LAND AT GREAT WHEATLEY, RAYLEIGH.

Initial Landscape & Visual Appraisal
CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY 1
2 BASELINE ASSESSMENT 2
3 POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS 11
4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 16

PLANS

ASPECT PLAN ASP1 SITE LOCATION PLAN
ASPECT PLAN ASP2 SITE AND SETTING PLAN

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 VISUAL ASSESSMENT
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been appointed by Manor Oak Homes to undertake an initial Landscape and Visual Appraisal relating to the potential for residential development and Green Belt release on land at Great Wheatley, Rayleigh. The site is located directly adjacent to the western built up edge of Rayleigh, with existing development to the north, east and south. The location and context of the site is illustrated on ASP1 Site Location Plan and ASP2 Site and Setting Plan.

1.2. An appraisal of the surrounding study area has been undertaken using Ordnance Survey data, historical map data, local policy and published character assessments. This has informed the on-site field analysis to identify key viewpoints, analyse the landscape character and visual environment of the local area, and determine any potential landscape and visual effects.

1.3. This initial Landscape and Visual Appraisal is not a fully detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) but aims to appraise the potential landscape and visual impacts associated with developing the site. The appraisal assesses the principle of residential development in the context of the existing landscape character, visual environment and Green Belt land to assess the ability of the site to integrate future development. It is assumed that any subsequent application for the development of this site would be accompanied by an LVIA that provides a detailed assessment of the potential effects of specific development proposals upon the receiving landscape character and visual environment.
2. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

2.1. The site is located on the western edge of the built up area of Rayleigh. The site comprises two medium sized arable fields, a pocket of woodland to the south east and a small tract of pastoral land which extends towards Great Wheatley Road to the south. The site comprises land extending from Highmead and the existing substation in the north, to Great Wheatley Farm and Great Wheatley Road in the south, with existing residential development also located to the east. The site and wider landscape setting to the west is designated as Green Belt, which extends around Rayleigh, and west towards Basildon and Wickford.

2.2. The site is located outside of but directly adjacent to the current built up edge of Rayleigh, with existing residential built form directly to the north, east and south of the site. Great Wheatley Farm is located directly to the south west of the site, and a large scale substation is located to the north. A railway line which broadly runs east to west is located approximately 200m to the north of the site which further reduces the perceived tranquility of the site. A network of major road corridors is located within the site’s localised context to the west, comprising the A127 Southend Arterial Road, the A1245, and the A130. The location and context of the site is illustrated on ASP1 Site Location Plan and ASP2 Site and Setting Plan.

2.3. The site comprises three agricultural fields predominantly enclosed by established mixed native hedgerows and mature treescape and vegetation structure that contains the fields. The site includes a pocket of woodland in the south eastern corner. The mature treescape associated with the site and its immediate context affords a strong degree of containment to the site, breaking up views into the site from the wider landscape setting to the west. The northern, eastern and southern site boundaries, where the site adjoins the wider settlement of Rayleigh, comprises timber fencing, with occasional hedgerows and hedgerow trees however the lack of a robust landscaped edge here means that the existing built up edge imparts an urbanising influence and characterises this part of the site.

2.4. The immediate context to the site is made up of a number of medium largely rectangular shaped arable fields to the west bounded by mixed native hedgerows and occasional treebelts, and small – medium pockets of trees, which break up the landscape and limit longer distance views. As the landform plateaus to the west, the extent of vegetation reduces, with the fieldscape being defined by ditches. The site
itself clearly relates to and is influenced by the western urban edge of Rayleigh, main road corridors within the site’s localised context and the existing substation and railway line to the north of the site.

2.5. Other than being an area of undeveloped arable land with internal field boundaries, the components of the majority of the site offer little in the way of landscape value. The more established vegetation structure, tree belts and pocket of woodland provides a degree of containment and visual separation from adjoining land uses and road corridors. The more open northern, eastern and southern edges illustrates how the site readily relates to the built up areas more than the wider countryside.

