

SouthernGreen

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by Southern Green Ltd., Chartered Landscape Architects, commissioned by Viscount Devonport (“the client”) to accompany the planning application for a public landmark to be known as Elizabeth Landmark, at Cold Law Hill, Kirkwhelpington, Northumberland.
- 1.1.2 Pre-application comments were provided from Karen Derham from the Conservation Team and Glenn Shaw from the Building Conservation team of Northumberland County Council (NCC) on 23.10.18, recommending that a Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) would be required, including reference to Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings within 3km. Viewpoints were suggested by Colin Godfrey of the Northumberland National Park to ascertain the effect on views looking to and from the nearby National Park.
- 1.1.3 The LVIA seeks to provide an understanding of the baseline landscape and visual conditions of the site and surrounding area, in order to determine likely effects which may arise as a result of the development and highlight mitigation measures to reduce, offset or compensate for such impacts. This LVIA provides a combined approach, which considers landscape and visual issues separately in order to gain an holistic understanding of the impact of the proposed landmark on landscape and visual receptors.
- 1.1.4 In the LVIA methodology, the baseline situation is considered before the likely environmental effects of the development are identified, including the construction phase. Baseline findings are used to inform the emerging design in order to avoid or reduce impacts where possible. Mitigation measures are then identified to reduce any remaining unavoidable negative effects before the residual effects are assessed.
- 1.1.5 The assessment has concentrated on a 5km radius study area, centred on the proposed landmark.
- 1.1.6 The assessment is intended to provide a factual account of the predicted landscape and visual effects of the proposed development and has not been written with a particular planning outcome in mind.

1.2 Site Location and Study Area

*Refer to **Figure 1: Site Location Plan***

- 1.2.1 The proposed site is located on land approximately 4km to the southeast of West Woodburn, Northumberland and around 5km west of the eastern boundary of the

Northumberland National Park. The landmark is proposed to sit on the summit of Cold Law, an upland fell within a largely open and large scale landscape.

- 1.2.2 The study area covers a 5.0km radius from the centre of the proposed site and includes the villages of East Woodburn and West Woodburn to the northeast. The site is an open field, containing upland heathland and marsh habitats within a wider area generally farmed for grazing, game shooting and plantation woodland. A strong network of footpaths, bridleways, cycleways and recreational routes criss-cross the study area, connecting villages and settlements to the surrounding landscape. The A68 and A696 travel northwest - southeast through the study area to the west of the site, linking England and Scotland.

1.3 The Development Proposal and Construction

- 1.3.1 The Elizabeth Landmark is a manifestation of Viscount Devonport's wish to recognise Queen Elizabeth II as the longest-reigning British monarch. The proposed landmark, a slender steel structure in a stone setting including interpretation, will be set on Cold Law, a distinctive localised hillock. The landmark will be around 56m high in order to match the height of nearby Hepple Heugh at 336m AOD.
- 1.3.2 The associated access road, car park and viewing area and 'rock slot' have been included in the assessment along with proposed outline construction access and methods.
- 1.3.3 The following extracts from the Artist's proposals describe the development and the proposed construction process in further detail:

'Concept

The proposed landmark will be a thin slice cut north to south through the uppermost bedrock of Cold Law hill, tilted and elevated at the north end so that it points to the sun at its zenith on Midsummer's day. The angled form will be between 55 - 60m high overall from the hill top, such that it will equal the summit of the adjacent Hepple Heugh crag.

Its upper curved surface will match the topographical form of the hill, precisely following its curved profile. The under surface will be flat. Angled lateral fins, between the upper and lower flanges, will change in pitch and frequency as they rise up the wing form, accentuating the sense of perspective and movement.

Plan

Visitors will walk on a curving pathway from the proposed car park (graded for accessibility). This will feature works by poets and writers from around the Commonwealth and the local community. It will lead through a bed rock lined slot cut

through the top of the hill and pass via an archway through the base of the monument to a pathway curving round to the hilltop viewpoint and area. Markers around the main oval path will indicate the shadow fall of the monument at the Queen's birthday, the sun rise and sunset locations at summer and winter solstice and the spring and autumn equinox.

The viewing area will be oval in plan with a stone bench and a sheltered space provided beneath the hillside overhang. The focus of this area will be a bronze topographic map set onto a stone plinth, giving information about the landscape and history of the surroundings. There will be Corten steel inserts in the stone floorscape denoting the commonwealth flag and direction and distance markers to all of the Commonwealth member state capitals.

Materials and construction

The artwork will be formed of Corten weathering steel, which weathers to a rich orange/red colour. The steel is metallurgically designed so that the rust surface forms a protective coating that prevents further corrosion and requires no maintenance.

It will be supported on a simple grass and stone covered reinforced concrete beam spanning the rock slot at the hill's summit, close to the base of the Corten structure and above the archway through it. The indigenous bedrock of the hill will be cut smooth and angled away above the pathway to provide a clean natural stone finish. The path surface will be of the same finish.

Its shape and appearance will reference the engineering heritage of the area, with the aerodynamic form of a steam turbine blade. The steam turbine was invented by Charles Parsons, a former owner of the Ray Estate; he is buried in Kirkwhelpington. The iron for the High Level Bridge was worked at Ridsdale. Small traditional sandstone quarries close to the site continue to produce stone for local use.'

Construction Phase

The construction period is anticipated at between 8 and 12 months.

A temporary site compound will be established on the site of the proposed visitor car park. This will provide space for contractor's office, materials and plant and fuel storage, staff facilities, deliveries drop off and turning area; and construction staff parking.

A temporary access track will be laid from this compound to follow the proposed footpath to the landmark, anti-clockwise NE around to the top of hill for the rock slot excavation machinery and landmark foundations construction. This route will also provide access to a temporary fabrication area for the landmark on the east shoulder of Cold Law. All site accommodation will be removed at project completion.

The 5m wide access road and site compound will be constructed in compacted stone using locally sourced stone and excavated material from site. Topsoil will be stored within the site for reuse.

Construction of the landmark base, rock slot, paths and visitor viewing area

Topsoil removed during construction will be stored at the site compound for re-use in landscape re-instatement.

Excavation of the rock slot will be by flush-cut circular saw mounted to the hydraulic arm of an excavator. This will cut the sides of the rock slot and the internal material will be removed by a rock pecker. An estimated volume of 1150 cubic metres of rock will be removed during the excavation of the rock slot: this equates to approximately 150 lorry loads on site. All waste material will be transported by lorry along the access track to the site compound for storage and will be crushed for surfacing the visitor car park, visitor viewing area and footpath network surrounding the landmark or used to build up to the proposed finished ground levels. The aim is that all excavated material will be used to create the proposed car park and footpaths, thus minimising traffic leaving the site with waste material.

Traffic during construction

There will be a series of different contractors visiting the site during the 8 – 12 month construction period at different stages of the project. Initially civil engineering, to include: creation of access roads and compounds, landscaping, excavation of rockslot, piling, and concrete. Secondly, steel fabrication to include delivery of 6 pre-made landmark units to site, site welding and erection of landmark using large cranes. Finally landscaping contractor for reinstatement and planting.

Staff traffic and deliveries to site:

Civil engineers estimate that at peak times there would be 14 personnel on site and so a maximum 14 staff vehicles accessing site daily to park. Steel fabricators estimate 13 personnel and a maximum 13 staff vehicle parking. The two contractors may overlap, but not at maximum staff rates.

Estimated plant machinery deliveries to site total: 1 x piling rig; 1 excavator; 1 x 300ton crane; 1 x 500ton crane; 1 x 550ton jib crane; and 17 ballast wagons. These ballast wagons will operate during peak excavation periods, not the whole contract period. Less than 10 construction plant movements a week are anticipated.

Delivery of the landmark in sections: 6 long low-loaders. Smaller deliveries will be on 7.5t vehicle or smaller.

- *Landmark onsite fabrication and erection: 6-21 wks. depending upon the contractor.*
- *Rock slot excavation: 8 wks. Foundations: 3 wks. Paths and visitor viewing area: 8wks.*
- *Construction of access roads: 2wks. Construction of 2 x site compounds: 3wks.*
- *Re-laying of topsoil for access roads and site compounds when entire job finished: 2wks. Making good/snagging: 2wks.*

Contract period

Site set up – 3 weeks:

- *rockslot excavation – 8 weeks;*
- *foundations – 3 weeks;*
- *landmark onsite fabrication and erection – 6 to 21 weeks (contractor approach varies);*
- *pathways and visitor viewing area – 8 weeks; access and car park – 2 weeks;*
- *reinstatement and landscaping – 4 weeks.'*

1.4 Policy Context

National Planning Policy Context (NPPF)

- 1.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. In terms of landscape and visual matters, the following paragraphs are of particular relevance to the proposed development:

Section 12. Achieving Well Designed Places

124. The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

131. In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

Section 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

1.4.2 Paragraph 172 is shown below however it is noted that it relates to development within the AONB/NP and does not directly relate to the proposal, which is outside the boundary:

'172. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads . The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.

Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) *the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated'*

Local Planning Policy Context

1.4.3 The adopted Development Plan for Northumberland comprises the Tynedale District Council Core Strategy (2007) and the saved policies from the Tynedale District Local Plan (2000). The relevant local plan policies are outlined below:

- Policy GD1: Locational policy setting out settlement hierarchy
Decisions on all planning applications will be recorded and analysed in terms of the scale and location of the development i.e. whether they are in main towns, local centres, smaller villages or the open countryside'

This development is considered to lie in open countryside.

- BE1 Protection and Promotion of Nature Conservation

1.4.4 The site does not lie within the Northumberland National Park but is fairly close to its border (approximately 5km to the west of the park at its closest point); therefore the following policies from the Northumberland National Park Core Strategy and Development Policies, adopted March 2009, are of relevance to the development proposal:

- Policy 20: Landscape Quality and Character

'The natural beauty and heritage of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced whilst being responsive to landscape change. All proposals will be assessed in terms of their impact on landscape character and sensitivity as defined in the Landscape Supplementary Planning Document. Development which would adversely affect the quality and character of the landscape will not be permitted'.

1.5 Non-statutory Policies

National Character Area Profiles, Statements of Environmental Opportunity and suggested actions and objectives, and Local Landscape Character

*Refer to **Figures 5:** National Character Areas*

*Refer to **Figure 6:** Northumberland Landscape Character Types and Areas*

- 1.5.1 The site and surrounding 5km radius study area lie within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 2 Northumberland Sandstone Hills.

- 1.5.2 The site lies within the **Outcrop Hills and Escarpments** Landscape Character Type as defined in the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment and within Character Area **8g: Sweethope and Blackdown**. Section 3.2 below gives full details of the County and Local landscape character areas and types as relevant to the development.

2.0 METHODOLOGY AND CRITERIA

2.0.1 The landscape and visual assessment will involve desk study, field work, data processing and analysis, and interpretation using professional judgement.

2.1 Landscape and Visual Methodology

Desk Study

2.1.1 The aim of the desk study is to establish the key landscape features and landscape planning designations affecting the proposed development site and the surrounding landscape. The landscape and visual assessment will draw on information provided in the following reference sources:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute 2013
- National Planning Policy Framework, 2018
- National Landscape Character Area Profiles, Natural England 2013
- Northumberland County Council Landscape Character Assessment, NCC 2010
- www.magic.gov (planning and environmental designations)
- Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Assessment Advice Note 01/11 Landscape Institute, 2011
- LI Guidance Note 02-17 Visual Representation
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment: Natural England 2014
- Visual Representation of Wind Farms, version 2.1 Scottish Natural Heritage Dec 2014
- Ordnance Survey mapping for the area

Baseline Study/Conditions

2.1.2 Analysis and reporting of the baseline assessment will be undertaken following completion of the desk and field surveys. The baseline landscape and visual assessment provides a description, classification and evaluation of the existing landscape and visibility of the study area, providing a starting point from which the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development are determined.

