OMEGA ZONE 8, ST HELENS

Omega St Helens Ltd / T. J. Morris Limited

Document Title
ES Vol. 1 Chapter 10 Landscape and Visual
Document No. OPP DOC.11.10

Omega St Helens / T. J. Morris Limited

OMEGA ZONE 8, ST. HELENS

Environmental Statement Volume 1 - Main Text
OPP DOC.11.10 Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual

70060349-CH10
DECEMBER 2019

PUBLIC

Omega **St Helens / T. J. Morris Limited**

OMEGA ZONE 8, ST. HELENS

Environmental Statement Volume 1 - Main Text
OPP DOC.11.10 Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual

TYPE OF DOCUMENT (VERSION) PUBLIC

PROJECT NO. 70060349

OUR REF. NO. 70060349-CH10

DATE: DECEMBER 2019

WSP

8 First Street
Manchester
M15 4RP

Phone: +44 161 200 5000

WSP.com

CONTENTS

TABLES

10. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

10.1. INTRODUCTION

10.1.1. This chapter reports the outcome of the assessment of likely significant effects arising from the Proposed Development upon landscape and visual receptors.

10.1.2. The assessment of landscape and visual impact has established that no additional mitigation measures are required, beyond those proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures presented in **Table 3-1** of **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development**.

10.1.3. The following residual effects have been identified:

- Permanent and enduring effects upon both landscape character and landscape features arising from construction of the Proposed Development. Similarly, enduring residual effects upon landscape character and landscape features as a result of operational activity.
- Residual visual effects upon a range of receptors, temporary effects during construction, but permanent effects arising from operation. During operation, the anticipated effect upon receptors would reduce over time as mitigation planting matures.
- There are likely to be both direct, and indirect, permanent effects upon landscape character and landscape features, assessed to be moderate/major adverse (significant) upon landscape features and major adverse (significant) upon landscape character arising from construction. Such effects are assessed to be of moderate adverse (significant) for both landscape character and landscape features during the operational stage.
- In respect of visual receptors, a range of effects have been assessed with significant, or potentially significant, adverse residual impacts identified at a relatively low number of locations.

10.1.4. No specific monitoring requirements have been identified. It is assumed that all new planting areas would be maintained in accordance with relevant British Standards and good horticultural practice to ensure establishment and long term development. Similarly, it is assumed that during construction, existing vegetation would be protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations' and that during the operational phase, existing vegetation would be managed in accordance with relevant British Standards and good arboricultural practice.

10.1.5. The following enhancement opportunities have been identified:

- Creation of new wild flora meadow and grassland.
- The establishment of new ponds and wetlands, in addition to the SUDs attention basins.

10.1.6. The remainder of this chapter describes the assessment methodology and the baseline conditions relevant to the assessment, which have been used to reach these conclusions, as well as a summary of the likely significant effects leading to the additional mitigation measures required to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any likely significant adverse effects, and the likely residual effects and any required monitoring after these measures have been employed. Opportunities for enhancement, where such opportunities exist, are also discussed.

10.1.7. This chapter (and its associated figures and appendices) is intended to be read as part of the wider ES, with particular reference to **Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage** and **Chapter 9: Biodiversity**.

10.2. CONSULTATION, SCOPE, METHODOLOGY AND SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN TO DATE

10.2.1. **Table 10-1** provides a summary of the consultation activities undertaken in support of the preparation of this assessment.

Table 10-1 - Summary of consultation undertaken

Body / organisation	Individual / stat body / organisation	Meeting dates and other forms of consultation	Summary of outcome of discussions
St. Helens Council	Mike Roberts; Trees and Woodlands Officer, St. Helens Council	Meeting, 13 November 2019	Provision of consultation notes in respect of scoping. Selection of viewpoint locations.

SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

10.2.2. The scope of this assessment has been established through an ongoing scoping process. Further information can be found in **Chapter 5: Approach to EIA**.

10.2.3. This section provides an update to the scope of the assessment and updates the evidence base for scoping out elements following further iterative assessment.

10.2.4. Detailed field inspection to inform the landscape and visual impact assessment has resulted in refinement of the study area boundary. The study area has been extended further north to encompass, and assess potential effects at, residential areas and public open space to the north of Travers Entry. The study area boundary to the west has been drawn to coincide with the fringe of Sutton Manor as a result of limited opportunities for views to the application site from this location.

ELEMENTS SCOPED OUT OF THE ASSESSMENT

10.2.5. There are no elements that are scoped out of the assessment.

ELEMENTS SCOPED INTO THE ASSESSMENT

Construction Phase

10.2.6. The following elements are considered to have the potential to give rise to likely significant effects during construction of the Proposed Development and have therefore been considered within this assessment:

- Construction compounds
- Soil stripping/groundworks; and
- Building construction.

Operation Phase

10.2.7. The following elements are considered to have the potential to give rise to likely significant effects during operation of the Proposed Development and have therefore been considered within this assessment:

- Completed buildings; and
- Associated infrastructure.

EXTENT OF THE STUDY AREA

10.2.8. The potential area of visual influence, based upon appropriate desk study and field inspection, has been considered. The area extends 2.5 km to the north of the application site boundary (to Travers Entry), 2.5 km to the west (to the fringe of Sutton Manor); 1.5 km to the south (to Warrington Road), and 1 km to the east (to within the ongoing development at Omega Business Park). This study area is illustrated at **Figure 10.1**; which also indicates the extent of the application site.

10.2.9. The study area has been identified on the basis of potential landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development and in accordance with the principles set out within paragraph 5.2 of the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition: Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013)' (Ref. 10.3).

METHOD OF BASELINE DATA COLLATION

DESK STUDY

10.2.10. Desk study has included examination of relevant planning documents in respect of landscape related policies and designations. Research has been undertaken to identify any relevant landscape character assessments, that contribute to definition of the landscape baseline, at national, regional and local level.

10.2.11. The following documents form the basis of desk based assessment for the landscape and visual impact assessment:

- St. Helens Local Plan Core Strategy (October 2012) (Ref. 10.8);
- St. Helens Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies (adopted 2 July 1998, amended 27 September 2007) (Ref. 10.9);
- St. Helens Borough Local Plan 2010-2035 (Ref. 10.6);
- Bold Forest Area Action plan (July 2017) (Ref. 10.7);
- National Character Area 60 'Mersey Valley' (Natural England 2013) (Ref. 10.4);
- St. Helens Council/LUC: Landscape Character Assessment for St. Helens (January 2006) (Ref. 10.10);
- Museum of Liverpool/English Heritage: Merseyside Historic Characterisation Project (December 2011) (Ref. 10.12); and
- Warrington Borough Council: 'Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment' (2007) (Ref. 10.11).

SITE VISITS AND SURVEYS

10.2.12. Members of the landscape team have undertaken site visits, including field inspection of the wider landscape, on 16 September, 10 November and 15 November 2019.

10.2.13. Field inspection was undertaken initially to identify potential receptors and site conditions. Following this, fieldwork included assessment of the view from receptors and supporting viewpoint photography.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

10.2.14. The landscape and visual impact assessment has been undertaken in accordance with current best practice, namely:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition: Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment: Natural England (October 2014) (Ref. 10.5);
- Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 08/2015 (February 2016) (Ref. 10.2); and,
- Landscape Institute: Visual Representation of Development Proposals; Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (September 2019) (Ref. 10.1).

