

Proof Of Evidence: Landscape, Visual and Green Wedge Matters.

Evidence of Katharine Ellinsfield BSc(Hons) PGDipLA FLI PIEMA.

In respect of land off Royal Hill Road, Spondon, Derby

On behalf of Miller Homes.

Date: 18/03/2025 | Pegasus Ref: P19-2639

Author: KMSE





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1. Introduction

Qualifications & Experience

- 1.1. My name is Katharine Morgan Schofield Ellinsfield. I hold a Bachelor of Science degree with dual honours in Landscape Design and Ecology and a Postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture, both awarded by the University of Sheffield. I am a Fellow of the Landscape Institute (FLI) and have been a Chartered Landscape Architect since 2011. I also hold an Associate Certificate in Environmental Management and am a Practitioner member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (PIEMA). I am an Approved Building with Nature (BwN) Assessor.
- 1.2. I hold the position of Associate Landscape Architect in the Birmingham office of the Pegasus Group. The company undertakes all aspects of planning, urban design, landscape design and environmental planning. I am involved in all of these areas of work and have specific expertise in the assessment of landscape and visual impacts, strategic landscape and green infrastructure (GI) design.
- 1.3. In 20 years of practice I have had experience of coordinating, managing and undertaking built development Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), Townscape and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments. I have advised upon and appraised the potential impacts of development projects across a range of scales, often involving environmentally sensitive sites, from initial conceptual design through to final completion and long-term aftercare. I have been involved in site selection and initial site appraisal, constraints analysis, green infrastructure design, masterplanning, and detailed design.
- 1.4. I have advised on landscape and visual impact issues on a wide range of residential developments and have been involved in many large-scale schemes across the UK, encompassing sustainable urban extensions and major employment projects. I have prepared and given landscape evidence at a number of hearings and public inquiries. Recent expert witness work includes a successful appeal in relation to solar energy development on land at Carr Lane, Winterton, North Lincolnshire¹ and residential development on behalf of the local authority for land at Linford Lakes, Wolverton Road, Great Linford, Milton Keynes².
- 1.5. The evidence contained within my proof related to this appeal is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution. I confirm that I understand that my duty as an expert witness overrides my duty to those instructing me and requires me to give my evidence impartially and objectively. The opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

¹ Appeal ref. APP/Y2003/W/23/3317097

² Appeal ref. APP/YO435/W/23/3321221

Background

- 1.6. This appeal relates to an outline application (planning ref: 23/01631/OUT) on land to the west of Royal Hill Road, Spondon (hereby referred to as the “Appeal Site”). The development proposals (the “submitted scheme”) were described as:
- “residential development for up to 90 dwellings including related infrastructure, landscaping and open space. All matters reserved except for access into the site from Royal Hill Road.”*
- 1.7. The planning submission included a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which was prepared in support of this application (CD 1.13), providing an assessment of the effects upon the landscape and visual resources as a result of the proposed development. This included a review of the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge, and the role and function of the Appeal Site in terms of its contribution to the Green Wedge.
- 1.8. In the committee report, the planning officer did not identify matters relating to landscape character or visual amenity as forming part of the application’s main material considerations.
- 1.9. Despite an officer recommendation to grant permission, the application was refused by Derby City Council (DCC) in June 2024, with 1 reason for refusal (RfR), relating principally to impacts upon the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge.
- 1.10. The Illustrative Masterplan (IMP) submitted with the outline planning application (CD 1.16) has been reviewed in response to comments from Councillors, with a revised layout (the “appeal scheme”) accompanying this appeal (CD 8.08).

Scope of the Evidence

- 1.11. I have been instructed by Miller Homes (the appellant) on behalf of whom my evidence is written for this appeal relating to land off Royal Hill Road, Spondon.
- 1.12. This Proof of Evidence relates specifically to matters pertaining to landscape character, visual amenity and the Green Wedge. I shall be seeking to demonstrate; in this capacity; that:
- The proposed development would not lead to the unacceptable narrowing of the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge, whereby an open and undeveloped area could not be maintained between these two distinct residential areas of the city;
 - The proposal would not reduce the extent to which the countryside is able to penetrate the urban area on the eastern fringes of Derby; and
 - The development proposals within the Appeal Site would not result in adverse impacts upon the identified strategic function of the Green Wedge to the extent that those functions would not remain intact.
- 1.13. It comprises the following:
- Section 2 sets out a description of the Appeal Site and the surrounding landscape, details from relevant published landscape character documents, the visual context, the landscape strategy, and landscape and visual effects summaries as reported in the LVIA.

- Section 3 sets out a review of the revised scheme and updated landscape strategy and the related landscape and visual effects.
- Section 4 presents analysis on the matter of the Green Wedge, both in the context of Derby City Council's evidence base and the 'Eastleigh Assessment'.
- Section 5 considers the Committee Report, the Reason for Refusal, and the Appeal Decision for land at Acorn Way, Spondon, within the south of the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge.

1.14. A further Proof of Evidence is provided under separate cover with regard to Planning Policy matters and the overall Planning Balance, prepared by Mr Gary Lees of Pegasus Group.

2. Landscape & Visual Overview

- 2.1. The Appeal Site has been described in the application documents (notably the LVIA; CD 1.13). This section therefore does not seek to duplicate the baseline information presented in the submitted LVIA but instead sets out an overview of the Appeal Site and the local landscape, so as to present an appropriate context and analysis for this Proof.
- 2.2. The summary sets out key features of the Appeal Site and its context, landscape character and visual amenity considerations, focusing on those aspects of greatest relevance to its character and appearance, and to its relationship with the surrounding area.

Site Description & Local Context

- 2.3. The Appeal Site consists of 4.51 hectares (Ha) of horse grazing adjoining the western edge of Spondon, to the east of Derby City centre. It encompasses four rectilinear grazed fields divided largely by both intact and defunct hedgerows, although some parcels are further subdivided by fencing into smaller paddocks. The Appeal Site boundaries themselves variously comprise hedgerow sections; many with trees; steel mesh and post and rail fencing.
- 2.4. Existing development adjoins or is in close proximity to all four boundaries of the Appeal Site.
- 2.5. Immediately to the north / north-east is the fenced compound to a covered reservoir, beyond which lies Longley Lane and a farm access track passing the northern-most extents of the Appeal Site. Royal Hill Farm and dwellings along Royal Hill Road on the western edge of Spondon meet the eastern boundary. The southern extents are defined by a track passing to the south along which there is a Public Right of Way (PRoW), and beyond which is a primary school, secondary school and homes along West Road between the two schools. To the west is Springfield Farm, Brookfield Farm (including boarding kennels) and surrounding farmland.
- 2.6. Contextually, the Appeal Site and its local landscape is developed countryside, influenced by the transition between the eastern suburban edge of Derby, contrasting with the more rural landscape beyond, primarily to the north. To the west a wide tract of land passes the Appeal Site (comprising mixed agricultural fields, unmanaged land, and a vegetated nature reserve) from the A6005 northwards between residential districts of Chaddesden and Spondon to connect with the broader agricultural landscape surrounding the north-east of Derby.
- 2.7. The topography of land around the eastern fringes of Derby falls – in broad terms – from north to south towards the River Derwent (which passes to the south of Spondon) although there is some variability due to a series of brooks and other minor tributaries draining into the River Derwent, including the Lees Brook to the north of Spondon. The western edge of Spondon slopes generally in a north to south direction, although the slope is undulating: land falls from high ground upon which the covered reservoir is situated at just over 90m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), to under 80m AOD along the track to the south of the Appeal Site, before rising again to around 85m AOD along West Lane and falling steadily to circa 50m AOD along the Derwent corridor. Land to the north of the reservoir falls towards the Lee Brook before ascending to the wider comparatively more elevated farmed landscape.
- 2.8. Consequently, the Appeal Site benefits from containment, not only by the existing built edge (including the reservoir and schools to the north and south, respectively) and the nearby farmsteads, but also due to the nature of the topography with locally highest ground to the north, rising ground to the south, and contextual field boundary vegetation.

- 2.9. There are no formal designations of direct relevance to landscape and visual matters, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), National Parks or Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs) either within or in close proximity to the Appeal Site. Locko Park (RPG, Grade II listed) is just over 1km to the north-east, and a Conservation Area within Spondon is no closer than circa 250m to the south-southeast of the Appeal Site.
- 2.10. The Appeal Site and its context described in this section are illustrated in supporting figures and photographs included within the submitted LVIA (CD 1.13).
- 2.11. The Appeal Site lies within the eastern extents of the Spondon – Chaddesden ‘Green Wedge’ (Policy CP18). This local policy is addressed as appropriate in the Section 5.

Landscape Character

- 2.12. Published guidance relevant to the Appeal Site comprises National Character Area NCA38 ‘Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfields’ (CD10.1), East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Area ‘5a: Village Farmlands’ (CD10.2), and ‘Landscape Character of Derbyshire’ (LCoD) Landscape Character Type (LCT) ‘Lowland Village Farmlands’ (CD10.3).
- 2.13. Of most relevance is the character assessment undertaken at County level, with greatest levels of detail and specificity to locale. As defined by the LCoD, the Appeal Site lies within the ‘Lowland Village Farmlands’ LCT, which broadly encompasses the tract of land between Spondon and Chaddesden.
- 2.14. The key characteristics of the ‘Lowland Village Farmlands’ are:
- *“Gently rolling, almost flat, lowland with river terraces*
 - *Low slopes and summits give a sense of elevation over a broad flood plain*
 - *Mixed farming with arable cropping and improved pasture*
 - *Thinly scattered hedgerow trees including some willow pollards*
 - *Scattered, locally dense, watercourse trees*
 - *Medium to large regular fields with thorn hedgerows*
 - *Discrete red brick villages with farms and cottages*
 - *Large red brick outlying farms”*
- 2.15. The document notes the variable tree cover including largely absent woodland and sparsely scattered hedgerow trees and wooded blocks, but locally dense trees along watercourses. The enclosure pattern is considered an important characteristic in defining the landscape’s scale, which takes the form of predominantly hawthorn hedgerows demarcating medium to large semi-regular and regular field parcels with some loss to farming intensification.
- 2.16. ‘Planting and Management Guidelines’ for this LCT include conservation and enhancement of tree groups occurring in and around rural settlements and ensuring new woodland does not conflict with characteristic features of the landscape.