2.1.3 The desk study and baseline assessments undertaken provide direction and focus to subsequent field survey work.

Landscape Character and Amenity

2.1.4 Landscape Receptors are landscape resources located within the study area that could potentially experience a change in landscape character as a result of the potential effects of the development proposal. The potential visibility of the proposed development from the landscape resources within the study area was checked during site visits.

Consideration is given here to changes upon landscape elements such as woodland, trees or other features.

2.1.5 The landscape baseline section of this assessment deals largely with the appreciation of landscape character (in which the particular attributes of the existing landscape are considered and described), while later sections of the study assess and make judgements about the potential impacts and effects of the proposed development based upon this characterisation.

2.1.6 Existing landscape character assessments are an important starting point for any new assessment. Landscape character assessment is hierarchical and describes landscape on different strategic levels and scales (i.e. national and regional, county and district or local and site specific).

2.1.7 The study of landscape assessments at different strategic levels is important for a number of reasons:

- it aids the understanding of the landscape at a wider level;
- it allows the identification of landscape elements that may be present at a number of different scales, and thus of higher importance;
- it highlights landscape character that is 'out of context' with other levels of the hierarchy; and
- it may identify potential mitigation and restoration options that may not be present at the local scale, but can be beneficial at a higher level.

2.1.8 The landscape character of the site and its surroundings is therefore assessed according to the above principles in 2.1.7.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

2.1.9 In order to inform the selection of viewpoints, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps were developed to a radius of 3.5km using Key Terra Firma software and viewing height is set to 2m. KeyTERRA-FIRMA Ground Modelling works entirely within AutoCAD to calculate a series of 3D triangles to represent accurately the existing ground/site, the design and other surfaces. This software creates a 3D ground model from OS Terrain 5 Data, at 5 metre level grid intervals and comprises a series of triangles stored as a kgm file. This software generates maps which show the extent to which the proposed development is likely to be visible in the surrounding landscape, by using Ordnance Survey 'Terrain 5' data. While the ZTV will help to inform viewpoint selection it always needs to be backed up by baseline research and fieldwork.

Viewpoints - Overview on selection

2.1.10 The selection of viewpoints is a key stage and is informed by the outcomes of the baseline and context work relating to landscape and visual considerations. The study area and draft viewpoints are determined using a combination of desk study, consultation, map analysis and field work. Some potential viewpoints were initially suggested by Northumberland National Park Authority, along with recommendations from NCC for capturing views related to Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings. Noting these recommendations, draft viewpoints were mapped using ZTV mapping and baseline desk study information for guidance, before panoramic photography was carried out on site. Viewpoints include not only the typical representative and specific receptor types but also sequential views as appropriate. As the study progressed, particularly relevant views were selected to be developed into photomontages to illustrate the final proposal from key views, while other views were simply included as annotated panorama photographs to illustrate the context and to support the narrative.

Visual Context

- 2.1.11 The aim of the baseline visual assessment is to ensure that an appropriate range of viewpoints is included in the assessment from representative locations (covering several receptors) and from specific locations (covering a particular receptor).
- 2.1.12 The selected viewpoints should represent views from a range of potential representative and specific visual receptors classified according to their associated land use, for example the occupants of settlements, footpath users, roads users, etc. Having identified potential receptors within the study area it is then possible, through site survey, to identify those likely to be most affected by future development.
- 2.1.13 The initial selection of viewpoints included a representative range in relation to the following criteria:
- A range of distances of receptor from proposed development to the maximum extent of the study area; and
 - A range of locations of receptors from proposed development, with the aim of achieving a reasonable distribution from different compass points around the site.

Visual Assessment

2.1.14 The visual assessment considers the site and its surroundings from a range of receptors, focusing on a maximum radius of 5.0km from the approximated centre of the proposed development site. It is typically considered that observers beyond this distance would be unlikely to obtain clear views of the site because of the surrounding topography, built fabric, tree cover and field boundaries within this landscape.

Field Survey

- 2.1.15 Field survey is used to verify and refine the viewpoints and receptors identified in the desk study and baseline assessment, and to gain a full appreciation of the relationship between the proposed development and its surrounding landscape. The field survey also helps to establish the existing condition and quality of the landscape within the study area.
- 2.1.16 A series of panoramic photographs was taken to record the view from each viewpoint selected and to provide a basis for discussion in this report.

Viewpoint Photography

- 2.1.17 All photographs in this assessment were taken using a full frame Nikon D750 digital SLR camera. The lens used is fixed to a focal length of 50mm, ISO 100 and white balance set to daylight, in accordance with relevant guidelines. Photographs were taken using a tripod at a height of 1.5m, the eye height above ground of the photographer. The camera was set in the correct position for the first photograph to show the development centred in the shot, with subsequent shots taken in an overlapping sequence.

Panorama Construction Method

- 2.1.18 Following completion of field work, the photographic images were constructed into panoramas by stitching together several frames using Hugin software. Hugin uses a cylindrical projection method for 90 degree images and a planar method to merge images for 53.5 degree panoramas, showing a horizontal field of view (FOV) of 53.5 degrees and a vertical field of view (FOV) of 18.2 degrees.

Annotated photographs

- 2.1.19 Selected views varied from a single frame (approx. 40°) to panoramic images (90°–360°) where appropriate. The viewpoint location (including National Grid Reference), camera type, lens focal length, horizontal angle of view and actual grid reference were recorded for each image. For viewing purposes, 90° images should be viewed at 'a comfortable arm's length' and 53.5 degree images should be laid in a flat position for viewing.
- 2.1.20 The Landscape Institute publication 'Advice Note 01/11, Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment' states (p2):

It is essential to recognise that:

- *Two-dimensional photographic images alone cannot capture or reflect the complexity underlying the visual experience, and should therefore be considered an approximation of the three-dimensional visual experiences that an observer would receive in the field;*
- *As part of a technical process, impact assessment and considered judgements using photographs and/or photomontages can only be reached by way of a visit to the location from which the photographs were taken.*

- 2.1.21 Where annotated photographs are included in addition to full photomontages, professional judgement is used to assess and demarcate the anticipated site location and extent of the development within the landscape, based upon site survey and sighting the proposed development using a compass, map information and existing landscape features.

Setting up of Camera Points and Position of Proposed Development for 3D representations

- 2.1.22 Using 3ds Max software, the camera point positions and the position of the proposed development are set according to the topographical survey information (for the camera points: ground level + eye level height above ground of 1.5m; and proposed levels for the development including key features). This base information is then imported into 3ds Max, where heights of any structures are double checked.

Terrain Modelling

- 2.1.23 The kgm format model file (which is explained in paragraph 2.1.9) is used to generate contours when a model has been created (2m interval contours). Contours are saved in CAD format and imported within 3ds Max to generate the digital terrain model (DTM).

Photomontages and Wirelines

- 2.1.24 Photomontages and wirelines are created by combining all information, including the digital terrain data, cameras locations, the 3D model of the proposed development and site photography using 3ds Max.
- 2.1.25 The model is then rendered in 3ds Max and saved as a TGA format image, which is imported into Photoshop and fine adjustments made such as brightness and contrast to suit the background. The process is repeated for other viewpoints.
- 2.1.26 Photomontages and matching wire-line views are prepared at an appropriate scale and resolution in accordance with current guidance from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Selected views vary from a single frame (approx. 40°) to panoramic images (90°–360°). The viewpoint location (NGR), camera type, lens focal length, vertical and horizontal field of view are recorded on each image.
- 2.1.27 Images should be produced at the appropriate print size in accordance with the guidance from Scottish Natural Heritage '*Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Version 2.1, Dec 2014*' and the viewing distance should normally be at a comfortable arms-length.

Assessment of Effects

- 2.1.28 Landscape and visual effects are considered separately for their sensitivity, nature and importance, along with relevant heritage and setting issues, predicted magnitude of change and likely effects arising from the proposed developments. The value of the landscape/ views and susceptibility to change for receptors is considered. The emphasis is on gaining a thorough understanding of the sensitivity of the setting as a whole, and the

predicted nature and effects of the proposed residential development. The types of effect are taken into account for example their duration and reversibility. The prediction of magnitude and assessment of significance of the residual landscape and visual effects is based on pre-defined criteria discussed and summarised in the following paragraphs/tables.

Mitigation

- 2.1.29 The study discusses options for measures to assist with reduction and avoidance of effects for example through choice of materials, consideration of alternatives and siting of the development. Residual effects that cannot be avoided are then further reduced where possible using mitigation measures.

Conclusions

- 2.1.30 The conclusions draw together the findings from the landscape and visual assessment to conclude what effects may arise from the proposed development and consider any avoidance/reduction/alternatives and recommend mitigation measures where appropriate. It is important to note though that, due to the nature of landscape and visual assessment, use of professional judgements and interpretation are often required.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 2.1.31 The assessment of Landscape Sensitivity is made by combining professional judgements in relation to the **susceptibility** of the landscape to change (particular to the proposed development type) and the **value** of the landscape receptor.

Susceptibility of Landscape to Change

- 2.1.32 Professional judgements are made in relation to the capacity of a landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies (whether the landscape receptor be the overall character of a particular landscape type/ area, or an individual element/feature or designation within it.

Value of the Landscape Receptor

- 2.1.33 Landscape value judgements should reflect:
- The value of the landscape character types or areas that may be affected based on review of any designations at both national and local levels. Where there are no designations, judgements are based on criteria that can be used to establish landscape value;
 - The value of individual contributors to landscape character, especially key characteristics, which may include individual elements of the landscape, particular landscape features, notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities, and combinations of these contributors.

2.1.34 The assessment of value is based on professional judgement and should include consideration of factors such as:

- **Landscape quality (condition):** A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- **Scenic Quality:** The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses).
- **Rarity:** The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type
- **Representativeness:** Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.
- **Conservation Interests:** The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historic and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.
- **Recreational Value;** Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
- **Perceptual Aspects:** A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and / or tranquillity.
- **Cultural Associations:** Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

2.1.35 The resulting landscape sensitivity can be described as **high, medium, or low**. **Definitions of these levels of sensitivity** can be summarised as follows:

Table A: Definition of Landscape Sensitivity

High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A landscape of national or regional importance • A landscape containing notable landscape features or structures with physical, cultural or historic attributes
Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A landscape which has been eroded by change (e.g. as a result of land use or by the inclusion of man-made elements) but which still contains some special characteristics
Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A landscape containing a limited number of special characteristics due to a significant deterioration of character

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

2.1.36 The visual receptor is the special interest or viewer group that will experience an effect. This includes residents, recreational users, visitors and groups of viewers present in the locality. Visual receptors are classified according to their sensitivity, with some considered more sensitive than others. In visual assessment, greater weight is given to the visual impacts upon public viewpoints than upon private properties. Views from rooms that are used during daylight hours, such as sitting rooms, are also deemed to be more important.

2.1.37 The sensitivity of visual receptors should also be assessed in terms of both their **susceptibility** to change in views and visual amenity and also the **value** attached to particular views, as follows:

Susceptibility of Visual Receptors

2.1.38 The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and
- The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

Value of the views

2.1.39 Judgements also need to be made in relation to the value attached to the existing views available and these should take account of:

- Recognition of the value attached to particular views i.e. in relation to heritage assets or planning designations;
- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, i.e. presence in tourist maps, provision of facilities for the enjoyment of views or references to specific views in literature or art.