10.2.15. The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) set out a detailed and appropriate methodology for undertaking assessment. GLVIA3 states (at paragraph 1.1) that, *"LVIA is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and amenity."* At paragraph 2.21, GLVIA3 further states that, *"the two components of LVIA are:*

- *assessment of landscape effects: assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;*
- *assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general amenity experienced by people."*

10.2.16. The two elements are inter-linked and both must be addressed by LVIA.

10.2.17. The assessment of potential landscape effects has referenced existing national and local landscape character assessments e.g. Landscape Character Assessment for St. Helens (January 2006), supplemented by field inspection to fully establish a detailed baseline for the subsequent assessment.

10.2.18. In respect of the visual baseline, receptors within the study area were identified by both desk top mapping and field inspection. The sensitivity has been established in accordance with GLVIA3.

10.2.19. Representative viewpoints (photographs) were selected, the location agreed in consultation with St. Helens Council, to support the assessment. Photography was undertaken using a full frame digital camera in accordance with Technical Guidance Note 06/19 noted above.

10.2.20. Based upon the nature of the Proposed Development, the potential magnitude of change during both construction and operational periods has been assessed, taking account of the 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures (refer to **Table 3-1** of **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development**) proposed to reduce or ameliorate likely significant effects upon landscape and visual amenity.

10.2.21. The likely significant effects arising from the Proposed Development has been assessed and the detailed effect upon both landscape and visual receptors is presented within **Appendix 10.1**. A detailed analysis of the visual impacts at receptor locations in respect of construction, operation and residual effects is provided in tabulated form at **Appendix 10.1**.

10.2.22. The LVIA has also considered potential cumulative effects to an agreed list of developments within the study area.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

10.2.23. The significance level attributed to each effect has been assessed based on the sensitivity/value of the affected receptor(s) and the magnitude of change arising from the Proposed Development, as well as a number of other factors that are outlined in more detail in **Chapter 5: Approach to EIA**. The sensitivity of affected landscape and visual receptors is assessed on a scale of very high, high, medium and low, and the magnitude of change is assessed on a scale of high, medium, low and negligible, aligned with GLVIA3.

EFFECT SIGNIFICANCE

10.2.24. The following terms have been used to define the significance of the effects identified and apply to both beneficial and adverse effects:

- **Very Major Effect**: where the Proposed Development could be expected to have a substantial improvement or deterioration on a Very High sensitivity receptor;
- **Major effect**: where the Proposed Development could be expected to have a substantial improvement or deterioration on receptors;
- **Moderate effect**: where the Proposed Development could be expected to have a noticeable improvement or deterioration on receptors;
- **Minor effect**: where the Proposed Development could be expected to result in a perceptible improvement or deterioration on receptors; and
- **Negligible**: where no discernible improvement or deterioration is expected as a result of the Proposed Development on receptors, including instances where no change is confirmed.

10.2.25. As set out in **Chapter 5: Approach to EIA**, effects that are classified as **moderate or above** are considered to be **significant**. Effects classified as below **moderate** are considered to be **not significant**.

10.3. BASELINE CONDITIONS

LANDSCAPE

National Landscape Character

10.3.1. The application site lies wholly within National Character Area (NCA) 60: 'Mersey Valley' (Natural England 2013). The Mersey Valley character area is described as a wide, low-lying, river valley landscape focussed on the River Mersey, its estuary, associated tributaries and waterways. The landscape is noted to be varied, extending from mosslands near the Manchester Conurbation in the east to the wide estuary with intertidal mudflats/sand flats and saltmarsh to the west. Key characteristics are noted to be:

- The landscape is low-lying, focusing on the broad linear valley of the River Mersey; it is estuarine in the west and has extensive areas of reclaimed mossland in the east.
- Underlain by Triassic sandstone, the surface geology is principally drift material: marine and river alluvium in the valley bottom, extensive areas of till, pockets of glacial sands and gravels, with peat in some drainage hollows.
- The Mersey Estuary is a defining element in the landscape, with expansive intertidal mudflats/sand flats and low exposed cliffs.
- The River Mersey flows from east to west, joined by associated tributaries, although the Mersey itself is often obscured from view.

- Trees and woodland are mainly associated with settlements, occasional parkland and isolated woodland blocks; and in recent years new community woodlands have been planted.
- Large-scale, open, predominantly flat, high-quality farmland occurs between developments, with primarily arable farming to the north of the valley and a mixture of arable and dairying to the south.
- The field pattern is regular and large scale, often defined by hedgerows with isolated hedgerow trees; many hedgerows are intermittent and have been replaced by post-and-wire fencing, while field boundaries on the mosses are marked by ditches.
- A range of important wetland habitats remain, including estuarine mudflats/sand flats and fringing salt marshes in the west, remnants of semi-natural mosslands and pockets of basin peats in the east, with the broad river valley in between.
- The predominant building material is red brick though some sandstone construction remains, and some survival of earlier timber frame.
- There are densely populated urban and suburban areas, with major towns particularly at the river crossings, including Runcorn, Widnes and Warrington.
- There is large-scale, highly visible industrial development, with docks, chemical works and oil refineries.
- The river valley has a dense communication network with motorways, roads, railways and canals running east–west, and power lines are also prominent.

Borough Landscape Character

10.3.2. A borough level landscape character assessment (LCA) was undertaken by LUC Ltd, on behalf of St. Helens Council, and published in January 2006. This LCA assessed, and subsequently categorised, both the townscape and landscape of St. Helens into a series of character types with sub-division into smaller areas. An LCA also describes over-arching issues that may affect the landscape including landscape quality, potential forces for change, sensitivity and capacity, and relevant strategies.

10.3.3. In respect of townscape, such character areas are classified on the basis of land use and age of development. A series of separate, landscape character types and areas were also classified. Typically, landscape character types/areas describe geographical areas that share key characteristics relating to land use, topography, vegetation cover and visual aspects. The sub-division of landscape character types typically offers a more local level of assessment and provides a reference point for the potential effects arising from a particular development.

10.3.4. The application site is situated within landscape character type number (LCT) 5 'Wooded Former Estate' (WFE), specifically landscape area WFE 4 Bold Hall. The LCA describes the over-arching characteristics of the 'Wooded Former Estate' character type as:

- a number of character areas of varying size across the Borough, where the frequency and size of mature woodland groups associated with former estate landscapes is a principal feature. The preponderance of mature woodland creates a partially enclosed landscape which is draped over the agricultural landscape;
- the woodland appears in a variety of forms, typically of mature deciduous woodland belts enclosing areas of farmland, but in addition remnants of tree avenues, lines and belts and single mature specimen trees within field are present. The changing character of the mature woodland creates a sense of grandeur and maturity to the landscape;

- the strength of the former estates are reinforced by the presence of landscape features including prominent estate houses and building of similar construction and often in blonde sandstone quarried locally, stone walls and decorative entrance pillars;
- landform varies over the character type but is typically of a rolling undulating landform where the experience changes from being enclosed by adjacent topography to open wide views over the surrounding landscape only partially interrupted by the presence of woodland;
- in many instance (*sic*) the underlying larger agricultural landscape has medium to large scale fields and associated with mature blocks of woodland creates a large scale landscape;
- obvious aesthetic qualities to the landscapes, the place often form areas of interest for recreation.

