



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL
APPRAISAL, GREEN BELT REVIEW
AND LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

THORPE

LAND EAST OF TEN ACRE LANE &
NORTH OF COLDHARBOUR LANE

Land East of Ten Acre Lane and North of
Coldharbour Lane, Thorpe:
Landscape and Visual Assessment and Green Belt
Appraisal

Prepared on behalf of CEMEX UK Operations Limited

September 2019

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CONTENTS

1.0	Landscape and Visual Assessment and Green Belt Review Summary.....	5
2.0	Landscape and Visual Appraisal	6
3.0	Review of Contribution of the Site to the functions of the Green Belt	8
4.0	Landscape and Green Infrastructure Strategy.....	10

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Figure 1: Site Context Plan

Figure 2: Townscape and Landscape Character Plan

Figure 3: Visual Appraisal Plan

Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan

Figure 5: Green infrastructure Plan

Site Appraisal and Context Photographs

1.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT AND GREEN BELT REVIEW SUMMARY

- 1.1 The site is a former quarry located on the eastern edge of Thorpe, adjoining Coldharbour Lane on the northern edge of a complex of lakes, formed from previous mineral extraction activities, which extend between the M3 and the site and include Thorpe Park amusement park. To the north and east of the site a former quarry area has been filled and forms a raised landform which physically and visually separates the site from the edge of Egham Hythe to the east and Thorpe Industrial Park to the north.

2.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

2.1 The key landscape and visual attributes of the site, see **Appendix 1** for illustrative material, include:

- Landform: levels within the site are raised through landfilling and vary from 15-20m AOD, rising gradually to a high-point in the northern part of the site. A linear bund follows the southern and western boundary of the site (**Site Appraisal Photographs 1 and 11**);
- Landscape Character: lies within NCA Profile 115: "Thames Valley" at a national level, "River Valley 2: Thames" landscape character area (LCA) in the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment (**Figure 2: Townscape and Landscape Character Assessment**);
- Land Use: comprises grassland, interspersed with areas of newly planted woodland as part of the quarry restoration;
- Vegetation cover/Enclosure: well contained by tree belts and hedgerows, on all boundaries with only glimpsed views into the site from Coldharbour Land and Ten Acre Lane (**Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan**);
- Scale: medium;
- State of repair: hedgerow trees and trees generally in good condition, albeit hedgerow structure gappy in places. Newly planted woodland requires maintenance to become established;
- Representativeness: representative of the Thames Valley NCA and the River Valley 2 Thames LCA which is influenced by urban features including mineral extraction, limited farming (grazed pasture) and tree cover which restricts views and helps obscure built form;
- Designations: Green Belt, Thorpe Conservation Area; Biodiversity Opportunity Area (draft Policy EE11), within 500m of South West London Waterbodies Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site, within 5-7km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA (**Figure 1: Site Context Plan**);
- Tranquillity / Remoteness: noise from traffic using the M25 and M3, noise from Thorpe Park amusement park, diminishes the tranquillity;
- Cultural / Recreational Associations: the site is within Thorpe Conservation Area which contains a number of listed buildings, but there is a lack inter-visibility between the site and the rest of the village and there is currently no public access to the site;
- Scenic Beauty: enclosed, due to dense woodland cover, but limited scenic quality due to the non-natural landforms and lack of positive visual features within the site; and
- Visual Influence: very limited visual envelope to due to the flat to gently undulating topography and the containment afforded by dense vegetation cover and adjacent built

form, distant views from the Beacon (viewpoint) on St Anne's Hill, scheduled ancient monument to the south of the site.

2.2 The key opportunities from a landscape and visual perspective include:

- Well contained by vegetation;
- Very limited visual envelope;
- Influence of adjoining built and engineered elements;
- Potential to respond positively to the Biodiversity Opportunity Area policy; and
- Generally flat landform, therefore limited requirements for cut and fill.

2.3 The key constraints from a landscape and visual perspective include:

- Green Belt designation, comprising an area of agricultural land between Thorpe and Egham Hythe;
- Relationship to the historic centre of Thorpe Conservation Area;
- Trees to be retained on the site boundaries.

2.4 Based on this assessment the site has capacity to accommodate residential development from a landscape and visual perspective.

