

Harrison, Liz

From: Griffin, Tim
Sent: 07 October 2022 17:29
To: Harrison, Liz
Cc: Ellison, Mark; Grandfield, Andy; Oliveira, Marta
Subject: Re: F/22/93194 THE AGEAS BOWL, MARSHALL DRIVE, WEST END, SOUTHAMPTON
- landscape comments

Hi Liz,

I have been asked to provide landscape comments on this site.

This is a major application, on a prominent and sensitive site, which lies within open Countryside and partially within a Settlement Gap. A landscape led approach is essential to create an attractive, high-quality setting for the proposals.

To the south and west of the site is Telegraph Woods and to the south and east Boundary Lakes Golf Course. Telegraph Woods and part of the Golf Course are designated as a SINC. To the west, land at, and to the south of Telegraph Heights, is covered by a Blanket TPO.

I have not had the opportunity to visit site, nor have I been able to assess on the ground potential mid and long-distance views of the proposed development from the wider area. My comments on the preliminary Landscape & Visual Appraisal (LVA) are based on a desktop study alone. I understand Mark Ellison may be able to assist separately with the scoping exercise by identifying key viewpoints from the wider area that should be included in the LVA.

In commenting on the landscape proposals, I am mindful of Eastleigh Borough Councils declared Climate Emergency and the importance of maximising opportunities for robust Green Infrastructure (GI), with a particular focus on street tree planting. This past spring and summer have been a reminder that periods of drought are likely to become more frequent. Special attention should therefore be given to the professional planting and maintenance of new trees (especially watering in the first year after planting). The design team must be cognisant of the Trees and Development SPD which details expectations for new tree planting on developments.

Policy WE4 of the Local Plan 2022 has a number of objectives. Those of particular relevance to landscape design are highlighted with italicised text below:

1. Development will be supported where it facilitates the site's important role in meeting sporting needs in the Borough and wider area; *complements the high quality design and open setting of the site; and protects the settlement gap.*

Taking these aims into account, development will be permitted if it meets all of the following criteria:

a. *buildings or structures must be appropriate in scale, form and location* to the predominantly green and open character of the area, taking account of the different characteristics of the site; and *should only be visible from the surrounding area in the context of the wider landscape setting;*

b. *development achieves a high quality design by paying careful attention to detailing, hard landscaping and planting;*

c. outside the urban edge (as defined by the policies map) development is for outdoor sports/recreational purposes only (including ancillary facilities of appropriate location, scale and design to protect the settlement gap, such as a golf clubhouse);

d. inside the urban edge (as defined by the policies map) development is for outdoor or indoor sports/recreation; leisure; hotel or office/research use provided that:

i. *any development creates a high quality of design and takes the form of distinctive individual buildings each set within an open and high quality landscape setting; the extent of development and the boundary treatment of that development (built design and landscape) creates a high quality, distinctive, green and open setting to the Ageas Bowl;*

ii. in addition to meeting criterion di, *any residential development is located solely in the north west corner of the site* (as defined on the policies map); the development provides an appropriately designed access directly to/from the settlement of West End rather than via Marshall Drive for pedestrians/cyclists and also, unless demonstrated otherwise, for vehicles; and the layout and design of the development ensures an appropriate level of residential amenity in respect of the cricket ground and events venue;

iii. enables the enhancement of sporting facilities on the site;

iv. does not compromise the function of the Ageas Bowl as an international cricket ground and events location;

e. any leisure, hotel or office/research use meets the sequential test by demonstrating there are no suitable, available and viable sites in city, town or district centres;

f. proposals for floodlighting on any part of the site must be of a scale, form, location and luminosity that would *not affect the predominantly open character of the area* or *the biodiversity interests of the adjacent SINC or protected/priority species*. The hours of use of any floodlighting may be limited in order to minimise its impact on nearby residential property;

g. the number of non-sporting events such as concerts, and their operation (including hours of operation) will be strictly controlled and any intensification of sporting events managed where practicable in order to minimise the impact

h. *proposals must be accompanied by satisfactory arrangements for vehicular access and must include provision for improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport;*

i. *any areas of the site to be used for temporary or occasional car parking must be provided with an appropriate soft surface treatment;*

j. *surface water drainage will not increase flood risks downstream and within the river corridor; and*

k. *there will be no adverse impact on the adjacent Telegraph Woods SINC with appropriate environmental buffers from development.*

