeping with other settlement in the view.
C. Crookbarrow Hill: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> top of hill (private land); bridleway 577(C), 578(C), 579(C) 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain intervening landscape structure, including tree cover, which screens views between Crookbarrow Hill and the land holding.
D. Spetchley Park, including Round Hill	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain intervening landscape structure, including tree cover, which screens views between Spetchley Park and the land holding.
E. Stonehall Common and escarpment to the west	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No views from Stonehall Common but glimpses of the southern parcel from adjacent footpath on eastern down slope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain intervening landscape structure, including tree cover, consider further Green Infrastructure southern edge of the land holding.

Location of views (area, route or elevated vantage point)	Applicable to land holding?	Potential for views of the land holding	Design considerations
F. Low Hill and elevated part of A44 corridor from A44 between Sneachill and Egdon and from public footpath 500(C), 501(C)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views of the land holding substantially screened by roadside hedgerows. Limited views of adjacent areas of the land holding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain intervening landscape structure, including tree cover and hedgerows, consider further Green Infrastructure on the land holding to further contain views of future development.
G Croome Court - Landscape Park	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development is unlikely to be prominent in the view at such a distance, however the contribution that potential landmark buildings make to the wider landscape should be considered.

3.3 Visual analysis

Wider Context

- 3.3.1 The high ground to the east and west of the site provide containment to the proposed new settlement and the Summix landholding, principally from the Severn Valley landscapes to the west and the wider low-lying catchment of the River Avon to the east. More distant, elevated views of the site can be seen from the Malvern and Bredon Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Views from both AONB's are panoramic and long ranging. However, within these views the new settlement location is distant and the wind turbine on site is the only noticeable feature. Development on the Summix landholding, in combination with the wider proposed settlement, would be identifiable from these locations, but at such a distance would not be prominent in the panoramic views, and would be seen integrated into the landscape by extensive landscape proposals and in context with existing areas of settlement at varying distances between the site and the AONBs.
- 3.3.2 More locally, views from the high ground around Hatfield and Stonehall Common, west of the Summix land, are substantially screened by intervening vegetation with filtered views of the site, the Crucible Business Park and Parkway Station. Views from these east facing slopes include a broad panorama including the Cotswold and Bredon Hills and Stoulton village. High ground to the east of the site at Low Hill, Upper Wolverton and Windmill Hill screen views from the wider landscape to the east and

much of the A44 corridor. Views from the road are largely confined to the roadside hedgerows and land immediately adjacent to the road.

Local context

3.3.3 The footpath network within the proposed new settlement boundary affords a number of views of the land holding and the surrounding landscape. Long distance views from footpaths and bridleways to the north of the Cotswold railway Line are principally from the more elevated paths south of Brickbarns Farm, around Upper Wolverton and to the north-east of Mucknell Abbey. Views include the Abbey, the Malvern Hills and Bredon Hill. Local landmarks such as St Edmunds Church tower are also noticeable in the view. Views back to these more elevated locations, from the surrounding landscape, are however limited by intervening woodland and the hedgerow network, and local topography. There are also limited intermittent views across the northern half of the site from the northern site boundary along Botany Bay Lane. There are views from the B4084 in the immediate vicinity of the Parkway Station and car park, where there are open views across the lower lying ground leading east towards Mucknell Abbey.

3.3.4 Land south of the railway is more open to view from the adjoining B4048 corridor with views south and west to Bredon Hill and the Malverns respectively. Footpaths within the southern part of the site afford wide ranging views to the west and south, and to the east include views to Stoulton village. Views from Littleworth and the site boundaries, Wadbrough Road and Station Road) include partial views of the site. Further south and west, beyond the site boundaries, intervening vegetation and topography substantially limit views of the site.

Existing Settlement

3.3.5 Stoulton is an historic village with a conservation area, including listed buildings and grade 2* listed Norman church. The village is situated on high ground to the south of the Stoulton Brook and has wide ranging views to the south and west which include the Bredon and Malvern Hills and the southern portion of the landholding. To the north footpaths run from the village affording views of Mucknell Abbey, the wooded Stoulton Brook corridor and more elevated ground around Upper Wolverton. The immediate setting to the village and the conservation area is medium to large scale arable farmland which is visually contained by treed field boundaries to the west and north.

3.3.6 Wolverton is a small hamlet set on a knoll of higher ground to the north-east of Stoulton. A group of farm buildings, houses and commercial buildings lie within a treed hill-top largely comprising

traditional orchards and shelter belts. Footpaths run north-south and west from the hamlet affording views of the Crucible Business Park with the backdrop of the Malvern Hills.

Notable Walking Routes

- 3.3.7 The Millennium way runs north-south through the eastern edge of the proposed new settlement. It's route takes in the more elevated land around Stoulton and Upper Wolverton and includes views towards the Bredon and Malvern Hills. Long distance views to the hills are not exclusive to the footpath within the site although they are a feature of the immediate environs of Stoulton and Upper Wolverton.
- 3.3.8 Botany Bay Lane has an historical context, as a Drover's Way it is a long-established route across the site. The views towards the site are limited to partial views of the northern sector through intermittent and limited to breaks in the hedgerow network between the Drovers Bridge and the A44.