2.1.40 The resulting sensitivity of the visual receptors can be described as **high, medium, or low. Definitions of these levels of sensitivity** can be summarised as follows in **Table B:**

Table B: Definition of Visual Receptor Sensitivity

High
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Users of recreational routes including footpaths, cycle routes or public rights of way• Users of outdoor recreational facilities whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape (e.g. visitors to beauty spots, scenic viewpoints or picnic areas)• Communities (where the development results in changes to the landscape setting, or valued views enjoyed by that community)• Visitors to important landscape features or buildings with physical, cultural or historic attributes (e.g. Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings)
Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Users of secondary footpaths (e.g. footpaths alongside roads, undesignated routes, informal tracks)• Views experienced by people travelling through the landscape on roads, train lines or via other transport routes, including on-road cycle paths• Primary views from individual private residential properties
Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People engaged in outdoor sports or recreation (other than for the appreciation of the landscape)• Users of commercial buildings, or commercially engaged pedestrians whose attention may be focussed on their work or activity rather than the wider landscape• Views from industrial areas, or from places of work• Secondary views from individual private residential properties

Magnitude of Change

2.1.41 The magnitude of change arising from the proposed development at any particular viewpoint is described as high, medium, low or negligible based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows:

- Degree of physical change in landscape features and landscape character;
- Duration of effect;
- Distance of the viewpoint from the development;
- Extent of the development in the view;
- Angle of view in relation to main receptor activity;
- Proportion of the field of view occupied by the development;
- Background to the development; and
- Extent of other built development visible, particularly vertical elements

TABLE C: Definition of Magnitude of Change

High
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A change in landscape quality and character that is major in scale, extent and/or duration, or• A change resulting in the loss of key characteristics, or• A change that introduces conflicting elements of landscape character
Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A change in landscape quality and character, but one which is limited in terms of scale, extent and/or duration, or• A change resulting in the erosion of some key characteristics, or• A change in landscape character, but one which introduces compatible or complementary elements of landscape character
Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A change of landscape quality and character that is small in scale, extent and/or duration, or• A change whereby new conflicting characteristics elements of character replace those of a less significant character value, or• A change that does not introduce any new characteristics into the surrounding landscape
Negligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A change in landscape quality and character that is barely noticeable in scale or extremely short in duration, or• This includes either a very small deterioration of existing landscape character elements, or the addition of characteristic or barely perceptible features and elements

Assessment of Significance

2.1.42 The significance of effect on landscape amenity is determined by combining the landscape sensitivity with the magnitude of change brought about by the development, in accordance with the matrix below. This matrix has been prepared in accordance with the findings of the baseline study, and is deemed to be appropriate in terms of the nature and value of landscape receptors located within the study area.

TABLE D: Assessment of Significance of Effect on Landscape Amenity

Landscape Sensitivity (A)	Magnitude of Change (C)			
	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Substantial	Substantial/ Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	No Effect
Medium	Substantial/ Moderate	Moderate	Minor	No Effect
Low	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor	No Effect

2.1.43 The significance of the effect on visual amenity is determined by combining the visual sensitivity with the magnitude of change for each viewpoint, in accordance with the matrix below. This matrix has been prepared in accordance with the findings of the baseline study, and is deemed to be appropriate in terms of the value of the visual receptors located within the study area.

TABLE E: Assessment of Significance of Effect on Visual Amenity

Visual Sensitivity (B)	Magnitude of Change (C)			
	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Substantial	Substantial/ Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	No Effect
Medium	Substantial/ Moderate	Moderate	Minor	No Effect
Low	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor	No Effect

2.1.44 Where an effect falls within a split category, professional judgement is used to evaluate which of the two categories most closely fits. While the matrices are helpful as moderation to opinion, professional judgement may overrule a matrix in specific cases where this can clearly be justified.

Significance Criteria

2.1.45 The resulting significance values for appraisal of the effects upon both landscape and visual amenity are defined as follows:

- Substantial – considerable effects (by extent, duration or magnitude), or of more than local significance, or breaching identified standards or policy, which would normally be considered significant.
- Moderate – limited effects which may be considered significant
- Minor – slight, very short, or highly localised effects which would not normally be considered significant
- Neutral – no discernible effect

2.1.46 This is combined with an appraisal of whether or not each effect is positive, negative or neutral. This is somewhat subjective and relies largely upon professional judgement, but can be broadly defined as follows:

- Beneficial – the effect would result in an improvement in the baseline situation
- Neutral – the effect would result in there being little or no change in the baseline situation, or a change that is neither negative nor positive
- Adverse – the effect would result in a deterioration of the baseline situation

Terminology

2.1.47 Terms to describe landscape and visual matters in this report have been used in accordance with the Glossary of Terms pages 155 to 159 "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment" Third Edition 2013 Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment.

2.1.48 Reference has also been made to the National Planning Policy Guidelines NPPF published in March 2012 by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

3.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Introduction

3.0.1 This section provides an overview of the baseline study results and references. It provides information on the following features within the study area:

- Statutory/ non-statutory designations;
- National and Regional Landscape Character;
- Site and surrounding area;
- Visual context (ZTV and representative views)

3.1 Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations

Refer to **Figure 2:** Access and Circulation Plan

Figure 3: Heritage Designations

Figure 4: Planning and Landscape Designations

Scheduled Monuments

3.1.1 There are twenty three Scheduled Monuments (SM) within the study area; the closest being a uni-vallate Hillfort at Great Wanney Crag. This is the only SM within a 2km radius of the site.

Listed Buildings

3.1.2 There are 14 Listed Buildings within the study area, the closest of which is Harewalls, a Grade II Listed Building around 1.6km to the north west of the site. This is the only listed building within a 2km radius of the site.

National Park

3.1.3 The boundary of the Northumberland National Park just clips the north west part of the study area around 5km from the site.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

3.1.4 There is one designated as SSSI within the study area, at Redesdale Ironstone Quarries located approx. 3.9km from the site.

Local Wildlife and Geological Sites (LWS)

3.1.5 There are several LWS within the study area, including Aid Moss around 1.5km to the south of the site. There are none within the site boundary.

Ancient Woodland

3.1.6 There are two small areas of Ancient Woodland within the study area, the nearest being at High Shaw around 1.9km northwest of the site.

Public Rights of Way, CROW land and other Public Access Routes

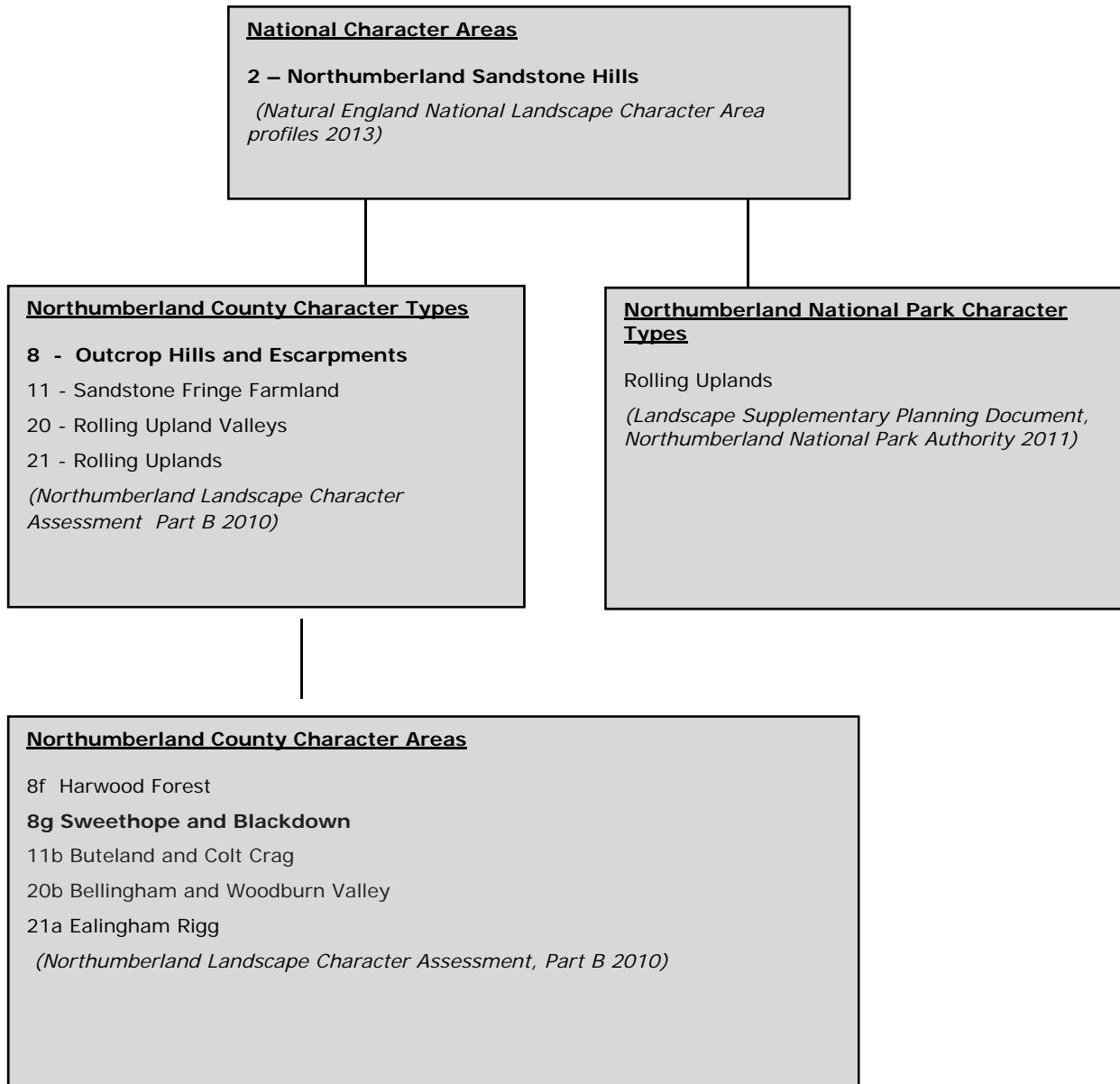
- 3.1.7 The study area is well populated with a network of footpaths, bridleways, recreational routes and cycle routes. The Reivers Way recreational route passes through the east part of the study area running north-south and St Oswald's Way lies just beyond the 5km study area to the east. There is also a National Cycle Network Route (NCN 68) identified on the Sustrans Cycle Map which passes 3 km to the north west of the site, and the Sandstone Way Mountain Bike Route in a similar location leading into the National Park. These routes are shown on **Figure 2** Access and Circulation Plan.
- 3.1.8 There are no Public Rights Of Way (PROW) footpaths or bridleways within the site, however the site lies entirely within land mapped under The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) allowing open access.

3.2 Landscape Character and Baseline Sensitivity

National Character Area Context

Refer to **Figure 5: National Character Area and Northumberland County Landscape Character Type and Areas Plan**

Summary of available and relevant Landscape Character Study Information



Approach to the Assessment of Landscape Effects

- 3.2.1 The above summary diagram of available and relevant Landscape Character information gives an overview of the many tiers of landscape character information available in this area at national, county, and local level. Some of the key characteristics discussed at national level are similar to those discussed at county level and therefore give a broad overview of the characteristics of large areas of land.
- 3.2.2 The following assessment of landscape character and landscape sensitivity provides an overview of wider character context nationally and regionally. This is followed by a discussion of character types and areas within Northumberland County Council related to the land within the 5.0km radius study area, and where applicable a combined assessment of landscape sensitivity. Information relating to the Northumberland County Council Local Character Areas and Types is also included, followed by a focussed landscape character assessment of the site.