- 2.17. 'Landscape Management and Change' for the LCT comprises conservation of rural character, of the settlement pattern, and of the primary field boundaries, hedgerow replanting and management (Primary Aim), and Conservation of vernacular pattern and the historic field pattern (Secondary Aim).
- 2.18. The LCoD identified the Lowland Village Farmlands as being of low to medium tranquillity, with the Site adjoining an area of low tranquillity (the developed area of Spondon).
- 2.19. To the north-east of Spondon is the 'Plateau Estate Farmlands' LCT, which the submitted LVIA considered as part of the impacts upon the Appeal Site's contextual landscape character. In summary, the 'Plateau Estate Farmlands' are described as having 'a distinct sense of elevation with long distance views over surrounding lower lying land'. Smaller plantations and parkland trees within the predominantly arable farmland indicate the estate ownership of the landscape and – together with mature oaks – are considered indicative of once-extensive ancient woodland. Key characteristics comprise:
- *"Upstanding, gently undulating plateau*
 - *Mixed farming Scattered hedgerow trees, predominantly oak*
 - *Small plantations*
 - *Parkland and ornamental tree belts associated with country houses*
 - *Medium to large fields*
 - *Relict parkland and former commons now enclosed and farmed*
 - *Dispersed [red brick] estate farmsteads and cottages ...with clay tiles and slate roofs*
 - *Sense of elevation with long distance views"*
- 2.20. The LCoD identified the Plateau Estate Farmlands as being of low to medium tranquillity adjoining Chaddesden, and medium tranquillity to the north of Spondon.

Landscape Effects Summary

- 2.21. The character of the Appeal Site and its immediate context would alter from settlement fringe grazing to a residential one with public open space and structural landscaping, with just over half the Appeal Site comprising green infrastructure (see Table 2, below). It would retain many of (or in some case enhance) its key characteristic features such as the sloping / undulating topography, network of hedgerows with trees, pattern of locally dense watercourse trees, largely absent woodland but presence of copses.
- 2.22. The perception of change in landscape character terms would extend only a limited distance beyond the Appeal Site due to its physical and visual containment within the local landscape. Consequently, the LVIA anticipated that the submitted scheme would not result in any impacts upon the Plateau Estate Farmlands LCT, and as the landscape framework establishes and matures, that adverse effects on the Lowland Village Farmlands LCT would reduce on balance.
- 2.23. The table below summarises the effects reported.

Table 1: Assessment of Landscape Effects

Landscape character	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact		Significance of Effect
Lowland Village Farmlands LCT	Medium	Completion:	Low to Medium	Minor to Moderate Adverse
		Year 15:	Low	Minor Adverse
Plateau Estate Farmlands LCT	Medium to high	Completion:	None	None
		Year 15:	None	None
Site and its immediate context	Low to medium	Completion:	Medium to High	Moderate Adverse
		Year 15:	Medium to High	Minor to Moderate Adverse

Visual Amenity

- 2.24. The scope of visibility of the Appeal Site is considered primarily to be restricted by settlement on the valley slopes to the east and west, as well as within the valley to the south. Elevated land to the north provides some opportunity for long-distance views towards the Site, where the undulating nature of the landform and intervening vegetation allows.
- 2.25. The key receptors are identified below:
- Residents on the western fringes of Spondon (Royal Hill Road) to the east;
 - Prow users passing the southern boundary of the Appeal Site and at short distance to the south-west at select locations between Royal Hill Road and Acorn Way;
 - PRoW users along the footpath near the northern boundary of the Site and in close proximity to / approaching from the north; and
 - PRoW users at select locations along footpaths and the bridleway at medium to long distance broadly to the north.

Visual Effects Summary

- 2.26. The geographical extent of potential views to the Appeal Site and of proposed development within it is considered to be very limited. Consequently, the likely associated visual impacts are primarily limited to a range of receptors in the immediate and local context of the Appeal Site, and approaching at short distance. These are considered to comprise:
- A small number of existing residents along Royal Hill Road, with either a direct view of the proposed built form of residential dwellings and / or the Site access, or at short distance with oblique views or partially obscured views. Mitigation is incorporated including a new hedgerow along the eastern boundary, avenue planting along the access road, and open space along the southern boundary, towards which 3 properties would front.

- Users of the PRoW between Acorn Way and Royal Hill Road passing to the south of the Appeal Site, whose views would focus on the new open space in the south-west and new residences beyond in the western half of the development envelope (on the approach), or glimpses of the adjoining open space via pedestrian connection points into the Appeal Site, where housing would be briefly visible beyond in passing.
- Users of the PRoW close to the northern extents of the Appeal Site, where a couple of brief glimpsed views via vegetation gaps would comprise partial and restricted views of new open space and planting proposals in the north of the Appeal Site.
- PRoW receptors at limited locations along elevated longer-distance routes where views are unimpeded and considered to be limited to additional structural landscape elements within the north-most extents of the Appeal Site.

- 2.27. The visual assessment demonstrated the positive influence of mitigation that is inherent in the submitted scheme, with Year 1 and Year 15 assessments demonstrating a reduction in impact, particularly from the north where views are not considered to be subject to level of effects greater than Negligible in any case. The ability to successfully mitigate potential adverse effects is a key consideration in respect of potential visual impacts.
- 2.28. For the existing residential properties located along Royal Hill Road, there would be a considerable change in views that look directly into the Appeal Site (i.e. subject to which room views are from and degree of localised screening on/adjacent to the properties). However, development proposals seek to provide mitigation that will soften views over time.
- 2.29. Acorn Way is enclosed by established vegetation to both sides, which forms an effective screen in terms of views looking west. Sections of the road are also in a slight cutting, the embankment also adding to the visual containment. As a consequence, there are essentially no views towards the Appeal Site: while there are very brief glimpses of the landscape to the east via field accesses, these are infrequent, and within which it is not considered that development proposals within the Appeal Site would be readily identified due to distance, intervening vegetation and the rolling landform. Acorn Way also serves to screen views from the edge of Derby. Where residents are situated further north, intervening woodland / tree cover and the high ground immediately north of the Appeal Site together with the distance are likely to screen any views of proposals within the Appeal Site.
- 2.30. The representative photoview locations and corresponding detailed viewpoint assessment are included within the figures of CD1.13.

3. The Amended Development Proposals

- 3.1. The IMP that accompanied the outline planning application (CD1.18) has been reviewed following consultation and Committee comments. This included a meeting with Councillors on 16th June 2023 (as outlined in the SCI; CD1.14) and a third-party response from Councillor J. Smale (CD2.03). These pertained to the strength of the buffer along the western boundary in maintaining the Green Wedge and the separation from Chaddesden.
- 3.2. This section considers the landscape and visual mitigation integrated into the submitted scheme and the associated reported landscape and visual effects and re-appraises these as appropriate in the context of the amended development proposals (“the appeal scheme”).
- 3.3. The landscape-led approach and the nature and disposition of proposed land uses that guided the submitted scheme remains unchanged in the revised Illustrative Masterplan (CD8.08) with the exception of development essentially being ‘drawn back’ from the site’s western boundary to incorporate a landscape buffer (CD8.09).
- 3.4. This amendment enables a more substantial and unbroken structural landscape belt to be established along the length of the Appeal Site’s western edge. This would supplement existing retained hedgerows and tree planting that define the western site boundary, and connect with GI to the north and south. The landscape buffer also includes provision along the northern boundary where this adjoins the covered reservoir compound. This structural landscape belt would be subject to detailed design as a planning condition.

Landscape and Visual Strategy

- 3.5. The analysis presented in Section 4: Development and Landscape Strategy of the LVIA (CD1.13) remains valid. However, for ease of reference, LVIA Table 2 is reproduced below and updated to reflect revisions and is to be read in conjunction with the revised IMP (CD8.08).

Table 2: Summary of integrated landscape and visual mitigation (updated)

Strategy component	Key points	Published characteristics & guidance for the Lowland Village Farmland LCT
Development envelope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set directly adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Spondon, which comprises relatively modern residential development Concentrated to a limited portion of the Site, where there is an existing close relationship with, and influence from, the residential edge Influenced by the existing western built extents of Spondon in the local landscape Whilst indicative, the extent of the development envelope is defined in relation to the western and northern boundaries by the proposed Landscape Buffer Occupies less than half the total area of the Site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically nucleated settlement located on the valley slopes Conserve the settlement pattern