10.3.5. The landscape character area at Bold Hall (WFE 4) provides the following description of the local area:

- unlike the rolling elevated topography of the estate landscape to the north, Bold character area is located on the flat expansive floodplain landscape to the extreme south of the Borough, at an average elevation of 25metres AOD;
- this rural landscape has an open, strongly horizontal composition which is interrupted by a number of mature woodland plantations and shelterbelts that break up the large scale field patterns. Whilst many of the hedgerow field boundaries are still intact, the large scale of the fields still retain a dominating open character. Within this open landscape and wider woodland structure, a series of small field ponds are located in the field system, denoted by the associated small woodland groups which punctuate the horizontal landform;
- located on the floodplain which subtly slopes south down to the River Mersey, views are typically focused southwards reinforced by the prominent vertical towers of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station which are focal point in many views, although the woodland blocks help to screen views at many locations. Views northwards are limited by the pronounced small scale hill features of the spoil heaps which seek to physically and visually separate this character area from the urban landscape to the north;
- the character area is further separated from the settled landscape to the north by the M62 corridor which borders the area to the north. Running at partial grade on subtle embankments, the route corridor reinforces the experience of separation by the spoil heaps from the wider Borough to the north;
- the character area is relatively uninhabited with a prominent cluster of vernacular buildings at Old Bold Hall Farm, access from the surrounding road network by track. Small settlement at cross roads of Bold Heath where the vernacular settlement of dark red brick buildings have been extended by more recent development;
- reinforcing the historical landscape character are remnant features of past estate use such as ornamental gates and stone walls, although the former estate does not have a strongly defined edge within which the woodland landscape sits.

10.3.6. The landscape analysis notes that there is, *"Strong open horizontal landform character" and there are, "Series of mature prominent woodland plantations"*. Noted negative features include, *"Separation and fragmentation…by route of M62"*, a *"Degraded landscape structure with some loss of field boundaries"*, *"Whilst the towers at Fiddlers Ferry form a series of dramatic features in views from the landscape, they do impose an industrial character on the rural landscape"*, and *"Ribbon development sprawling along from small vernacular settlements"*. The area is considered to be rural and have, *"no developed edge"*.

10.3.7. The 'Judgement about Potential to Accommodate Development' in the LCA notes, *"Whilst the character area has a large scale landscape character with a number of prominent woodland blocks which offer screening, the horizontal landform is inherently sensitive to development and change which could interrupt the horizontal composition. Development could encroach upon the interplay of open to enclosed space and create a visually and physically 'cluttered' landscape fragmenting the large scale. However where carefully sited with the appropriate scale and form of development, there may be potential for small scale landscape change taking due cognisance of the existing landscape patterns"*.

10.3.8. Given the close proximity of character type LCT 7 'Floodplain Farmland', located to the north, west and south of the 'Wooded Former Estate' character type, the key characteristics of this landscape character type are also described. The area identified as 'Floodplain Farmland' includes landscape area FF 3 'Clock Face Farming' and FF 4 'Bold Heath'.

10.3.9. The over-arching characteristics of character type 'Floodplain Farmland' are noted to be:

- predominantly flat open and expansive landform subtly falling in elevation southwards to the River Mersey floodplain;
- large scale agricultural arable landscape with large fields, partially enclosed by hedgerow remnant, but interspersed with drainage ditches which retain an open character to the landscape;
- open landscape allows wide views across the flat land although there is a foreshortening of distance in the view. Strong visual pull southwards to the industrial skyline along the Mersey and in particular the prominent vertical chimneys to Fiddlers Ferry Power Station;
- open landscape with a lack of woodland blocks. Some isolated trees in hedgerows and tree copses associated with field ponds;
- agricultural land shows signs of degradation i.e. loss of field boundaries and hedgerows, and derelict agriculture buildings;
- encroaching urban elements are evident such as new housing along the roads, lighting, and kerbs. Main road corridors cross the landscape in simple straight alignments reflects horizontal flat landscape;
- isolated farms as well as some industrial and commercial buildings often found intermittently throughout the landscape;
- pronounced small scale hills of former spoil heap areas situated immediately to the north form visual horizon and elevated backdrop to the flat landscape;
- often prominent developed edge visible over wide distances.

10.3.10. The landscape character area at Clock Face Farming (FF 3) provides the following description of the local area:

- larger character area, of predominantly flat landform running down to the Mersey floodplain to the south. The area is open and exposed and any vertical elements become strong visual foci within views across the horizontal landscape composition. This is the case with pylon lines and especially Fiddlers Ferry Power Station to the south;
- mature shelterbelts and hedgerows are present bounding the few large scale irregular fields, although the majority are degraded and do little to impose a strong landscape pattern. Small irregular belts and pockets of mature woodland are associated with small tributary streams which cross the landscape. In addition, small woodland copses denoted the location of field ponds;
- the unnatural strong line of the M62 forms a boundary to the area to the north, and despite the proximity, due to the flat landscape, and low angle of view the road corridor is only delineated by

the frequent movement of traffic along the route and the line of roadside vegetation along the verge;
- there are sporadic isolated large farms within the landscape, although there are a number of unsympathetic buildings present. These include highly visible petrol stations and office buildings;
- pronounced hill features of the former spoil heaps are key focal points and form a physical setting to the flat landscape and often enclose or restrict views to the wider landscape.

10.3.11. The landscape analysis for this area describes, *"Some mature woodland blocks along water features" and a "Flat horizontal landscape composition"*. Negative features consist of, *"Degradation of field boundaries and shelterbelts"*, and the *"Physical and visual influence of the motorway corridor and movement of traffic"*.

10.3.12. The area is noted to have, *"a small section of landscape abutting the developed edge of Clock Face"*.

10.3.13. Potential to accommodate development is noted as, *"Some limited opportunities exist for small scale development within the character area in tandem with the enhancement of an appropriate structure", and, "Siting and scale of development should reflect the existing small farm clusters and seek to retain the balance of open and enclosed space"*.

10.3.14. The landscape character area at Bold Heath (FF 4) offers the following description of the local area:

- largest of the floodplain landscapes located to the extreme south of the Borough. In places the southern boundary, defined by the administrative boundary, is arbitrary and therefore the landscape character is likely to extend into adjacent council area;
- landform is overriding flat landform running down to the Mersey floodplain to the south. The area is open and exposed and any vertical elements become strong visual foci. This is the case with pylon lines and especially Fiddlers Ferry Power Station to the south;
- the arable agricultural landscape is composed of large scale geometric fields almost in a loose grid pattern situated perpendicular to the main parallel A roads which run north west to south east between the M62 and Penketh. Mature shelterbelts and hedgerows bound the fields, although the majority are degraded which reinforces the open landscape character. There are also small pockets of mature woodland associated with hedgerows and field ponds;
- to the northwest the grade separated motorway junction and associated embankments forms a pronounced boundary to the area and is a dominant visual feature containing views;
- there are sporadic isolated large farms some of vernacular stone or red brick construction within the landscape accessed immediately off the parallel roads. In addition, there are a number of more recent buildings and residential dwellings along the rod (*sic*) which are unsympathetic in scale and design to the vernacular. These include highly visible petrol stations and office buildings which form a ribbon of development;
- former spoil heaps are key focal points and backdrops to the landscape and often enclose or restrict views to the wider landscape;
- pylon lines to the south and west impose large scale vertical features which reinforce the influence of urban feature in the landscape unsympathetic to the rural character;
- highly visible residential developed edge to the south and south east, which whilst outwith the Borough landscape, form prominent hard visual edges to the character area.

10.3.15. The administrative boundary of St. Helens Council is located to the immediate eastern boundary of the application site, further east is land within Warrington Borough Council. Given the close

proximity of the latter i.e. within the immediate environs of the Proposed Development, reference has also been made to the LCA published by Warrington Borough Council, namely 'Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment' (2007). The LCA divides the District into a series of six, basic 'Landscape Character Types' (LCT) which describe geographical areas that share key characteristics relating to land use, topography, vegetation cover, settlement pattern and visual aspects. Each basic LCT is then sub-divided, where relevant, into 'Landscape Character Areas' that share the fundamental characteristics of the LCT, but also have a distinct and recognisable local character/identity. The immediate environs, are located within LCT 4: Level Areas of Farmland & Former Airfields, specifically 4B, the former Burtonwood Airfield.