Public Rights of Way

2.6. There are a limited number of Public Rights of Way within the localised vicinity of the site, with a singular footpath to the south west of the site which runs between Great Wheatley Road and Southend Arterial Road and beyond. A number of additional footpaths exist within the site’s wider context, notably in closest proximity 300m to the north of the site, extending west between the wider settlement setting of Rayleigh and the A1245. Refer to ASP1 Site Location Plan and ASP2 Site and Setting Plan.

Designations

2.7. As noted, the site and wider landscape is designated as the Metropolitan Green Belt and the extent of which is identified on ASP1 Site Location Plan, however it should be noted that Green Belt land is not a qualitative landscape designation.

2.8. In addition to the Green Belt, it is noted that three Listed Buildings and structures are within the vicinity of the site, associated with the Great Wheatley Farmstead. Rayleigh Conservation Area is located approximately 500m to the north east of the site, located beyond intervening residential development which affords it a strong degree of visual and physical containment.

Topography

2.9. The site itself is located at the top of a localised hill, and extends along its west facing slope. The site rises from approximately 50m AOD along the north western
site boundary, to a high point of approximately 78m AOD in the eastern half of the site. The landform then falls to the north, east and south towards existing residential development, which is located at between 75 and 60m AOD. The wider countryside setting to the west of the site falls to approximately 35m AOD before plateauing into a gently undulating landscape. The extent of vegetation within the site and its localised setting affords a strong degree of containment to the site, however due to the elevated landform in the eastern half of the site, long distance views are available.


2.10. The Development Management Plan sets out the detailed day-to-day planning policies which planning applications will be assessed against, for example design of new developments, housing extension limits in the Green Belt, trees and woodlands, and equestrian facilities. Policies considered to be of relevance include:


Rochford District Council Local Development Framework – Core Strategy (December 2011)

2.12. The Rochford District Core Strategy is the main document of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and sets out the overall strategy for the future development of the District. Policies considered to be of relevance include:


Rochford District Council New Local Plan

2.14. The Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, which will set the strategy for the future development of the District beyond 2025 – the current plan
period. The new Local Plan will replace a number of the adopted policy documents which form the local development plan for the District.

2.15. Once adopted the new Local Plan will replace a number of the adopted policy documents. It will set out the Council’s strategic vision, policies and land allocations, where necessary, for meeting future needs (including housing, employment, community facilities, transport and other infrastructure needed to support development). It will also identify areas for protection, such as sites that are important for wildlife and open space.

**National Landscape Character**

2.16. A landscape assessment of the local area has been carried out by Aspect which seeks to identify broadly homogenous zones that can be categorised in terms of quality and character. Natural England have produced a countrywide landscape character assessment resulting in the National Character Areas (NCA’s). The site lies within the eastern part of the Northern Thames Basin NCA 111 which extends eastwards from Watford towards the Greater Thames Estuary. The border with the adjacent NCA 81 is in close proximity to the east of the site which extends towards the North Sea. The map includes large tracks of countryside which have similar characteristics in terms of landform, geology, land use and other landscape elements.

**County Landscape Character**

*Essex County Council – Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003)*

2.17. In addition to the NCA Essex County Council have produced a county wide character assessment in 2003. The site is located within the ‘South Essex Coastal Towns (G3)’ character area. The summary and key characteristics of the landscape character are listed as being:

- “Large areas of dense urban development.
- *Strongly rolling hills with steep south and west facing escarpments covered by open grassland or a mix of small woods, pastures and commons.*
- *Extensive flat coastal grazing marshes in the south adjacent to the Thames Estuary. Large blocks of woodland in the centre of the area.*
• Narrow bands and broader areas of gently undulating arable farmland, with a remnant hedgerow pattern, separating some of the towns.
• Particularly complex network of major transportation routes.
• Pylon routes visually dominate farmland in the A130 corridor."