National Character Areas (Natural England)

- 3.2.3 In order to gain a strategic overview of landscape character, reference has been made to the Natural England's National Character Areas. **Figure 5: National Landscape Character Areas Plan** indicates that the site itself and the whole of the study area lies within the **NCA 2 Northumberland Sandstone Hills** and the key characteristics present in the landscape are as follows:

Key Characteristics

- *Sandstone hills forming distinctive skyline features characterised by generally level tops, north-west facing scarp slopes, and craggy outcrops. Exceptional views from the hills of the coast and across the lowland fringe to the Cheviots.*
- *Range of semi-natural habitats, with varied moorland communities dominated by heather and rough, acid grassland mosaics on the thin, sandy soils of the higher steeper slopes and broken ground, giving way to scrub, oak/birch woodland and then to improved farmland and parkland, on the lower slopes. Wet peaty flushes, mires, loughs and small reservoirs occur throughout the area.*
- *Rectilinear pattern of large, open fields bounded by dry stone walls, often broken up by blocks and belts of coniferous woodland.*
- *Extensive plantations of coniferous woodland. Broadleaved woodland associated with rivers and scarp slopes.*
- *Important prehistoric archaeological landscape, with 'cup and ring' marked rocks, Bronze Age burial cists, earthwork remains of later Iron Age hill fort systems, standing stones, enclosures and cairns.*
- *Parkland settings of the large country mansions, which fringe the lower fellside slopes, have distinctive 'landscaped' features and much semi natural broadleaved woodland cover.*
- *Scattered pattern of individual isolated farmsteads and small hamlets, served by the market towns of Alnwick and Rothbury.*

County Character Type and Areas (Northumberland County Council)

- 3.2.4 County Character Types and Areas have been defined by Northumberland County Council and are shown on **Figure 5**. The Landscape Character Type of the central and northern parts of the study area including the site is within **Outcrop Hills and Escarpments** and Character Areas are **8f Harwood Forest** and **8g Sweethope and Blackdown** within which the site lies. The key characteristics present are highlighted as follows:

Key Characteristics

- *Distinctive scarp hills with rocky outcrops*
- *Relationship with the Cheviots, across the cheviot fringe landscape*
- *Open, relatively remote, character*
- *Areas of uninterrupted, sweeping moorland*
- *Historic features, particularly concentrations of settlements, cup and ring marked.*

- 3.2.5 The guiding principal (Vision statement) for the Outcrop Hills and Escarpments Character Type is as follows:

'This hills are a distinctive feature of Northumberland landscape, and have valuable landscape features which remain in good condition, The approach for this landscape should be to manage development, while maintaining the distinctive landform and moorland areas.'

- 3.2.6 Land management guidelines, with the most relevant objectives listed below:

- *Where restructuring of forestry takes place, encourage softer plantation outlines with shapes designed to integrate with local topography. Encourage greater diversity of species, including broadleaves, where this coincides with good silvicultural practice.*
- *Seek to preserve the open situation of craggy outcrops and visually significant archaeological sites so that these are not visually masked by woodland.*
- *Encourage a greater uptake of woodland grants to bring semi-natural woodlands back into active management where they have suffered from neglect.*
- *Retention of unimproved wet pastures on lower slopes and the protection of buried archaeology and earthworks should be encouraged in order to retain the visual diversity and time- depth of this landscape.*
- *The rebuilding and restoration of stone walls should be encouraged through provision of appropriate grants and development of locally-based skills to ensure walls are stockproof and reflect the distinctive enclosure pattern found in parts of this landscape, particularly where it is associated with historic sites.*
- *Manage heather moorland and sustain and enhance biodiversity through appropriate stocking densities and burning regimes.*
- *Conservation of historic sites and their settings should be encouraged particularly where they act as local focal points and reinforce local distinctiveness. Access to*

key features should be sensitively managed to reduce erosion of the landscape and archaeology.

- 3.2.7 To the southeast, central and south west of the study area is the County Character Type **Sandstone Fringe Farmland** and the Character Area is **11b Buteland and Colt Crag**. The key characteristics present are highlighted as follows:

Key Characteristics

- *Distinctive, regular enclosure pattern of stone walls and hedges.*
- *Smooth rounded skylines with extensive views and a sense of remoteness.*
- *Wet/rushy pasture and areas of grass and heather moorland providing important habitats for breeding birds.*
- *Reservoirs providing water and recreational resources as well as supporting wildfowl.*
- *Prominent rocky outcrops of the Whin Sill*
- *Isolated vernacular farmsteads and important historical features including Romano-British farmsteads, prehistoric settlement and henges and deserted medieval villages.*

- 3.2.8 The guiding principal (Vision statement) for Outcrop Hills and Escarpments Character Type is as follows:

'This landscape has a strong identity and many valuable landscape features which remain in good condition. Although there has been some change such the planting of coniferous plantation and the decline in pastures, the landscape retains a consistent character. The overall approach for this area is to sensitively manage the landscape of the area.'

- 3.2.9 Land management guidelines, with the most relevant objectives listed below:

- *Felling and restructuring of coniferous plantations may present opportunities to soften the edges of larger plantations.*
- *Ensure that proposed new plantations accord with the aims of relevant forestry policy, and seek to retain the open nature of views.*
- *Seek to preserve the open situation of craggy outcrops and visually significant archaeological sites so that these are not visually masked by woodland.*
- *Encourage a greater uptake of woodland grants to bring semi-natural woodlands back into active management where they have suffered from neglect, particularly along gills and ravines.*
- *Retention of unimproved wet and acidic grasslands and protection of buried archaeology and earthworks should be encouraged in order to retain the visual diversity and time-depth of this landscape.*
- *The rebuilding and restoration of stone walls should be encouraged through provision of appropriate grants and development of locally-based skills to ensure*

walls are stockproof and reflect the distinctive enclosure pattern found in parts of this landscape, particularly areas associated with historic sites.

- *Manage heather and grass moorland and sustain and enhance biodiversity through appropriate stocking densities and burning regimes. Encourage the regeneration and expansion of heather moorland in order to reinforce the distinctive rich colours and textures found in this landscape.*
- *Conservation of historic sites and their settings and areas of earthworks should be encouraged particularly where they act as local focal points and create strong landscape patterns and textures.*
- *Seek to enhance field boundaries through hedgerow and tree planting, maintaining existing structure and pattern within the landscape*

3.2.10 To the north east and extending into the central part of the study area is the County Character Type **Rolling Upland Valleys** and the Character Area is **20b Bellingham and Woodburn Valley**. *The key characteristics present to the site are highlighted as follows:*

Key characteristics

- *Consistent patterns of land use including valley floor mixed farming and hedgerows, rushy valley-side pastures enclosed by stone walls, and open moorland above*
- *Wooded bluffs along the edge of the valley floors and tributary burns, creating visual enclosure and comprising significant areas of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland*
- *Historic sandstone villages occur repeatedly along the lower valley sides and act as important visual focal points*
- *Historic features, including remains from the Roman period, medieval period and the Border conflicts of the 16th century, as well as mining and industrial relicts.*
- *The valleys act as corridors and gateways to the National Park and to the recreational; landscape of Kielder Water, and form part of their setting..*

3.2.12 The guiding principal (Vision statement) for Rolling Upland Valleys Character Type is as follows:

'The defining element of this landscape character type is the pattern of land use and enclosure, which progress from mixed farming on the valley floor where fields are enclosed by hedge, to pastures on the valley sides defined by stone wall, to open moorland above. The overall approach should be to conserve and restore the enclosure pattern, and maintain the unique character of each of the valleys.'

3.2.13 Land management guidelines, with the most relevant objectives listed below:

- *Encourage restructuring of coniferous plantations where there are visually dominant. Discouraged planting on the skyline.*

- *Encourage a greater uptake of woodland grants to bring semi-nature woodlands back into active management where they have suffered from neglect, particularly in woodland bluffs and along burns.*
- *Encourage the planting of new woodland on the valley floor where it adds visual interest, enhances landscape structure and complements existing woods on steep side bluffs.*
- *Retention of unimproved pastures on the valley sides and some areas of valley floor should be encouraged in order to retain the visual diversity of this landscape.*
- *Creation of landscape margins and buffers adjacent to watercourses would be beneficial where arable land or intensive grazing impinges on the water's edge.*
- *Encourage landowner to improve management and carry out replacement of hedgerows and hedgerow trees through agri-environment funding schemes.*
- *Conservation of historic sites and structures, which act local focal points and reinforce local distinctiveness in each of the valleys, is important. Access to and views of these key features should also be retained.*

3.2.14 To the north east of the study area close to the National Park is a small area of County Character Type **Rolling Uplands** and the Character Area is **21a Corsenside Common**. The key characteristics present are highlighted as follows:

Key Characteristics

- *Open smooth rolling landform with expansive and panoramic views*
- *Extensive areas of semi-natural habitat including ancient woodland along burns, heather and grass moorland, peat bog and mosses.*
- *Distinctive craggy sandstone outcrops*
- *Archaeological and historical features including Dere Street, rig and furrow and a medical church*
- *Wildness and remoteness derived from the landscape's upland character, limited accessibility and relative lack of overt manmade features.*

3.2.15 The guiding principle (Vision statement) for Rolling Upland Character Type is as follows:

'The condition of this landscape, including its semi-natural habitats and historic features and patterns, remains good despite some changes associated with coniferous planting and military training activity. The approach for this landscape is therefore one of conservation.'

3.2.16 Land management guidelines, with the most relevant objectives listed below:

- *Encourage restructuring of coniferous plantations where there are visually dominant.*
- *Planting of new native woodland should focus on natural depressions in the landform and along burns, and should avoid masking rocky outcrops which act as local landmarks and a valuable habitat.*

- *Encourage a greater uptake of woodland grants to bring semi-natural woodlands back into active management where they have suffered from neglect, particularly in wooded bluffs and along burns.*
- *Heather moorland should be managed to enhance biodiversity through appropriate stocking densities and burning regimes. Conserve blanket bog through the avoidance of drainage and physical damage. Restore damaged bogs and flushes by blocking drains. Promote uptake of agri-environment schemes to achieve such aims.*
- *Protect historical features from inappropriate land management including drainage, woodland planting and arable cropping.*
- *Encourage the sensitive management of areas used for military training.*

3.2.17 A very small part of the Study Area in the Northumberland National Park is identified as Landscape Character Type **Rolling Uplands**. From the Northumberland National Park Landscape Supplementary Planning Document, September 2011 the key characteristics are as follows:

- *Broad, open, large-scale, rolling moorland plateau;*
- *Simple, smooth flowing landform, often featureless with high degree of uniformity;*
- *Extensive areas of semi-natural vegetation including matrix of heather, matt-grass moorland, raised bogs or mires and patches of bracken;*
- *Archaeological sites of all periods are found in this area, but most date to the prehistoric and post-medieval/20th century periods. These relate to farming (farmsteads, field systems, sheepfolds and shielings) and industry (coal workings, lime kilns and quarries);*
- *Sparse settlement including isolated farmsteads and Victorian hunting lodges;*
- *Drained by a network of burns that have eroded deep but not visually prominent ravines;*
- *Sparse tree cover – occasional coniferous shelterbelts and clumps, with limited areas of semi-natural woodland along burns;*
- *Uniformity of land cover broken in places by In-byre pastures associated with farmsteads;*
- *Military training use over a significant part of the area;*
- *One of the most tranquil areas within the National Park.*

Landscape Character Assessment of the Proposed Development Site

3.2.18 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition LI and IEMA 3rd Edition 2013 Page 77 paragraph 5.13 and Page 79 paragraph 5.16 advise the following in relation to references to existing landscape character assessments:

‘Existing assessments must be reviewed critically as their quality may vary, some may be dated and some may not be suited to the task in hand. Before deciding to rely on information from an existing assessment a judgement should be made as to the degree to which it will be useful in informing the LVIA process.’

It should be reviewed in terms of:

- *When it was carried out and the extent to which the landscape may have changed since then;*
- *Its status, and whether or not it has been formally adopted, for example as supplementary planning guidance;*
- *The scale and level of detail of the assessment and therefore its suitability for use in the LVIA, while noting that larger scale assessments can often provide valuable context;*
- *Any other matters which might limit the reliability or usefulness of the information.*

Justification should be provided for any departure from the findings of an existing established LCA.