10.3.16. These are typically large areas of even, reasonably flat ground found at former airfields constructed during WW2 and subject to extensive levelling operations. The LCT description notes that the former Burtonwood airfield, the site of Omega, has largely been demolished with only remnant runways and hangers to the north of the M62; since the LCA was prepared those areas north of the M62 have now been cleared and replaced with large scale distribution warehouses. Operational use of local airfields ceased between the 1950's and 1960's when the local motorway network was constructed. Significant volumes of hardcore were reclaimed during demolition of the former airfield by crushing the concrete runways. Key characteristics of LCT 4 are noted as:

- Level ground.
- Open expansive and often exposed areas.
- Historic land use.
- Often a lack of visible agricultural heritage.

10.3.17. The Local Landscape Character Area 4B covers land that was formerly Burtonwood Airfield to the south of the M62. At the time of writing (the Warrington Borough Council LCA), the airfield had been demolished and materials removed with temporary reinstatement to grassland in preparation for redevelopment to commercial/industrial uses. Some natural regeneration of small copses and individual trees had taken place to create a 'wooded' fringe to the area.

10.3.18. Key characteristics of the Local Landscape Character Area 4B are described as:

- Level ground
- Visual and audible dominance of M62
- Presence of 'fringe' deciduous trees/woodland
- Central open space/grassland
- Very large scale with open views
- Absence of agricultural heritage

10.3.19. In respect of cultural history, it is noted, *"Burtonwood Airfield was constructed in 1940 and became a famous American airbase during WW2. Burtonwood was the largest (RAF) airfield in Europe during WW2, with the most USAAF personnel and the longest runway"*. Further, *"By the end of WW2, 18,000 servicemen were based at Burtonwood, but by the end of WW2 Burtonwood was returned to the RAF"*.

10.3.20. Operational use continued during the 1940's and with the advent of the Cold War, Burtonwood became a reception base for aircraft involved in the Berlin airlift. USAAF aircraft, namely the B29 'Superfortress', were stationed at Burtonwood as part of the deterrent against potential Soviet aggression in Europe. Burtonwood continued to play an active role during the 1950's and 1960's, becoming the base for a USAAF 'Weather Reconnaissance Squadron' (between 1953 and 1959)

and a US Army base in 1967. Burtonwood, as an airfield, effectively ceased to function in 1971 when the M62 was constructed. The control tower and other structures were demolished by the Warrington and Runcorn Development Corporation in the 1980's.

10.3.21. The LCA notes that, *"Following demolition of all hard structures and surfaces in the 1980's, the land was advertised as the largest single area of development in Europe"*. The LCA also confirms that the application site is considered to have a low landscape sensitivity with parts that may be assigned as high; these judgements being made before the recent onset of large scale commercial/industrial development. Retention of trees and woodland within the application site is considered important together with ponds and connecting ditches. Areas of ecological value are also noted.

10.3.22. The LCA also highlights the irrevocable changes brought to the once open farmland between Great Sankey and Burtonwood by construction of the WW2 airfield, decline since closure of the airfield and construction of the M62; which effectively bisected the airfield.

Local Landscape Character

10.3.23. To supplement the LCAs at national and borough level, an appraisal has been undertaken of the landscape attributes at a local level. In accordance with current character assessment guidance, this local level assessment encompasses the following criteria:

- 'The elements that make up the landscape in the study area, including
  - Physical influences – geology, soils, landform, drainage and water bodies;
  - Land cover, including different types of vegetation and patterns and types of tree cover;
  - The influence of human activity, including land use and management, the character of settlements and buildings, and pattern and types of fields and enclosure;
- The aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape – such as, for example, its scale, complexity, openness, tranquillity or wildness;
- The overall character of the landscape in the study area, including any distinctive Landscape Character Types or areas that can be identified, and the particular combinations of elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects that make each distinctive, usually by identification as key characteristics of the landscape.'

10.3.24. Key elements of local landscape character are noted at **Table 10-2** below.

Table 10-2 - Local landscape elements

Physical Influences	• New red sandstone (Triassic period) to the south-east and pebble beds to the north-west with a north/south fault line just east of Bold Hall. Coal measures to the north-west beyond Sutton Leach. • The landform is gently sloping to the south-east towards the River Mersey with flat, open areas adjacent to the M62. • The local area is generally low lying with a highpoint @ 30m AOD adjacent to the M62 overbridge at the northern fringe of the application site. • The low-lying ground results in a network of drains within the agricultural land that drain to the south and east. There are numerous ponds within the landscape.
Land Cover	• Land cover is predominantly agricultural, arable with small areas of pasture. • There are a number of deciduous woodland blocks, many of which date beyond the mid 19th century forming part of parkland at Bold Park. There are more recent shelterbelts and plantations.

	• Hedgerows are occasional features in the landscape. • Some woodland blocks follow ditches/streams. • Recreational areas, in the form of a golf course close to Warrington Road and country parks at Clock Face and Sutton Manor, are present within the local landscape.
Influence of Human Activity	• There are major settlements at Warrington, to the south-east, and St. Helens to the north-west. The suburban extents of both lie within, or close by. • There are a small number of discrete villages and hamlets including Burtonwood to the north and Bold Heath to the east. A number of former villages, including Sutton Leach, Penketh and Sankey have been subsumed by the expansion of both St. Helens and Warrington. • The field pattern consists primarily larger, irregular fields many which are the result of successive enclosure; most likely from the medieval period on. There are smaller fields to the south closer to the River Mersey. • Infrastructure is evident locally and includes the M62, local highways and the overhead electricity distribution line. • The substantive built form at Omega South and Omega North is located to the east with extensive residential development to the south-east. • Remnant colliery sites to the north-west have resulted in reclaimed/restored land that now form the country parks at Clock Face and Sutton Manor.
Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects	• The landscape is relatively open and of larger scale with some visual containment by local woodland blocks and built form. • Landscape elements are a mixture of simple (predominantly the agricultural landscape) and more complex (the areas of built form). • The landscape is managed with few 'wild' areas. • There is a lack of tranquillity close to the M62 and the built up areas, however to the north-west and at open spaces within the built up areas, there are pockets of tranquillity.
Overall Character of the Landscape	• A generally flattish landform with local elevation created by built earthworks. • A well-managed, agricultural land use and built form predominates. • There are numerous, small woodland blocks/plantations. • Hedgerows that bound the field system are relatively sparse, some link woodland areas. • The low-lying land features a network of drainage ditches, streams and ponds. • Close to the M62, infrastructure and commercial development dominate.

Historic Landscape Character

10.3.25. The County level 'Merseyside Historic Landscape Characterisation Project' (Museum of Liverpool/English Heritage), published in December 2011, included reporting of the administrative area of St. Helens.

10.3.26. The application site consists of two Broad Character Types, 'Field System' (916) and 'Woodland' (301). The Broad Character Types are sub-divided into Sub Types of which there are five within the application site, of which four consist of field types, namely 'Irregular/Small', 'Regular/Medium', 'Semi-regular/Large', and 'Semi-regular/Medium'. The remaining Sub Type is 'Plantation'; part of the 'Woodland' Broad Type.

10.3.27. The ‘Field System’ character type makes up some 48.3% of the St. Helens borough land area whilst ‘Woodland’ constitutes just 3.55%. Of the field types present, smaller and irregular fields tend to be a result of piecemeal enclosure, at least medieval origin, whilst the larger and more regular fields derive from periods of enclosure from the medieval period on. The latter, within the application site, are most likely ‘Surveyed enclosure’ from the period 1750 to 1900.