I have downloaded and reviewed the following documents:

Apartment Block Type 1 - North West Front & North East Side Elevations
 Budget Hotel - Coloured South East Elevation
 Budget Hotel - North West Elevation
 Care Home - Elevations Sheet 002 (South & West)
 Design and Access Statement - Part 1 of 3
 Design and Access Statement - Part 2 of 3
 Design and Access Statement - Part 3 of 3
 Footpath Link to Telegraph Road (1)
 Landscape & Visual Appraisal - Appendix B
 Landscape & Visual Appraisal - Appendix D - Site Sections C-E
 Landscape & Visual Appraisal - Appendix D Street Sections A-B
 Landscape & Visual Appraisal - Appendix E definitions
 Landscape & Visual Appraisal - Report
 Landscape Masterplan Areas 1-5
 Landscape Plan Area 1 East (Sheet 2 of 6)
 Landscape Plan Area 1 West (Sheet 1 of 6)
 Landscape Plan Area 4 (Sheet 4 of 6)
 Landscape Plan Area 5 East (Sheet 6 of 6)
 Landscape Plan Area 5 West (Sheet 5 of 6)
 Landscape Plan Areas 2 & 3 (Sheet 3 of 6)
 Landscape Planting Strategy
 Well-Being Centre - North & East Facing Elevations
 Well-Being Centre - West & South Facing Elevations

I intend to provide some initial 'high-level' landscape comments covering broad principles of design, followed by feedback on the series of more detailed landscape plans for each area. I will also comment on the submitted Landscape & Visual Appraisal.

The submission is comprehensive and provides a reasonable level of detail at this stage. Many of the hard and soft landscape proposals are welcomed and it is good to see a significant number of new trees are included, although we do have serious reservations about the feasibility of some of the street tree planting in the proposed residential area.

General landscape comments:

1. Whilst I do not object in principle to the development proposals, it is my considered opinion that the density of development on the residential section of the site is too high. This reduces opportunities for deliverable public realm structure planting. Along a number of streets proposed street trees are very close to the new dwellings (in the most extreme locations under 2m). As a result, either only small tree species with limited presence in the streetscene can be planted, or if larger species are used, there will be long-term pressure to prune/fell these trees as they broaden with age.

2. Although the proposed Care/Retirement Home in character area 4 is within the urban edge, it is contrary to Policy WE4 clause dii that states '*any residential development is located solely in the north west corner of the site*'.

Whilst I defer to comments by the Tree Officer, I suggest the successful retention of the existing Monkey Puzzle tree is optimistic given the proximity of this key tree to the proposed Care Home and the anticipated disruption during construction.

I have concerns regarding localised visual impact of this sizable building since it is in an elevated position in relation to the adjacent Fanzone, paths and road.

3. Whilst I defer to separate comments by the Urban Design Officer, I have concerns with a number of aspects of the proposed vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements, both into and around the site.

It is anticipated that there will be significant issues for those wishing to access the residential and wellbeing areas (character area 5) on match days or during special events since this will be via a single shared access along Marshall Drive. There is potential for conflict here with fans arriving on foot, the coach/bus drop off area and vehicles accessing hotel parking.

The proposed access from Botley Road for the event overflow parking will not only lead to significant congestion along Botley Road, but there are also potential safety issues for pedestrians crossing the new access road. Also, since vehicles will be manoeuvring along relatively loosely defined access routes, there are a number of crossing points where pedestrians could be in danger.

The proposed upgrading of the pedestrian link to Telegraph Road, the suggested informal access through Telegraph Woods and the notional woodland walk path adjacent the proposed Care Home could potentially have an adverse impact on the Telegraph Woods SINC. During match days and special events, these routes may be well used, resulting in additional pressures on the Woodland.

4. I note that the proposed apartment blocks in character area 5 are located in a relatively elevated position in relation to the existing stadium (see extract section below). The height of these apartment buildings raises concerns as regards increased visual impact, particularly as elements of the building may rise higher than surrounding tree belts. This needs to be fully considered in the final LVA (see comments under LVA section).



5. The levels on this site are challenging and the illustrative sections indicate banks, retaining walls and slopes to accommodate the existing and proposed contours. In some locations the suggested drops in level are very significant. For example:



Further clarification of existing and proposed levels is required in some locations so that an accurate assessment of the proposed contouring is possible.