Strategy component	Key points	Published characteristics & guidance for the Lowland Village Farmland LCT
Existing vegetation and green infrastructure strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprises over half the Site (circa 2.3Ha of a total of approximately 4.5Ha). • The Appeal Site as a whole retains substantial areas of green infrastructure and open space to the north and south, each serving different functions in terms of mitigation. • Existing vegetation across the Site is retained and enhanced within the layout wherever possible, including to the boundaries, with supplementary planting to increase structure, diversity and succession. • To the south, GI includes informal open space, meadow and sustainable drainage provision. • To the north, landscape proposals seek both to integrate with and enhance the existing field boundary pattern, as well as providing community facilities (described below in 'Internal Layout and Proposed Open Space'). • Proposed new hedgerow planting along the north-eastern section of the boundary, where currently it only comprises a fence to the reservoir compound. • To the west, existing vegetation is retained and enhanced with a substantial belt of structural landscape planting along the inside of the western boundary to establish a strong, robust, and enduring edge bordering arable land. • Planting proposals and new reinforcement planting (including hedgerow trees) to improve species diversity, are intended to enhance the existing network of field boundary vegetation, and increase linear habitat links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation and enhancement of tree groups occurring in and around rural settlements. • Ensuring new woodland does not conflict with characteristic features of the landscape. • Conserve primary field boundaries. • Seek opportunities for hedgerow replanting and management. • Conserve vernacular pattern and the historic field pattern.
Internal Layout and Proposed Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notwithstanding the outline nature of the application, the parameters define the maximum developable area and position, as well as the principal areas of open space and GI elements including retained vegetative features. • Given the large proportion of GI and open space there are opportunities to create development set within a substantial landscape framework of a high-quality design at the detailed stage. • Omission of development from, and allocation of open space in the northern part of the Site, maintaining a sense of openness in the most elevated parts of the Site and reduction in potential visibility of the scheme to the north. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enclosure Pattern – the spatial distribution and orientation of new buildings responds to the existing pattern of fields and existing boundaries, with northern development limits in line with the southern boundary of the covered reservoir compound. • Site comprises horse grazing, with fields sub-divided by fencing. Characteristic mixed fields of medium to large

Strategy component	Key points	Published characteristics & guidance for the Lowland Village Farmland LCT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of more informal green space and structural planting in the south of the Site close to (and connecting with) existing woodland and tree lines close to the southern boundary. More formal structure to the landscape planting in the north of the Site, with a publicly accessible orchard, avenue tree planting and recreational open space together with areas of meadow creation and clumped tree planting. Enhancements to the existing PRoW network, with multiple connections onto the public footpath passing the southern boundary (Spondon 7), through the site via a green corridor, and a new link onto the public footpath at the northern edge (Spondon 6). 	<p>scale occurring elsewhere across the LCT in close proximity to the Site are preserved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The species composition of existing long-established hedgerows should be used to guide the composition of new hedgerow planting, with enhancements made where species numbers are limited for biodiversity benefits.

Landscape Effects

- 3.6. The LVIA concluded that the physical changes would be limited to the Appeal Site and form only a very small proportion of the wider Lowland Village Farmlands LCT. The perception of change in landscape character terms would also be limited, extending only a limited distance beyond the Appeal Site. This is due to the containment of and influence upon the Appeal Site (physically and visually) by the suburbs of Spondon to the east and Chaddesden to the west, the rising topography to the south and high ground to the north. Perceived changes to character are restricted and highly localised. This limits the impact in terms of spatial area and magnitude.
- 3.7. The GI framework proposed as an inherent part of the appeal scheme would contribute to the mitigation of impacts arising from the development proposals. A strengthened landscape buffer along the western edge reinforces the boundary between the Appeal Site and the agricultural landscape to the west, creating a robust and enduring limit to the appeal scheme as part of the western settled edge of Spondon.
- 3.8. The effects upon landscape character have been reviewed, and while there would be some additional beneficial impacts as a consequence of the strengthened landscape buffer, the significance of effects as reported in the submitted LVIA remain materially unchanged.

Visual Effects

- 3.9. 10 photo viewpoints were presented as part of the appraisal of visual effects of the submitted scheme, representative of key view locations and / or visual receptors. These viewpoints have been reconsidered in the context of the appeal scheme, and It is noted that views from the majority of these (namely Viewpoints 1, 3 – 10), would not be affected. Receptors at Viewpoint 2 have the potential to experience changes to visual effects as reported in the LVIA arising from the amended scheme. Table 3 presents the likely effects upon their visual amenity.

Table 3: Assessment of Visual Effects

Viewpoint (and ensitivity)	Description of change and nature of impact	Magnitude / significance of effects: Completion	Magnitude / significance of effects: Year 15
2. From PROW Spondon 5 between Springfield Farm and West Road (High: PROW users)	<p>PROW Spondon 5 extends north from West Road toward Springfield Farm and Brookfield Farm where it joins the east-west route of PROW Spondon 7 to Royal Hill Road. PROW Spondon 7 is flanked by hedgerows and trees.</p> <p>A short section of 'Spondon 5' is sufficiently elevated, allowing views north beyond the adjacent hedgerow and the foreground arable land to part of the south of the Appeal Site, which is screened along much of the route by a combination of landform and vegetation. The mid distance horizon is formed by fields on rising ground divided by hedgerow sections / remnants, scattered trees and fencing. Other visible elements include farm buildings, two communication masts, buildings / earthworks at the covered reservoir, paddock shelters / structures, and Spondon's residential rooftops.</p> <p>The proposed development would be separated by foreground pasture to the west and south of the Appeal Site and set back from the farms. On completion, development would be extend the settlement edge within this view. New housing would be clearly visible at short range -replacing grazing - but fragmented by intervening vegetation and sitting in front of the reservoir compound. Existing gappy hedge sections and fencing within and bordering the Appeal Site would be reinforced with new hedgerow planting and a new belt of structural landscape planting along the western boundary hedgerow. By Year 15, from this limited length of footpath a continuous substantial and robust vegetated buffer would provide some screening of the development, offering some balance to the adverse impacts. Glimpsed roof tops would be seen in the context of existing roof tops to the east-northeast, the farms' built form, the covered reservoir and communications masts. Landscape proposals in the north and south of the Appeal Site would be less readily discernible at completion due to topography, existing retained and intervening vegetation.</p>	<p>Magnitude: Medium to High</p> <p>Significance of Effects: Moderate to Major Adverse</p>	<p>Magnitude: Medium</p> <p>Significance of Effects: Moderate Adverse</p>

- 3.10. In summary, the principal difference between the submitted scheme and appeal scheme is a marginal adjustment to development parcel positions to incorporate a landscape buffer along the western boundary and to the northern boundary south of the covered reservoir. All other elements of the GI proposals remain as proposed. The effects upon the landscape and visual resources are not materially altered, however, the adverse effects experienced by visual receptors along a short section of PROW Spondon 5 as a consequence of the appeal scheme are on balance reduced by the increased beneficial impacts of the enhanced GI through an establishing western planted buffer in the longer term offering additional screening.

4. Green Wedge Review

Introduction

- 4.1. Policy CP18 within DCC's adopted Core Strategy (2017) describes Green Wedges as *"areas of land that define and enhance the City's urban structure, maintain the identity of the different residential neighbourhoods, provide an uninterrupted link to the countryside, form part of the wider green infrastructure network and play an important role in climate change adaptation"*.
- 4.2. CP18 states that development in the Green Wedge will be limited and should not endanger the open and undeveloped character of the wedge, its links and GI value. Where development does occur, it should provide opportunities to improve the remaining Green Wedge and ensure that the principles of the policy itself will be continued.
- 4.3. The primary function of all of the Green Wedges is essentially 'to define and enhance the urban structure of the City as a whole' (para 1.3, CD9.01).
- 4.4. As described within the DCC Green Wedge Review (published October 2012), the two essential characteristics of the Green Wedge were defined by DCC, being that:
 - They have an open and undeveloped character; and
 - They penetrate the urban area from the open countryside.
- 4.5. The Green Wedges' overarching functions are derived from these characteristics:
 - Primarily, the Green Wedges must exhibit the essential characteristics in order to be capable of defining and enhancing the urban structure of the city as a whole; and
 - Maintenance of neighbourhood identity.
- 4.6. Appendix B of the LVIA considered the functions of the Green Wedge as set out in DCC's Core Strategy, which in turn was based on its 2012 Green Wedge Review. This proof provides a summary of the LVIA's review of the Green Wedge, and additionally considers the physical, visual, and experiential features of the Green Wedge as guided by and with reference to the 'Eastleigh Criteria' (as derived from the Inspector's Report for the 1998 Eastleigh Local Plan).

The 2012 Green Wedge Review

- 4.7. DCC's 2012 Core Strategy 'Green Wedge Review' (the DDCGWR; CD9.01) sets out an appraisal of its thirteen Green Wedges, including that which extends between Spondon and Chaddesden. For each, a specific set of main functions were identified.
- 4.8. The location-specific analysis of the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge has identified the following particular main functions:
 - helping to define the edges of Chaddesden and Spondon, contributing to their separation, character and identity and enhancing the urban structure of the city;
 - providing a vital break in the urban landscape helping to reduce the feeling of urban sprawl;

- allowing the open countryside to penetrate into the urban area of the city, providing residents with access to the countryside and space for recreational activities. It also provides a haven for wildlife within the urban area;
- providing vital flood storage and provides space to allow water to soak away naturally, reducing the need for engineered drainage;
- accommodating educational establishments and associated playing fields, including West Park Secondary School;
- providing space for agriculture and is one of the most actively farmed areas of the city;
- being a green lung within the city, helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change; and
- providing recreational opportunities that contribute towards the mental and physical well-being of residents by way of its open and undeveloped character.

4.9. Key observations relevant to the Appeal Site and its immediate context within the DDCGRW description of the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge include the following:

- West Park School is noted as being close a local east-west ridgeline across the centre of the Green Wedge, making the school prominent and impacting upon the openness and undeveloped character of the area. By comparison, the most elevated part of the Appeal Site would remain undeveloped , with proposed dwellings adjoining existing residential development to the south of the reservoir and development north of West Road.
- One of the most sensitive points is considered to be where the Green Wedge passes West Road / Springfield Primary School. The Appeal Site is not within or further west than the existing development in this location.
- An area of public open space has been proposed within the DDCGWR north of the Nature reserve and west of the primary school. The Appeal Site does not sit within this area, nor compromises any existing or potential publicly accessible connections to it.
- The northern parts of the Green Wedge are generally agricultural; flowing into the Green Belt to the north; with the character of open countryside. The Appeal Site is not agricultural, is well enclosed, and has a smaller scale and sense of intimacy, contrasting with the larger open fields to the west

4.10. The DCCGWR also identifies the 'axis' of each Green Wedge; considered to be the most sensitive part, whereby openness and undeveloped character of the axis is essential in providing visual separation between neighbourhoods and maintaining the urban structure.