10.3.28. The woodland plantation areas within the application site are considered, within the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, to be post-industrial in origin i.e. the period 1836 to 1900; note that examination of Ordnance Survey (County Series) mapping during preparation of this LVIA indicates the woodland areas to present by 1849. All of the existing woodland areas, including Booth’s Wood, Duck Wood, Big Wood Belt, Plain Plantation, and Finch’s Wood to the immediate south, are categorised as ‘Plantation’ in the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project.

10.3.29. The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project also identifies key management issues relating to the Broad Character Types. In respect of ‘Field System’, it is observed that in the context of historical interest, *“Surviving examples of piecemeal enclosure can be difficult to date and, surviving examples can be of considerable antiquity”* with medieval field systems, *“a relatively rare survival in Merseyside and are of considerable historical interest”*. Within the application site, the piecemeal enclosure area is limited to a single field east of, and adjacent to Duck Wood through which the existing ditch flows. The remainder fields are ‘Semi-regular/Large’, and ‘Semi-regular/Medium’ to the northern part of the application site and one field of the ‘Regular/Medium’ Sub-Type to the eastern boundary. These latter fields are considered, Historic Landscape Characterisation Project. The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project considers the *“Development of greenfield sites….and the loss of historic landscapes”* a threat. Management recommendations include provision of appropriate investigation and recording prior to development.

Landscape Designations

10.3.30. There are no specific landscape designations within the study area.

10.3.31. Booth’s Wood is identified as a Local Wildlife Site (reference LWS 114) in the emerging draft of the Local Plan, however ecological sites *per se* would not constitute a particular receptor in a LVIA, being assessed separately within an ecological appraisal; in the context of a LVIA, Booth’s Wood would be considered as a mature woodland landscape feature.

10.3.32. There are also a number Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within both the application site and immediate area. The principal areas of woodland within, and immediately adjacent to the application site are protected by TPOs, consisting of; Booth’s Wood; Plain Plantation; Big Wood Belt; Duck Wood; the unnamed woodland adjacent to the M62 overbridge; Finch’s Plantation; and, Old Hall Plantation.

VISUAL

10.3.33. A field based assessment of potential visual effects at the identified receptors, or groups of receptors, was undertaken in early November 2019. Weather conditions during the visit were good, with generally clear skies or very light cloud, and excellent visibility. A photographic record, to illustrate viewpoints, was taken during this inspection; see **Figure 10-3** for the location of the individual photographic viewpoints and Photo Sheets A to G **at Appendix 10.2** for the views; details of the viewpoint are noted on the Photo Sheets.

10.3.34. All viewpoints visited were publicly accessible, and included local highways, footpaths, residential areas and public open space. The site inspection was undertaken in autumn hence vegetation was in partial leaf, offering some screening to potential views. The location of the Proposed Development is such that the potential screening effects from vegetation in leaf, in particular adjacent woodland blocks, may be an important factor in potential visual effects; potential visual effects (as noted for this assessment) may increase during winter months.

10.3.35. Visual horizons have been mapped on the basis of desk top study (OS digital mapping) and verified by field inspection. The visual horizons, and consequent visual envelope, take account of physical features within the landscape including landform, woodland, hedgerows and buildings; see **Figure 10.3**. A record of visual receptors noted during the field based assessment undertaken in early November 2019 is presented in tabular form in **Appendix 10.1**, aided by detailed annotations to describe the nature of view. Views have been assessed from ground level only, at eye level, from publicly accessible locations. For the purposes of this assessment, visual receptors are grouped on the basis of location where a similar visual effect may be experienced, however the nature (sensitivity) of viewpoint i.e. residential property, commercial property, recreation ground, highway and footpath is also noted and the constituent group that make up each location are noted; the latter to ensure that the scale of potential effect is assessed. Given the extent of the study area, and number of likely receptors, the Photo Sheets contained within **Appendix 10.2** illustrate representative viewpoints; the locations of each viewpoint are noted at **Figure 10.3**.

10.3.36. In respect of the Proposed Development, it is contended that visual effects beyond 3km are unlikely to be of significance hence the visual envelope, for the purposes of assessment, is limited to this distance.

FUTURE BASELINE

10.3.37. In respect of the landscape baseline, conditions within the application site are anticipated to remain essentially as they are at present i.e. an agricultural landscape formed of irregular, medium sized fields with a combination of open boundaries and hedgerows and woodland blocks. Topography is generally flat set within a low-lying area where ditches and small ponds are common features.

10.3.38. For the future visual baseline, natural features within the landscape of the application site and study area are relatively mature hence little change is anticipated to the principal screening elements including woodland and hedgerows. The semi-mature woodland at Clock Face Country Park and younger trees to the southern fringe of Griffin Wood are likely to have grown in the intervening period providing a small degree of additional screening.

10.4. SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

LANDSCAPE

10.4.1. In respect of landscape receptors, the Borough level LCA states that landscape sensitivity at Bold Hall (WFE 4) Character Area is considered to be ‘medium to high’, with a ‘medium’ visual sensitivity. The proposed Landscape Strategy is defined as ‘Conserve and Restore’.

10.4.2. The Borough level LCA also notes that landscape sensitivity at Character Area Clock Face Farming (FF 3) is considered to be ‘medium’, with a ‘medium’ visual sensitivity. The Landscape Strategy is defined as ‘Conserve and Enhance’.

10.4.3. At Character Area Bold Heath (FF 4), the Borough level LCA considers landscape sensitivity to be 'low to medium', with a 'medium' visual sensitivity. The Landscape Strategy is defined as 'Conserve and Enhance'.

10.4.4. The Warrington LCA for LCT 4B notes the variable sensitivity of this landscape unit, ranging from 'low' to selected areas of 'high'.

10.4.5. Based upon the assessed level of sensitivity within the referenced LCAs and criteria noted within the LVIA methodology, landscape sensitivity at the application site is hence considered to be **medium** i.e. the landscape is undesignated, contains features that contribute to landscape character but with some that could be considered irreplaceable e.g. historic landscape elements. The application site is immediately bordered by areas that are noted to be within the 'low' to 'medium' sensitivity range (as assessed within the respective LCAs) and there are a number of negative influences within the local landscape, namely the M62 which borders the northern edge of the application site and large scale commercial development immediately to the east, together an overhead electricity distribution line which is routed through the application site.

10.4.6. Landscape receptors also include physical landscape features within the application site and the context they provide to the wider landscape.

VISUAL

10.4.7. The following sensitive visual receptors have been assessed:

- **Very High** - residential properties, public rights of way (PRoWs).
- **High** – public open space and recreation areas.
- **Medium** – highways.
- **Low** - commercial properties.

10.4.8. Within the study area a total of 76 individual, or grouped, residential receptors have been identified. There are 7 PRoWs (footpaths and bridleways), a further 7 public open space/recreational areas, some 10 highways, and 24 commercial properties.

10.4.9. All key sensitive receptor locations are shown on **Figure 10.2**.

10.5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

10.5.1. Assessment of the potential effects upon landscape are noted within the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, SI No. 571.

POLICY

10.5.2. The following policies have been considered in preparation of the LVIA:

- St. Helens Local Plan Core Strategy (October 2012);
- St. Helens Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies (adopted 2 July 1998, amended 27 September 2007);
- St. Helens Borough Local Plan 2010-2035; and,
- Bold Forest Area Action plan (July 2017).

GUIDANCE

10.5.3. The following guidance documents have been used during the preparation of this chapter:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition: Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment: Natural England (October 2014);
- Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 08/2015 (February 2016); and,
- Landscape Institute: Visual Representation of Development Proposals; Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (September 2019).