Even where there are useful and relevant existing Landscape Character Assessments and historic landscape characterisations, it is still likely that it will be necessary to carry out specific and more detailed surveys of the site itself and perhaps its immediate setting and surroundings. This provides the opportunity to record the specific characteristics of the more limited area, but also to analyse to what extent the site and its immediate surroundings conform to or are different from the wider Landscape Character Assessments that exist, and to pick up other characteristics that may be important in considering the effects of the proposal'.

3.2.19 Landscape Character Assessments are useful in the determination of landscape character context and it is considered that the character assessments listed above provide useful information for this assessment. The paragraphs below provide a description of the site itself and its surrounding context.

3.3 Site Description and Context

3.3.1 The proposed landmark site is proposed at the summit of a localised distinctive hillock known as Cold Law, set within sloping upland grassland of an open character and wet flushes of marsh, adjacent to a minor rural road with grass verges. The immediate landscape context is largely devoid of trees other than some deciduous trees along water courses and large blocks of coniferous forestry plantation. The land is part of the Ray Estate, managed for agriculture, game shooting and fishing and also home to a wind farm on the fells to the north east of the study area.

3.3.2 The western and northern site boundaries formed by dry stone walls with the western boundary running alongside a minor rural road. There is a field gate for access.

- 3.3.3 To the east of the site is the line of a railway, now disused, that formerly carried iron ore to and from local quarry workings and the ironworks at Ridsdale to the west, and beyond this the land slopes down to Risey Burn and then gives way to forestry plantation. At the foot of the west flank of the hill is a traditional circular drystone sheepfold.
- 3.3.4 To the south of the site the landscape contains craggy outcrops including Hepple Heugh which is around 750m south of Cold Law.
- 3.3.5 Outwith the site there are localised highpoints throughout the study area, often associated with historic forts and settlements such as to the south at Great Wanney Crag. Beyond the study area lies the Northumberland National Park, its closest point being at Corsenside crossroads around 4.7km to the north west of the site.
- 3.3.6 Around 2.7km to the north west of the site lie the villages of East and West Woodburn, the closest settlements to the site.
- 3.3.7 The surrounding landscape is of a large scale and open in character with moorland on higher land and patches of sedge indicating areas of poor drainage, such as the flush of marshland wrapped around the south western foot of Cold Law. Blocks of modern coniferous plantation are present and there are occasional clumps of riparian deciduous woodland along the burns. Field boundaries are generally fenced or dry stone walled rather than hedgerows.

3.4 Visual Context

- 3.4.1 In order to explore the potential visibility of the proposed site and select likely viable viewpoints to represent potential receptors, a 5.0km diameter Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map has been generated using digital topographic mapping.

Visual Envelope

Refer to **Figure 6a: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Plan (bare land) with Potential Visual Receptor Locations**

- 3.4.2 The visual envelope is the extent to which the proposed development would be seen from areas in the surrounding landscape. The visual envelope is shown as a coloured area on the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Plan **Figure 6a** illustrates the ZTV with only the 'bare land' topography within the study area taken into consideration. It is important to note that the ZTV mapping is not fully accurate but can help to build up an understanding of the overall visibility of the development when supported by inspections on site. Desk study also informed the viewpoint selection, with particular consideration given to designated or sensitive locations such as the National Park, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Public Rights of Way and adjacent residential areas.

- 3.4.3 From the findings of the ZTV exercise, the extent to which the site is likely to be visible within the study area, as shown on **Figure 6b**, is generally more contained by landform and plantations to the south of the site, with the potential for some longer distance views from the north and northwest, however as the proposed landmark is deliberately sited on top of a highpoint long distant views are expected from all sides. Coniferous plantation blocks have been treated as a temporary landscape feature due to the relatively short crop rotations.
- 3.4.4 There will be short range views into the site from the minor rural road when in close proximity. There will also be views from several points along the A68 which runs north-south to the west of the site, and potentially a short glimpsed view from the A696 to the north east of the study area.
- 3.4.5 The site has been selected to allow good visibility towards the landmark, and there will be elevated views from several PROW footpaths and bridleways and indeed the immediate site area lies within land mapped under the CROW Act 2000 as open access land. Views will also be available from recreational and cycle routes such as NCN route 68 and the Sandstone Way in the National Park to the northwest.

Viewpoint Selection

- 3.4.8 Informed by comments from the pre-Application process, an emphasis was placed on views to and from Scheduled Monuments since these are a feature of this historic landscape. The setting of Listed Buildings were also noted for example from Harewalls to the north of the site. Views to and from the Northumberland National Park and associated recreational paths and routes were also emphasised. View selection was guided by the ZTV followed up by site photography to test the visibility of the proposals from different directions, distances and receptor types, and provide an understanding of the baseline conditions and context of them. The selected viewpoints are listed in the table below.

	Viewpoint Description	Distance from site (approx.)	Receptor Type
1	View 1: View north from road adjacent to Hepple Heugh	500m	Road users
2	View 2: View south east from road, PROW footpath and bridleways, over Stiddlehill Common	600m	Road Users, PROW footpath and bridleway users
3	View 3: View east from road, over Stiddlehill Common	1.4km	Road Users
4	View 4: View north west from road and Scheduled Monument	2.1km	Road Users, setting of Scheduled Monument
5	View 5: View north west from PROW bridleway to Lake Wood	2.5km	PROW bridleway users
6	View 6: View west from PROW bridleway by Scheduled Monument	2.4km	PROW bridleway users setting of Scheduled Monument
7	View 7: View south from track to Harewalls	2km	Track users, setting of Listed Building

	Viewpoint Description	Distance from site (approx.)	Receptor Type
8	View 8: View south east from road between A68 and East Woodburn	2.2km	Road Users
9	View 9: View east from Ridsdale at jn. of A68 with PROW Footpath	2.2km	PROW footpath users and views from settlement
10	View 10: View south east from road between East Woodburn and Monkridge at jn. with Cycleways and Byway	2.8km	Road, Byway and Cycleway Users (NCN 68 and Sandstone Way)
11	View north west from PROW bridleway at Lunga Crag	3.5km	PROW bridleway users
12	View 12: View north west from road by Cornhills at jn. with PROW footpath	4km	Road Users, PROW footpath users
13	View 13: View south east from seating area off A68 by Woodhouse	4.7km	Road and Byway users, seating area users.
14	View 14: View south east from parking area/ Viewpoint off A68 at Corsenside Crossroads	4.5km	Road and viewpoint users by Northumberland National Park
15	View 15: View north west from PROW footpath at Great Wanney Crag	2km	Users of PROW Footpath and visitors to Scheduled Monument
16	View 16: View east from road between West Woodburn and Bellingham, looking out over Hole (out of study area)	6km	Road Users and cycle users on NCN 68

3.4.9 Panorama photography was captured from selected representative viewpoints, and context photography taken from sample locations where the site was not found to be visible. Photomontages were prepared for viewpoints where effects were predicted to be most prominent or requested by consultees (Viewpoints 4, 7 and 14) to illustrate the likely residual effects and their significance. *Refer to Photomontages Figures 15, 16 & 17.*

4.0 Assessment of Predicted Effects

4.1 Summary of Process

- 4.1.1 The findings are advised by desk top, field work undertaken to ascertain the baseline character and visibility of the site in relation to its surrounding context, combined with a review of the detailed proposals to predict potential effects on these.

4.2 Landscape Assessment

- 4.2.1 The following paragraphs provide an assessment of the predicted effects on the landscape character of the site and study area.

- 4.2.2 The landscape of the study area is reflective of the key characteristics detailed above in both the County and Local Character Area studies and bearing in mind the context of the nearby Northumberland National Park and significance of the landscape as a registered battlefield the sensitivity of the landscape as a receptor is considered to be **high**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Magnitude of Change

- 4.2.3 The main change in relation to Landscape Character that would be the effect of introducing a landmark and associated access and parking into the open rural landscape. There will be a slight direct erosion of landscape features in the removal of some surface vegetation existing on site, however the development is of a very limited scale therefore the change will be of **low** magnitude in the context of the local and wider landscape character areas.

Opportunities for Mitigation

- 4.2.4 Care should be taken to minimise direct impacts upon geology, water and vegetation in the Construction and in-use phases. Excavation, compound, fabrication and storage areas should be carefully limited to the minimum area required to achieve the project, with fencing to prevent overrun into adjacent areas. Refer also to the ecology report, E3 Ecology January 2019.
- 4.2.5 The landmark is intended to function as a visible element in the landscape and therefore screening proposals are not appropriate as mitigation for the landmark itself. However there is the opportunity to minimise effects from the associated parking and access road, using subtle landforms or dry stone walls to match the style and materiality found already around the site. Materials for the car park and access routes should be selected from those found commonly in the landscape character area in order not to disrupt the rural character. Urban materials and geometric lines should be avoided in the design of the landscape setting. Care should be taken in the proposed development to avoid any unnecessary signage, clutter or inappropriate commercial features that might detract from the simple open character of the landscape. Screen planting using trees and shrubs is not considered appropriate around the setting of the proposed monument as such

vegetation does not exist within the proposed site area; the existing vegetation on site is generally acidic grassland, wet marsh and heath. Detailed soft landscape proposals will be informed by a suitable qualified ecologist (SQE) and proposed to be limited to the preservation of as much existing vegetation as possible, and recreation of similar low-level vegetation, along with any potential for increasing biodiversity. The proposed site layout and landscape strategy incorporates the mitigation elements described above which has reduced potential landscape impacts. It will be important to ensure that these principles are carried through in the detailed design of the proposals.

Residual Significance of Effects on Landscape Character

- 4.2.8 The site lies within the **Outcrop Hills and Escarpments** landscape character type, sub area **8b Sweethope and Blackdown**, an upland landscape which is very open in character with the exception of coniferous blocks of forest plantation and some occurrence of riparian deciduous vegetation in lower valleys along water courses. Given the relatively undeveloped nature of the area, and as much of the surrounding higher land lies within the Northumberland National Park, the landscape context is a sensitive receptor. The open landscape character of the area punctuated by crags and escarpments, and its border location between England and Scotland, has produced a landscape with a long tradition of hill forts and castles being sited and built to be seen as much as to function in a military fashion, and then a post-medieval tradition of landscape monuments. The historic context of the landscape is discussed in detail in the report 'Desk Based Assessment and Archaeological Visual Impact Assessment Compiled for the Devonport Estate by The Bamburgh Research Project: Commercial Projects Section, January 2019'.
- 4.2.9 While the proposed landmark is intended to be visible over a wide area, the change will result in minimal direct landscape impacts, and will bring about only a minor change in character in relation to the wider character area. It could be argued that the use of a localised hillock as a vantage points and landmark would not be out of keeping in this landscape character area given the many hillforts and other constructions at highpoints in the Northumberland landscape. The key characteristics of the national and local landscape character areas would not be harmed and the proposal would not disrupt the stated management guidelines for the local landscape character type Outcrop Hills and Escarpments.
- 4.2.10 The proposed landmark has some similarities in its slender verticality to the existing wind turbines seen extensively in this landscape, however the matte earth tones of the proposed corten steel and soft curves of the form (derived from the topography of Cold Law) would assimilate well with the landscape. While the introduction of any man-made object could be considered an adverse change in comparison to the undeveloped baseline, the change could also be beneficial and could encourage greater appreciation of the landscape. The magnitude of change would be negligible upon the National Character

Areas 2 Sandstone Hills, while the magnitude of change in the Outcrop Hills and Escarpments local landscape character type is considered to be low. A landscape receptor with **high** sensitivity combined with a **low** magnitude of change results in **moderate/ minor effects** on Landscape Character. The direct landscape effects and the landscape effects upon the landscape character areas would not be significant.

