

LIZ LAKE ASSOCIATES

Chartered Landscape Architects ■ Urban Designers ■ Landscape Planners

Landscape & Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Assessment

**THE RANGE NORTH, CHILDERDITCH
INDUSTRIAL PARK**

Childerditch Properties

September 2013



I INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background

- I.1.1 Liz Lake Associates were instructed by Strutt & Parker on behalf of Childerditch Properties, owners of Childerditch Industrial Park to prepare a Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Assessment of the Range North Site, this is to inform representations on the Preferred Options Consultation Draft of Brentwood Borough Local Plan to support the allocation of the Range North Site for industrial development.
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I.2 Site Description/Context

Industrial Park background:

- I.2.1 The industrial park was formerly a concrete plant during the Second World War. It was constructed to supply concrete to the East of England for the rapid construction of Airfields. The Industrial park expanded from this site to its size at the present day and now supports a variety of uses – a ‘traditional industrial estate’
- I.2.2 The industrial park is currently situated in Green Belt land adjacent to the A127 Arterial Road and approximately 2.7 miles south of Brentwood and 4.4 miles west of Laindon. The site is adjacent to an existing employment site in the Brentwood Local Plan (2005). Junction 29 of the M25 lies roughly 2 miles to the west and provides vehicular access to the national road network.
- I.2.3 The Site comprises of a parcel of land known as the Range North which lies to the north and west of existing buildings within the industrial park and is immediately north of the Range South, an area of commercial storage (see Figures 1 and 2 for Site Location).
- I.2.4 The land covers an area of nearly 2 hectares. It slopes gently to the north and is bounded on its western side by an existing earth bund which is approximately 4 metres high (see image 6 on Figure 3 and image 12 on Figure 4). To the west of the bund is a linear woodland plantation approximately 8m high. The bund and linear woodland provide an effective landscaped screen along the western edge of the industrial park that extends

around to the Range South. It is within the bunded area that the allocation for industrial development is sought.

- 1.2.5 To the north and west of the Range North Site (beyond the bunding and linear woodland) is open arable agricultural land.
- 1.2.6 The wider Childerditch Industrial Park, to the east and south of the Site is some 11.25 hectares in area and comprises an extensive range of industrial and commercial buildings with associated parking and open storage areas. The Industrial Park is accessed via Childerditch Hall Drive linking to the A127. Little Warley Hall Lane lies some 350-400m from the western boundary of the Site. There is a ribbon of housing development of some 15 properties along both sides of the Lane.

1.3 Methodology

- 1.3.1 A desk study was undertaken to understand the existing Local Landscape Character Baseline and Green Belt Policy.
- 1.3.2 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Assessment were undertaken on Site and from the surrounding countryside on Wednesday 11th September 2013. Figure 1 shows the Site location and the location of photographic viewpoints. The aerial photograph on Figure 2 was taken in 2006 but is helpful in understanding the context of the Range North Site in relation to both the adjacent Childerditch Industrial Park and the wider countryside.
- 1.3.3 The rather limited number of views of the Range North Site that can be seen from public footpaths within the surrounding countryside are shown on Figure 3. Figure 4 shows the views from the centre of the Site at 7m above ground level looking outwards towards the boundaries of the Site and beyond. This is useful because it corresponds with a typical ridge height of an industrial building. Where there are views out of the site at this point, there may be views back in from adjacent roads and footpaths.
- 1.3.4 Figure 5 shows a tabulation of the findings of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal and sets out our landscape recommendations for the Site should it be allocated for industrial development. Figure 6 (Site Section) shows how new industrial buildings could sit comfortably within the enclosure of the existing bunding and tree screen on the western and northern boundaries of the Range North Site. Figure 7 shows a number of possible layout schemes prepared by the architect to show how a new access road, industrial

buildings and areas of hardstanding could be accommodated within the Site. This figure also shows our proposed landscape mitigation proposals. Finally our Green Belt Assessment sits at the end of this report.

1.4 Summary of Findings/Conclusion

GB Purposes, criteria for assessing areas:

- 1.4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 79 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt Policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. Paragraph 80 sets out the 5 purposes of Green Belt:
- 1.4.2 However the overall conclusions of the Green Belt Assessment is that the Site makes little contribution towards the 5 purposes of the Green Belt: The Site has low potential to lead to unrestricted urban sprawl. Development of the Site would not result in the merging of settlements. The Site does not perform an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Furthermore, the development of the Site would not have an effect on the setting and special character of a historic town. Subject to detailed ecological survey, the Site could provide opportunities to provide an improved ecological corridor just beyond the sites northern boundary linking woodland corridors to the east and west. The proposals also offer an opportunity to improve the existing visual amenity when looking south from Public Footpath 114 in close views toward the Site's northern boundary where there are currently views of the industrial park buildings and storage areas beyond (see image 1 on Figure 3 which shows the existing view towards the site from the footpath which could be screened by the proposed new tree planting along the northern boundary of the Range North Site).
- 1.4.3 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal concludes that the Range North Site is not very characteristic of the Local Landscape Character Area. The Site comprises of open land formerly used for open storage that is bordered to the east and south by the existing industrial park and to the west by an engineered bund which is part of the industrial park landscape. These urban influences result in a landscape that cannot be considered to be remote or tranquil. In addition to disturbances from the adjacent industrial park the distant noise from the adjacent A127 creates some further interruptions.