10.6. ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS, MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS

LANDSCAPE

10.6.1. Potential effects upon landscape include permanent removal of landscape features e.g. woodland together with a deterioration i.e. indirect effects in terms of context and setting, to remainder features of the landscape in the wider landscape. Loss of landscape features would impact upon landscape character both within the application site and immediate environs. It is considered that direct effects upon landscape features would not extend beyond the boundary of the application site. Indirect effects upon landscape setting and the wider landscape are likely given the context of the application site within the surrounding area i.e. a flat, open landscape with features that link both physically and visually. The proposed landscape mitigation is illustrated at **Figure 10.4**.

Construction Phase

Table 10-3 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during construction upon landscape character

Sensitive receptor	Borough level Landscape Character; namely LCT 5 'Wooded Former Estate', including LCA WFE 4 'Bold Hall', LCT 7 'Floodplain Farmland' including LCA FF 3 'Clock Face Farming' and FF 4 'Bold Heath', together with LCT LCA 4B 'Burtonwood'.
Potential effects	LCT 5 – loss of characteristic agricultural landscape/field pattern, mature woodland, and context of remainder historical landscape features i.e. assemblage of features such as small ponds. LCA WFE 4 – loss of characteristic woodland features, and site activity during construction would affect perception of relatively uninhabited area. LCT 7 – loss of large scale arable landscape and remnant hedgerows, loss of woodland blocks, loss of hedgerows, encroachment of urban elements and increased prominence of 'developed edge' visible over some distance. LCA FF 3 – introduction of further vertical elements into predominantly flat/open/ exposed area, and loss of woodland/hedgerows. LCA FF 4 – introduction of further commercial development and extension of 'developed edge'. LCT 4B – characteristics are largely reflective of Proposed Development within the application site.
Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.

Residual Effects and monitoring	The magnitude of effect upon Landscape Character is assessed to be 'medium'. There would be permanent, direct and indirect effects upon landscape character. Mitigation measures would re-create some elements of landscape character but would take time to mature and would not contribute to landscape character over the period of construction. There would be a permanent loss of key features of the existing agricultural landscape, leading to a **major/moderate adverse** residual effect (**significant**).

Table 10-4 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during construction upon landscape features

Sensitive receptor	Landscape Features – including woodland, hedgerows, ponds and agricultural land
Potential effects	Tree groups (including woodland) and individual trees: Existing 80 ha; Removed 56 ha; Created 79.8 ha; Nett gain 23.8 ha. Hedgerow: Existing 534 linear m; Removed 534 linear m; Created 770 linear m/Nett gain 236 linear m. Agricultural Land (pasture, consisting Improved and Semi-improved grassland): Existing 106 ha; Removed 106 ha; Created 0 ha; Nett loss 106 ha. Ponds (including attenuation): Existing 11 ha; Removed 10 ha; Created 15.7 ha; Nett gain 5.7 ha.
Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.
Residual Effects and monitoring	The magnitude of effect upon Landscape Features is assessed to be 'high'. Mitigation measures would replace some key landscape features however, these would take some time to mature and are unlikely to make a substantive contribution during the period of construction. The structure and pattern of the existing landscape would be permanently altered leading to substantial, permanent, direct effects and giving rise to a **major adverse** residual effect (**significant**).

Operational Phase

10.6.2. In respect of landscape character, the Proposed Development may be considered to conflict with the stated potential to accommodate development within landscape character area WFE 4 (Bold Hall), namely, *"the horizontal landform is inherently sensitive to development and change which could interrupt the horizontal composition. Development could encroach upon the interplay of open to enclosed space and create a visually and physically 'cluttered' landscape fragmenting the large scale. However where carefully sited with the appropriate scale and form of development, there may be potential for small scale landscape change taking due cognisance of the existing landscape patterns"*. It should be noted that this assessment took place prior to development of Omega North and Omega South; a single building the Royal Mail sorting building located close to the eastern edge of Lingley Mere Business Park. It is contended therefore, that the context to WFE 4 has changed which may affect previous judgements relating to capacity; although it is accepted that development has not taken place within LCA WFE 4. Similarly, the context to LCA FF 3 (Clock Face Farming) has changed with the subsequent development within Omega North in particular. The context to Local LCA 4B (former Burtonwood Airfield) has changed more radically with substantial levels of development within this area; this area is notable in that it contributes to the setting of LCA WFE 4.

10.6.3. Landscape features, including mature woodland, hedgerows, open fields and ditches, would be lost within the application site with limited opportunities for replacement. A number of features that are considered to be key characteristics would be lost, namely mature woodland and the historic field pattern hence a number of potentially direct effects are noted. The nature of the existing landscape i.e. primarily agricultural, is such that replacement of some characteristic features is considered incompatible with the intended future use. Some elements such as hedgerows and trees form part of the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation, hence constitute an integral part of the Proposed Development, however these would take some time to reach maturity.

10.6.4. At operation, it is considered that there would be little difference in the significance of effect from the construction stage of the Proposed Development. The proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation would be at an immature stage with minimal contribution to the replacement of key landscape features hence a residual effect of **moderate/major adverse** significance is assessed for landscape character, with a residual effect of **major adverse** significance upon landscape features; both are considered to be **significant**.

10.6.5. As the mitigation measures mature there is likely to be a partial replacement of some lost features e.g. woodland areas, which together with a maturing new landscape infrastructure would make a limited contribution to landscape character. The effect arising from a loss of characteristic features, including historical field pattern and key open characteristics, and introduction of uncharacteristic built form, including scale, would be permanent. Residual effects, associated with the subsequent operation of the application site, are hence assessed to be at the **moderate adverse** level i.e. **significant**, for both landscape character and landscape features.

VISUAL

10.6.6. The likely magnitude of visual effect at each receptor assessed takes account of the context of existing view, with respect to the future baseline described above, and the predicted change that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development (including the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation). For each receptor identified, a field inspection has been undertaken at the closest publicly accessible location i.e. note that no visits have been made to individual residential properties or gardens. Given the scale and duration of construction activity, it is accepted that the actual effect of the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation, namely planting, is unlikely to offer significant screening during both the construction phase and initial years of operation at several receptors.

10.6.7. The assessment of visual impact is presented at **Tables 10-5** to **10-9** below, based upon grouping of receptor types. The detailed schedule of visual effects, at **Appendix 10.1**, notes the likely impacts at each receptor assessed.

Construction Phase

Table 10-5 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during construction upon residential receptors

Sensitive receptor	Residential receptors (76 individual or groups of receptors assessed)
Potential effects	Potential effects range from direct views at close approach, the closest receptor being 345 m distant (Bembridge Close, Lingley Green) from the application site boundary, to

	distant and/or partial views screened by existing buildings and/or vegetation. Residential receptors up to 2.25 km distant, within the study area, have been assessed. There are a number of existing visual detractors that include overhead electricity distribution lines, commercial buildings and highways.
Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.
Residual Effects and monitoring	Residential receptors are of 'very high' sensitivity. The magnitude of effect ranges from 'no view' i.e. no effect, to 'high'. Residual visual effects at a total of 20 residential receptors have been assessed as **moderate adverse** to **very major adverse** (**significant**).. Visual effects at the remaining 56 residential receptors are considered to be **not significant**.