4.11. The axis for the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge is demonstrated in Figure 2.53 of the DDCGWR, indicating that this focuses east-west upon the Lees Brook Valley, and broadly north-south centrally towards Derby Road (A6005). There is no description or explanation of the axis itself in the accompanying text, however, as identified above, the northern parts are described as *"generally agricultural in character [flowing] northwards into an area of Green Belt"*. This is largely represented by the southern arrow, although the illustration is more strategic in nature and not reflective of some of the nuances within the Green Wedge, for example it cuts across the Brookfield and Springfield Farm steads, and the covered reservoir compound which is described as a detracting feature. Nevertheless, considering the

diagrammatical intent of Figure 2.53, built form within the appeal scheme does not interrupt the axis as illustrated.

- 4.12. The LVIA's own review considered the role and function of the Appeal Site and its contribution to the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge and its functions, and the predicted impacts upon the GW as a consequence of the delivery of the proposed development. Each of the functions of the Green Wedge have been considered, presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Appraisal of the Site in the context of the Spondon / Chaddesden Green Wedge

Green Wedge Function	Contribution of the Site to Green Wedge function	Impact upon the Green Wedge Function
Definition of the edges of Chaddesden and Spondon, contributing to their separation character and identity	To the east, the Appeal Site directly adjoins the residential edge of Spondon. To the north and south there is existing development in the form of the reservoir and masts, and the schools, respectively.	<p>While the appeal scheme would extend built form slightly further west in this specific location along Spondon's edge, geographically this is no further than already is evident (on West Road) and would be well contained by a combination of new and existing GI features.</p> <p>In terms of separation from Chaddesden, a tract of open undeveloped land would be retained between the two settlements. A green buffer has been incorporated along the western boundary to strongly define the new western developed edge.</p> <p>It is not considered that the appeal scheme would adversely impact this function.</p>
Provide a break in the urban landscape and reduce the feeling of urban sprawl	The Appeal Site adjoins Spondon which has a variable developed edge, compared to the linear edge of Chaddesden. There are a few publicly accessible locations from within the GW where the Appeal Site is visible, particularly given the undulating nature of this tract of landscape which together with vegetation provides a notable degree of enclosure in places.	<p>In the context of the proposed development, a robust and material break between the two settlements would be retained. Where views or glimpses across this Green Wedge are possible, these would still generally include the undeveloped countryside or would be enclosed by proximate vegetation to a varying degree.</p> <p>It is not considered that the appeal scheme would adversely impact this function.</p>
Penetration of the countryside into the urban area, together with recreational and biodiversity opportunities	<p>The Green Wedge's axis extends along the Lees Brook, and from open countryside to the north southwards to the A6005. Development within the Appeal Site does not lie on the axis.</p> <p>The PRoWs passing the northern and southern boundaries provide links to and across the Green Wedge.</p>	<p>The appeal scheme would not interrupt the current extent of southward penetration of the countryside between Spondon and Chaddesden, nor interrupt the existing PRoW connections between Spondon and countryside within the Green Wedge.</p> <p>It is not considered that the appeal scheme would adversely impact this function.</p>

Flood storage provision and natural soakaway opportunities	The Appeal Site is greenfield land but does not currently perform any identified flood storage role and slopes from north to south towards Springfield Brook to the south-west.	The proposals include sustainable drainage features to accommodate surface water run-off from the proposed development itself. It is not considered that the appeal scheme would adversely impact this function.
Accommodating educational establishments	The Appeal Site constitutes private land and is neither accessible to the school nor provides a related function.	The school sites, and connections to them would continue to function as currently. It is not considered that the appeal scheme would adversely impact this function.
Providing a 'green lung'	The Appeal Site includes a number of hedgerows, hedgerow sections and trees, although several of the field boundaries are partially or wholly fenced. The Site itself is grazed.	A single hedgerow and some short sections would be removed to facilitate the development, however, the appeal scheme includes new hedgerow lengths, gapping up of existing hedgerows, a green buffer along the west boundary, meadow creation, and new tree planting which all together is considered to exceed that which has been removed. While addressing the climate change impacts is relevant to a variety of environmental factors (e.g., flooding / drainage, biodiversity etc), the proposed GI provides a robust framework to the appeal scheme, facilitating habitat creation, BNG and storm water management. It is not considered that the appeal scheme would adversely impact this function.
Providing space for agriculture	The Appeal Site currently comprises horse grazing divided into a series of paddocks, and consequently is considered to be in equestrian rather than agricultural use.	Neither the proposed residential development nor the creation of new open space would involve the loss of agricultural land. It is not considered that the appeal scheme would adversely impact this function.
Providing recreational opportunities	While there are two public rights of way passing the Appeal Site boundaries, there are no public routes or access through the Site nor any public use within it.	The proposals represent an opportunity for increased recreational benefits for existing and new residents. The existing PRoWs will be retained as existing and the proposals involve the creation of new footpath connections between the PRoWs to north and south, and around open space within the scheme itself. It is considered that the appeal scheme would enhance this function.

- 4.13. Overall, considering the above analysis, the appeal scheme would not result in adverse impacts upon the identified function of the Green Wedge to the extent that those functions would not remain intact; indeed, it has been demonstrated by way of the layout and GI proposed that there is opportunity for positive enhancements to some of the Green Wedge's functions.

Review of the Green Wedge: Eastleigh Criteria

- 4.14. The 'Eastleigh Criteria' are derived from the Inspector's report for the 1998 Eastleigh Local Plan Inquiry, reproduced in the "Strategic Gap and Green Wedge Policies in Structure Plans: Main Report" (ODPM, 2001; CD10.4). The criteria have been applied to numerous applications and appeals to determine the effectiveness of an existing strategic gap or Green Wedge.
- 4.15. The 'Eastleigh Criteria' comprise:
- Distance;
 - Topography;
 - Landscape Character/Type;
 - Vegetation;
 - Existing Uses and Density of Buildings;
 - Nature of Urban Edges;
 - Inter-visibility (the ability to see one edge from another);
 - Intra-visibility (the ability to see both edges from a single point); and
 - The sense of leaving a place (or arriving at a place).

The Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge

- 4.16. Three broad sections of differing land use and character have been identified across the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge comprising: the southern section (north of Derby Road and south of West Road), a central section north of West Road and east of Acorn Way (within which the site lies), and a northern section west of Acorn Way.

Southern Section

- 4.17. The southern section lies to the south of PROW Spondon 4 and West Road, west of Spondon (Merchant Avenue), north of Derby Road, and east of Chaddesden (Acorn Way). The north-eastern part of this section is occupied by West Park Secondary School and associated development. The north-western part comprises West Park Meadow Nature Reserve. Of the remaining four parcels within the southern section, two are actively farmed (arable) and two are unmanaged.
- 4.18. The school comprises an extensive collection of large-scale buildings of up to 3 storeys set within an apron of hardstandings, with hard-surfaced multi-use games courts to the west and manicured grassed sports pitches to the west and southwest of the school buildings. The school is entirely enclosed by utilitarian palisade fencing. The building and hard standings of the secondary school extend to c.2.8ha. In terms of character and form the school reads as part of an urban area and therefore is visually and spatially contiguous with, and perceived as part of Spondon rather than the open and undeveloped land of the Green Wedge to its south and west. Inclusion of the secondary school within the Green Wedge appears inconsistent compared to the treatment of Springfield Primary School within the central section (see below).

- 4.19. Residential development to the east, south and west of the southern section is medium density and mixed, predominantly two storey with occasional single storey. Prevailing residential types are semi-detached dwellings with localised pockets of bungalows, detached houses, and short terraces. West Park school buildings are a comparably much larger footprint.
- 4.20. The secondary school palisade fence and residential fenced curtilages form an abrupt urban edge to the east and south. Acorn Way's eastern roadside is bound by an established tall hedgerow (along the western extents of the green wedge); this vegetated edge is further reinforced by a strong tree belt bordering Acorn Way to the west beyond the Green Wedge.

Central Section

- 4.21. The central section lies to the north of PROW Spondon 4, bound to the east by Spondon and to the west by Acorn Way/Oregon Way and Oregon Way Park. A small rectilinear woodland ('Springfield Wood') lies to the northwest of the primary school. Arable land between the primary school and Acorn Way is subject to a Proposed Open Space policy. Springfield Farm/Brookfield Farm and Kennels lies centrally within this section, with land to the north and west of the farm complex comprising medium to large scale arable fields. Land to the east and northeast of the farm complex comprises a series of smaller rectangular fields principally used as paddocks (the Appeal Site), as well as a covered reservoir with associated built form.
- 4.22. Open land to the north of Springfield Primary School is washed over by Green Wedge policy, but the school buildings are excluded, forming part of the urban settlement. The primary school comprises single storey buildings occupying a relatively compact footprint with a hard-surfaced games court to the west and grassed open sports and a recreation area to the north. The built form together with its enclosure by security fencing creates an urban character.
- 4.23. Adjoining medium density residential development is predominantly two storeys, detached or semi-detached, with bungalows along most of the western edge of Marina Drive and the northern section of Royal Hill Road. The urban edges to the east and south are formed principally by fenced residential curtilages, as well as by Royal Hill Road.
- 4.24. An assessment of the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge using the Eastleigh Criteria is presented in Table 5, below, with reference to the Green Wedge Appraisal plan (Appendix 1). The plan shows the extent the Green Wedge within the Appeal Site's local context, which – based on desk and field study – has been subdivided into a series of ten parcels (labelled 1-10) reflecting subtle differences in character and/or land use.