Landmark Features and View Corridors

- 3.3.9 The most prominent and widely visible landmark within the northern sector is Mucknell Abbey. The abbey is a recent addition to the locality, a distinctive set of farm buildings incorporating nineteenth-century barns within a purpose-built, sustainable and contemporary monastery. The abbey is set on a high point to the east of the Station, within substantial grounds set to meadow and woodland. There has been extensive new tree planting along the slopes to the Stoulton Brook and the western boundary with the adjacent farm at Hillfarm House. Public footpaths run through the abbey grounds, which from high ground around the abbey buildings afford long distance views of the Malvern Hills. The roofscape of the Crucible Business Centre is also noticeable in the middle-distance views although intervening tree cover partly screens the buildings from view.
- 3.3.10 St Edmund's Church, Stoulton is a notable landmark, largely seen in the context of the treed skyline around Stoulton and only clearly open to view close to Stoulton village. There are views of the church from the high ground around Upper Wolverton, the Millennium Way and the outlying knolls of high ground north and east of Mucknell Abbey.
- 3.3.11 View corridors which include the most distinctive views associated with the site are the long-distance views to the south and west to the surrounding hills. Vantage points from which these views can best be appreciated are the public footpath within the grounds of Mucknell Abbey and the knolls of high ground to the north and east of the abbey.

Visual Sensitivity

3.3.12 The highest degrees of visual sensitivity are likely to be attributed to walkers along public rights of way within the area, whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the view. In particular, these include the Millennium Way, Botany Bay Lane and routes over high ground and open areas, such as around the high point to the north-east of Mucknell Abbey, and across the more open plateau to the west of Stoulton. Design of the proposed development will require careful consideration of the views from these locations. Motorists such as those travelling along the B4084 would generally have a lower visual sensitivity, given that views of the site would be transient and not the primary focus of the drivers attention.

4.0 Landscape Led Design Principles

4.1.1 The Worcestershire Parkway Concept Principles as set out in the Council's Strategy documents seek to fully embed the Green and Blue Infrastructure into the design principles for development, such that the scheme is landscape led (see plans HDA 6 and HDA7).

4.1.2 The Green Infrastructure principles proposed include the following:

- Safeguard the existing green infrastructure,
- Create a natural boundary which defines the edge of the compact town,
- Maintain a rich, diverse natural environment to create a strong sense of place,
- Protect and enhancement of biodiversity through the GI strategy and,
- Inform where the development should be located.

4.1.3 The SLVA has set out the baseline and analysis for the principal landscape and visual considerations for the development of the masterplan for a new settlement at Worcester Parkway. Key considerations for the development of the masterplan will include the following:

1. The distinctive and characteristic landscape features should be retained and enhanced and should have a primary influence on the Placemaking of the scheme and the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. To this end the masterplan should:
 - Maintain the existing watercourses and their associated floodplain and develop the potential for integrating the wetland features with the development.

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- Retain the riparian woodland, significant stream-side vegetation and wetland habitat associated with the watercourses and retain substantial elements of the existing hedgerow network, to provide a framework for the future Green and Blue Infrastructure of the town and the biodiversity of the new settlement.
 - Retain and enhance the woodland habitats, traditional orchards and diversify plantation woodland within the site.
 - Establish species rich grassland in areas of open space and recreation.
 - Retain and enhance the existing green infrastructure within proposed residential areas and town centre.
2. Identify landscape elements and design drivers that are central to the early establishment of the vision for the new settlement.
- In respect of the town centre location, given the likely scale and massing of the proposed town centre, the focus for built development should be on the lower and more gently sloping land close to the Worcestershire Parkway station. Development should utilise the grain of the landscape to provide an east-west axis to the town centre and emphasise the building line on the central band of higher ground leading from the station to Mucknell Abbey.
 - The setting to key landmarks and existing settlements e.g. Mucknell Abbey and Stoulton should be maintained.
 - The contribution landscape features, landmark buildings and vistas make to the outlook of the proposed development should be considered alongside the disposition of land uses, principal routes and civic spaces so as to recognise their contribution and make best use of such features in the wider landscape setting.
 - The immediate setting to the notable walking routes should be considered and integrated with other footpath alignments into the Green Infrastructure Strategy to maintain connectivity and, where possible, the landscape and visual amenity of the routes.
 - Where the landscape structure is limited, e.g. to the south of the landholding, a new landscape structure in keeping with the landscape character of the area would need to be established.

3. Embed key views and view corridors leading to landmark features into the masterplan.

- Maintain the rural character and visual amenity of the surrounding landscape.
- Establish a robust landscape framework to the new settlement, based on the existing green infrastructure, to enhance the natural containment of the site and integrate the new development into the wider landscape.
- Utilise existing green corridors e.g. the Stoulton Brook to form the basis of view corridors across the site.
- Establish clear links between the proposed town centre and residential hubs with adjacent areas of higher ground from where the principal view corridors can be best appreciated. Incorporate areas of high ground and view corridors into public open space or the wider Green Infrastructure Strategy so as to maintain the long-distance views out from the site towards the Bredon and Malvern Hills.

4.1.4 The Landscape and Visual Assessment of the Summix landholding has identified the principal landscape features of value that are distinctive and characteristic of the area and the key views and view corridors that can be appreciated from within the site. The design principles outlined above will ensure that the masterplan respects and builds upon the character and identity of the local landscape and its green infrastructure. Where the landscape structure is limited the masterplan will provide the opportunity to establish a new and compatible green infrastructure that will integrate the new settlement with the wider landscape.