- 1.4.4 The Range North Site has relatively low visual prominence. There are filtered views from Public Footpath 114 as it traverses the agricultural field to the north, through and above the existing northern boundary hedgerow, with the existing industrial units to the south and south west of the site providing an industrial backdrop. There are two isolated, elevated viewpoints from public footpaths over 1km to the west (see images 2 and 3 on Figure 3) , where the existing engineered bund on the western site boundary can be seen beyond the existing industrial park (although this forms a small part of this wider view), otherwise the Site is well screened from the wider landscape.
- 1.4.5 The eastern and southern boundaries front onto the Childerditch Industrial Estate. Whilst there are some existing trees which screen the western part of the southern boundary, the urbanising influences of the industrial park are visually dominant (see images 10 and 11 on Figure 4).
- 1.4.6 Visually, the Range North Site reads as if it is part of the Industrial Estate, rather than as part of the wider landscape and arable fields. Only the filtered views through the existing hedgerow on the short northern boundary (see image 9 on Figure 4) link it to the wider landscape. The views from within the Range North Site to the east south and west are not attractive.
- 1.4.7 The Range North Site is not representative of the wider character area, it is unremarkable and there is some interruption. The site is considered to have *moderate to low* visual prominence and a partially visible industrial urban edge with few attractive features or views. Public views are limited and as such the Site is considered to have a High Landscape Capacity/Scope for Mitigation.
- 1.4.8 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal therefore concludes that there would appear to be *"little reason in landscape terms why the Range North Site should not be considered for Industrial Development in the LDP."* The appraisal also sets out landscape recommendations for the Site should it be taken forward in the preferred Options Consultation, to confirm that the development can be easily absorbed within the landscape.
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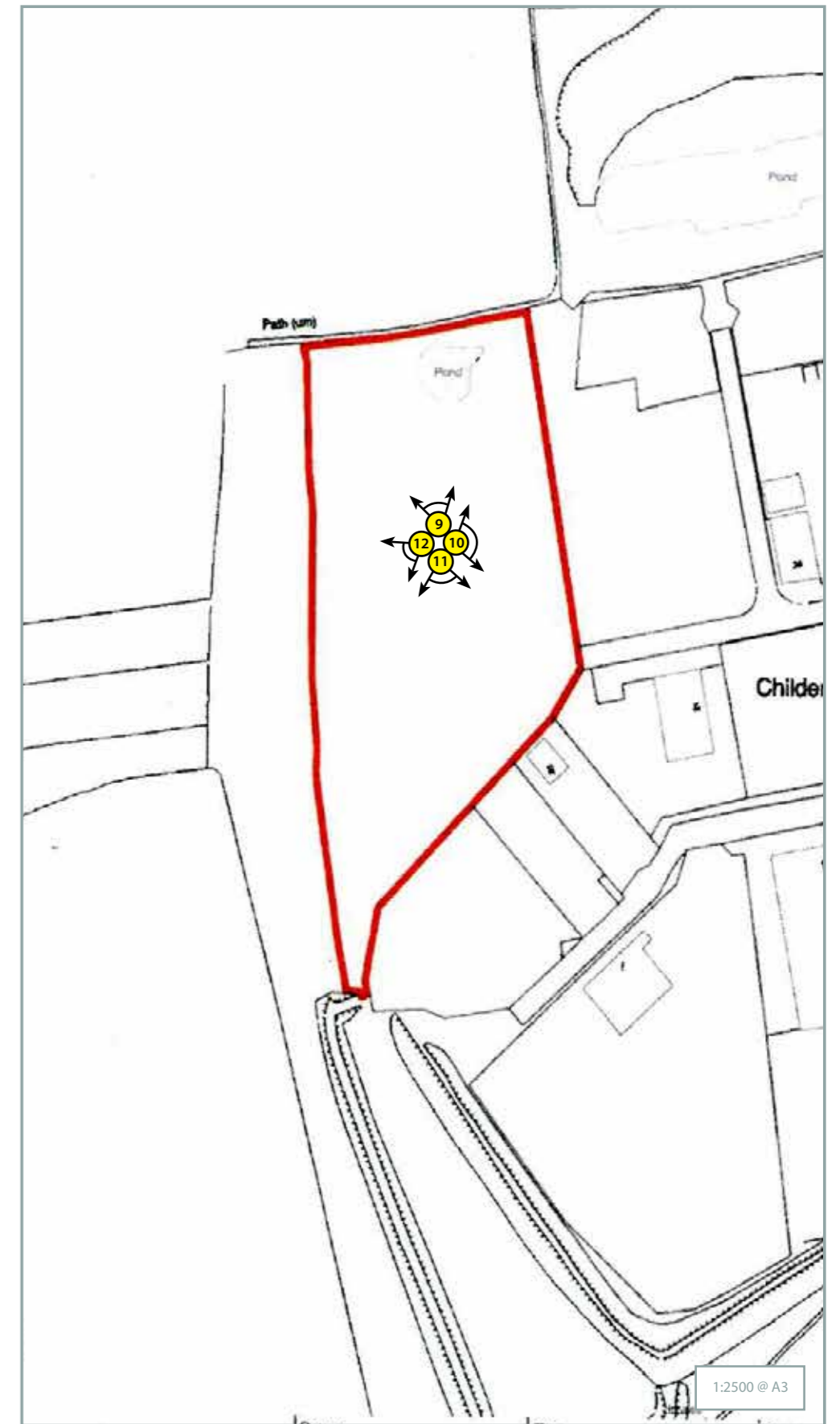
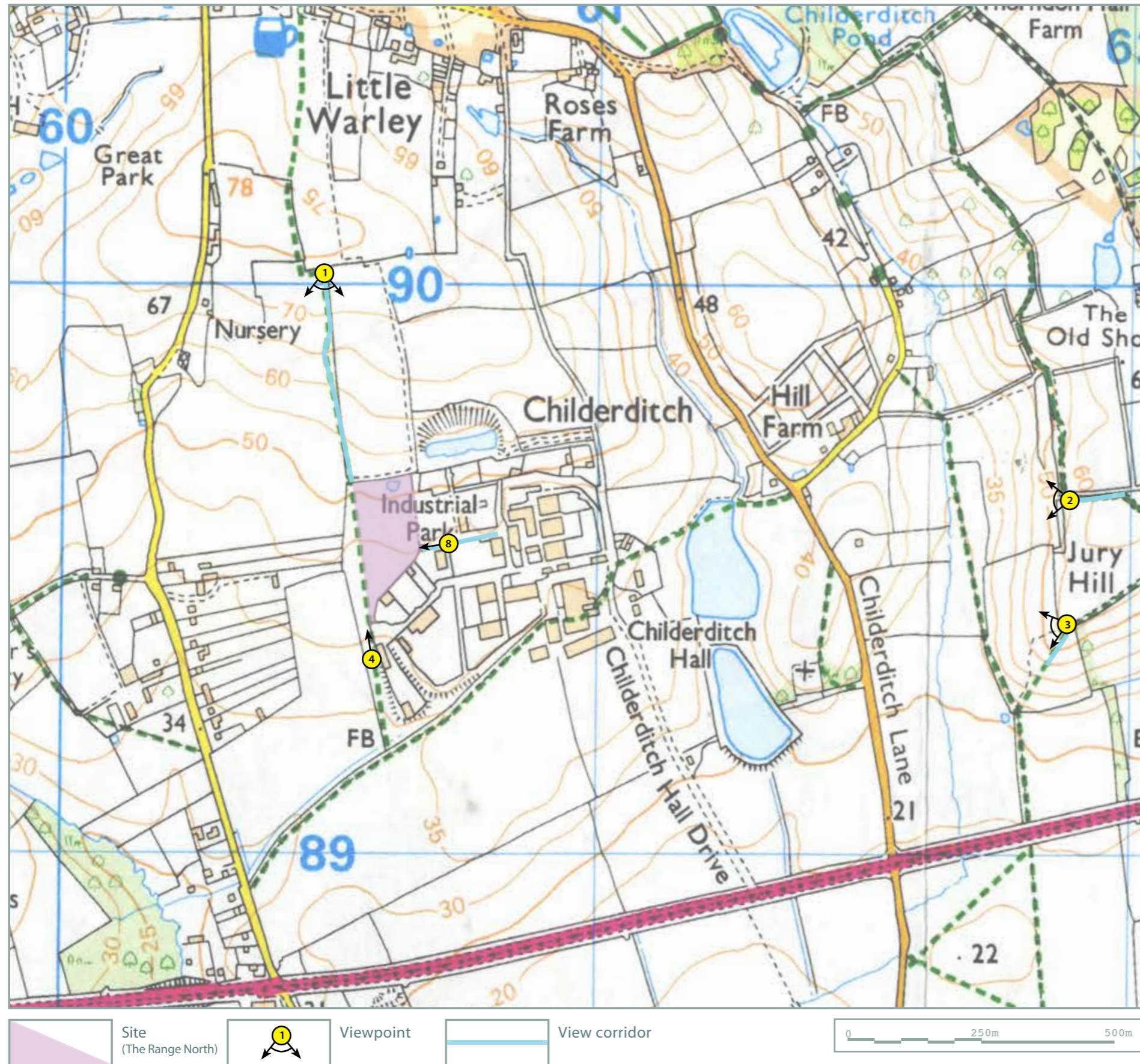