Northern Section

- 4.25. The northern section of the Green Wedge lies to the west of Acorn Way, east of Oregon Way/north of and including Oregon Way Park, extending to the north and northeast to the west of the Green Belt designation. This land is subject to Existing Open Space and Proposed Open Space policies, and no built form is present.

Table 5: Green Wedge Central Section Appraisal using Eastleigh Criteria

Eastleigh Criterion	Key Features	Green Wedge Central Section Appraisal
Distance	<p>The narrowest existing width of this Green Wedge is between West House (West Rd) and Acorn Way, which measures c.300m.</p> <p>The distance between proposed development within the Appeal Site and the western edge of the Green Wedge is between 287m and 335m.</p>	<p>The width of the Green Wedge varies between the settlements in the context of the Appeal Site. With the appeal scheme in place, a broad swathe of open agricultural land would be maintained along the Green Wedge axis in the vicinity of the Appeal Site, comparable in width to the existing narrowest point. The appeal scheme would not result in a developed edge to Spondon that is any further geographically west than currently observed.</p> <p>Therefore, the main purpose and function of the Green Wedge would be preserved: proposed development would maintain a sufficient and functional width to the Green Wedge, providing separation between the settlements.</p>
Topography	<p>The Green Wedge axis lies north-south (see Appendix 1) broadly perpendicular to prevailing topography. East-west across the Green Wedge, Chaddesden is slightly lower than Spondon at between c. 70m and 80m AOD opposite the Appeal Site.</p> <p>The northwest of the Appeal Site, (area 2a) has a south-westerly aspect, towards Chaddesden, and is the most elevated portion with the greatest potential to be visible from land within the Green Wedge and Chaddesden.</p> <p>The remainder of the Appeal Site (area 2b) is lower lying at c. 90m AOD to 75m AOD and has a comparatively lower potential of being visible from Chaddesden and the wider Green Wedge. Furthermore, it has a southerly aspect and so is oriented toward urban development off West Road, including Springfield Primary School. Areas 8, 9 and 10 within the Green Wedge abut and are directly influenced by the urban edge of Spondon to the east and south.</p>	<p>The landscape-led layout of the appeal scheme has had due regard to its topography and the potential visibility of the northwest area 3a. This area would remain free from built development, with GI and amenity uses to be established including an orchard, informal recreation, and wildflower grassland to enhance biodiversity, Thus complementing the purposes of Green Wedge policy.</p>
Landscape Character / Type	<p>The central section is split broadly into two in terms of landscape character, with larger scale arable fields occupying the western half (areas 1, 4, 5a, 6 and 7). The strong hedge and tree belt along Acorn Way physically and visually separates this land from Chaddesden. Vegetation emphasises field pattern and establishes an east-west grain.</p>	<p>Areas of land broadly to the west beyond the Appeal Site make the greatest contribution to the landscape character of the central section of the Green Wedge, including that they lie along and indeed form part of this Green Wedge's axis.</p>

Eastleigh Criterion	Key Features	Green Wedge Central Section Appraisal
	<p>There is a limited sense of enclosure due to the rolling landform, field scale, arable land use, and vegetation pattern.</p> <p>In contrast, the eastern half comprises small, narrow, elongated fields used as horse paddocks, frequently further subdivided by fencing. Springfield Wood (area 9) together with established but gappy hedgerows with trees bordering areas 2a and 2b (within the Appeal Site) and areas 5b and 8 create a prevailing north-south grain albeit crosscut by hedgerows flanking PROW Spondon 7. These features restrict outward views and create a more intimate scale, with the proximity to Spondon to the north, east and south reinforcing the urban influence.</p>	<p>The northernmost part of the Appeal Site is also considered to make some contribution to the landscape character of the Green Wedge, principally due to its elevated position. This is to remain undeveloped as part of the appeal scheme. The main body of the Appeal Site directly abuts and is already influenced by the urban edge of Spondon.</p> <p>The scale and grain of field parcels, visibility and vegetation cover within this area distinguishes it from land to the west and so it is considered to make a more limited contribution to the function and landscape character of the Green Wedge.</p>
Vegetation	<p>Occasional mature trees lie within hedgerows of varying condition and completeness within the Green Wedge. This vegetation defines fields and locally controls views within and across the Green Wedge. Hedgerows and trees are more frequent toward the edge of Spondon due to the smaller parcel sizes.</p> <p>Acorn Way defines the urban edge of Chaddesden which is flanked along the east by an established hedgerow with trees and a strong belt of trees to the west. This near continuous double row of vegetation is punctuated by only short gaps that accommodate a PROW crossing (Spondon 4) and the access to Springfield Farm or associated field gates off Acorn Way.</p>	<p>More than half of the Appeal Site would comprise green infrastructure to provide a generous framework of tree, shrub, hedgerow planting and grassland within which the proposed development would be set. This would include an orchard, informal recreation, and wildflower grassland to enhance biodiversity, thus complementing the purposes of Green Wedge policy.</p>
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	<p>The central section of the Green Wedge is bound to the east by Spondon urban edge and to the west by Acorn Way and the suburb of Chaddesden.</p> <p>The most prevalent land use is medium to large scale arable farmland (areas 1, 4, 5a, 6, 7 and 8), occupying its central and western extents. A small rectilinear woodland (area 9) lies to the west of the primary school open space (area 10), the buildings to the south being excluded from the Green Wedge. Springfield Farm, and Brookfield Farm lie centrally within this section.</p> <p>To the north-east of the farms are a series of small/ narrow and elongated fields divided into paddocks (areas 5b, 2a and 2b) and a covered reservoir with associated built form (area 3).</p>	<p>The proposed development would replace existing urban fringe 'horsiculture' land use with residential built form set within a generous framework of green infrastructure. The specific layout, design and appearance of the built form are reserved matters, it is reasonable to assume that this would deliver medium density development complementary to and in keeping with the existing settlement.</p>

Eastleigh Criterion	Key Features	Green Wedge Central Section Appraisal
	<p>Springfield Primary School comprises low rise (single storey) small to medium scale buildings occupying a relatively compact footprint with a hard-surfaced games court to the west, and displays a hard urban form and character.</p> <p>To the east, southeast and west of the Green Wedge's central section is medium density residential development along a varied street layout; predominantly two storey detached or semi-detached houses with bungalows along most of the west of Marina Drive and the northern section of Royal Hill Road.</p>	
Nature of Urban Edges	<p>At the macro level, Chaddesden is defined by a largely uniform urban edge to the tree and hedgerow-lined Acorn Way. In contrast, the western edge of Spondon is irregular, with development along both north-south and east-west roads variously defining the edge.</p> <p>The urban edges to the south and south-east of the Green Wedge are typically formed by fencing (to residential curtilages or the school) resulting in an abrupt interface between Green Wedge and urban settlement, but Royal Hill Road and incidental open space provides an offset from residential properties to the north and south of Royal Hill Farm. A higher frequency of trees marks the boundaries of properties off West Road including West House which creates a localised softer edge.</p>	<p>The appeal scheme would retain and enhance the existing western boundary hedgerow and trees. This would be supplemented by a landscape buffer (a parallel belt of structural planting of 5-10m width) to establish a robust and enduring settlement boundary that provides a vegetated transition between the Green Wedge and Spondon urban edge.</p>
Inter-visibility	<p>Inter-visibility between Spondon and Chaddesden is restricted by landform and vegetation; there are few publicly accessible vantage points along either settlement edge. Acorn Way's strong vegetation belt screen the majority of eastward views from Chaddesden toward Spondon. Strong bounding hedgerows line PROWs Spondon 4 and Spondon 7. View opportunities from the settlement edge of Spondon toward Chaddesden from public locations are limited to the junction of PROWs Spondon 4 and Spondon 5 adjacent to West House, at the far end of West Road.</p>	<p>From the one identified location for intervisibility between Spondon and Chaddesden on West Road, the Appeal Site is not visible due to intervening landform and vegetation. Consequently, the appeal scheme would not impede this view or diminish the openness of the Green Wedge as viewed from this location and not affect matters of inter-visibility.</p>
Intra-visibility	<p>Opportunity for intra-visibility of the two settlements is limited to PROW Spondon 5. However, although open westward views are gained from elevated parts of the route across the Green Wedge, vegetation along Acorn Way screens Chaddesden with only glimpses of housing gained through localised breaks.</p>	<p>The western fringes of the appeal scheme (including the landscape buffer, southern GI and the western edge of proposed development) may be visible within these views but in the context of very limited and localised views toward properties in Chaddesden there would</p>

Eastleigh Criterion	Key Features	Green Wedge Central Section Appraisal
	An established, well-maintained hedgerow lying along the eastern edge of the route restricting views of most of the urban edge of Spondon.	be minimal impact on intra-visibility arising from the proposed development from one short section of this PROW.
The sense of leaving (or arriving) a place	<p>The 'leaving' points from Spondon into the Green Wedge in closest proximity to the Appeal Site comprise the PROWs from Royal Hill Road (Spondon 7) and westward off West Road (Spondon 4).</p> <p>Movement between Spondon and Chaddesden across the Green Wedge is limited to Spondon 4 which forms the only direct publicly accessible link between the settlements, with respective leaving/arrival points at either end of the route. As the secondary school on West Road is within the Green Wedge, views from here initially remain urban in nature, with domestic and municipal built form clearly apparent. A sense of 'leaving' is experienced once on PROW Spondon 4.</p> <p>While open views are gained to the northwest across the Green Wedge at the Spondon 4 and 5 junction, the presence of an adjacent telecoms mast and walling/palisade fencing to the secondary school to the west and south root the view within an urban context.</p> <p>Whilst PROW Spondon 7 'leaves' the urban edge off Royal Hill Road, it shortly reconnects to it via PROW Spondon 5 at West Road, described above.</p>	The Appeal Site is remote from PROW Spondon 4 and not intervisible with it; proposed development is not therefore considered to influence or affect the sense of leaving or arriving at Spondon along this route.