3.0 REVIEW OF CONTRIBUTION OF THE SITE TO THE FUNCTIONS OF THE GREEN BELT

Criteria	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
<p>Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</p>	<p>The northern limit of the site is marked by treed hedgerows, beyond which is a notable local landform. Further north is the well vegetated edge to Thorpe Industrial Estate along Green Lane. To the east of the site is the densely vegetated boundary to Coldharbour Rosery and Fleetmere. The southern western limit of the site is formed by Coldharbour Lane and the dense vegetation along this edge and Manor Cottage.</p> <p>The land to the north of the site containing a 15m high hill contributes to the Green Belt function of restricting sprawl to a greater extent than the Site itself. The existing hedgerow lines on the northern edges of the Site form a secondary restriction. Limited development on the parts of the Site adjacent to existing development could be contained within a robust boundary of structure planting. Whilst resulting in an extension to the eastern edge of Thorpe, this would relate to existing residential built form and set within a comprehensive landscape framework, including Green Infrastructure, reflecting the overall scale of development in this part of Thorpe.</p>	<p>Limited</p>
<p>Prevent nearby towns from merging into one another</p>	<p>The settlements of Thorpe and Egham Hythe to the north are separated by landform, vegetation and the built form of Thorpe Industrial Estate. Residential and leisure development on the south western part of the Site would be contained within a strong landscape framework reinforced by defensible boundaries of woodland. Potential development would not result in the merging of Thorpe with Egham Hythe through ribbon development along Coldharbour Lane and the intervening landscape would continue to provide separation between the two settlements.</p>	<p>none</p>
<p>Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>The character of the site is influenced by its former use as a quarry including the artificial bunds on its boundaries. Surrounding mineral extraction workings have an influence including the large earth works to the north of the Site, haul roads and industrial sheds. There is limited public access as noted in the Runnymede GB Villages Review. PROW 49 to the south of the site is limited in length and impassable to the east.</p> <p>Development of the south western corner of the Site would result in the localised loss of agricultural land of poor landscape quality. However, the development would give the opportunity to improve the overall quality of the landscape of the site through restoration of natural contours, native hedgerow planting and improvement to public access.</p>	<p>none</p>

Criteria	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
<p>Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</p>	<p>Although the sites are within Thorpe Conservation Area there are no features of historic significance in or visible from the site. The site, due to its very contained visibility makes a limited contribution to the setting of Thorpe. The hedgerow boundaries on Coldharbour Lane and Ten Acre Lane contribute to the vegetated nature of the lanes. These would be preserved as part of any development proposals.</p> <p>The site is not visible from within the historic core of Thorpe Village.</p>	<p>very limited</p>

- 3.1 Proposed development could therefore be accommodated on the site, with no significant increase in the extent of development visible in existing views, and would not result in greater visibility of the site within the immediate or wider context.
- 3.2 By containing the extent of proposed development, the existing contribution that the site makes to the functions of the Green Belt would be maintained. Views of the site, from the Green Belt which includes and surrounds the site are, in any event, very limited. Ensuring that there is no increase in visibility of development on the site in views from the immediate east and from the south will assist in accommodating development on the site.
- 3.3 Proposed development could therefore be successfully accommodated on the site, limited to the south western extent of the site; and set within an existing and enhanced framework of mature trees and vegetation; without significantly increasing the potential visibility of development on the sites or reducing the contribution the sites makes to the purpose or functions of the Green Belt in this locality.

4.0 LANDSCAPE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

4.1 From our assessment of the landscape and visual context of the site the following strategy is recommended to maximise potential of the Site to promote green infrastructure within and surrounding Thorpe and to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 141 of the NPPF (2019). These principles are illustrated in **Figure 5: Green Infrastructure Plan (Appendix 1)**.

- Retain and enhance, through management and supplementary native planting, existing hedgerows and tree belts on the boundaries of the site; including suitable offsets from retained vegetation from changes in level or built development;
- Protect and enhance local character through the use of scale, massing and materials within the proposed residential area;
- Incorporate a structure of street tree planting to soften and integrate the built form;
- Establish a strong structure of native woodland/hedgerows to create a well-defined edge to the Green Belt and transition from the proposed housing area to the country park;
- Extend the hedgerow/woodland links across the site and within the country park promote biodiversity through a variety of habitat types including native wildflower grassland planting, native wildflower wetland planting and native aquatic planting to provide new habitat and foraging opportunities for local wildlife. These areas would sit within the wider framework of Green Infrastructure within the site, drawing together existing areas of planting;
- Create interest for users of the footpath linkages through ground modelling and vegetation;
- Provide cycle paths and a network of safe accessible pedestrian routes linking Ten Acre Lane and Coldharbour Lane;
- Integrate a network of surface water drainage channels / swales across the site, planted with moisture-tolerant trees and shrubs, contributing to the site-wide green infrastructure and visual amenity;
- Promote opportunities for country park to be used as an educational resource for schools / local wildlife bodies with strategically located interpretation boards.