

# Appendix 6.1 Landscape and Visual Assessment Method

# Appendix 6.2: Landscape and visual assessment method

- 1.1
- The Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects experienced in LVIA and with regard to the following industry accepted guidance:

  - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013 ; and
  - Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), Guidance for England and Scotland, Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency), 2002.
- 1.2
- The LVIA has been undertaken in a staged approach from desk study reviews and field work, development of primary and secondary mitigation measures and the assessment. While landscape and visual aspects are related studies they are assessed separately. The LVIA has been undertaken Stage 1 – Establishing the initial baseline and study area
- 1.3
- This stage has defined the study area by establishing a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) for the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. This has been achieved through a review of OS contour mapping, aerial photography and field work to undertake inter-visibility studies between The Site and the surrounding area. The inter-visibility studies established the locations within the surrounding area that can be seen from The Site and accordingly would have corresponding views. The ZTV has been mapped manually and this is considered appropriate as there are few elements of the Proposed Development which would extend above the surveyors’ eye line. The study area and ZTV are illustrated on Figure 6.1.

## Stage 2 – Baseline development

- 1.4
- To establish the landscape character areas and visual receptors within the study area a review of OS mapping, aerial photography, existing published landscape character assessments and field work has been undertaken. The sources of information are outlined in Appendix 6.3.

## Stage 3 – Judging the baseline and establishing the sensitivity to change

### Landscape Baseline

- 1.5
- As part of identifying landscape character areas and establishing the sensitivity of the landscape resource to change within the study area, judgments on their condition, tranquility and value have been made. This is in accordance with the approach outlined within the LVIA industry guidance. The criteria used to define the scale of the landscape condition, tranquility and value are:

Table 6.1.1 Landscape Criteria

Landscape Features	Scale	Criteria
Condition (the physical state of the landscape such as the built form or vegetation/farmland)	Good	Appears to be well maintained or not in need of repair or compliant with landscape management objectives.
	Fair	Appears to be relatively well maintained or part compliant with landscape management objectives.
	Poor	Appears damaged or not maintained or not compliant with landscape management objectives.
Tranquility (subjective view on the scale of development, audible levels of noise and lighting)	High	Low density development with notable open space, low levels of audible noise from transport sources and largely unlit.
	Medium	Medium levels of density, characterised by residential areas with intermittent open space, medium levels of audible noise from transport sources with noticeable lighting.
	Low	High density due to mixed land usages of residential, industrial and commercial, high levels of audible noise from transport sources, with very noticeable lighting and light spillage.
Value (relative value relating to landscape policies and subjective community usage)	High	International or nationally designated landscape e.g. a National Park. Highly used by the local community.
	Medium	Regional or borough designations, used by the local community, including Conservation Areas and designated open spaces.
	Low	Limited or no designations, few or no distinguishing landscape features and low to limited usage by the local community.

- 1.6
- The above criteria have been considered to establish the sensitivity of change of the identified landscape character areas. The sensitivity to change is the ability of the identified character areas to accommodate the Proposed Development, based on judgments on the susceptibility to change and the condition, tranquillity and value of the character area. This is recorded as high, medium or low as follows:

Table 6.1.2 Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity	Criteria
High	In good condition High levels of tranquility A landscape of international or national value. Is characterised by landscape features which are rare or distinctive. Limited capacity for change. High levels of tranquility. In good condition.
Medium	In a fair condition Medium levels of tranquility A landscape with local value. A designated open space or conservation area. Is characterised by landscape features which can be replaced. Capacity for some change.
Low	In poor condition Low levels of tranquility A landscape with limited value. Is characterised by landscape features which can easily be replaced. Capacity to change.

Visual Baseline

- 1.7 Field work has been undertaken to identify visual receptors and record their existing view via photographic record (as appropriate) and written descriptions. Due to the extent of public access across in proximity to The Site, the visual receptors include:
  - representative viewpoints from across Hampstead Heath, as a large number of potential views cannot all be included;
  - specific viewpoints for certain receptor groups, such as residences or designated views; and
  - verified views or photomontages, which are specifically located and illustrate the existing view and the Proposed Development. A photomontage is the superimposition of an image onto a photograph for the purpose of creating a representation of potential changes to the view. The methodology for the verified views is included within the LVIA Appendix 6.2.
- 1.8 To establish the existing views, publicly accessible locations has been visited during the field work. In the case of areas where access has not been permitted, such as residential properties, the description of the view and the corresponding photograph is taken from the nearest publicly accessible location.
- 1.9 The sensitivity to change of the visual receptors is based on the following criteria, derived from sections 6.32, 6.33 and 6.34 of the GLVIA:

Table 6.1.3 Visual Sensitivity

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
High	Residents at home, outdoor recreation, Heath users, designated or protected view locations.
Medium	Transport users or those in care, school or hospital.
Low	Employment users and outdoor sport.