Contribution to Green Wedge

- 4.26. Areas within the central section have been assessed and ranked in relation to their contribution to the function of the Green Wedge, presented in Table 6 below. Area references are indicated on the Green Wedge Analysis Plan (Appendix 1).

Table 6: Area Contribution to Green Wedge

Area	Contribution to Green Wedge	Contribution
Areas 1, 4, 5a, 5b, 6, 7, and 8	<p>Open areas north of PROW Spondon 4 separated from the urban edge of Chaddesden by the well vegetated corridor of Acorn Way, and from Spondon by smaller scale parcels to the east with largely intact north-south field boundary vegetation.</p> <p>Each of these areas contribute to the broad swathe of open land that extends along the Green Wedge axis from Derby Road to open countryside to the north.</p>	High

Area	Contribution to Green Wedge	Contribution
	<p>Areas 7 and 8 are important in respect of maintaining separation between West Road/West Park Secondary School and Chaddesden and the Green Wedge axis between the southern area and open countryside to the north.</p> <p>Overall, these areas are considered to have a high contribution to the function of the Green Wedge.</p>	
Area 2a	<p>This area is sub-divided into series of small horse paddocks, west of the covered reservoir. The smaller scale of this field enclosure contrasts with the larger scale, more open arable land use to the west. The landform here is elevated and sits slightly below the local high point occupied by the reservoir. There is some visual connection between this area and the settlement edge to the east.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that Area 3a makes a moderate contribution to the function of the Green Wedge.</p>	Medium
Area 2b	<p>This area comprising a number of smaller paddocks directly abuts Royal Hill Road to the east, and therefore has a visual and physical connection with the existing settlement edge. A covered reservoir is located to the north, with a further series of horse paddocks to the north-west.</p> <p>The smaller scale of these field enclosures often delineated by hedgerows (in varying condition) contrasts with the larger scale, more open arable land use to the west. The landform here is falling from a localised high point to the north. It is enclosed by development to the north, east and south, and partially to the west by the farmsteads.</p> <p>The combination of the influence of the settlement edge and other 'urban fringe' land uses (such as the covered reservoir and paddocks), smaller scale field pattern with vegetated boundaries, sense of enclosure and falling landform, means that overall, area 2b is considered to have a low contribution to the function of the Green Wedge.</p>	Low
Area 3	<p>This area comprises the covered reservoir and associated structures, including security fencing and telecommunications masts, adjacent to the settlement edge of Spondon. The landform in this location is locally elevated at a high point of ca. 92m AOD.</p> <p>This area is located directly adjacent to the existing settlement edge, but given its elevated position, it is considered to have a moderate contribution to the function of the Green Wedge overall.</p>	Medium
Area 9	<p>An area of mature deciduous woodland, forming a physical barrier to any potential future development. As such is considered to make a high contribution to the function of the Green Wedge.</p>	High
Area 10	<p>This area directly north of Springfield Primary School and east of Spondon residential edge has modified ground levels and is separated physically and visually from land to the west by woodland within Area 9.</p> <p>Overall, Area 10 is considered to make a low contribution to the function of the Green Wedge.</p>	Low

Eastleigh Assessment Findings

- 4.27. The Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge comprises three sections of differing land uses and character: a southern, northern, and central section (within which the Appeal Site lies). The southern lowest-lying section lies to the south of PROW Spondon 4, enveloped to the west, south, and east by the wider urban area. Land use is mixed, with the northeast occupied by West Park School (which is washed over by Green Wedge policy), the West Park Meadow Nature Reserve, unmanaged land in the south-west, and school playing fields.
- 4.28. The northern section of the Green Wedge lies to the west of Acorn Way and east of Oregon Way extending around the settled fringes to the north-west. This land is subject to Existing Open Space and Proposed Open Space policies, and no built form is present.
- 4.29. The central section lies to the north of PROW Spondon 4, bound to the east by Spondon, to the west by Acorn Way, and to the north by open countryside forming designated Green Belt.
- 4.30. With regard to ‘topography’, the landscape-led layout of the appeal scheme has had due regard to the topography of the Appeal Site and potential visibility of the northwest portion. This would remain free from built development with open space and amenity uses proposed, thus complementing the purposes of Green Wedge policy.
- 4.31. Examining the Green Wedge in greatest detail, the central section can be split in two in terms of ‘landscape character’ due to scale, views, enclosure, land use, and vegetation pattern. There are larger scale arable fields to the west, and small fields enclosed by mixed quality hedgerows with a more intimate sense of scale to the east that are often subdivided into paddocks. These eastern fields are influenced by the urban edge due to their proximity to existing settlement. The contrast in enclosure / scale is illustrated in the photographs below, taken either side of the hedge dividing the northern field of the Appeal Site from the adjoining farmland to the west.



Photo Plate 1: View into the north of the Appeal Site at its north west corner



Photo Plate 2: View across farmland to the west, from the Appeal Site's north-west corner

- 4.32. With regard to 'vegetation', hedgerows of varying condition and intactness with scattered hedgerow trees typically define fields and locally control views within and across the Green Wedge, particularly in the east, where these hedgerows and trees are more frequent toward the edge of Spondon including within and around the Appeal Site. More than half of the appeal scheme would comprise green infrastructure to provide a robust framework of open space, tree, shrub, hedgerow planting and grassland within which the development proposals would be set. This would include an orchard, informal recreation, and wildflower grassland to enhance biodiversity concurrent with the purposes of Green Wedge policy.
- 4.33. In terms of 'distance', the width of the Green Wedge varies between the settlements in the context of the Appeal Site. The built form of the appeal scheme would be in keeping with this varied settled fringe but would not extend the geographical limit of the urban edge of Spondon any further west than is currently evident. Furthermore, with the appeal scheme in place a broad swathe of open land comprising the Green Wedge would still be maintained, including along the Green Wedge axis.
- 4.34. Both inter-visibility and intra-visibility between Spondon and Chaddesden is restricted by landform and vegetation and such opportunities focus on a very limited section of a single PROW. Views from the settlement edge of Spondon toward Chaddesden are limited to the junction of PROWs Spondon 4 and Spondon 5 with West Road. The site is not visible from here due to intervening landform and vegetation, so would not affect 'inter-visibility' considerations. Some western parts of the appeal scheme may be visible from Spondon 5 but in the context of a very limited views toward properties in Chaddesden, there would be negligible intra-visibility arising from the proposed development, and from only one short section of this PROW.

- 4.35. The proposed GI would also include the retained and enhanced western boundary hedgerow and trees, supplemented by belts of structural landscape planting to the western and northern boundaries to establish a robust and enduring boundary between the Green Wedge and Spondon urban edge.
- 4.36. In terms of 'existing uses and density of buildings', the appeal scheme would replace existing urban fringe 'horsiculture' uses with built form set within a generous GI framework. Although the specific layout, design and appearance of the built form is yet to be detailed, in line with the scheme's parameters it is reasonable to assume that this would deliver medium density development complementary to and in keeping with the existing settlement.
- 4.37. With regard to the 'sense of leaving a place', publicly accessible movement routes between Spondon and Chaddesden across the Green Wedge are limited to PROW Spondon 4. This PROW is well away from Appeal Site and not readily intervisible with it; the appeal scheme would not therefore influence or affect the sense of arrival or departure at Spondon along this route.
- 4.38. Areas within the central section have been assessed and ranked as High, Medium, or Low in terms of their contribution to the function of the Green Wedge. This has identified that areas of land to the west and southwest of the Appeal Site make the highest contribution to the Green Wedge, which lie along – and form – the Green Wedge axis. The northernmost part of the Appeal Site is considered to make a medium contribution to the Green Wedge, principally due to its elevated position, and is to remain undeveloped. The main body of the Appeal Site is influenced by and directly abuts the urban edge of Spondon: the scale, grain and vegetation cover within this area distinguishes it from land to the west and is considered to make a low contribution to the function of the Green Wedge.

Summary

- 4.39. Considering the description of the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge and the detailed appraisals of the appeal scheme in the context of both the its specific identified functions and the 'Eastleigh Criteria', the Appeal Site is more closely related to the smaller scale fields with urban edge land uses (horse grazing) adjoining Spondon rather than the larger and typically arable fields observed within much of the Green Wedge in the Appeal Site's proximity, including along the Green Wedge's Axis, along which the Appeal Site is not considered to lie.
- 4.40. With regard to visibility criteria, both settlement intervisibility and intra-visibility is already limited, primarily controlled by landform and vegetation, and the resulting few visually unrestricted publicly accessible vantage points along either settlement edge.
- 4.41. It is also noted on the related matters of topography and vegetation that given the landscape-led layout, the more elevated and potentially visible northern extents of the Appeal Site would remain free from built development: instead this would be the focus of green infrastructure enhancements and new public amenity opportunities that complement the purposes of the Green Wedge. This would be accompanied by a planted structural landscape belt along the western Appeal Site boundary, delivering a robust buffer to the Green Wedge beyond that responds to feedback received on the submitted scheme.
- 4.42. The safeguarded distance between Chaddesden and Spondon including the appeal scheme is comparable with that from Acorn Way to West Road and the West Park School built form, not extending further west than is already in evidence at West Road.

- 4.43. When assessing the Appeal Site and the contextual portion of the Green Wedge in which it sits in detail, the appeal scheme was not considered to lie within an area of high sensitivity in terms of its contribution to the function of the Green Wedge. Indeed, the proposed built form is situated wholly within an area of low sensitivity, with the medium sensitivity portion of the Appeal Site comprising publicly accessible space and green infrastructure proposals constituting enhancements in the context of the Green Wedge's purposes.
- 4.44. In conclusion, the appeal scheme would maintain a sufficient and functional width to the Green Wedge providing separation between the residential areas of Chaddesden and Spondon in keeping with the existing settlement pattern. Overall, the purpose and function of the Green Wedge would be preserved.