4.3 Visual Receptors and Viewpoint Assessment

Refer to **Figure 6b**: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Plan (visual barriers) with Viewpoint Locations

Figures 7-14: Photographic Viewpoints 1 to 16

Figures 15-17: Photomontages from Viewpoints 4, 7, and 14

- 4.3.1 The photographs demonstrate the relatively open, upland character of the landscape, and how the topography of the surrounding area with woodland blocks restricts middle and distant views towards the site from some aspects.
- 4.3.2 Fieldwork was used to check visibility and context photographs taken. Following the fieldwork, it was found that no view of the site was achievable from some expected views within the ZTV due to localised landforms or vegetation.
- 4.3.3 Descriptions of both the existing view of the site and predicted views of the development are provided below.

Viewpoint 1 –View north from road over Stiddlehill Common adjacent to Hepple Heugh

Refer to **Figure 7**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.4 This view taken from the minor road to the south west of the site facing north, looking towards the raised hillock in the centre mid-ground of the view grazed by sheep. The backdrop is of higher land seen against the horizon, a series of upland ridges and escarpments partially clothed in coniferous plantation forestry, along with occasional squares of isolated forestry blocks. The view is very rural in character other than the road, fence, scattered farmstead on the distant hillside, and two existing wind turbines to the right of the shot.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.5 This viewpoint represents the users of the minor rural road that lies to the southwest boundary of the site. There are no existing footpaths or cycleways at this location other than a PROW further south however the site lies in land mapped under the Crow Act 2000 as open access land. Due to the location on a roadside, the sensitivity of this receptor would be medium. Due to the nature of the receptor as a road user, and therefore being focused on the functional use of the road, susceptibility is considered to be medium. The duration of the view is medium. The landscape is not designated for its quality and there are wind turbines in the view. The value of the view is considered to be high due to the open long views. The resulting sensitivity is considered to be **medium**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.6 During construction some activity will be visible as works are carried out to create the rock slot, viewing area and access path using heavy plant machinery and a crane to construct sections of the landmark in the proposed fabrication area. The construction compound and vehicle deliveries may also be discernible but are largely concealed by the shoulder of the hill. At completion, the proposed new landmark will be clearly visible from this viewpoint seen here at relatively close range (around 400m), set on the summit of the hillock, and seen partly against the skyline. The proposed landmark is not dissimilar in its slender verticality to the existing wind turbines seen widely in this landscape, but is designed to have a pleasing appearance with its shape informed by the contours of the hillock and is finished in matte earth tones which will assimilate well with the colours found in the landscape. The shoulder of the hill is likely to limit views to the ca park however a coach would be more visible. The development will bring about a noticeable change in the view particularly seen at this close range, albeit due to its slender form the landmark will occupy a narrow part of the view.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.7 While the majority of this view will remain uninterrupted by the proposals, due to the proximity of the view to the proposed site and the scale of the development seen here against the horizon, therefore in comparison to the baseline, the magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be **medium**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.8 A visual receptor with **medium** sensitivity combined with a **medium** magnitude of change results in a **moderate** effect on visual amenity which could bring about '*limited effects which may be considered significant*'. The nature of effect would be theoretically considered adverse in comparison to the undeveloped baseline in the open upland setting, however is likely to be perceived as a positive addition by many receptors and not incongruous due to its earth colour and relationship to the form of the landscape.

Viewpoint 2 –View south east from road over Stiddlehill Common at junction with PROW Footpath and Bridleway

Refer to **Figure 7**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.9 This view taken from a 90° bend in the minor road that crosses Stiddlehill Common to the south west of the site, facing south east, looking towards the raised hillock known as Cold Law in the centre mid-ground of the view. The right hand side of the view is dominated by the continuation of the highway as it rises up to the south east, flanked by a drystone wall. The skyline features a drystone wall running from the brow of the hill along the horizon until interrupted by the distinctive shape of Cold Law, then a series of blocks of coniferous plantation forestry punctuated by wind turbines. The view is semi-natural in character, including sweeping open areas of acidic grassland, marsh and heath, but incorporating a number of man-made elements including the 6 visible wind turbines, the blocks of coniferous plantation, and the visually dominant highway and wall.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.10 This viewpoint represents the approaching view of users of the minor rural road that lies to the southwest boundary of the site and also users of a PROW footpath and a PROW bridleway, both of which originate at this corner in the highway. Receptors using the PROWs would be classified as of high sensitivity and highly susceptible to change whereas road users would be of medium sensitivity and susceptibility due to the nature of the receptor as a road user, and being focused partly on the functional use of the road. The duration of the view is medium. The value of the view is considered to be medium due to the mixture of pleasing landforms combined with the visually dominant highway and turbines seen against the skyline. The landscape is not designated for its quality or visual amenity. The overall sensitivity is considered to be **high**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.11 During construction, some activity will be visible as works are carried out to create the rock slot, viewing area and access path using heavy plant machinery and a crane. The construction compound is not expected to be visible. At completion the proposed new landmark will be clearly visible from this viewpoint, set on the summit of Cold Law, and seen entirely against the sky along with 6 existing wind turbines set further in the distance. The distinctive landmark will bring about a noticeable change in the nature of the view, albeit the landmark will not screen any views of the landscape. The proposed car park is not visible from here due to the existing dry stone wall.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.12 While the entire landmark is seen here against the skyline which adds to the visual drama, views of the landscape will remain uninterrupted by the proposals, and the slender form of the landmark takes up only a narrow proportion of the view, therefore in comparison to the baseline, the magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be **medium**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.13 A visual receptor with **high** sensitivity combined with a **medium** magnitude of change results in a **substantial/ moderate** effect on visual amenity which could bring about *'limited effects which may be considered significant'*. The nature of effect would be theoretically adverse in comparison to the relatively undeveloped character of the baseline, however is likely to be perceived as a positive addition by many receptors.

Viewpoint 3 –View east from road over Stiddlehill Common

Refer to **Figure 8**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.14 This is a further view from the minor road that crosses Stiddlehill Common to the south west of the site, taken looking east at around 1.4km from the site. The horizon and centre of the view is dominated by a block of coniferous forestry plantation which currently conceals views to Cold Law, however the wind turbines on higher land at the rear to the north east are visible along much of the horizon. The left hand side of the view includes the highway flanked by a drystone wall. While the foreground is occupied by sweeping open areas of acidic grassland, the view contains numerous man-made elements, including 14 visible wind turbines, the large monoculture block of coniferous plantation, and the highway, gate and wall.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.15 This viewpoint represents the approaching view of users of the minor rural road that lies to the south west boundary of the site. Road users would be of medium sensitivity and susceptibility due to the nature of the receptor as a road user, and being focused partly on the functional use of the road. The duration of the view is short. The value of the view is considered to be low due to the dominance of the coniferous plantation, the many turbines seen against the skyline and the road itself. The landscape is not designated for its quality or visual amenity. The overall sensitivity is considered to be **medium**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.16 During construction no activity is expected to be visible other than potentially the proposed crane seen over the trees. At completion the proposed new landmark will be partially visible above the plantation and the upper part seen against the horizon. The landmark will bring about a small but noticeable change in the nature of the view, albeit the landmark will not screen any views of the landscape. The access paths and proposed car park are not visible from here.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.17 The upper part of the landmark will be seen against the skyline among the existing vertical wind turbines. Views of the landscape will remain uninterrupted by the proposals, and the slender form of the landmark takes up only a narrow proportion of the view, therefore in comparison to the baseline, the magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be **low**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.18 A visual receptor with **medium** sensitivity combined with a **low** magnitude of change results in a **minor** effect on visual amenity. The nature of effect would be adverse in comparison to the undeveloped baseline in terms of this assessment, however is likely to be perceived as a positive addition by many receptors.

Viewpoint 4 –View northwest from road over Stiddlehill Common

Refer to **Figure 8** (Panorama Photo) and **Figure 15** (Photomontage)

Baseline Description

- 4.3.19 This view taken from the minor road to the southwest of the site facing north west, around 2.2km from the site, looking towards the Northumberland National Park whose boundary is around 7km to the north west but not visible from this viewpoint. The hillock Cold Law is just visible above trees, and the distinctive Great Wanney Crag is seen to the left of the shot (the site of a Scheduled Monument: a univallate Fort). The distant background and horizon is of higher land seen, a series of upland ridges and escarpments

partially clothed in coniferous plantation forestry, along with occasional squares of isolated forestry blocks. The view is very rural in character other than the road flanked by post and wire fences. A Scheduled Monument (homestead) is close to this viewpoint.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.20 This viewpoint represents the users of the minor rural road that lies to the south west boundary of the site. There are no existing footpaths or cycleways at this location. Due to the location on a roadside, the sensitivity of this receptor would be medium. Due to the nature of the receptor as a road user, and therefore being focused partly on the functional use of the road, susceptibility is considered to be medium. The duration of the view is medium. The value of the view is considered to be high due to the open long views towards hills and the National Park beyond, and there is a lack of existing development in the view. The resulting sensitivity is considered to be **high**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.21 During construction very little will be visible from this viewpoint other than taller plant such as the crane visible at times above the trees. The proposed new landmark will be clearly visible from this viewpoint, set on the summit of the hillock, and seen against the sky. The proposed landmark will bring about a noticeable change in the nature of the view, albeit the development is relatively limited in scale due to its slender form so the landscape will remain open and views largely uninterrupted.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.22 While the majority of this view will remain uninterrupted by the proposals and the landmark is at a distance of 2.4km, the development is seen here clearly against the horizon. The magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be **low**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.23 A visual receptor with **high** sensitivity combined with a **low** magnitude of change results in a **moderate / minor** effect on visual amenity which could bring about '*limited effects which may be considered significant*'. The nature of effect would be adverse in comparison to the undeveloped baseline in terms of this assessment, however is likely to be perceived as a positive addition by many receptors.

Viewpoint 5 –View northwest from Bridleway to Lake Wood

And

Viewpoint 6 –View northwest from Bridleway to Lake Wood by Homestead Feature

Refer to **Figure 9**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.24 These two views are taken from a very similar location, the second one added to incorporate the location of a Scheduled Monument (homestead feature). The views are taken each side of a disused railway track that leads northwest to and beyond the subject site.

Both views were taken from a PROW bridleway to the south west of the site facing northwest, around 2.4km from the site. The ZTV indicates that these views are on the very edge of visibility and indeed the hillock Cold Law is not visible above trees. The foreground dominates both views with extensive grassland and marsh in View 5 and bracken in View 6. Both views have areas of cleared coniferous plantation and distant horizon is of higher land, a series of upland ridges and escarpments on the far horizon, partially clothed in coniferous plantation forestry, with other disparate blocks of forestry blocks. The view is very rural in character other than the forestry blocks and the wind turbines on the horizon including a lone turbine seen at close range on the horizon of both views, close to where the Elizabeth Landmark could be visible.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.25 These viewpoints represent the users of a bridleway that lies to the south west boundary of the site, and there could be additional sensitivity from the presence of the Scheduled Monument. Due to the location on a PROW, the sensitivity and susceptibility of this receptor would be high. The duration of the view is medium. The value of the view is considered to be low due to the blocks of coniferous plantation, cleared areas of plantation, and close proximity to a wind turbine. The resulting sensitivity is considered to be **medium**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.26 During construction and at completion there is unlikely to be a noticeable change from either of these viewpoints.

Viewpoint 7 –View south from track to Harewalls

Refer to **Figure 10** (Panorama Photograph) **and Figs 16 a&b** (Photomontage)

Baseline Description

- 4.3.27 This view taken from a vehicle track leading to Harewalls, a Grade II Listed farmhouse and bastle. The vehicle track continues east serving High Nick Quarry and also becoming a PROW bridleway and eventually a PROW footpath.