There are some notable areas of cut and fill. It would be helpful to have a separate plan indicating the location and extent of areas of cut and fill to ensure there will be no adverse impact on retained vegetation.

In addition, a drawing that focuses solely on the locations, heights and types of all proposed retaining structures and banks would be very helpful. Wherever feasible 'green' retaining walls should be specified for a softer effect. Any banks should ideally be no steeper than 1:3.

6. There seems to be a lack of amenity space provided for the residential area? If the linear 'Parkland' space between the housing and the existing stadium is envisaged to provide an amenity for residents, this may well result in conflicts between residents using the space and fans during special events. In addition, there are level changes across this area, plus swales/basins which will all limit usable amenity space. Has any kick-about space been considered?

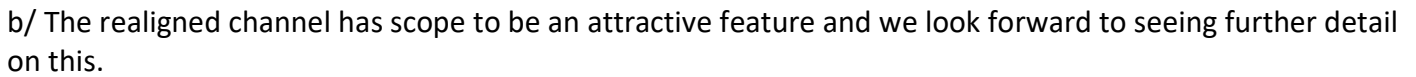
7. The inclusion of water features/channels and SUDs elements are welcomed, although the feasibility of the new swales/basins/attenuation ponds to the east of the proposed housing needs to be checked since this area, at least in part, is sloping. Further shallow swales could be included feeding into the southernmost basin adjacent the West gate. Details of the proposal to pipe a section of Telegraph Brook are required and wherever possible the Brook should be open coursed and not piped.

8. Due to the density of proposed development, there are a number of locations around the edge of the residential area and adjacent the Care Home where the proposals come close to existing retained boundary trees. I defer to separate comments by the Tree Officer, but in some places, where there are pinch points, there may be unacceptable impact.

Landscape Plan Area 1 west (sheet 1 of 6)

(note: It would be helpful to have cut off lines to show where sheets overlap)

a/ The layout in this area is generally acceptable and it is good to see the inclusion of seating in the Fan Zone, including the raised island planter that will double as an informal sitting wall. It might be worth considering increasing opportunities for informal seating by replacing the individual benches in this location with a continuous low sitting wall? This is likely to be a very busy area on match days.



d/ Parking zone 1 should be softened with internal tree planting between bays. The Trees and Development SPD suggest 1 tree every 6 bays for large areas of parking. This may require a re-planning of this area.

e/ The immediate setting for the budget hotel is rather hard and further design work is required here to ensure the setting is softened with additional planting. There is scope to reduce some path widths and perhaps re-shape the pond in front of the hotel to have a more natural profile, increasing opportunities for planting. The other option would be to replace the pond with an extension of the re-aligned channel thus creating an area of open space that could be developed as a focal planted area or gathering space. Some limited feature panels of living wall would be an attractive option to visually soften selected elevations of the hotel.

f/ The circulation routes make sense with obvious desire lines incorporated into the layout. The range and types of surfacing are welcomed. It is good to see some variation in paving in the Fan Zone which will provide additional interest.

g/ The retention of the majority of existing vegetation is supported, although in places this will require careful construction on site to avoid additional removals. The proposed structure tree planting is effective and in the majority of locations there is space for these to be canopy species. There is scope to replace the area of grass with native buffer/screen planting to the west of James Mills:



This could be a clipped native mix hedge if preferred.

Perhaps in fringe locations, some areas of amenity grassland could be replaced with long mown wildflower grass to reduce maintenance and to increase Biodiversity gain?

Landscape Plan Area 1 east (sheet 2 of 6)