5. The Reason for Refusal

The Delegated Report

- 5.1. The report to planning committee identified six key issues in the Officer's opinion to be considered to be the main material considerations, including Green Wedge impact, Trees and Biodiversity, and Design and Amenity (CD 3.02, Section 7). It also included a summary of the consultations undertaken and representations made.
- 5.2. No objections were made on the basis of Natural Environment (Trees) or Ecology by the relevant consultees. With regard to Design and Amenity, the officer noted that the submitted scheme would meet the design principles and amenity requirements of the relevant local plan policies.
- 5.3. Section 7.2 of the Committee report addresses Green Wedge Impact, wherein the planning officer noted the following (the most relevant aspects to this Proof highlighted in bold):

*"It is acknowledged that the form and extent of the proposed housing development sits up to the western edge of the existing Royal Hill Road housing area in Spondon and **would not extend by a substantial distance towards Chaddesden. A clear break would be preserved, of agricultural land between the two residential areas, such that the open countryside would continue to penetrate into the city from north to south.** It is also worth noting that **the proposed development would not extend as far west, towards Chaddesden as the existing housing at the western extent of West Road,** which lies to the south of Springfield Primary School. Geographically, the proposed housing would not project further into the Wedge than the existing urban form around West Park School.*

The function and character of the Green Wedge in this part of the city, which is to provide separation between the distinct areas of the city, Chaddesden and Spondon and allow the countryside to extend into the urban area, would be safeguarded by this proposal. A sufficient width of the Green Wedge to the west of the development site would also be maintained in its current agricultural use.

*In terms of benefits which would be afforded by the development and which must be considered in the tilted balance, **the applicant is proposing to deliver green infrastructure enhancements on the site, through landscape planting and on-site open space provision, which would provide a net gain in biodiversity within the development and improve the quality of the green infrastructure and open space in this part of the Green Wedge,** for the benefit of existing and future residents."*

- 5.4. Furthermore, the officer also stated:

*"in this specific case, it is material that **a viable and functional Green Wedge can be maintained which will continue to provide the main roles of the separation of the distinct character areas of Spondon and Chaddesden and continue to allow the penetration of open countryside to the north into the city.** As the proposed housing development is constrained to the eastern part of the wedge, it would form an urban extension to the built area of Spondon, becoming part of that suburb, **without compromising the role and function of this particular Green Wedge.**"*

- 5.5. It is particularly noteworthy that the officer specifically expresses that the essential characteristics, role and overarching functions of the Green Wedge would be maintained with the appeal scheme in place, with the opportunity to institute improvements to the quality of the GI in this part of the Green Wedge as a consequence of its delivery.
- 5.6. An objection was received from CPRE (CD2.08), the themes summarised as:
- The Green Wedge should not be developed for housing. It provides a link between urban areas and countryside, offering recreational value
 - The existing footpaths passing to the north and south of site would become “urban passageways” bordered by housing
 - Development would create urban sprawl and narrow the gap between Chaddesden and Spondon that provides a break between settlements
 - This land should continue to be used for agriculture
 - Green Wedge has important ecological value and residential development could eliminate established ecological corridors
- 5.7. The following briefly considers these key points of objection. Matters pertaining specifically to the function of the Green Wedge are considered in more detail in Section 4 of this Proof.
- 5.8. As demonstrated by the IMP (CD8.08) and DAS (CD1.12), the development proposals would not compromise existing links between Spondon or Chaddesden and the adjoining countryside, nor would it diminish the recreational value in terms of public access: indeed, the recreational opportunities would be increased with new public open space and a new pedestrian connection between the two PRowS passing north and south of the Appeal Site.
- 5.9. With regard to the experiential journey along these PRowS, they are both notably influenced by the settlement edge in close proximity to the Appeal Site, however, the LVIA demonstrates that existing intervisibility with the Appeal Site (and consequently the development proposals) would be limited. Furthermore, from the section of the PRow passing immediately along the southern boundary, views of the wider countryside are curtailed by vegetation to both sides as well as by the local landform.
- 5.10. I do not consider that development of the Appeal Site represents “urban sprawl”: it is closely associated with the existing settlement edge of Spondon, the Appeal Site boundary being broadly north–south aligned with – and extending along – the existing built edge. The planning officer also considered in the report to the Planning Committee that *“the proposed housing development sits up to the western edge of the existing Royal Hill Road”,* with a clear break between Spondon and Chaddesden, identifying that *“the proposed development would not extend as far west, towards Chaddesden as the existing housing at the western extent of West Road”* and that *“the proposed housing would not project further into the Wedge than the existing urban form around West Park School”.*
- 5.11. It is worth highlighting that the objection refers to the current use of the land as being agricultural: given factors such as the presence of shelter structures and evidence of supplemental feeding (Photo Plates 1 and 2, below), I consider this to comprise equestrian use, and therefore the Appeal Site is already no longer used as agricultural land.



Photo Plate 3: view into the eastern field parcel adjoining Royal Hill Road



Photo Plate 4: view from Spondon 7 into the south of the Appeal Site

- 5.12. Neither the planning officer nor consultees were of the opinion that the submitted scheme would impact on any designated conservation sites or irreplaceable habitats, and via the greater than 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) demonstrated through the structural landscape and open space proposals that the green infrastructure could offer improvements.

The Reason for Refusal

- 5.13. Despite the careful approach taken with the planning application, and an officer's recommendation that consent should be granted, DCC chose to refuse the proposal (CD3.01).
- 5.14. A single reason for refusal was provided:
- "In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed residential development would result in the narrowing of the Spondon and Chaddesden Green Wedge, which provides an important strategic function by maintaining an open and undeveloped area between these two distinct residential areas of the city. The proposal would reduce the extent to which the countryside is able to penetrate the urban area, increase the likelihood of coalescence between the Spondon and Chaddesden neighbourhoods and would, therefore, amount to inappropriate development in this Green Wedge. For these reasons, the proposed development would be contrary to the intentions of Policy CP18 (Green Wedges) of the Derby City Local Plan – Part 1: Core Strategy. The Local Planning Authority accepts that this proposal should be determined in the context of the 'tilted balance' which has been invoked and accordingly, the relevant guidance in Paragraph 11d of the National Planning Policy Framework has been duly considered. In this particular case the proposed residential development would lead to the unacceptable narrowing of the Spondon and Chaddesden Green Wedge and, as a result, this important policy contravention would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the planning benefits of the proposal."*
- 5.15. DCC has not presented any technical evidence to support its assertion that an open and undeveloped area between the two distinct residential areas of Spondon and Chaddesden could not be maintained to a sufficient degree such that its important strategic function would no longer be provided, nor that *"the proposal would reduce the extent to which the countryside is able to penetrate the urban area"*.
- 5.16. Furthermore, this unsupported judgement is clearly at odds with the professional views of the Planning Case Officer, who considered that the function and character of the Green Wedge in this part of the city would be safeguarded by the submitted scheme, and that the open countryside would continue to penetrate into the city from north to south since a clear break would be preserved.
- 5.17. The function of the Green Wedge in the context of Policy CP18 and landscape and visual matters has been examined in detail in Section 4.

Land at Acorn Way and Derby Road: Appeal Decision

- 5.18. It is relevant here also to consider the appeal for 'Land at Acorn Way and Derby Road, Spondon' (Appeal Ref: APP/C1055/W/15/3132386, CD6.01): this site is also situated in the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge, and was dismissed referencing intrusion upon the Green Wedge, the undermining of its effectiveness, and the sense of separation between the two urban areas of the city.
- 5.19. This site (the "Acorn Way site") is located at the southern end of the Green Wedge on low-lying land adjoining Acorn Way (and therefore the edge of Chaddesden) to the west and the rear of residential properties along the A6005 Derby Road to the south.

5.20. In describing the Acorn Way site and surrounding context, the inspector recognises the mixed, non-agricultural land use of the site and adjoining parcels within the Green Wedge, the “unused and unkept” condition of the land with the site, and the urbanising “amorphous out-of-centre-sprawl” surrounding the southern extents of the Green Wedge in this location:

“Opposite the dwellings on Derby Road is a muddle of commercial sheds, signs and car parks; a large Asda and its associated petrol filling station are the most prominent.... [with] the dual carriageways of the A52 immersed amidst a cacophony of slip roads and roundabouts with a connection to Derby Road”

5.21. The inspector considered that – although mixed in use – the predominantly open land of the Green Wedge in the vicinity of the Acorn Way site penetrated the suburbs to the very edge of Derby Road, providing both visual and recreational (via tracks or PRowWs) links to the countryside over 1km to the north, and formed an expanse of open land offering vistas testifying to the evident separation of Chaddesden and Spondon.

5.22. He noted the varying width of the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge in general, and commented that while *“a physical separation between communities would not be essential to preserve the distinction between them....the ‘separating space’ provided by this ‘green wedge’ does create a perceptible and physical distinction between identifiably different places, thereby helping to maintain their separate identity and contributing to the character of the City”*. He was also of the opinion that the perception of ‘separation’ between the two suburbs is accentuated by the strong boundary created by Acorn Way.

5.23. The inspector went on to consider whether the proposals would undermine the function of the Green Wedge. He noted that the reduction in gap would diminish separation of the neighbourhoods; similar to the distance between Acorn Way and West Road; but with crucial differences. These comprised: the breaching of *“the strong physical and visual boundary created by Acorn Way”* that encloses, defines and separates Chaddesden; the perception of the proposed development beyond its “peripheral landscaping” accentuating the existing urban impacts in the locality; and the diminution of such a separation across a space where urban influences are already clearly evident, raising the significance of distance as a means of conveying the perception of separation. Indeed, he recognises that this Green Wedge encompasses areas of different character, and that because – rather than in spite of – the existing urban influences and comparative lack of contrast between the settlement and a more ‘rural’ Green Wedge character that there is *“little but distance to convey a perception of separation”*. He concluded that the scheme would undermine the ability of the southern section of the Green Wedge to perform its intended function.