2.18. The Essex Landscape Character Assessment identifies three possible ‘Past, Present and Future Trends for Change’ within the South Essex Coastal Towns Character Area. These are identified as being:

• “The area has been subject to very significant change in the 20th Century, with massive expansion of urban areas, and urban development pressure is likely to be a significant ongoing trend.
• Areas where traditional landscape character survives well, such as the Upper Roach Valley, the Crouch Valley, the Thames Marshes, Langdon Hills and Dunton Ridges need particular protection from landscape or development change.
• Recreational pressures are also likely to be considerable.”

2.19. Furthermore, the Landscape Character Assessment has undertaken a Sensitivity Evaluation which identifies the character area as being of Medium sensitivity to major urban extensions (>5ha) and new settlements. The evaluation identifies the following key landscape sensitivity and accommodation of change issues:

• “Visually exposed steep escarpments.
• Integrity of woodlands and hedgerow pasture fields.
• High intervisibility on marshlands.
• Coalescence.
• Major green spaces / integrity of major green corridors.
• Poor condition of some arable farmland with intrusive pylons, transportation routes.”

“Any new development should include strong new woodland / hedgerow framework particularly where arable farmland is in poor condition.”

2.20. It is considered that the typical value of the landscape character of the site itself is of low sensitivity. The site is considered to be consistent in terms of its land use, features and elements with that of the immediate surrounding area, and is not
remarkable nor does it include any features which elevate above ordinary landscape. It is considered the greenfield qualities of the site and typical rural tranquil characteristics are somewhat diminished within the site and its immediate landscape fabric. It is therefore considered that the application site itself would typically be of low landscape sensitivity.

2.21. With regard to the localised and wider landscape of the site, the established vegetation structure and mature treescape which exists within the locality provides positive landscape features that also help to integrate the site and its immediate setting within the landscape. As outlined in the county character assessment, large areas of dense urban development and complex networks of major transport routes are already a characteristic of the site’s setting, which detract from the remoteness and tranquility within the site’s wider setting. As such, the overall area of the localised and wider rural landscape is considered of medium landscape sensitivity.

Visual Environment

2.22. A number of viewpoints have been identified in order to demonstrate the visibility of the site within the localised and wider setting and a series of photographs are included within Appendix 1 that illustrates the site within its setting. The views have been informed by a thorough desk study and a number of field assessments. The photographs have been taken in accordance with published guidance from the Landscape Institute, from publicly accessible locations. The photographs were taken in March 2017.

2.23. Viewpoint 1 is taken from Great Wheatley Road, to the south of the site, in a break of the boundary vegetation. The viewpoint looks north into the tract of pastoral land contained within the site boundary, and illustrates the site’s topography and the relationship between the wider settlement setting of Rayleigh and the site. Viewpoint 1 illustrates the developed nature of the site’s immediate setting, with the wider settlement of Rayleigh, Great Wheatley Farm and high voltage electricity pylons all forming urbanising features within the field of view and localised landscape fabric.

2.24. Viewpoint 2 is taken from Poyntens, a residential street to the east of the site. The viewpoint looks south west and illustrates the extent of vegetation associated with the eastern site boundary. The localised hill located in the eastern arable field forms a notable feature within the field of view, which forms the high point of the site.
Existing residential development located off Poyntens forms a notable urbanising feature within the context of Viewpoint 2, characterising the receiving streetscene.

2.25. Viewpoint 3 is taken from Great Wheatley Road to the south west of the site. The viewpoint illustrates the extent of vegetation lining the southern site boundary at this point, and the level of containment that it affords to the site. The viewpoint looks east along the road corridor towards existing residential development to the south of the site.

2.26. Viewpoint 4 is also taken from Great Wheatley Road, to the south of the site, and looks north through a break in existing residential development along the southern site boundary. The viewpoint illustrates the relationship between the site and its immediate residential context to the south.