The view looks south towards Cold Law which is discernible as a hillock just breaking the horizon. At the foot of the hill, Harewalls is the farm seen to the right of the view, and a second farm, Blakelaw, is seen to the left. There are clumps of trees along the foot of the hill associated with Lises Burn Dene. The foreground is dominated by the improved grazing pasture associated with the farmsteads, framed by drystone walls. There are seven existing wind turbines seen on the horizon and typical features of working farms including modern storage facilities, byres and stacked silage.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.28 This viewpoint represents the view of users of the minor rural road/ track that serves the farms and High Nick Quarry. The view also captures the setting of the Grade II Listed Harewalls Farm in the context of the landscape. Road users would be of medium sensitivity and susceptibility due to the nature of the receptor as a road user, and being focused partly on the functional use of the road, however it is noted that there are views in this vicinity from PROWs. The duration of the view is medium. The value of the view is considered to be medium due to the combination of pleasing landforms with the noticeable wind turbines seen against the skyline. The farm is Grade II Listed and the various architectural features of historic merit are stated in the listing, however the setting contains the normal sheds, storage, silos and silage storage of any typical modern working farm. The landscape is not designated for its quality or visual amenity. The overall sensitivity is considered to be **medium**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.29 During construction some activity may be discernible on the horizon as works are carried out to create the rock slot and to construct sections of the landmark in the proposed fabrication area. The construction compound and vehicle deliveries may also be discernible as a distant element. At completion the proposed new landmark will be clearly visible from this viewpoint, set on the summit of Cold Law, and seen against the horizon. The distinctive landmark will bring about a noticeable change in the nature of the view, albeit the landmark will not screen any views of the landscape. The access route up Cold Law will not be visible from here however parked vehicles may be discernible in the distance. Vehicles are already present in the landscape as seen using the highway to the south of the proposed monument.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.30 While the landmark is seen here against the skyline which increases how noticeable it is in a similar way to the existing wind turbines, views of the wider landscape will remain uninterrupted by the proposals, and the slender form of the landmark will occupy only a narrow proportion of the overall view, therefore in comparison to the baseline, the magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be **medium**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.31 A visual receptor with **medium** sensitivity combined with a **medium** magnitude of change results in a **moderate** effect on visual amenity which could bring about '*limited effects which may be considered significant*'. The nature of effect would be **adverse** in comparison to the undeveloped baseline in terms of this assessment, however is likely to be perceived as a positive addition by many receptors.

Viewpoint 8 –View southeast from road between A68 and East Woodburn

Refer to **Figure 10**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.32 This view is from the minor road that connects the A68 with East Woodburn, taken looking east at around 2.2km from the site. There are very limited locations along this route where any view can be gained to the site. Cold Law can be seen against the horizon in the far distance, with wind turbines along the horizon to the north. The centre horizon is dominated by an area of higher improved pasture and a block of coniferous plantation. While the view is occupied by large sloping open areas of acidic grassland and marsh, the view contains numerous man-made elements, including the modern farm buildings at High Shaw, several wind turbines, and the drystone wall flanking the highway.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.33 This viewpoint represents a lateral view of users of the minor rural road that lies to the south west boundary of the site. Road users would be of medium sensitivity and susceptibility due to the nature of the receptor as a road user, and being focused partly on the functional use of the road. The duration of the view is short, seen laterally. The value of the view is considered to be medium high as it is dominated by natural features and landforms in spite of the turbines and modern farm sheds. The landscape is not designated for its quality or visual amenity. The overall sensitivity is considered to be **medium**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.34 During construction heavy plant may be seen occasionally against the horizon as the setting and rock slot are constructed, and a crane will be visible work progresses and the landmark is lifted into place. At completion the proposed new landmark will be visible in the far distance against the sky. The landmark will bring about a small but noticeable change in the nature of the view, albeit the landmark will not screen any views of the landscape. The access paths and proposed car park are not expected to be visible from here.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.35 The landmark will be seen against the skyline near to existing vertical wind turbines. Views of the landscape will remain uninterrupted by the proposals, and the slender form of the landmark will occupy a very narrow proportion of the view, therefore in comparison to the baseline, the magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be **low**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.36 A visual receptor with **medium** sensitivity combined with a **low** magnitude of change results in a **minor** effect on visual amenity. The nature of effect would be **adverse** in comparison to the undeveloped baseline in terms of this assessment, however is likely to be perceived as a positive addition by many receptors.

Viewpoint 9 –View east from Ridsdale at Junction of A68 with PROW Footpath

Refer to **Figure 11**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.37 This view is from the A68 road as it passes through the small settlement of Ridsdale, and also at a junction with a PROW footpath, taken looking east at around 2.2km from the site. Cold Law itself cannot be seen as it lies just beyond the horizon. The centre horizon is dominated by an area of wind turbines seen in the far distance. The view is very open in character being largely composed of grazing land bound by drystone walls giving way to acidic grassland, heath and marsh on higher land in the far distance. The view contains numerous man-made elements, including the turbines and the modern housing at the southern edge of the settlement to the right of the shot.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.38 This viewpoint represents a lateral view of users of the A68 but also the views of residents of Ridsdale and users of the PROW footpath. Road users would be of medium sensitivity and susceptibility due to the nature of the receptor as a road user, and being focused partly on the functional use of the road. The duration of the view for road users is short, seen laterally, but longer duration views will be experienced by residents and walkers who would have a high sensitivity and susceptibility to change. The value of the view is considered to be high as it is dominated by natural features and landforms in spite of the turbines and modern housing. The landscape is not designated for its quality or visual amenity. The overall sensitivity is considered to be **high**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.39 During construction it is unlikely that plant will be visible unless occasional tall cranes can be glimpsed over the horizon. At completion the proposed new landmark may be visible in the distance beyond the natural horizon. The landmark will bring about a small but noticeable change in the nature of the view, albeit the landmark will not screen any views of the landscape. The access paths and proposed car park will not be visible from here.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.40 The landmark will be seen against the skyline in the context of existing vertical wind turbines. Views of the landscape will remain uninterrupted by the proposals, and the slender form of the landmark will occupy a very narrow proportion of the view, therefore in comparison to the baseline, the magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be **low**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.41 A visual receptor with **high** sensitivity combined with a **low** magnitude of change results in a **moderate/ minor** effect on visual amenity. The nature of effect would be **adverse** in comparison to the undeveloped baseline in terms of this assessment, however is likely to be perceived as a positive addition by many receptors.

Viewpoint 10 –View south east from road and Cycle Route between East Woodburn and Monkridge

Refer to **Figure 11**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.42 This view taken from a minor rural road which is also the cycle route NCN 68 and a small part of the Sandstone Way cycle route, around 2.8km from the site. To the left of the shot is the minor road leading to several properties including Harewalls and High Nick Quarry.

The view looks south east and the distinctive shape of Cold Law is visible on the horizon. Woodburnhill Farm is visible in the centre of the shot next to a Scheduled Monument (Medieval cross). The landscape view is largely rural however the foreground is dominated by a waste bin collection point, highways signage, cattle grid and telegraph pole.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.43 This viewpoint represents the view of users of the minor rural road and cyclists using the NCN Route 68 and Sandstone Way. The view also captures the setting of the Scheduled Monument. Road users would be of medium sensitivity and susceptibility due to the nature of the receptor as a road user, and being focused partly on the functional use of the road, however the cyclists would have a high sensitivity on a recreational route. The duration of the view is short. The value of the view is considered to be medium due to the combination of pleasing landscape but with clutter and manmade elements in the

foreground. The landscape is not designated for its quality or visual amenity. The overall sensitivity is considered to be **high**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.44 During construction some activity may be discernible on the horizon as works are carried out to create the rock slot and viewing area, and a crane may be visible at some points. At completion the proposed new landmark will be clearly visible from this viewpoint, set on the summit of Cold Law, and seen against the horizon. The distinctive landmark will bring about a noticeable change in the nature of the view, albeit the landmark will not screen any views of the landscape. The access route up Cold Law and viewing area will be visible but the car park is not expected to be visible from this location.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.45 While the landmark is seen here against the skyline however views of the wider landscape will remain uninterrupted by the proposals, and the slender form of the landmark will occupy only a very narrow proportion of the overall view, therefore in comparison to the baseline, the magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be **low**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.46 A visual receptor with **high** sensitivity combined with a **low** magnitude of change results in a **moderate/ minor** effect on visual amenity. No mitigation is recommended.

Viewpoint 11 –View north west from PROW Bridleway at Lunga Crags

Refer to **Figure 12**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.47 This view taken from a PROW Bridleway facing north west, around 3.5km from the site. The hillock Cold Law is not visible above trees. The distant background and horizon is of higher land seen as series of upland ridges and escarpments partially clothed in coniferous plantation forestry, along with a large isolated forestry block in the centre of the view concealing the view to Cold Law. The view is very rural in character other than the post and wire fences and wind turbines seen against the skyline.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.48 This viewpoint represents the users of the bridleway looking out over expansive views from Lunga Crags. Due to the nature of the receptor susceptibility to change is considered to be high. The duration of the view is medium. The value of the view is considered to be high due to the open long views. The resulting sensitivity is considered to be **high**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.49 During construction very little would be visible other than tall cranes. The upper part of the proposed new landmark may be visible above the trees, and it is noted that plantation forestry is periodically clear felled which would expose the landmark fully, set on the summit of the hillock, and seen against the horizon but at a smaller scale than nearby wind turbines. At this distance it is unlikely that the landmark would be noticeable unless the plantation was felled.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.50 In comparison to the baseline, the magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be negligible, or in the case of the plantation being felled, **low**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.51 A visual receptor with **high** sensitivity combined with a **low** magnitude of change results in a **moderate / minor** effect on visual amenity.

Viewpoint 12 –View north west from Cornhills at Junction with PROW Footpath

Refer to **Figure 12**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.52 This view was taken from a minor road and PROW Footpath to the south west of the site facing north west, around 4km from the site. The view is taken adjacent to a Scheduled Monument (Medieval Village of West Whelpington). The ZTV indicates that these views are on the very edge of visibility and indeed the hillock Cold Law is not visible above a block of deciduous trees. The foreground is of undulating pasture framed by drystone walls. The distant horizon is of higher land, a series of upland ridges and escarpments on the far horizon partially clothed in coniferous plantation forestry, with other disparate blocks of forestry blocks. The view is very rural in character other than the forestry blocks and the many wind turbines dominating the horizon.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.53 This viewpoints represent the users of a minor road and PROW footpath bridleway, and there could be additional sensitivity from the presence of the Scheduled Monument. Due to the location on a PROW, the sensitivity and susceptibility of this receptor would be high. The duration of the view is medium. The value of the view is considered to be medium due to the blocks of coniferous plantation, cleared areas of plantation, and wind turbines dominating the horizon. The resulting sensitivity is considered to be **medium**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.54 During construction and at completion there is unlikely to be a noticeable change from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint 13 –View south east from Byway and Seating Area off A68 by Woodhouse

Refer to **Figure 13**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.55 This view taken from a seating area and open space adjacent to the entrance to Woodhouse, around 4.5km from the site. This is a complex view including the edge of West Woodburn, the settlement of East Woodburn, numerous farmsteads, expansive views of the upland hills and escarpments and lowers areas marked by mature tree growth. The A68 trunk road is visible in the foreground flanked by a stone wall. The boundary of the Northumberland National park lies less than a kilometre to the rear.