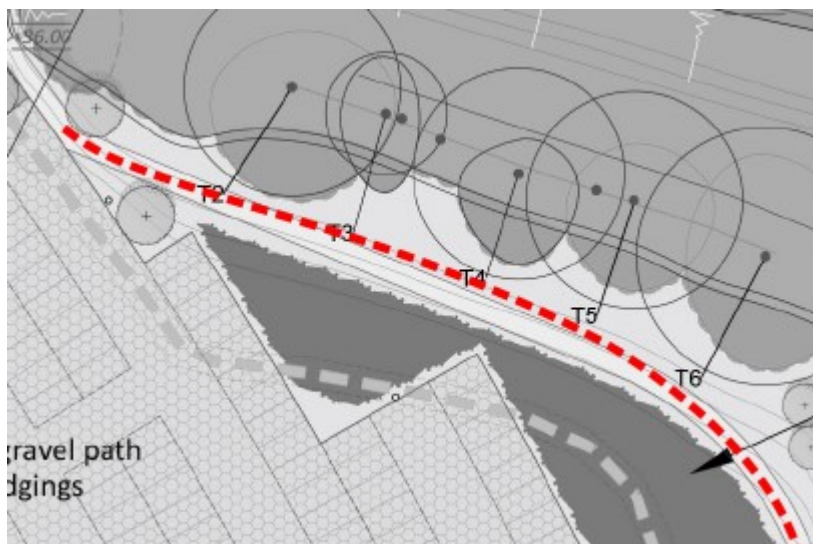
a/ This area lies within the Gap so special attention is required to ensure the protection and enhancement of the Gap.

b/ Parking zones 2 & 3 are presently devoid of any tree planting. Please include some radial tree planting between bays not only to provide shade to parked vehicles but also to increase Green Infrastructure in the Gap.

c/ Further thought is required regarding the pedestrian route that crosses these parking areas. There is currently insufficient protection for pedestrians using this path which raises safety concerns for fans due to vehicles crossing the path to access parking spaces. This path should be tree lined to create an attractive arrivals avenue and I support the idea that a sculpture is indicated to terminate the main vista down this path into the site.

d/ The triangular pool in front of the hotel seems out of keeping with the form of the adjacent lakes that have a more natural profile/shape. Perhaps this pool should have a less geometric shape with a more natural character? As mentioned before, the other option is to omit this lake and use the space to create a focal landscaped space, including planting to soften the area?

e/ Can the route of the diverted PROW be adjusted as below to avoid a pinch-point in the planting? The revised route should be outside RPA's. This would allow an increase in native tree & shrub planting to improve the setting of the path.



Landscape Plan Areas 2 & 3 (sheet 3 of 6)

a/ No landscape comments. The route of the PROW is incorrect and needs to be adjusted (see comments by the Ramblers Association).

Landscape Plan Area 4 (sheet 4 of 6)

a/ It appears to me that the Care Home is a residential facility and therefore Contrary to Policy WE4 which requires *'any residential development to be located solely in the NW corner of the site'*.

b/ The location of the new Care Home presents a multitude of challenges with regards external levels. The building occupies an elevated position in relation to areas to the north and east of the site, and as a result extensive retaining walls will be required. To the rear the sloping ground necessitates significant stretches of retaining walls, terraces and banks. Further work is required to demonstrate how the levels can be successfully handled, especially to the north of the building where space is tight. A number of typical cross-sections would be useful. Some areas, particularly to the rear of the building, would appear to provide limited access for elderly residents due to changes in level and there is relatively little usable amenity space. Some locations for benches appear random and should be reviewed.

c/ The retention of the Monkey Puzzle tree as a focal point will be challenging and will require considerable on-site attention to be successful. This would only really be worthwhile if it is a Grade A specimen.

d/ Lower level views from the Fan Zone need to be carefully considered to avoid the new building being over-bearing in the scene. A cross-section through this area would assist to understand potential impact and the need for additional screen planting.

e/ Either end of the building comes close to Telegraph Woods which is far from ideal. The impact of the notional woodland walk on the Woods would need to be assessed and further native buffer planting to protect the edge of the Woodland is required.

f/ Impact on retained vegetation needs to be carefully reviewed. It appears that a section of G54 will be removed to enable construction of the road, path and retaining wall?

h/ The green roof and deck are welcomed but further detail is required to ensure this is deliverable.

j/ The arrangement of tree planting to the rear of the building is unconvincing and needs to be re-visited. Perhaps there is scope for orchard planting and some canopy trees are needed along the edge of the Woods to ensure successional growth.