2.27. Viewpoint 5 is taken from the A127 Southend Arterial Road, approximately 1km to the west of the site. The viewpoint illustrates the extent of intervening vegetation and built form, which affords a strong degree of containment to the site and its immediate setting. Existing residential development to the south east and south of the site, alongside the existing high voltage electricity pylons and main road corridor form notable urbanising features within the field of view and the receiving landscape fabric.

2.28. Viewpoint 6 is taken from the A1245, approximately 1.7Km to the north west of the site. The viewpoint illustrates the extent of vegetation associated with the road corridor, which restricts views to the east. The main road corridor and existing high voltage electricity pylons form notable urbanising features within the view and the receiving landscape fabric.

2.29. Viewpoint 7 is taken from Wheatley Wood, approximately 1Km north west of the site. The viewpoint illustrates the extent of vegetation associated with Wheatley Wood and the existing railway corridor to the north west of the site, which largely restricts views to the south east. Existing development located to the south west and south of the site is perceptible within the field of view located beyond vegetation associated with the site’s localised setting and the railway corridor.

2.30. Viewpoint 8 is taken from a Public Right of Way, approximately 3.2Km north west of the site. The viewpoint illustrates the relationship between the site and its wider setting, being perceptible within the field of view beyond intervening vegetation and built form. Existing residential development to the south east and south of the site
forms notable features within the field of view, alongside the wider settlement setting of Rayleigh to the north of the site.

2.31. Viewpoint 9 is taken from the A127 Southend Arterial Road, approximately 3.4Km west of the site. The viewpoint illustrates the visual presence of existing residential development located to the south of the site, which forms a notable urbanising feature within the field of view.

2.32. A number of viewpoints not taken from publically accessible locations have also been included within Appendix 1. These viewpoints (A – D) illustrate the site in relation to the openness of the surrounding Green Belt, illustrating the perceived gap between existing settlements.

2.33. As an overview, the site is visually well contained from the localised and wider setting. Views of the site are largely localised, with the primary receptors being users of the localised road corridors and existing residential development to the north, east and south. Within these views, existing development forms notable urbanising features (refer Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, C and D). Within the site’s wider setting, the extent of mature vegetation associated with the site’s boundaries and the site’s localised context affords a strong degree of containment, largely restricting views towards the site (refer Viewpoints 6, 7, 8, 9, A and B).

The Proposals

2.34. The Initial Masterplan produced by RG+P accompanies this application. The layout illustrates how sensitively designed residential development could be implemented within the site whilst respecting the characteristics of the localised and wider Green Belt setting. The proposed development seeks to retain all key vegetation where appropriate, with only limited breaks in existing vegetation structure required to allow for access and internal roads. The existing tree belts and blocks of woodland associated with the site boundaries will be reinforced with additional planting and provided an appropriate development offset, ensuring their future health and long term growth.

2.35. Areas of open space have been included throughout the initial layout, breaking up the development, maintaining the character of the settlement edge. Furthermore, the proposed layout incorporates various buffers around the edges of the site to ensure
that the localised Green Belt setting and amenities of neighbouring properties have been appropriately considered. It is intended that any built form on the site would incorporate a simple palette of materials that have been informed by the local setting and vernacular.

2.36. It is considered that alongside the proposed development, a robust landscape strategy will be implemented, comprising extensive tree, shrub and hedgerow planting along the site boundaries. The additional planting will assist in integrating the proposed development into it’s receiving landscape setting and will provide structure to the proposed residential development, tying in with the surrounding existing vegetation along within the site’s immediate context and wider green infrastructure within the setting. This green strategy will not only contribute to the sustainability of the site, but also assists in creating a high quality development which sits well within its landscaped context. Street tree planting and incidental open space within the proposed layout will assist in breaking up and softening the perceived built environment.
3. POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

3.1. An initial appraisal of the site has been undertaken to assess the nature of the change as a result of the principle of residential development in terms of the impact upon the existing landscape character and visual environment within which the site is situated.