The view looks south east and Cold Law is partly visible on the horizon though its distinctive shape is concealed by intervening landform.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.56 This viewpoint represents the view of users of the A68 trunk road and people using the seating area to enjoy the view. Road users would be of medium sensitivity and susceptibility due to the nature of the receptor as a road user, and being focused partly on the functional use of the road, however the users of the seats would have a high sensitivity and susceptibility to change. The duration of the view is long. The value of the view is considered to be high due to the expansive and complex view. The landscape is not designated for its quality or visual amenity. The overall sensitivity is considered to be **high**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.57 During construction some activity may be discernible on the horizon as works are carried out to create the rock slot and viewing area, and a crane may be visible at some points. At completion the proposed new landmark will be just visible from this viewpoint, set on the summit of Cold Law, and seen against the horizon. The access route and car park are not expected to be visible at this distance.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.58 While the landmark is seen here against the skyline however the distance from the view and complexity of the scene mean that the landmark will be discernible but will make little alteration to the scene, therefore in comparison to the baseline, the magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be **negligible**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.59 A visual receptor with **high** sensitivity combined with a **negligible** magnitude of change results in a **minor** effect on visual amenity. No mitigation is recommended.

Viewpoint 14 –View south east from A68 Parking Area/ Viewpoint at Corsenside Crossroads

Refer to **Figure 13** (Panorama photograph) and **Figs 17a&b** (Photomontage)

Baseline Description

- 4.3.60 This view taken from a viewpoint and parking layby adjacent to the A68 and at the boundary of the Northumberland National Park, around 4.7km from the site. There is also a Scheduled Monument (Tumulus). This is an expansive view including part of West Woodburn, the settlement of East Woodburn, numerous farmsteads, expansive views of the upland hills and escarpments and lowers areas marked by mature tree growth. The foreground is dominated by an expanse of improved pasture, while the upland fells for the horizon with several wind turbines seen against the skyline. The boundary of the Northumberland National park lies close to the rear of the shot.

The view looks south east and Cold Law is clearly visible seen as a distinctive hillock on the horizon.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.61 This viewpoint represents the view of users of the A68 trunk road and people using the seating area to enjoy the view. Road users would be of medium sensitivity and susceptibility due to the nature of the receptor as a road user, and being focused partly on the functional use of the road, however the users of the layby and viewpoint would have a high sensitivity and susceptibility to change. The duration of the view is long. The value of the view is considered to be high due to the expansive view. The landscape is not designated for its quality or visual amenity however the view also represents views from the Northumberland National Park. The overall sensitivity is considered to be **high**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.62 During construction some activity will be discernible on the horizon as works are carried out to create the rock slot and viewing area, and a crane / heavy plant will be visible at

times during the construction period. At completion the proposed new landmark will be clearly visible from this viewpoint albeit seen at considerable distance, but set on the summit of Cold Law, and seen against sky. The access route and car park are not expected to be visible.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.63 While the landmark is seen here against the skyline in a similar context to the existing wind turbines. The landmark is of considerably smaller scale than the wind turbines and will occupy a very small part of the view but will nevertheless be noticeable due to the distinctive shape of the landform seen against the sky, therefore the magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be **low**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.64 A visual receptor with **high** sensitivity combined with a **low** magnitude of change results in a **moderate/ minor** effect on visual amenity. No mitigation is recommended.

Viewpoint 15 –View north west from PROW Footpath at Great Wanney Crag

Refer to **Figure 14**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.65 This view taken from a PROW footpath facing north west, around 2km from the site, with elevated panoramic views looking over the wider landscape including views towards the Northumberland National Park to the west. The hillock Cold Law is just visible above the shoulder of Hepple Heugh, and the escarpment at Hartside is seen beyond the site. Wanney Crag is also the site of a Scheduled Monument (uni-vallate hill fort) which would have been chosen for its location as a look out. Much of the land in the view is either coniferous plantation of different ages (some in angular blocks) or upland fell. There are wind turbines in the view.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.66 This viewpoint represents the users of the PROW so the sensitivity and susceptibility to change is high. The duration of the view is long. The value of the view is considered to be high due to the open long views towards hills, the presence of the SM and the National Park beyond. The resulting sensitivity is considered to be **high**.

Effects During Construction and at Completion

Predicted View

- 4.3.67 During construction site activity will be visible in the distance as the rockslot and viewing area are constructed and the landmark lifted into place. The proposed new landmark will be visible from this viewpoint, set on the summit of the hillock, but seen against the

landscape backdrop so the earth tones of the corten steel will help the landmark to assimilate with the landscape from this view. proposed landmark will bring about a noticeable change in the nature of the view, albeit the development is very limited in scale due to its slender form so the landscape will remain open and views largely uninterrupted.

Magnitude of Change

- 4.3.68 The majority of this view will remain uninterrupted by the proposals and the landmark is at a distance of 2km, seen here against the landscape backdrop. The magnitude of change experienced by this receptor is considered to be **low**. No mitigation is recommended.

Residual Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.69 A visual receptor with **high** sensitivity combined with a **low** magnitude of change results in a **moderate/ minor** effect on visual amenity which could bring about '*limited effects which may be considered significant*'. The nature of effect would be adverse in comparison to the undeveloped baseline in terms of this assessment, however is likely to be perceived as a positive addition by many receptors.

Viewpoint 16 –View east from road between West Woodburn and Bellingham on NCN Route 68 looking over Hole

Refer to **Figure 14**

Baseline Description

- 4.3.70 This view was included at the request of the Northumberland National Park and is taken at the eastern edge of the NNP boundary. The view is around 6km from the site. No view is anticipated from here because of intervening landform.

5.0 Mitigation and Recommendations

Refer to **Figure 14**: Landscape Strategy

- 5.1 The following measures or landscape works will help sensitively integrate the development into the surrounding area:
 - 5.1.1 The proposed landmark itself is very tall as it is intended be noticed and seen from long distances, nevertheless the earth tones and matte finish of the cor-ten material will not appear incongruous and the slender form and use of curves will help the piece to sit at ease in the landscape.
 - 5.1.2 The base of the landmark including rock slot and viewing area are of a significant scale and will require care in the detailed design stage to ensure that the resulting forms and materials work successfully.
 - 5.1.3 Care will be required in the detailed design of the proposed associated access and parking to avoid any unnecessary clutter or inappropriate features that might draw attention to the intervention, detracting from the landscape setting and the landmark itself. Man-made materials such as concrete road kerbs should be avoided along with straight lines and geometric shapes that might appear noticeable and incongruous in this open upland landscape. Materials and plant species should be selected from those found commonly in the landscape character area.
 - 5.1.4 Surface vegetation will be lost in a limited area due to excavations to create the access, parking and in the installation of the landmark. Since trees and hedgerows are relatively uncommon in this landscape it is not recommended to introduce screen planting as this in itself could appear incongruous. Low level mounding and use of local rocks has been identified as a way to limit vehicular movements to the identified access road and car park, and this will also help to screen vehicles for views. Any retaining or screening walls should be formed to give the appearance of dry stone walling to match existing walls and sheepfolds, and where any fencing is cannot be avoided a simple timber post and rail or wire fence should fit in well with local agricultural fencing.
 - 5.1.5 Parked vehicles will be visible in the landscape which could be a detractor both from the setting of the landmark and the landscape itself given the open character and long views. Care should be taken in the detailed design to set the car park levels and landform in such a way as to minimise visibility of the parked vehicles.
 - 5.1.6 Materials choice and colour will also play an important factor in limiting the visual effects of the development in particular the car park. The vehicular and path surfaces could be in a local crushed stone without kerbs or edgings. Brown/ grey tones and low colour

saturation will help the development assimilate with the neutral tones of the upland landscape.

6.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 6.0.1 The main change in relation to Landscape Character that would be the effect of introducing a tall landmark into the rural landscape, and the direct localised effects of excavation and removing vegetation to install the landmark, paths and parking area. The site lies within open access land and much of the surrounding higher land lies within the Northumberland National Park so the landscape context is a sensitive receptor.
- 6.0.2 The proposed landmark has some similarities in its slender verticality to the existing wind turbines seen extensively in this landscape, however the matte earth tones of the proposed corten steel and soft curves of the form derived from the topography of Cold Law would assimilate well with the landscape. The direct landscape effects and the landscape effects upon the landscape character areas were found overall to be **moderate/ minor** which would not be considered significant.
- 6.0.3 The landscape character area contains a number of highpoints such as escarpments and craggy outcrops creating a landscape of vantage points and long views. Northumberland has a long tradition of hill forts and castles being sited and built to be seen as much as to function in a military fashion, and then a post-medieval tradition of landscape monuments. While the development is adding a modern landmark to the landscape, the landscape will remain open in character and the history of the area will remain available for interpretation. The site itself and the hillock have not been identified as an area of particular historical or archaeological interest.
- 6.0.4 This study assessed views from a wide range of viewpoints and then identified several key views (Viewpoints 4, 7 and 14) that were selected for more accurate scrutiny of visual effects using photomontages. The key driver for selection of these views was to consider views from the most sensitive recreational receptors and views both towards and from the Northumberland National Park whose boundary is around 4.5km from the site at its closest point.
- 6.0.5 Of the 16 representative viewpoints assessed, four were found to have no view, three were found to have minor effects, and six were found to have moderate/ minor effects. Viewpoint 1 and View 7 were found to have moderate visual effects, and View 2 was found to have substantial/ moderate effects which could be considered significant, however this was due to the close proximity to the landmark.
- 6.0.6 The car park, access road and paths have been designed using the mitigation recommendations in section 5. The proposed design measures including drystone walling with earth bunding have successfully reduced visual effects and the measure will help to minimise visibility of the carpark in the landscape. It will be critical to ensure an appropriate design response is carried through to detailed design stage. Residual visual

effects will include the visual effects of vehicles parked at the site, albeit the shelter walls will partly conceal vehicles other than coaches.

- 6.0.7 In many of the views, wind turbines were present in the view. Where turbines are seen against the sky the pale colour reduces visual effects, however they are more obvious when seen against a darker landscape backdrop. The converse is true with the Elizabeth Landmark; its matte earth tones assimilate with the colours found in the upland landscape setting, while the landmark stands out more clearly when seen against the pale colours of the sky.
- 6.0.8 The slender form of the landmark means that from most aspects it occupies a narrow part of the view and does not disrupt views over the landscape, and its curved form, derived from the topography of Cold Law, helps the feature to sit well in this landscape context while still performing as a deliberate focus for views.

Appendix A - References

1. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (Third Edition 2013, prepared by the Landscape Institute and IEMA)
2. Northumberland County Council – Landscape Character Assessment
3. Northumberland National Park LDF Landscape Supplementary Planning Document, Sept 2011
4. Natural England Character of England Map – Natural England Website
5. The National Heritage List for England Website (<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk>)
6. The Magic Website
7. Northumberland County Council Website
8. Emapsite.co.uk

Appendix B - Figures

- Figure 1:** Site Location Plan
- Figure 2:** Access and Circulation
- Figure 3:** Heritage Designations
- Figure 4:** Designations (Landscape and Planning)
- Figure 5:** National Landscape Character Area and Local Character Types and Areas Plan
- Figure 6a:** Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Plan (Bare Land)
- Figure 6b:** Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Plan (Barriers and Viewpoint Locations)
- Figure 7:** Photographic Viewpoints 1 and 2
- Figure 8:** Photographic Viewpoints 3 and 4
- Figure 9:** Photographic Viewpoints 5 and 6
- Figure 10:** Photographic Viewpoints 7 and 8
- Figure 11:** Photographic Viewpoints 9 and 10
- Figure 12:** Photographic Viewpoints 11 and 12
- Figure 13:** Photographic Viewpoints 13 and 14
- Figure 14:** Photographic Viewpoints 15 and 16
- Figure 15 a&b:** Photomontage from Viewpoint 4
- Figure 16 a&b:** Photomontage from Viewpoint 7
- Figure 17 a&b:** Photomontage from Viewpoint 14