Landscape Plan Area 5 West (sheet 5 of 6)

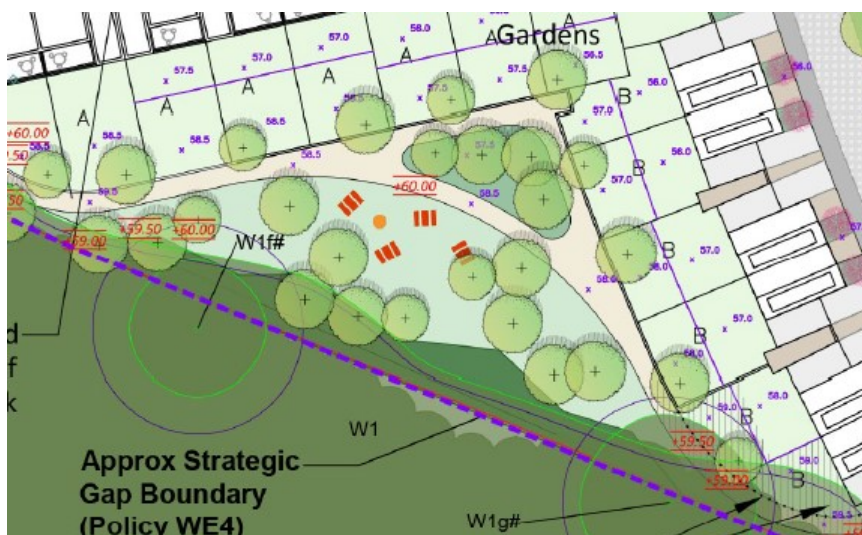
(note: Please add plot numbers to plan)

a/ This is the area of housing and in my view (as stated under general comments above) the density of development is too high. This results in the external realm being dominated by drives, parking and pedestrian circulation leaving limited areas for robust, deliverable Green Infrastructure (GI). In places the roads and paths come very close to the boundaries, a particular concern adjacent to Telegraph Woods. Opportunities for new native planting to protect and bolster the edge along the Woods are few and a wider buffer strip would be preferred.

b/ Street tree planting is a primary aspiration and with the layout being squeezed there are definitely concerns that the tree planting indicated cannot be delivered. In too many locations the space along frontages is very limited with new trees far too close to houses. In some locations trees are shown less than 2m from buildings. This would prevent even a small tree being planted. The layout needs to be re-visited to create realistic space for street tree planting. Please ensure that the tree planting will not be adversely affected by utilities or lighting columns as we will not accept omissions further down the line due to on-site conflicts. All tree planting shown on planning drawings must be deliverable.

c/ I am not clear what is meant by 'walled gardens' and the concept behind this proposal? Tree planting in rear gardens is welcomed but cannot be relied on to provide long-term GI as it can easily be removed by future residents. Is there some way of providing legal protection to ensure the long-term retention of these trees?

d/ There is limited usable amenity space on site and the area below is enclosed by rear gardens and woodland and due to lack of surveillance is not acceptable:



How will access into open spaces by match day fans be controlled? At the moment there seems to be unfettered access for fans across the residential areas?

e/ The proposed number of units in the blocks of apartments necessitates significant numbers of parking bays that erode the area of open space between the apartments and the stadium. This is regrettable and it would be good to see a reduction in parking spaces and a subsequent increase in open space.

All parking areas should be provided with tree planting (1 tree per 4 spaces).

f/ Levels present a challenge in some areas and a number of cross-sections should be provided to help understand the proposals and to assess possible adverse impacts. Some sections are required across the linear open space between the apartments and the stadium so we can assess the feasibility of proposals here, especially the balancing basins.

Please indicate on plan all retaining walls. Wherever possible retaining walls should be below 600mm high to avoid the need for safety railings which add visual clutter to the scene.

g/ Some tree and hedge/shrub planting is required in this area to soften the streetscene:



h/ There is scope to utilise clipped hedges within the core of the site to define defensible space and improve streetscenes and further native mix buffer planting is required around the boundaries to bolster screening.

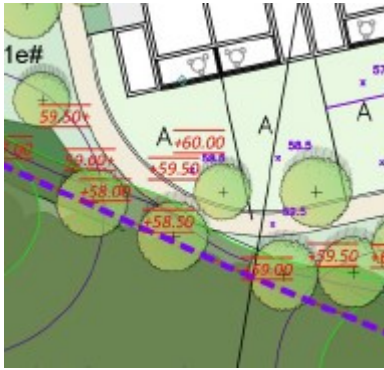
j/ Please provide details of proposed surfacing for private access drives and paths.

k/ Can this section of Telegraph Brook be in an open stream not piped:



Please confirm the swales indicatively shown will be vegetated ditches and further details on the proposed basins are required to ensure these avoid being unattractive 'holes in the ground'!

l/ These sections of path run too tight to the site boundary and should be re-aligned to reduce impact on existing vegetation and to create space for buffer planting:



m/ The feasibility of providing the informal access into Telegraph Woods needs to be reassessed. There are some significant level changes to enable this access resulting in high retaining walls and the arrangement is cramped:



(Please note that I will provide further detailed comments on the residential area once any site layout re-design has occurred in response to Officers comments).