Image 1: Elevated view looking south towards the Site from Public Footpath 272_114



Image 2: Elevated view from Public Footpath 272_188 1.25km to the west of the Site



Image 3: Elevated view from Public Footpath 272_130 on the edge of Jury Hill



Image 4: Looking north along Public Footpath 272_114



Image 5: Oak tree - Northern boundary



Image 6: Bund and tree screen western boundary (typical)



Image 7: Tree Screen to part of southern boundary (typical)



Image 8: Looking west towards the palisade entrance gates into the Site



Image 9: Panoramic Photo 1 looking towards the northern site boundary



Image 10: Panoramic Photo 2 looking towards the eastern site boundary



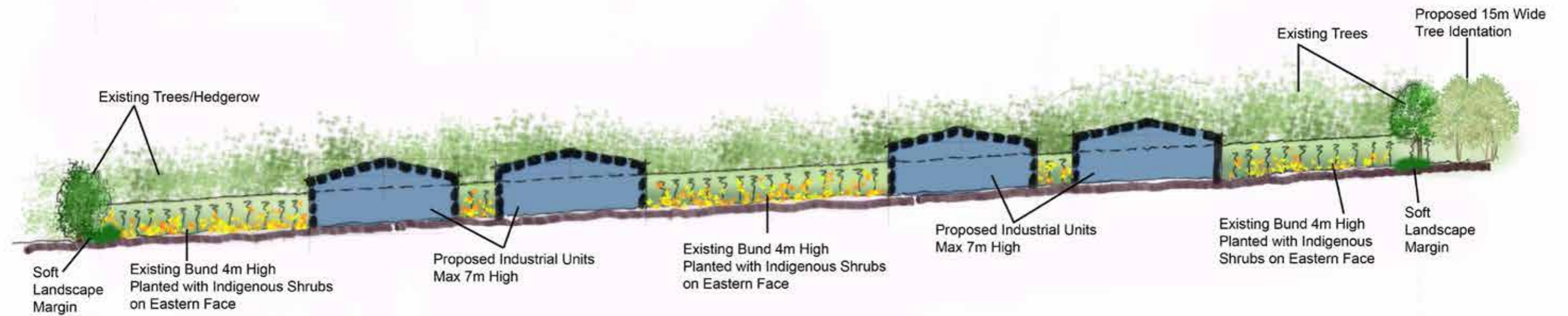
Image 11: Panoramic Photo 3 looking towards the southern site boundary



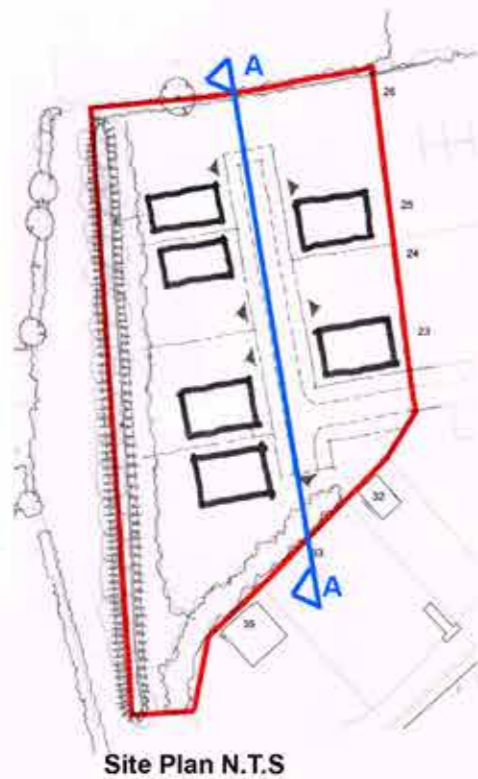
Image 12: Panoramic Photo 4 looking towards the southern half of the western site boundary

NOTE: All Panoramic Photo on this Figure have been taken from the same viewpoint, with an eyeline 7.0m above a point in the centre of the Site. This is useful because it corresponds with the typical ridgeline of an industrial unit. By looking beyond the surrounding site boundaries it is possible to discern where there might be views back into the Site.