Table 10-6 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during construction at public rights of way receptors

Sensitive receptor	PRoW receptors (7 locations assessed)
Potential effects	Potential effects range from direct views at close approach, the closest receptor (F7) passes through the north-west corner of the application site (the proposed ecological and landscape area) to distant and/or partial views screened by existing buildings and/or vegetation. PRoW receptor locations up to 1.86 km distant, within the study area, have been assessed. There are a number of existing visual detractors that include overhead electricity distribution lines, commercial buildings and highways together with effects upon tranquillity arising from noise e.g. traffic noise from the M62.
Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.
Residual Effects and monitoring	PRoW receptor locations are of 'very high' sensitivity. The magnitude of effect ranges from 'no view' i.e. no effect, to 'high'. Residual visual effects at a total of 3 PRoW receptor locations have been assessed as **moderate adverse** to **very major adverse** (**significant**). Visual effects at the remaining 4 PRoW receptors are considered to be **not significant**.

Table 10-7 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during construction at public open space/recreational area receptors

Sensitive receptor	Public open space/recreational area receptors (7 locations assessed)
Potential effects	Potential effects range from direct views at close approach, the public open space at Lingley Green, oblique but partially screened views across a highway (Griffin Wood) to distant and/or partial but elevated viewpoints; the latter at some 2.19 km distant at open space off 'The Pastures'. There are a number of existing visual detractors that include overhead electricity distribution lines, commercial buildings and highways.

Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.
Residual Effects and monitoring	Public open space/recreational area receptor locations are of 'high' sensitivity. The magnitude of effect ranges from 'no view' i.e. no effect, to 'high'. Residual visual effects at a total of 5 public open space/recreational area receptor locations have been assessed as **moderate** to **major adverse** (**significant**). Visual effects at the remaining 2 public open space/recreational area receptors, with views of the application site, are considered to be **not significant**.

Table 10-8 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during construction at commercial property receptors

Sensitive receptor	Commercial property receptors (24 locations assessed)
Potential effects	Potential effects range from direct views at close approach (working farmland immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the application site) partially screened and/or distant views across agricultural land. There are a number of existing visual detractors that include overhead electricity distribution lines and commercial buildings.
Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.
Residual Effects and monitoring	Commercial property receptors are of 'low' sensitivity. The magnitude of effect ranges from 'no view' i.e. no effect, to 'high'. Residual visual effects at 4 receptor locations have been assessed as **moderate adverse** (**significant**). Visual effects at the remaining 20 commercial receptors are considered to be **not significant**.

Table 10-9 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during construction at highway receptors

Sensitive receptor	Highway receptors (10 locations assessed)
Potential effects	Potential effects range from direct views at close approach (M62, immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the application site) to partially screened and/or distant views. There are a number of existing visual detractors that include overhead electricity distribution lines and commercial buildings.
Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.
Residual Effects and monitoring	Highway receptors are of 'medium' sensitivity. The magnitude of effect ranges from 'negligible' to 'high'. Residual visual effects at 2 highway locations have been assessed as **moderate adverse** (**significant**). Visual effects at the remaining 8 receptor locations are considered to be **not significant**.

Operational Phase

10.6.8. For the operational phase of the Proposed Development, and subsequent residual effects, an assessment of visual impact is presented at **Tables 10-10** to **10- 14** below; again, the tables are based upon grouping of receptor types.

Table 10-10 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during operation upon residential receptors

Sensitive receptor	Residential receptors (76 individual or groups of receptors assessed)
Potential effects	Potential effects range from direct views at close approach, the closest receptor being 345 m distant (Bembridge Close, Lingley Green) from the application site boundary, to distant and/or partial views screened by existing buildings and/or vegetation. Residential receptors up to 2.25 km distant, within the study area, have been assessed. There are a number of existing visual detractors that include overhead electricity distribution lines, commercial buildings and highways.
Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.
Residual Effects and monitoring	Residential receptors are of 'very high' sensitivity. The magnitude of effect ranges from 'no view' i.e. no effect, to 'high'. Residual visual effects at a total of 21 residential receptors have been assessed as **moderate adverse** to **very major adverse** (**significant**). . Residual visual effects at the remaining 55 residential receptor locations are considered to be **not significant**. Residual visual effects in Year 15 at 14 residential receptors have been assessed as either **major adverse** or **very major adverse** (**significant**). The maturing mitigation planting would begin to provide a visual screen, particularly to receptor locations south and west of the application site). Residual visual effects at the remaining 62 residential receptor locations after 15 years are considered to be **not significant**.

Table 10-11 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during operation at public rights of way receptors

Sensitive receptor	PRoW receptors (7 locations assessed)
Potential effects	Potential effects range from direct views at close approach, the closest receptor (F7) passes through the north-west corner of the application site (the proposed ecological and landscape area) to distant and/or partial views screened by existing buildings and/or vegetation. PRoW receptor locations up to 1.86 km distant, within the study area, have been assessed. There are a number of existing visual detractors that include overhead electricity distribution lines, commercial buildings and highways together with effects upon tranquillity arising from noise e.g. traffic noise from the M62.
Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.

Residual Effects and monitoring	PRoW receptor locations are of 'very high' sensitivity. The magnitude of effect ranges from 'no view' i.e. no effect, to 'high'. Residual visual effects at a total of 3 PRoW receptor locations have been assessed as **moderate adverse** to **very major adverse** (**significant**). Residual visual effects at the remaining 4 PRoW receptor locations are considered to be **not significant**. Residual visual effects in Year 15 at two PRoW receptor locations have been assessed as **moderate** to **major adverse** (**significant**). Residual visual effects after 15 years at the remaining 5 PRoW receptor locations are considered to be **not significant**.

Table 10-12 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during operation at public open space/recreational area receptors

Sensitive receptor	Public open space/recreational area receptors (7 locations assessed)
Potential effects	Potential effects range from direct views at close approach, the public open space at Lingley Green, oblique but partially screened views across a highway (Griffin Wood) to distant and/or partial but elevated viewpoints; the latter at some 2.19 km distant at open space off 'The Pastures'. There are a number of existing visual detractors that include overhead electricity distribution lines, commercial buildings and highways.
Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.
Residual Effects and monitoring	Public open space/recreational area receptor locations are of 'high' sensitivity. The magnitude of effect ranges from 'no view' i.e. no effect, to 'high'. Residual visual effects at a total of 5 public open space/recreational area receptor locations have been assessed as **moderate** to **major adverse** (**significant**). . Residual visual effects at the 2 remaining public open space/recreational area receptor locations are considered to be **not significant**. Residual visual effects in Year 15 at three public open space/recreational area receptor locations have been assessed as **moderate** to **major adverse** (**significant**. Residual visual effects after 15 years at the 4 remaining public open space/recreational area receptor locations are considered to be **not significant**.

Table 10-13 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during operation at commercial property receptors

Sensitive receptor	Commercial property receptors (24 locations assessed)
Potential effects	Potential effects range from direct views at close approach (working farmland immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the application site) partially screened and/or distant views across agricultural land. There are a number of existing visual detractors that include overhead electricity distribution lines and commercial buildings.
Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.

Residual Effects and monitoring	Commercial property receptors are of 'low' sensitivity. The magnitude of effect ranges from 'no view' i.e. no effect, to 'high'. Residual visual effects at receptor location has been assessed as **moderate adverse** (**significant**). Residual visual effects at the remaining 21 commercial receptor locations are considered to be **not significant**. In Year 15, residual visual effects at two receptor locations has been assessed as **moderate adverse** (**significant**). Residual visual effects after 15 years at the remaining 22 commercial receptor locations are considered to be **not significant**.