5.24. This contrasts with the Appeal Site:

- The appeal scheme is closely associated with Spondon and contained on three sides by existing built form on Spondon’s urban edge; one that demonstrates variability in terms of form, unlike to Chaddesden on the opposite side of the Green Wedge which is relatively uniform and defined by Acorn Way.
- As demonstrated through the detailed analysis of the Green Wedge, the visual influence of the appeal scheme has limited (if any) contribution to intervisibility or intravisibility factors with regard to Spondon or Chaddesden. It also does not compromise the contiguousness of vegetation along Acorn Way, nor is there any such uniform vegetated belt along the western edge of Spondon.

- Due to the enclosure afforded to the Appeal Site by virtue of field scale, vegetation and landform it contrasts with the larger-scale and more open agricultural fields to the west that are considered to form the Green Wedge's axis, which provide clear distinction between the urban area and the contextual Green Wedge.

5.25. The appeal scheme also not only retains the existing physical (recreational) links with the Green Wedge in its vicinity – off Royal Hill Road past the southern boundary and into the Green Belt to the north – but enhances these opportunities with new connections into the PRow network. Additionally, the nature of the visual connection between Spondon and the Green Wedge is not materially altered, as PRow Spondon 7 from Royal Hill Road passing the Appeal Site is already enclosed until meeting Spondon 5 (beyond the Appeal Site boundary), and the more open views looking north from the PRow off Longley Lane along are not impeded: looking south views are already impinged upon by the reservoir compound and peripheral vegetation but nevertheless the appeal scheme would have limited influence within these views; as evidenced in the submitted LVIA.

6. Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1. This Proof of Evidence is written on behalf of Miller Homes and relates to an appeal against refusal of planning permission by Derby City Council in respect of an outline application for the construction of up to 90 dwellings, related infrastructure and green infrastructure on the western urban edge of Spondon, Derby. The application was accompanied by a suite of supporting information encompassing all the baseline environmental studies carried out by the team, including an LVIA.
- 6.2. This evidence has been prepared in respect of landscape and visual matters and the related functions of the Green Wedge, considering the LVIA, consultee responses, report to committee and the subsequent Reason for Refusal.
- 6.3. On the basis of the Reason for Refusal, the main issues of relevance to landscape and visual matters comprise compliance with Policy CP18 (Green Wedges) and more specifically the Appeal Site and appeal scheme in the context of the function of the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge, within which the Appeal Site is located as defined in DCC's adopted Core Strategy.
- 6.4. Planning policy matters and the overall planning balance in respect of the appeal scheme are separately addressed within Mr Lees' Proof of Evidence.
- 6.5. The submitted LVIA identified that the Appeal Site lies within a 'Lowland Village Farmlands' LCT. The submitted scheme (and subsequently the appeal scheme) has sought to respond to the existing grain and pattern of the landscape relative to its scale, as well as to the characteristics of the landscape at the most detailed level in published guidance. The perception of change in landscape character terms would extend only a very limited distance beyond the Site due to both physical and visual containment of the Appeal Site within the local landscape.
- 6.6. It also demonstrated that there would be limited visibility of the appeal scheme within the surrounding landscape, with direct views restricted primarily to the Appeal Site's immediate proximity. Opportunities for views of the appeal scheme beyond short range quickly diminish with increased distance and successive vegetative screening.
- 6.7. The findings of the LVIA fed into the iterative design process and informed a landscape strategy for the Site through the identification of potential impacts, with mitigation integrated into the proposed scheme. The integral mitigation measures were considered in the balance of judgements when determining the level of effects in the submitted LVIA and the proposed development was assessed as acceptable in landscape and visual terms.
- 6.8. In respect of impacts upon views including upon residents the Planning Officer noted the scheme was considered acceptable. Matters of landscape character and visual amenity did not form part of the Reason for Refusal.
- 6.9. Furthermore, it was agreed in the SoCG (CD8.01) that neither the Appeal Site nor the surrounding area constituted a valued landscape for the purposes of Paragraph 180 (a) of the NPPF, the area of the site proposed to be developed is currently well screened and enclosed from long range views by existing built form, topography and landscape features, and that the appeal scheme would not be unduly prominent within views from the Green Wedge or the wider landscape.

- 6.10. The submitted LVIA presented a Green Wedge Review which considered the functions of the Green Wedge as set out in Derby City Council's Core Strategy (2017), which in turn was based on the DCC Green Wedge Review (October 2012). This proof additionally considered the physical, visual, and experiential features of the Green Wedge as guided by and with reference to the 'Eastleigh Criteria' (as derived from the Inspector's Report for the 1998 Eastleigh Local Plan.
- 6.11. In the context of DCC's Green Wedge Review, it is considered that the development proposals within the Appeal Site would not result in adverse impacts upon the identified function of the Green Wedge to the extent that those functions would not remain intact; indeed it was established that through the mitigation proposed by way of the layout, new green infrastructure and recreational opportunities there may be the opportunity for positive enhancements to some of the Green Wedge's functions.
- 6.12. The Chaddesden – Spondon Green Wedge's axis extends southwards from the open countryside to the north down to the A6005, and along the Lees Brook to the west. The Appeal Site does not sit along this axis, given that it is located directly adjoining Spondon on the edge of the Green Wedge.
- 6.13. Examining the appeal scheme through the application of the 'Eastleigh' Criteria, the western built edge of Spondon demonstrates variability along its north-south length. The Appeal Site both reflects this nuanced expression; while not extending further west than is already in evidence at West Road; and is visually and physically well related to existing residential development. It would be supplanting settlement fringe equestrian – rather than agricultural – land use. The safeguarded distance between Chaddesden and Spondon including the appeal scheme is comparable with that from Acorn Way to West Road and the West Park School built form.
- 6.14. The Appeal Site is more closely related to the smaller scale fields with urban edge land uses (horse grazing) adjoining Spondon rather than the larger and typically arable fields observed within much of the Green Wedge in the Appeal Site's proximity, including along the Green Wedge's Axis, along which the Appeal Site is not considered to lie.
- 6.15. With regard to visibility criteria, both settlement intervisibility and intra-visibility is already limited, primarily controlled by landform and vegetation, and the resulting few visually unrestricted publicly accessible vantage points along either settlement edge. It is also noted on the related matters of topography and vegetation that given the landscape-led layout the more elevated and potentially visible northern extents of the Appeal Site would remain free from built development, instead being the focus of green infrastructure enhancements and new public amenity opportunities that complement the purposes of the Green Wedge. This would be accompanied by a planted structural landscape belt along the western Appeal Site boundary, delivering a robust buffer to the Green Wedge beyond that responds to feedback received on the submitted scheme.
- 6.16. When assessing the Appeal Site and the contextual portion of the Green Wedge in which it sits in detail, the appeal scheme was not considered to lie within an area of high sensitivity in terms of its contribution to the function of the Green Wedge. Indeed, the proposed built form is situated wholly with an area of low sensitivity, with the medium sensitivity portion of the Appeal Site comprising publicly accessible space and green infrastructure proposals constituting enhancements in the context of the Green Wedge's purposes.

- 6.17. The Appeal Site has also been considered in the context of the Appeal Decision for 'Land at Acorn Way and Derby Road, Spondon' (Appeal Ref: APP/C1055/W/15/3132386). This scheme is in stark contrast with the Appeal Site in a variety of ways. The Appeal Site is closely associated with Spondon and contained on three sides by existing built form on Spondon's urban edge; one that demonstrates variability in terms of form, unlike to Chaddesden on the opposite side of the Green Wedge. The visual influence of the appeal scheme has limited (if any) contribution to intervisibility or intravisibility factors with regard to Spondon or Chaddesden. It also does not compromise the contiguousness of vegetation along Acorn Way, nor is there any such uniform vegetated belt along the western edge of Spondon.
- 6.18. Furthermore, due to the enclosure afforded to the Appeal Site by virtue of field scale, vegetation and landform it contrasts with the larger-scale and more open agricultural fields to the west that are considered to form the Green Wedge's axis, which provide clear distinction between the urban area and the contextual Green Wedge.
- 6.19. The appeal scheme also not only retains the existing physical (recreational) links with the Green Wedge in its vicinity – off Royal Hill Road past the southern boundary and into the Green Belt to the north – but enhances these opportunities with new connections into the PRoW network. Additionally, the nature of the visual connection between Spondon and the Green Wedge is not materially altered, as PRoW Spondon 7 from Royal Hill Road passing the Appeal Site is already enclosed until meeting Spondon 5 (beyond the Appeal Site boundary), and the more open views looking north from the PRoW off Longley Lane along are not impeded: looking south views are already impinged upon by the reservoir compound and peripheral vegetation but nevertheless the appeal scheme would have limited influence within these views; as evidenced in the submitted LVIA
- 6.20. Overall, the appeal scheme would not reduce the extent to which the countryside is able to penetrate the urban area on the eastern fringes of Derby nor would development proposals within the Appeal Site result in adverse impacts upon the identified strategic function of the Green Wedge to the extent that those functions would not remain intact; a view supported by the planning officer in the Committee Report.
- 6.21. Equally, the appeal scheme would not lead to the unacceptable narrowing of the Spondon – Chaddesden Green Wedge. It has been demonstrated that an open and undeveloped area could be maintained between these two distinct residential areas of the city.
- 6.22. The appeal scheme would maintain a sufficient and functional width to the Green Wedge providing separation between the residential areas of Chaddesden and Spondon in keeping with the existing settlement pattern and the purpose and function of the Green Wedge would be preserved.



Appendix 1: Green Wedge Appraisal

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