Element	Assessment
Key features of landscape character area	<p>The Range North Site falls within the south eastern part of the Landscape Character Area F13 Great Warley Wooded Farmland. (Landscape Character of Brentwood Borough) Key Characteristics of relevance to the Range North Site include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly undulating wooded farmland Small – scale field pattern with mature treed field boundaries Noise associated with the M25 and A127 road corridors.
Site description	<p>There is an existing 4m high engineered bund on the sites western boundary which was constructed (with planning permission) with the objective of screening the Childerditch Industrial Park from the wider landscape. Immediately beyond the bund, is an 8m high linear woodland plantation of Ash, Field Maple, Birch, oak, Lime, Horse Chestnut and Cherry.</p> <p>Public Footpath 114 is aligned north/south immediately to the west of the plantation within a wide corridor of amenity grassland (see photo 8). The original field boundary lies to the west of this footpath corridor and comprises some fine mature specimens of Oaks and Ash. The hedgerow also includes some fairly mature Lleylandii conifers and hawthorn and elder where the conifers are absent.</p> <p>The sites northern boundary includes a 10m high mature specimen Oak tree and a rather sparse outgrown hedgerow primarily comprising of blackthorn but with some hawthorn and elder and occasional spindle. The adjacent agricultural field slopes gently up to the north. The eastern boundary comprises 2.8m high galvanised palisade security fencing and 2No. 10m high floodlight columns, to light the extensive concrete hard-standing storage area beyond. There is a 10m wide linear treed plantation along the south western two thirds of the sites southern boundary comprising primarily of semi-mature Horse Chestnut and Sycamore trees with Oak, Apple, Field Maple and Hazel. The southern boundary comprises of a 2.8m high galvanised palisade security fence with industrial units and hard-standing storage areas beyond to the south.</p>
Landscape Qualities	
Representativeness/ consistency with wider character judgement	Highly Consistent/Mostly consistent/Some key characteristics present/Not representative of wider character
Landscape character attractiveness judgement	Highly attractive/Attractive/Pleasant/Unremarkable
Remoteness and tranquillity judgement	Remote/Peaceful/Some interruption/Not tranquil
Landscape qualities general description	The Range North is not very representative of the wider character area. The existing area is Grade 3 Agricultural land that is bordered to the east and south by the existing industrial park and to the west by an engineered bund which is part of the industrial park landscape. There urban influences result in a landscape that cannot be considered to be remote or tranquil, and in addition to disturbances from the adjacent industrial park the distant noise from the A127 creates some further interruptions.
Visual Qualities	
Visual Prominence judgement	High/Moderate high/Moderate low/Low
Nature of the urban edge judgement	No visible urban edge/Soft well vegetated urban edge limited views of principally rooflines/Partially visible industrial urban edge/Hard urban edge with no screening
Settlement setting and views of settlement judgement	Highly attractive features or views/Some attractive features of views/Few attractive features of views/No attractive features or views
Public accessibility within and immediately surrounding the potential development site judgement	Many public views/Some public views/Limited public views/No public views
Visual qualities general descriptions	<p>The Range North Site has relatively low visual prominence. There are filtered views from the public footpath as it traverses the agricultural field to the north, through and above the northern boundary hedgerow with the existing industrial units to the south and south west of the site providing an industrial backdrop. There are two elevated isolated viewpoints from public footpaths over 1km to the west where the existing engineered bund on the western site boundary can be seen beyond the existing industrial park (although this forms a small part of this wider view) otherwise the Site is well screened from the wider landscape.</p> <p>The eastern and southern boundaries front onto the Childerditch Industrial Estate and whilst there are some existing trees which screen the western part of the southern boundary the urbanising influences of the industrial park are visually dominant. The existing engineered bund extends southwards through to form the western boundary of the Range South and can be considered part of the landscape associated with the industrial park. Visually the Range North Site read as if it is part of the industrial estate rather than as part of the wider landscape, only the filtered views through the short northern boundary link it to the wider landscape. The views to the east, south and west are not attractive.</p>
Landscape Capacity/Scope for mitigation	
Landscape Capacity Scope for mitigation: High/Moderate high/Moderate Low/Low	
Given the industrial park character of the Range North Site and the poor quality of the existing east, south and western edges of this site it is considered to have a high capacity for industrial development. There is scope to improve views of the Range North Site by introducing additional vegetation just north of the northern boundary hedgerow.	
There would appear to be little reason in landscape terms why the Range North Site should not be considered for industrial development in the LDF.	
Recommendations if site is taken forward to LDF	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buildings and hard-standing should avoid tree protection areas for existing trees and hedgerows Ideally new industrial buildings should be set back from the northern boundary A new 15m wide plantation of tree screening should be planted just to the north of the existing northern boundary hedgerow. This will screen new and existing industrial buildings from the viewpoints to the north and improve visual amenity from Public Footpath 114 in the medium to long term. This will also link existing woodland blocks to the north east and west in accordance with suggested Land Management Guidelines for Brentwood Borough Plant indigenous shrubby hedgerow species on the eastern side of the existing engineered bund. This 	



Section A-A



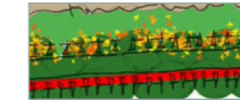
Site Plan N.T.S

 <p>Go Planning Unit 4, Bolding Hatch Business Centre Bishops Stortford Road Roxwell Chelmsford Essex CM1 4LF T: 01245 230712 E: Planning@goholdings.co.uk</p>	Scale : 1:200@A3
	Date : Sept 2013
	Status : Preliminary
	Dwg No : 2013-363-SC07
Client : Mr J Ford	
Project : Childerditch Industrial Park Brentwood	
Drawing : Site Section	
<p>© THIS DRAWING IS THE COPYRIGHT OF GO PLANNING LTD. It shall not be in any way used or reproduced without their prior written consent. All dimensions are to be checked on site or in the workshop prior to commencing any work. Work only to figured dimensions. Any discrepancies are to be reported to the Architect.</p>	