3.2. It is considered that the immediate and localised setting has capacity to accommodate sensitively designed and well considered residential development and that a new defensible Green Belt boundary can be provided.

Landscape Related Policy

3.3. As identified within section 2 of this report, the site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Within the NPPF, Paragraph 80 identifies that the Green Belt serves five purposes. These are outlined as being:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

3.4. In addition Paragraph 85 states that “When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:

- ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
- not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
- where necessary, identify in their plans areas of ‘safeguarded land’ between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;
- make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;
3.5. It is considered that the proposed development of the site would form a logical extension to Great Wheatley, with existing residential development located to the north, east and south of the site. Existing development to the south and north of the site already forms a notable urbanising feature within the site’s localised and wider setting to the west, and any proposed development would be seen within this context. The proposed development would not breach the current limits to Rayleigh formed by the major road corridors within the site’s localised context. These act as suitable defensible Green Belt boundaries.

3.6. Alongside any proposed development, it is considered that substantial offsets will be provided to existing field boundaries and tree belts which already afford a strong degree of containment to the site from the wider setting to the west. Inclusion of robust landscape buffers, woodland blocks and open space will be provided where breaks in boundary vegetation occur, and on higher ground within the site. Opportunities exist to enhance and reinforce the existing treebelt along the western site boundary, to the north of Great Wheatley Farm, which would create an enduring Green Belt boundary. The proposals would accord with the NPPF paragraphs 85 and 80, ensuring boundaries are redefined utilising physical and permanent features such as the treebelts and roads with landscape buffers to define the new Green Belt edge. A suitable undeveloped ‘gap’ would be maintained between the redefined Green Belt edge and existing settlements of Thundersley, Basildon and Wickford as illustrated by photography A - D within Appendix 1. Proposals would ensure that the separate settlements within the site’s localised and wider context will not merge through the use of the physical and permanent features as well as maintaining a substantial undeveloped ‘gap’, and development of the site would therefore not result in coalescence. This also ensures that the setting and separate characters of the settlements are preserved.

3.7. The third purpose of the Green Belt is to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. New development proposals will inevitably require some green field land, however the site is not of particularly high landscape value, is influenced by its urban fringe setting and is well contained by adjoining residential development. It is
considered that the extent of mature vegetation within the site’s localised and wider setting would ensure that any impact upon the wider countryside as a result of development would be localised. It is considered that whilst proposed development of the site would develop some green field agricultural land on the edge of Great Wheatley, it would not represent a significant encroachment into the countryside, being contained by the existing urbanising features that are already characterised by the urban edge, and the opportunities that are provided to form a new logical Green Belt boundary along the west of the site through reinforced and new planting.

3.8. In terms of the fourth purpose, this is not considered relevant for this particular site. In terms of the fifth purpose of Green Belts to assist in urban regeneration, at a prima facie level it seems that the use of a Green Belt site is likely to discourage rather than encourage the use of derelict and other urban land. However, Councils are struggling to meet development targets on previously developed land alone and as such some green field sites of lower landscape value need to be considered particularly in terms of the opportunity to meet housing needs and provide a comprehensive scheme with wider social and economic benefits. Consequently, it is considered that the fifth purpose of Green Belts is not being materially compromised by any proposed development within the site.

3.9. It is therefore considered that the exclusion of the site from Green Belt will not significantly affect the characteristics of the surrounding Green Belt designation.