Stage 4 – Mitigation

- 1.10 The LVIA baseline studies have informed the design stages of the Proposed Development, with the aim of preventing/avoiding, reducing and compensating any potential significant adverse effects. This has been achieved through primary and secondary mitigation measures that are embedded into the Proposed Development. These mitigation measures are outlined in Appendix 6.4.

Stage 5 – Assessment

- 1.11 The assessment stage is based on a review of the Proposed Development during construction, operation year 1 (winter) and operation year 15 (summer) and the potential effects this phases would have on the landscape resource and visual receptors. This is defined as the nature of effect, i.e. magnitude of change that the Proposed Development would result in. The criteria for landscape includes for the size and scale of change, the geographical extent and the duration and reversibility of the Proposed Development. This is expressed as high, medium or low as follows:

Table 6.1.4 Landscape Magnitude

Landscape Magnitude	Criteria
High	Major alteration (loss or addition) to the landscape, including for features that make a rare or distinct contribution to the landscape character.  The Proposed Development is likely to cover a large geographic area, covering several landscape character types.  The change is likely to be long term.
Medium	Moderate alteration (loss or addition) to the landscape features which make a contribution to the landscape character.  The Proposed Development is likely to cover an immediate setting or landscape character type.  The change is likely to occur for the medium term.
Low	Minor alteration (loss or addition) to the landscape to features which make a contribution to the landscape character.  The Proposed Development is likely to cover a localised setting only at the site level.  The change is likely to occur for the short term.
Negligible	Very minor alteration to the landscape features which make a contribution to the landscape character, such that it may be considered no overall change.

- 1.12 In accordance with paragraph 6.38 of the GLVIA the visual magnitude of change is related to the size, scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the Proposed Development. The criteria for this are

Table 6.1.5 Visual Magnitude

Visual Magnitude	Criteria
High	Total loss or major alteration to the key compositional features of the view. Change is at close range, open views, or within the direct angle of view. The change within the view is likely to be for the long term.
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to the key compositional features of the view. Change may be at close range but partially screened by intervening features or not within the direct angle of view. The change within the view is likely to be for the medium term.
Low	Minor loss or alteration to the key compositional features of the view. Change is likely to be largely screened by intervening features, viewed obliquely or a minor component of a panoramic view. The change within the view is likely to be short term.
Negligible	Very minor changes to the composition of the view, or such that the new features are largely characteristic of the view. Change may be almost entirely screened by existing features.

Stage 6 – Assessment Conclusion

1.13 For both the landscape and visual amenity, the assessment of effects is established though the combination of the relationship between the sensitivity to change and the magnitude of change. The criteria for landscape effects are defined as follows:

Table 6.1.6 Landscape Effect Criteria

Landscape Effect	Landscape Criteria
Major adverse (significant)	The Proposed Development would not be compatible with the existing landscape character and may result in the irreversible loss of mature, rare or distinct features that contribute to the landscape character. The adverse effects may cover an extensive area. The landscape features may be of inter-national or national value.
Moderate adverse (significant)	The Proposed Development would be partially compatible with the existing landscape character, although a variance. The adverse effects may range between localised and extensive areas. The landscape features may be of regional or borough value.
Minor adverse	The Proposed Development would be largely compatible with the existing landscape character, although a slight variance. The adverse effects may be reversible or localised. The landscape features may be of local value.
Negligible	The Proposed Development would be compatible with the existing landscape character.
Minor beneficial	The Proposed Development would improve and enhance the landscape character. The scale of improvement may be at a localised scale.

Landscape Effect	Landscape Criteria
Moderate beneficial (significant)	The Proposed Development would improve and enhance the landscape character to an extent that any lost, rare or distinctive features are partially restored.
Major beneficial (significant)	The Proposed Development would improve the landscape character to the extent that any lost, rare or distinctive features are fully restored. The scale of improvement may be over an extensive area.

1.14 The criteria for visual effects are defined as follows:

Table 6.1.7 Visual Effect Criteria

Visual Effect	Criteria
Major adverse (significant)	The Proposed Development would result in a marked deterioration in the view. The Proposed Development would be contrary to national or borough policies on designated or protected views.
Moderate adverse (significant)	The Proposed Development would result in a noticeable deterioration in the view. The Proposed Development would be contrary to local policies on designated or protected views.
Minor adverse	The Proposed Development would result in a discernible deterioration in the view.
Negligible	The Proposed Development would reflect the character and composition of the existing view.
Minor beneficial	The Proposed Development would result in a discernible improvement to the view.
Moderate beneficial (significant)	The Proposed Development would result in a noticeable improvement to the view.
Major beneficial (significant)	The Proposed Development would result in a marked improvement in the view.