Landscape Plan Area 5 East (sheet 6 of 6)

a/ Once again the contours are challenging in this zone with significant falls requiring retaining walls and steps. Further levels information is required for this area to enable a full assessment of the proposals. A cross-section through the offsite David Lloyds centre through to the stadium would be very helpful.

b/ I am not convinced by the location and layout of the play zone. Perhaps there is scope to relocate the area within the open space at the southern end of the Wellbeing Centre? The play area should incorporate

principles of natural play and be designed to have a more informal, natural character. Is there any opportunity to include a kick-about space?

c/ Tree planting is required to soften areas of parking.

d/ Is there scope in some fringe areas to replace amenity grassland with long-mown wildflower grass to reduce maintenance and to increase Biodiversity gain?

Landscape & Visual Appraisal

The introduction to the appraisal states that the report is preliminary. I therefore presume a final version will be forthcoming in due course.

The appraisal is generally thorough and fair, although further work is required in assessing the potential visual impact. I note that to date there has been no formal consultation with Eastleigh Borough Council on visual scoping.

I am happy with the methodology outlined in the report which follows GLVIA3 practice guidelines.

Landscape Appraisal

I concur with the summary of the site landscape character as follows:

'Having considered the characteristics of the landscape as a whole, the value of the Site and its context is assessed as medium value. The landscape is one that is undesignated, however, it contains valued components and is a landscape of moderate importance and rarity, valued at the local level.'

Further, I also accept the summary of effects on the Landscape Character that:

'....the Site has the capacity to accommodate the nature of the changes resulting from the Proposed Development without undue consequences on the landscape baseline. Indeed, the comprehensive suite of mitigation and enhancement measures proposed (including green and blue infrastructure) and access improvements would result in some longer-term beneficial effects in terms of landscape character.'

In terms of effects on the Strategic Gap, I think it is fair to say:

'It is considered that the nature of the Proposed Development would not result in coalescence or impact in any way on the perceived sense of separation between Hedge End and Harefield.'

I am also in agreement with the conclusion that:

'.....it is judged that any change resulting from the Proposed Development would not detract from the overriding sense of landscape character likely to be experienced from publicly accessible areas or diminish or 'erode' any sense of separation between Hedge End and Harefield.'

However, I do question the suggestion that the reinforced grass area would be a significant positive contribution to the strategic Gap:

'.....the proposed car park expansion area would create a generous landscaped zone as a setting to the new hotel using reinforced grass and sown with a suitable flowering lawn mix. It is considered this approach would contribute positively to the Strategic Gap function'

If the tree planting I have suggested within the grass overspill car park is incorporated into the design, my view is this will have a more significant effect in protecting, and potentially enhancing, the Gap.

So overall, I accept that any impact on the Landscape Character is limited and that there is scope to see some overall positive effects on the character with the significant tree planting associated with the development.

Visual Appraisal

Although some useful appraisal work has been undertaken, there are a number of missing elements to allow a comprehensive assessment of visual impact:

a/ The viewpoint photographs are taken in summer months when vegetation is in full leaf. For a full assessment to be undertaken winter views should also be submitted to assess the potential increased visual impact when deciduous trees are not in leaf.

b/ I am concerned that some of the taller proposed buildings may have mid and long distance impact. In particular, the taller block of apartments that are proposed in a relatively elevated position in comparison with the stadium, may have increased visual effect. I suggest that the top of the apartment block be marked in some way (helium balloon, cherry picker etc) and that viewpoints are then re-visited to assess impact.

For example, Viewpoint 8 - the top of the existing stadium is clearly visible and I am concerned that the apartment blocks will be higher than the stadium and break the horizon line.



c/ As regards mid and long distance views, I defer at the moment to advice from Mark Ellison who knows this site well and who may well be able to identify potential viewpoints that have not yet been considered. If Mark cannot assist, I will have to carry out an on-ground assessment in this regard.

Once the above missing information is available, I can provide further feedback on the visual impact appraisal.

If you wish to discuss any of the above do get in touch.

KR Tim

TimGriffin

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