3.10. While it is acknowledged that the development of this site would extend built form into greenfield land, the site is well related to the existing urban edge, with development to the south, east and west with a number of urbanising influences extending to the west. The site presents opportunities to provide sustainable land for residential use within the localised context of the western settlement edge of Rayleigh that can be integrated without harm to the wider landscape setting or Green Belt purposes. Opportunities exist for a redefined Green Belt boundary that could create a more robust and enduring Green Belt edge through the use of structural woodland planting along the western site boundary. It is considered that development of the site for residential uses comply with the aims and objectives of the NPPF, and would not significantly affect the characteristics of the surrounding Green Belt designation. It is therefore considered that the site could be developed in accordance with landscape policies and it is a suitable site in landscape and visual terms for residential development.
Landscape Character

3.11. The context of the immediate site setting is already characterised by the neighbouring built form associated with the wider settlement setting of Rayleigh to the north, east and south, alongside the presence of Great Wheatley Farm to the south west. Existing major road corridors, residential development, large high voltage electricity pylons and a railway corridor all form major urbanising features within the immediate and localised landscape fabric, reducing the perceived tranquility of the site. It is considered that alongside any proposed development, robust landscape buffers will be implemented along the western site boundary, ensuring that the character of the wider setting is not significantly effected by the proposed development and an enduring and defensible Green Belt boundary can be provided. The introduction of a sensitively designed residential scheme could be integrated without significant harm to the existing key characteristics of the site and its setting. The proposed development of the site would be perceived within the context of existing residential properties, road corridors and other urbanising features ensuring that they were not introducing new or alien components. The use of a considered and appropriate palette of materials, informed by the local vernacular will ensure that the proposed development can be integrated into its setting. The incorporation of a comprehensive scheme of landscaping will also assist the integration of the proposal creating a high quality environment in which to live, as well as creating opportunities for ecological and recreation enhancements. The proposals would not require the significant removal of any existing landscape features within the site. It is considered that the site can be developed in accordance with the guidance within the published landscape character assessment.

3.12. In summary, in reviewing effects upon the landscape character, it is considered that whilst some localised harm of the site itself is acknowledged as a result of developing a current green field site, the harm is restricted to the site and its immediate context only and reduces substantially within the wider landscape setting.

3.13. It is considered that the proposed development of the site for residential use could be integrated without significant harm to the existing landscape character of the site and its localised and wider setting. Furthermore development would present opportunities for an enhanced built edge, a defensible Green Belt boundary and could contribute positively in the long term to the shaping of the urban edge of Rayleigh.
Visual Environment

3.14. Within the context of the existing visual environment, it is considered that the site can integrate carefully designed residential development without compromising the amenities or qualities of the localised setting. As illustrated within the visual assessment, views of the site are largely localised, with the primary receptors being local residents associated and road corridors to the north, east and south of the site. Within these views, the site is seen within the context of existing built form associated with the wider settlement setting of Rayleigh to the north, east and south. The mature treescape within the site’s immediate and localised context affords a strong degree of containment in views from the site’s wider setting to the west, however it is acknowledged that occasional glimpsed views of development will be perceptible from a limited number of viewpoints. Any glimpsed views of the proposed development will be seen within the context of existing residential development to the south and north of the site which from notable urbanising features within these views.

3.15. It is considered that alongside any proposed development, the site boundaries would be further reinforced through a robust landscape buffer and planting strategy, assisting in integrating any proposed development into the receiving landscape fabric. The presence of the established treescape within the wider site context will ensure that appropriately designed built form will not appear prominent or overbearing.

3.16. It is therefore considered that the development of the site for residential use can be integrated without significant harm to the receiving visual environment. Any views of the proposed development would be largely localised and seen within the context of existing built form.
4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been appointed by Manor Oak Homes to undertake an initial Landscape and Visual Appraisal relating to the potential for residential development and Green Belt release on land at Great Wheatley, Rayleigh. The site is located directly adjacent to the western built up edge of Rayleigh, with existing development to the north, east and south.

4.2. It is acknowledged that the development of this site would extend built form into greenfield land, however the site is well related to the existing urban edge, with development to the south, east and west with a number of urbanising influences extending to the west. The site presents opportunities to provide sustainable land for residential use within the localised context of the western settlement edge of Rayleigh that can be integrated without harm to the wider landscape setting or Green Belt purposes. Opportunities exist for a redefined Green Belt boundary that could create a more robust and enduring Green Belt edge through the use of structural woodland planting along the western site boundary. It is considered that development of the site for residential uses comply with the aims and objectives of the NPPF, and would not significantly affect the characteristics of the surrounding Green Belt designation. It is therefore considered that the site could be developed in accordance with the adopted and emerging policies of the Local Plan.

4.3. In reviewing effects upon the landscape character, it is considered that whilst some localised harm of the site itself is acknowledged as a result of developing a current green field site, the harm is restricted to the site and its immediate context only and reduces substantially within the wider landscape setting. Development for residential uses on the site would be compatible with the localised context and would link with the existing built up edge of Rayleigh to the north, east and south.

4.4. As illustrated within the visual assessment, views of the site are largely localised, with the primary receptors being local residents associated and road corridors to the north, east and south of the site. Within these views, the site is seen within the context of existing built form associated with the wider settlement setting of Rayleigh to the north, east and south. The mature treescape within the site’s immediate and localised context affords a strong degree of containment in views from the site’s wider setting to the west, however it is acknowledged that occasional glimpsed views of development will be perceptible from a limited number of viewpoints. Any
4.5. The use of an appropriate palette of materials and a carefully considered layout would ensure that the proposed development can be integrated in this location and appear as a suitable addition to the existing urban grain. Currently views towards the site are characterised by a degree of built form associated with its immediate setting. The proposed development will not introduce new components that would appear out of character within the context of these views and would not appear dominant or overbearing within the context of the adjoining streetscene.

4.6. With regards to the potential impact on Green Belt designation, it is considered that where a recognised need for development exists, areas of Green Belt can be considered. The site is considered to be able to accommodate a level of development that could contribute positively in the long term to the shaping of the urban edge of Rayleigh by creating an enduring Green Belt edge. The proposals would accord with the NPPF, in particular paragraphs 85 and 80, ensuring boundaries are redefined utilising physical and permanent features such as the woodland and tree belts with landscape buffers to define the new Green Belt edge. A suitable and substantial undeveloped ‘gap’ would be maintained between the redefined Green Belt edge and existing settlements, and development of the site would therefore not result in coalescence. This also ensures that the setting and separate characters of the settlements are preserved. It is therefore considered that the removal of the site from Green Belt will not significantly affect the characteristics of the surrounding Green Belt designation or compromise the purposes for including land within it.

4.7. It is considered that the site and receiving environment have the capacity and potential to accommodate sensitively designed future residential development. Proposed residential development on the site would not result in significant harm to the wider landscape character or visual environment. It is considered that proposed development of the site for residential development can be supported from a landscape and visual context.
ASPECT PLANS

ASP1 SITE LOCATION PLAN
ASP2 SITE AND SETTING PLAN
APPENDIX 1

VISUAL ASSESSMENT
Viewpoint 1

Viewpoint 2

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 60° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.
Site located beyond intervening vegetation associated with the southern site boundary

Great Wheatsley Road

Existing residential development located off Great Wheatsley Road to the south of the site

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 58mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when printed at A2, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.
High voltage electricity pylons to the north west of the site

A127 Road corridor
Site located beyond intervening vegetation and built form
Kingswood, located off great Wheatley Road to the south west of the site
Existing residential development located on rising ground to the south and south east of the site

Approximate direction of site located beyond intervening vegetation and built form
A1245 Road corridor

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 60° and when printed at A2, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.
N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.
High voltage electricity pylons to the north west of the site

Site located beyond intervening vegetation structure

A127 Road corridor

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 55mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 65° and when printed at A2, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.
Site located beyond intervening vegetation

Kingswood, located off Great Wheatley Road to the south west of the site

Existing residential development located on rising ground to the south of the site

A127 Road corridor

Viewpoint A

High voltage electricity pylons to the north west of the site

Wider setting of Rayleigh to the north of the site

Site

Viewpoint B

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when printed at A2, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.
Viewpoint C

Viewpoint D

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 66° and when printed at A2, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.