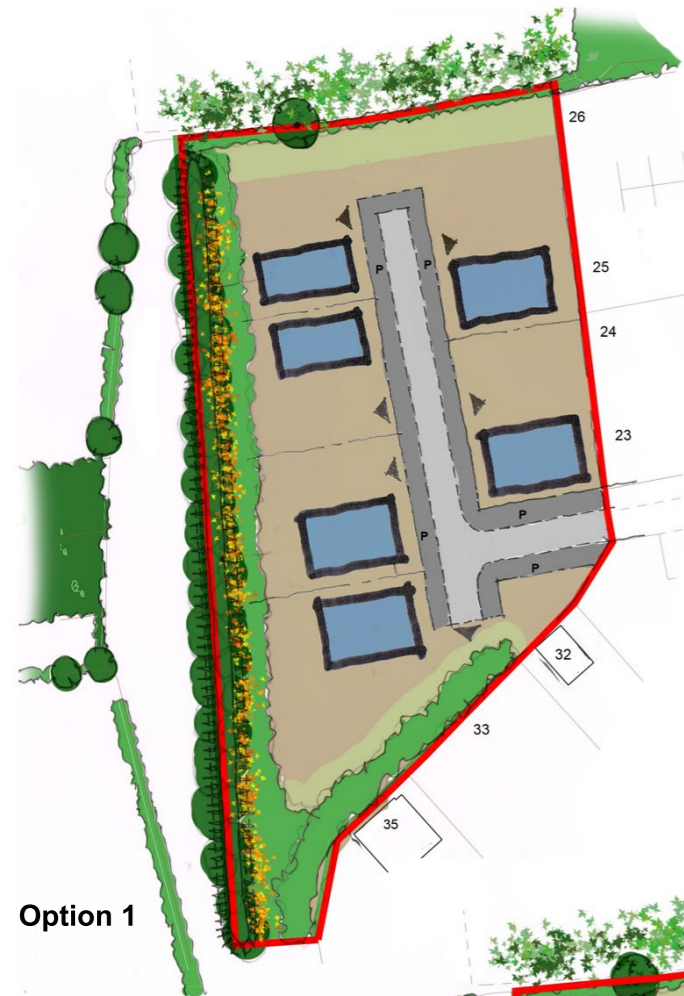
KEY TO LANDSCAPE STRATEGY PROPOSALS



Proposed 15m wide treed plantation to be planted in adjacent field just beyond the northern boundary



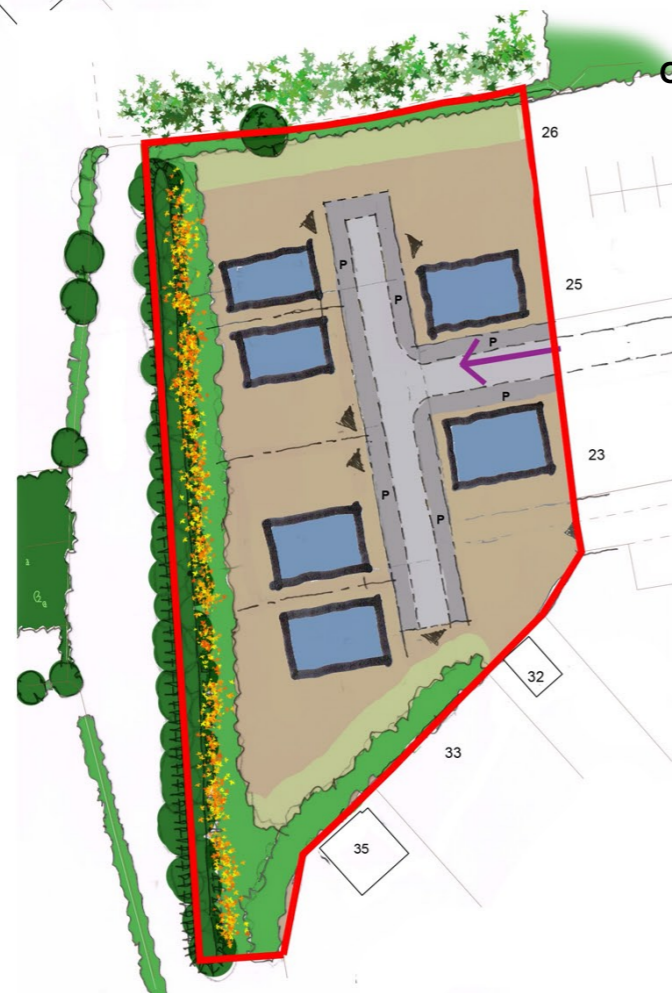
Proposed indigenous shrubby species to be planted on the east face of existing engineered embankment



Option 1



Option 2



Option 4



Option 3



<p>Go Planning Unit 4, Bolding Hatch Business Centre Bishops Stortford Road Roxwell Chelmsford Essex CM1 4LF T: 01245 230712 E: Planning@goholdings.co.uk</p>	Scale : N.T.S@A3
	Date : Sept 2013
	Status : Preliminary
	Dwg No : 2013-363-SC08
Client : Mr J Ford	Rev : -
Project : Childerditch Industrial Park Brentwood	
Drawing : Schemes	
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APPENDIX 1

Green Belt Assessment

The table below sets out our assessment of the contribution that the Range North Site makes towards the 5 purposes of the Green Belt. There are a number of responses for each of the 5 purposes in the Assessment column. Those that do not apply are crossed through and the conclusion can be found at the end of the table.

Assessment against the purposes of including land within the Green Belt - Proposed Methodology

Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved, boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. It is therefore necessary to assess which land within the Green Belt can make a significant contribution to meeting long term growth which would be least damaging to the purposes and integrity of the District's Green Belt .

GB purposes, criteria for assessing areas:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 79 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. Para 80 sets out the 5 purposes of Green Belt:

Purpose	Criteria and definitions	Assessment
1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	<p>Intended to stop continuous spread of settlements and encourage brownfield regeneration. The following criteria will be used to judge whether an area being developed would result in unrestricted sprawl:</p> <p>i. Would development of the area lead to/ constitute or extend ribbon development YES/NO</p> <p>ii. Would development result in an isolated development area not connected to existing boundaries YES/NO</p> <p>iii. Is the area well connected to a settlement? Does it have two or more boundaries with the existing built up area? YES/NO</p> <p>iv. Would development of the area effectively 'round off' the settlement pattern YES/NO/PARTIAL</p> <p>v. Would development breach natural features or infrastructure which provide an obvious and defensible barrier between the existing urban area and undeveloped land? YES/NO</p>	<p>Assessment</p> <p>i. If response yes, high potential for unrestricted sprawl</p> <p>ii. If response yes, result would be isolated development, high potential for urban sprawl</p> <p>iii. If an area has several boundaries with the adjacent urban area (well connected), then there is lower potential for urban sprawl. If only one boundary with urban area, this would 'jut out' or not be as well related and has more urban sprawl potential.</p> <p>iv. If response yes, development would 'round off', low potential for unrestricted sprawl</p> <p>v. if yes, higher potential for urban sprawl.</p> <p>Overall conclusion: Development of the area would result in either: High potential to lead to unrestricted sprawl OR Low potential to lead to</p>

Purpose	Criteria and definitions	Assessment
		unrestricted sprawl
2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	<p>It is impossible to define a minimum distance that there should be between settlements. The important consideration is whether development would appear to result in the merging of built up areas. Topography and features such as watercourses and major roads can act as barriers preventing merging. The assessment should therefore ask:</p> <p>i. Do natural features and infrastructure provide a good physical barrier or boundary to the area that would ensure that development was contained? YES/NO</p> <p>ii. Would development of the area lead to physical connection of two or more settlements? YES/NO</p>	<p>i. If yes, the features or infrastructure will prevent the merging of neighbouring towns.</p> <p>ii. If yes, this purpose of the Green Belt would be lost.</p> <p>Overall conclusion: Development of the area would lead to coalescence/merging of settlements</p> <p>Development of the area would not result in the merging of settlements OR</p> <p>Development of the area would not result in actual merging of settlements but:</p> <p>i) does not make good use of any physical barriers/there is no defensible boundary and/or</p> <p>ii) would significantly reduce the Green Belt gap between settlements.</p>
3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>This is an assessment of the extent to which the Green Belt constitutes 'open countryside' i.e. having countryside characteristics (e.g. fields in active agricultural use, patterns of dominant hedgerows, openness where any buildings do not dominate the landscape). The assessment should therefore ask:</p> <p>i. Is there a strong, defensible boundary between the existing urban area and the adjoining countryside – wall, watercourse, main road, hedgerow etc (as opposed to garden boundaries) YES/NO</p>	<p>i. If yes, this boundary should be recognised as the permanent edge of the built area, and development should not be permitted outside the boundary, unless provision is made for adequate replacement boundaries which will be defensible for the period of this Plan.</p>

Purpose	Criteria and definitions	Assessment
	<p>ii. Does the area include areas of woodland, trees or hedgerows that are protected or significant unprotected tree/hedge cover. YES/NO</p> <p>iii. Would the development of the area result in significant adverse impact as identified in the Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study N/A</p> <p>iv. Does the area include any grade 1, 2 or 3a (high quality) agricultural land? YES/NO (it is open unused land)</p> <p>v. Are any existing buildings in the area dominant in the landscape? YES/NO</p>	<p>ii. If yes, any development which is permitted should ensure that these natural features remain the dominant landscape feature to protect the characteristics of the local countryside.</p> <p>iii. If yes, no development should be permitted unless measures are included which adequately replace significant landscape features or which minimise adverse impacts</p> <p>iv. If yes, explore the potential availability of other land in the locality of lower agricultural quality before reaching a decision on the development of this land</p> <p>v. If yes, the development may not amount to encroachment of the countryside. If no, the earlier tests in this section should be applied.</p> <p>Overall conclusion: The area performs an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment OR</p> <p>The area does not perform an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>
<p>4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</p>	<p>Many towns and villages have historic features, so this assessment focuses on whether development would be adjacent to conservation areas, or significant groups of listed buildings, or other features of historic significance.</p> <p>Where a development is adjacent* to such a feature, it may still be able to preserve the setting and special character if designed sensitively. This is a matter of judgement at initial area selection stage.</p> <p>* adjacent is either abutting the current boundary or only separated by a road that is not included in the boundary.</p> <p>For the assessment:</p> <p>i. Is the development adjacent to a conservation area, significant group of listed buildings or other historical features? YES/NO</p>	<p>i. If yes, the development should respect and protect, or add positively to, the special character of the area</p> <p>Overall conclusion:</p>

Purpose	Criteria and definitions	Assessment
		<p>Development of the area would have no effect on the setting and special character of historic towns OR</p> <p>Development of the area would have an effect on the setting and special character of historic towns, which could be mitigated against through appropriate detailed design OR</p> <p>Development of the area would have a significant adverse effect on the setting and special character of historic towns</p> <p>(Delete response which does not apply)</p>
<p>5. Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land</p>	<p>Not to be included within GB assessment because the Local Plan policies will encourage regeneration within the urban area. In the District the existing urban brownfield areas have already been identified and are not sufficient to meet the future growth demands in the District.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Additional criteria:</p>		
<p>6. Positive use of the Green Belt. This suggests that potential or actual beneficial uses such as;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> access to outdoor sport and recreation, retention and enhancement of landscapes and visual amenity biodiversity, and improvement of damaged and derelict land; <p>should be considered in this assessment.</p>	<p>The assessment should consider or ask:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Does the area provide an opportunity to improve accessibility to sport or recreation facilities through the provision or relocation of such facilities to the area? YES/NO Does the area provide access to the countryside – footpaths, bridleways across the land, or is it a designated park/greenspace? YES/NO Does the area include sites of national or local significance for nature conservation? YES/NO Does the area provide an ecological corridor between known communities of protected species? UNKNOWN AT THIS STAGE Does the area provide opportunity to improve damaged/derelict land? YES/NO 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If yes, does this result in the potential reuse of an urban site? for other forms of development, reducing the need to release Green Belt land for those purposes? If yes, can these facilities be retained or adequately replaced in the new development? If yes, can the areas be retained and adequately protected? In the case of locally significant sites only, can they be adequately replaced elsewhere in the development site? If yes, can the corridor be retained and adequately protected? If yes, the potential area for growth may improve the landscape and make use of a damaged/derelict site. <p>Overall conclusion: The area provides opportunities for</p>

Purpose	Criteria and definitions	Assessment
		<p>beneficial uses of the Green Belt if developed.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The area does not provide opportunities for beneficial use of the Green Belt if developed.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The area provides a mix of opportunities and concerns were it to be developed. (B and C apply). Potential for enhancement of visual amenity and biodiversity.</p>
		<p>NB Within each "purpose" section, the overall conclusion is taken from each of the criteria assessed.</p>
<p>OVERALL CONCLUSION FROM EACH SECTION OF THE ASSESSMENT FOR THIS AREA:</p> <p>The Site has low potential to lead to unrestricted urban sprawl. Development of the Site would not result in the merging of settlements. The Site does not perform an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.</p> <p>Development of the Site would not have an effect on the setting and special character of a historic town. Subject to detailed ecological survey, the Site could provide opportunities to provide an improved ecological corridor just beyond the sites northern boundary linking woodland corridors to the east and west.</p> <p>The proposals also offer an opportunity to improve the existing visual amenity when looking south from Public Footpath 114 in close views towards the sites northern boundary where there are currently views of the Industrial Park buildings and storage areas beyond.</p>		

Note:

The end comments box is the overall conclusion having assessed all of the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

A scoring or weighting system has not been applied, as an area may have only one applicable criterion as opposed to many. Even one factor, however, may be so significant that the overall effect on Green Belt purposes is very significant. Development of an isolated area is likely to create urban sprawl, but could satisfy all other Green Belt purposes. Developing such a location may be judged to have a more significant effect on the purposes of Green Belt than, eg development which would 'round off a settlement where that area performs a role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

LIZ LAKE ASSOCIATES

Chartered Landscape Architects ■ Urban Designers ■ Landscape Planners

Western House
Chapel Hill
Stansted Mountfitchet
Essex CM24 8AG