Table 10-14 – Assessment of potential effects, additional mitigation, residual effects and monitoring during operation at highway receptors

Sensitive receptor	Highway receptors (10 locations assessed)
Potential effects	Potential effects range from direct views at close approach (M62, immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the application site) to partially screened and/or distant views. There are a number of existing visual detractors that include overhead electricity distribution lines and commercial buildings.
Additional mitigation	No additional mitigation, above the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development, is proposed.
Residual Effects and monitoring	Highway receptors are of 'medium' sensitivity. The magnitude of effect ranges from 'negligible' to 'high'. Residual visual effects at 2 highway locations have been assessed as **moderate adverse** (**significant**). Residual visual effects at the remaining 8 highway receptor locations are considered to be **not significant**. In Year 15, 2 highway receptor locations have been assessed to experience **moderate adverse** (**significant**). Residual visual effects after 15 years at the remaining 8 highway receptor locations are considered to be **not significant**.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Table 10-15 – Cumulative Assessment

Project	Status	LVIA Comment
OMEGA South: Zones 3-6 (application reference 2015/26469) Outline Planning (major) – Outline Planning Application for the creation of up to 1100 residential units and mixed-use zone to include retail/food and drink uses (Use Classes A1; A2; A3: A4 and A5), Hotel (Use Class C1), Extra Care Facility (Use Class C2) and Non-Residential Institution (Use Class D1) with associated access, parking, landscaping and infrastructure proposals (all other detailed matters are reserved for later approval)	**Granted** EIA submitted, under construction, not constructed. 550 dwellings are under construction; further planning application has been	Project located some 830 metres east of the application site. Landscape: Project not contiguous with Proposed Development, no direct effects upon landscape features or indirect effects upon landscape character. Project is within an area of ongoing development, considered to have discrete effects. Visual: Effectively screened by existing development within Omega South, Lingley Mere Business Park and vegetated boundaries.

Project	Status	LVIA Comment
	submitted for 300 dwellings.	
Lingley Mere, formerly Lingley Mere Business Park (application reference 2016/27313) Outline Planning – Application for Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved for proposed demolition of all existing on site buildings and structure and redevelopment to provide up to 275 Class C3 residential units, together with associated landscaping, open space and supporting infrastructure, including the creation of a new vehicular road into Lingley Mere Business	**Granted** EIA Screening submitted but not required, under construction.	Project located some 400 metres east of the application site. Landscape: Project not contiguous with Proposed Development, no direct effects upon landscape features or indirect effects upon landscape character. Project is within an area of ongoing development to the east of Lingley Mere Business Park, considered to have discrete effects. Visual: Effectively screened by existing Lingley Mere Business Park and vegetated boundaries.

10.7. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

- A total of 6.3 ha of new wild flora meadow and grassland, principally within the landscape and ecological area to the north-west former of the application site.
- The provision of new ponds, six in total, and wetlands also within the landscape and ecological area. The ponds would be planted with marginal and aquatic species, including inoculation from local donor ponds. Ponds and wetlands would total some 2,900 m^2.

10.8. LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

10.8.1. The LVIA has been prepared on the basis of the information supplied, by third parties, in respect of the Proposed Development. The accuracy of such information is the responsibility of the originator.

10.8.2. Programme limitations have resulted in the assessment being undertaken over one season only; however this is considered compliant with GLVIA3.

10.9. SUMMARY

10.9.1. **Table 10-16** provides a summary of the findings of the assessment.

Table 10-16 - Summary of landscape and visual effects

Receptor	Potential Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects	Monitoring
Construction Phase				
Landscape Character	Loss of characteristic farmland, assemblage of landscape features, woodland features and introduction of uncharacteristic features.	No additional mitigation.	**Major/moderate adverse (significant)** P/D/LT	None
Landscape Features	Loss of woodland, hedgerows, agricultural land and ponds.	No additional mitigation.	**Major adverse (significant)** P/D/LT	None
Residential receptors	Views of construction activity, some receptors are located at close proximity to the application site.	No additional mitigation.	Range from **moderate to very major adverse (significant at 20 receptors)** T/D/ST	None
Public Right of Way receptors	Views of construction activity, some at close proximity.	No additional mitigation.	Range from **moderate to very major adverse (significant at 3 receptors)** T/D/ST	None
Public open space/recreational area receptors	Views of construction activity, some at close proximity.	No additional mitigation.	Range from **moderate to major adverse (significant at 5 receptors)** T/D/ST	None

Receptor	Potential Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects	Monitoring
Commercial receptors	Views of construction activity, some at close proximity.	No additional mitigation.	**Moderate adverse** **(significant at 4 receptors)** T/D/ST	None
Highway receptors	Views of construction activity, some at close proximity.	No additional mitigation.	**Moderate adverse (significant at 2 receptors)** T/D/ST	None
Operational Phase				
Landscape Character	Loss of characteristic farmland, assemblage of landscape features, woodland features and introduction of uncharacteristic features.	No additional mitigation.	**Major/moderate adverse (significant)** Reducing to **major adverse (significant)** as mitigation matures P/D/LT	None
Landscape Features	Loss of woodland, hedgerows, agricultural land and ponds.	No additional mitigation.	**Major adverse (significant)** Reducing to **moderate adverse (significant)** as mitigation matures P/D/LT	None
Residential receptors	Views of new buildings and operational activity, some	No additional mitigation.	Range from **moderate to very major adverse**	None

Receptor	Potential Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects	Monitoring
	located at close proximity to the application site.		**(significant at 21 receptors)** After 15 years: Range from **moderate to very major adverse (significant at 14 receptors)** P/D/LT	
Public Right of Way receptors	Views of new buildings and operational activity, some at close proximity.	No additional mitigation.	Range from **moderate to very major adverse (significant at 3 receptors)** After 15 years: **Moderate adverse (significant at 2 receptors)** P/D/LT	None
Public open space/recreational area receptors	Views of new buildings and operational activity, some at close proximity.	No additional mitigation.	Range from **moderate to major adverse (significant at 5 receptors)** After 15 years: Range from **moderate to major adverse (significant at 3 receptors)** P/D/LT	None

Receptor	Potential Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects	Monitoring
Commercial receptors	Views of new buildings and operational activity, some at close proximity.	No additional mitigation.	**Moderate adverse** **(significant at 4 receptors)** After 15 years: **Moderate adverse** **(significant at 2 receptors)** P/D/LT	None
Highway receptors	Views of new buildings and operational activity, some at close proximity.	No additional mitigation.	**Moderate adverse (significant at 2 receptors)** After 15 years: **Moderate adverse** **(significant at 2 receptors)** P/D/LT	None

Key to table:

P / T = Permanent or Temporary, D / I = Direct or Indirect, ST / MT / LT = Short Term, Medium Term or Long Term, N/A = Not Applicable

10.10. REFERENCES

- Ref. 10.1: Landscape Institute: Visual Representation of Development Proposals; Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (September 2019)
- Ref. 10.2: Landscape Institute: Landscape Character Assessment; Technical Information Note 08/2015 (February 2016)
- Ref. 10.3: Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment: Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Third Edition (2013)
- Ref. 10.4: Natural England: National Character Areas (England); 60. Mersey Valley (2013)
- Ref. 10.5: An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment: Natural England (October 2014)
- Ref. 10.6: St. Helens Council: St. Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035; Submission Draft (January 2019)
- Ref. 10.7: St. Helens Council: Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan (July 2017)
- Ref. 10.8: St. Helens Council: St. Helens Local Plan Core Strategy (October 2012)
- Ref. 10.9: St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council: St. Helens Unitary Development Plan (September 2007)
- Ref. 10.10: St. Helens Council/LUC: Landscape Character Assessment for St. Helens (January 2006)
- Ref. 10.11: Warrington Borough Council: 'Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment' (2007)
- Ref. 10.12: Museum of Liverpool/English Heritage: Merseyside Historic Characterisation Project (December 2011)
- Ref. 10.13: Bing Maps (www.bing.com/maps)
- Ref. 10.14: Google Earth Pro
- Ref. 10.15: MAGIC (magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap)