South Kesteven District Council
Site Allocations and Policies Development
Plan Document Hearing Statement
Session 8 – Omissions Sites

Prepared on behalf of The Welby Estate

19 October 2012

Contact details

The Welby Estate

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1 Introduction

1.1 Knight Frank LLP is instructed by the Welby Estate to submit a Hearing Statement in relation to South Kesteven’s Site Allocations and Policies DPD.

1.2 This statement relates specifically to the village of Harlaxton, and in particular the omission of site ADD 17 Land to the West of Swine Hill.

1.3 Knight Frank will appear at the Hearing Session 8 “Omission sites” on behalf of the Welby Estate on Thursday 15th November 2012, to expand on the issues set out in this statement.

2 Scope of Statement

2.1 This Statement has been prepared in response to the Schedule of Matters and Issues for Examination as set out in the Inspectors agenda and relates specifically to the allocation of land in Harlaxton. One housing site has been allocated in the site allocations DPD on land adjacent to the doctors surgery, Swine Hill rather than this particular site.

2.2 Session 7 of the Examination dealt with the issues below related to that preferred site, HARL 06 ;
   • Has selection of the site taken proper account of the heritage assets?
   • Is the site the most appropriate choice for development in Harlaxton?

2.3 This written statement will provide further clarity on the deliverability, answering the question:
   • Are there sound reasons for allocating the ADD 17 site in the allocations DPD?

3 Harlaxton

3.1 Harlaxton is an identified Local Service Centre in the adopted South Kesteven Core Strategy. The settlement is well served with facilities including:
   • Primary school.
   • Food and local shops.
   • Post Office
   • Village hall.
3.2 The village benefits from a regular bus service to both Grantham and Melton Mowbray and is considered a sustainable settlement capable of accommodating an appropriate level of future development.

4 History of Local Plan Representations and Allocations

4.1 South Kesteven District Council issued a Site Allocations and Policies DPD Suggested Sites Consultation Document in 2009, which had eight suggested sites for housing allocations in Harlaxton. Following this consultation response, a further consultation document in Summer 2010, entitled, Site Allocation and Policies DPD Additional Sites Consultation presented an additional site, ADD17, Land West of Swine Hill, which was part of a previously larger site considered as HARL07.

4.2 South Kesteven District Council then undertook a review of these sites. Two suitable sites for residential development within Harlaxton remained under the site analysis demonstrated in the evidence base for the site Allocation and Policies DPD. HARL06 – Adjacent to the doctors surgery, Swine Hill and the land owned by the Welby Estate under reference ADD17 – Land west of Swine Hill.

4.3 South Kesteven District Council have subsequently issued the Site Allocations DPD, which is the subject of this Examination with just the one housing allocation in Harlaxton, that of HARL06 which is referred to as allocation LSC1e in the document and dismissed ADD17.

Matters and Issues for Examination

Are there sound reasons for including site ADD17 in the allocations?

- SKDC Assessment

4.4 SKDC undertook an assessment of all the residential sites proposed in Harlaxton. As part of this process the Council dismissed a number of sites based on a range of issues such as highways, impact on the surrounding area and compatibility of surrounding uses.

4.5 This statement will outline the SKDC process that should have identified ADD17 as the preferred site allocation in Harlaxton and further demonstrate the deliverability of the site based on further work
being undertaken.

4.6 One site has been allocated in Harlaxton and it has been demonstrated in Session 7 that the preferred site was inadequately assessed on the grounds of Heritage Assets and its impact on a Grade II* Historic Park and Garden and setting of a Grade I Listed Building.

4.7 The top two sites in Harlaxton in the Council’s assessment were the two sites on Swine Hill. Their location to the south of the A607 makes them a more integral and sustainable component of the village, both in the heart of the village and adjacent to the village school and surgery.

4.8 Through the consultation process and local feedback it has become clear that there was an issue with parking at the local school and surgery and there was an opportunity to seek to address these issues as part of any development.

4.9 It is important to ensure that the key driver in allocating any land for housing is that first and foremost the assessment is based on the most appropriate site for development and then other material issues such as parking are considered as material benefits.

- **Site Assessment Spreadsheet**

4.10 The Site Assessment Spreadsheet (Appendix 1) is a simplistic summary document, colour coded red, yellow and green as a signal of key constraints and opportunities.

4.11 The assessment process was simplistic yet an appropriate method of identifying “showstoppers” for development. These key issues could be a combination of location or technical or policy constraints.

Of the sites promoted:
- Sites HARL 01, 02 and 03 were situated to the north of the A607 and have a poor relationship with the village centre as well as serious highway concerns or objections.
- Sites HARL 04 and 05 have existing permissions or have been developed.
- Site HARL 06 which was selected as the preferred site has been demonstrated to have significant heritage impacts being within a designated Grade II* Registered Historic Park and Garden.
- Site HARL 07 was considered too large on highways grounds and potential landscape grounds – but a smaller scale site may be appropriate – See ADD17
- Site HARL 08 was dismissed on highways grounds as there is no suitable access
- ADD17 is the only site that has not been dismissed on highways grounds and lies to the south of
the A607 in a position which relates well to the existing village centre.

4.12 The Councils spreadsheet demonstrates the suitability of the site compared to other promoted sites.

- **Site Assessment Pro-Forma**

4.13 As well as the colour coded spreadsheet, each site assessed was summarised in a single sided pro-forma. The details for ADD17 *(Appendix 2)* are clear that the site would need to overcome similar parking and highway concerns associated with the school and these would restrict the developable area.

4.14 Should these issues be capable of resolution the site may be suitable if other less constrained or better located sites are not available. It has been demonstrated above that there no better located or less constrained sites. The matters of highways and landscape are dealt with in more detail later in this Statement.

**Summary**

4.15 This demonstrates that the site ADD17 was the most appropriate site to be allocated as part of the Council's own assessment process.

4.16 The Councils pro-forma for ADD17 concludes that the site “may be suitable if other less constrained or better located sites are not available.” It has been demonstrated that this is the case. The site has the strongest relationship with the village centre and facilities, lies outside of any heritage designations and has direct access.

**Deliverability**

- **Highways**

4.17 Building on the assessment that the site should have been identified as the preferred housing allocation additional work was undertaken that further justifies the allocation of the site in the DPD. Site ADD17 is assessed by the Council as needing to address the same highways constraints as its current preferred allocation. Rather than assume that this can be achieved, additional work has been undertaken to demonstrate a solution and a package of measures that would deliver this site and improvements to the village.

4.18 The site would be accessed to the south of the first property when entering Harlaxton on Swine Hill, via an existing field access. Concern has been expressed about this access encroaching into open countryside and this issue is dealt with later in the Statement.
4.19 In order to fully understand the highway position and demonstrate the site can deliver a technical highway solution, Ashley Helme Associates were engaged to provide an Access Feasibility Appraisal and have also undertaken an Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) on Swine Hill (Appendix 3).

4.20 This has demonstrated that an appropriate level of visibility can be achieved and that a technical solution is available to access site ADD 17. It has also demonstrated that the levels of traffic along Swine Hill are relatively low but vehicles enter and leave the village above the 30mph speed limit.

4.21 It is suggested that as part of the allocation and development of ADD 17 that the speed restriction be relocated to slow down traffic entering the village. Appendix 3 shows the relocation of the limit as well as rumble strips to change the approach to the village of Harlaxton. As well as resolving any issues with the allocated site this would resolve what is demonstrated by the ATC, as an existing problem, therefore addressing current highway issues. This matter has been discussed in detail with the Highway Authority and final sign off is awaited.

**Doctors and School Parking**

4.22 Site ADD17 is capable of providing the same improvements to the parking situation at the school and surgery, together with pedestrian linkages as the preferred site in the DPD.

4.23 It has been demonstrated through the 85th percentile speeds of vehicles entering and leaving the village are higher than the 30mph speed limit, and average speeds are greater than the 30 mph limit. Relocating the speed limit and introducing “slow” markings and rumble strips will reduce speeds of vehicles entering the village.

4.24 It is considered that these changes will create a better environment for all site movements and improves the current position by slowing vehicles on entry to the village. The proposed allocation could also be responsible for providing a car park for the school and doctors surgery, which will provide a pedestrian link between No’s 28 and 30 Swinehill to encourage its use.

**Summary**

4.25 The allocation of ADD 17 is capable of being accessed in a manner which provides adequate visibility without any major removal of hedgerows and vegetation by using an existing field access.

4.26 The site can also provide a car park for the school and doctors surgery which addresses existing issues of highway safety on Swinehill.
4.27 The site proposal would also relocate the restricted speed limit and introduce rumble strips which would reduce the speed of vehicles where it has been demonstrated that a highway safety issue exists.

Visual impact and Heritage impacts

4.28 The does not fall within any designated heritage allocation unlike a number of other sites within Harlaxton. The site lies adjacent to a Conservation Area and there are glimpsed views of Harlaxton Manor beyond existing properties on Swinehill.

4.29 In respect of the visual impact and landscape assessment, this was undertaken back in 2009 by Pegasus for the Welby Estate (see Appendix 4), which concludes that views of Harlaxton Manor would be screened by existing development.

5 Summary and Conclusions

5.1 Harlaxton is identified as a Local Service Centre within the District of South Kesteven. It has been allocated as such due to its location, facilities and as a LSC Harlaxton has been designated as capable of accommodating additional housing. Within Harlaxton long standing issues have been raised with regard to parking facilities and highways issues surrounding the primary school. It has been established that any development within the village presents the opportunity to assist in the mediation of these problems.

5.2 This statement outlines the fact that SKDC’s assessment of the sites should have identified site ADD 17 as the preferred allocation. It is the only site which lies to the south of the A607, without a highways objection, outside of any statutory heritage designation and has a strong relationship with the village centre.

5.3 The site as well as being capable of delivering the required housing numbers for the village of Harlaxton, is also capable of providing a car park for the school and doctors surgery on Swinehill.

5.4 It has been demonstrated that the site is capable of resolving existing parking issues associated with the surgery and school but will also address an existing issue of the speed of vehicles entering the village of Harlaxton.

5.5 Work has been undertaken that has demonstrated that the visual impact of development in this location would not result in harm to the heritage asset of Harlaxton Manor and the Historic Park and Garden as it is screened by existing development on Swinehill.
5.6  From the Council’s own assessment of sites in Harlaxton, ADD 17 was the site with least constraints. It has been demonstrated that the preferred location was inadequately assessed and the representations made to the consultation process to date as well as this Statement demonstrate that there are sound reasons for allocating this site for housing development in Harlaxton within the DPD.
Appendix 1 - SKDC Assessment Spreadsheet
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Appendix 2 - SKDC Pro-forma for Site ADD17
**Site Reference:** ADD17 (4.19 ha)  
**Location:** land west of Swine Hill

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**Site Description**
Large site located on the southwestern edge of the village. Comprises a large field in agricultural use.

**Summary of Assessment**

**Constraints:**
Highway Authority: concerns regarding development of such a large site via an access that is constrained by width, visibility and proximity to the school. Some small development may be acceptable, subject to detail. Likely detrimental impact on the local network if whole site developed.  
Adjacent Conservation Area.  
Adjacent Listed Building.

**Impact:**
Edge of settlement site which is to the rear of residential properties fronting Swine Hill. These are all single storey. Development in this location would encroach on open countryside and have a significant impact on landscape character (high) of the open countryside and the visual character of the village.

**Consultation Response:**
27 representations were received as a result of the consultation in August 2010 cover the following points:
- concerns about the impact on Harlaxton Manor  
- concerns about the impact on the open countryside  
- concerns about traffic and access to the site, school and surgery  
- concerns that localised flooding would be exacerbated by development  
- concerns about the capacity of the school

**Conclusion**
This is a large site, in open countryside on the edge of the village. Highway Authority concerns, including car parking for surgery and school, would need to be overcome, and these may restrict the developable area. Proposed access strip to the south of existing development on Swine Hill would extend the built form of the village into the countryside. May be suitable if other less constrained or better located sites are not available.
Appendix 3 - Automatic Traffic Count (ATC)
LAND AT SWINE HILL, HARLAXTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The location of the proposed development is at land to the west of Swine Hill, Harlaxton, Lincolnshire, as indicated on Figure 1. This is henceforth referred to as the Site.

1.2 The Site has frontage on Swine Hill at 2no locations:
   - Location 1: Between nos. 28 and 30 Swine Hill, opposite Harlaxton Surgery.
   - Location 2: to the south of the southernmost dwelling on Swine Hill (No 56).

1.3 The proposed development is for up to 50 residential dwellings.

2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1 Swine Hill is a single carriageway road of variable width, and is between circa 4.8m and 5.8m in the vicinity of the Site.

2.2 On the west side Swine Hill there is a 1.2m wide footway starting to the south at the frontage of No 56 Swine Hill, and extending circa 230m north. There is no footway on the eastern side of Swine Hill in the vicinity of Site frontage Location 2. There is footway on the eastern side of Swine Hill beginning between the surgery and primary school accesses, and extending north into the village.

2.3 There is an uphill gradient along the Site frontage Location 2 from north to south.

2.4 Swine Hill is subject to a 30mph speed limit within the village. There is an existing speed limit change from 30mph to derestricted just to the south of No 56 Swine Hill, i.e. the southern most existing dwelling in Harlaxton.

2.5 Street lighting is present on Swine Hill within the village and there is an absence of loading/waiting restrictions, with the exception of ‘School Keep Clear’ markings outside the primary school. A number of existing properties take direct access from Swine Hill, and these are shown on Drg 1325/01, enclosed herein.

2.6 An Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) was undertaken on Swine Hill for a period of 7 days from 4 October 2012 to 10 October 2012 inclusive at Site frontage Location 2. The ATC collected traffic volumes and speeds in each direction on Swine Hill. A summary of the volumetric data is as follows:
   - Weekday 24-hour average two-way flow of 384 vehicles,
   - 7-day 24-hour average two-way flow of 336 vehicles.
   - Weekday average AM peak hour two-way flow of 47 vehicles (0800-0900).
   - Weekday average PM peak hour two-way flow of 54 vehicles (1500-1600, earlier than typical due to the proximity of the primary school).

The above shows that Swine Hill is very lightly trafficked in the vicinity of the Site, even during peak hours, where two-way flows are less than 1 vehicle per minute.
2.7 A summary of the ATC speed data is as follows:

- 7-day mean speeds of 36.3mph in the northbound direction, and 35.5mph in the southbound direction;
- 7-day 85th percentile speeds of 44.2mph in the northbound direction, and 44.0mph in the southbound direction.

3.0 PROPOSED SITE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 The proposed access arrangements are presented on Drg 1325/04 which shows a priority control Site access junction at Site frontage Location 2. The main features of the Site access junction are:

- Provides 5.5m wide access carriageway,
- Provides 2.0m wide footway on the northern side of the Site access road,
- Provides 6.0m corner radii at the junction with Swine Hill,
- Visibility splays of 2.4m x 40m shown, based on guidance in MFS.

3.2 The existing speed limit within the village is 30mph. As mentioned above, the existing speed limit change from derestricted to 30mph is at the southern end of the village. Swine Hill is subject to a derestricted speed limit at the proposed Site access location. The proposed Site access arrangements include the relocation of the speed limit change circa 200m south of the exiting speed limit change as shown on Drg 1325/04. This ensures that vehicular, pedestrian and cycle movements to and from the proposed development are undertaken in an environment where the speed of vehicles travelling along Swine Hill can reasonably be expected to be about 30mph.

3.3 Drg 1325/04 shows that required minimum 11.5m clear visibility to the speed limit change sign is achievable, as set out in the DfT Traffic Signs Manual, Chapter 3, Table 14-3.

3.4 Drg 1325/04 shows indicative traffic calming features such as ‘slow’ markings and transverse rumble strips, which may be used to reduce speeds on the approach to the village. The final details of any traffic calming scheme are to be agreed with the highway authority at a later stage.

3.5 The ATC data confirms that 85th percentile speeds of vehicles entering and leaving the village are significantly higher than the 30mph speed limit, and indeed average speeds are greater than the 30mph speed limit. This is higher than the desirable speed of vehicles entering a village environment, particularly given the proximity of the primary school and surgery to the existing speed limit change. It is considered that relocating the speed limit change further from the village boundary, and introducing traffic calming features, is likely to reduce speeds of vehicles entering the village.

4.0 SUMMARY

The proposed development comprises up to 50 dwellings. The proposed Site access arrangements comprise a priority controlled junction on Swine Hill and the relocation of an existing speed limit change. It is considered that relocating the speed limit change provides a better environment for all Site movements and will reduce the speed of vehicles entering the village.
Existing speed limit change to be relocated

Introduce 'SLOW' markings

Introduce transverse rumble strips on gradient

30 Proposed relocated speed limit, details to be agreed with the highway authority

101.4m
Appendix 4 - Landscape and Design Assessment
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1.1 Purpose of the Document
This report has been prepared to support the response of the Welby Estate to the Site Allocations and Policies DPD Suggested Sites Consultation (October 2009). A package comprising approximately 30 dwellings and new community facilities can be accommodated on the eastern part of the larger site HARLD7 shown at page 85 of the Suggested Sites Consultation.

This document has been produced to demonstrate that this smaller site can accommodate an appropriate form of development which can be successfully integrated within the landscape. The report considers the effect of the proposed development upon the landscape in terms of both its character and visual amenity. It also considers the implication of the development on the Harlaxton Conservation Area and views of Harlaxton Manor which lies to the east of the village.

It is proposed that the development would include the following elements:

- Residential development of up to 30 units off Swinahill;
- Community uses which will include a school car park, public open space and children’s play area;
- By adopting a design strategy together with an appropriate landscape scheme, the development proposals can be effectively accommodated without having an adverse effect on either the character of the conservation area or the surrounding landscape and its visual amenity;
- Harlaxton is defined by South Kesteven District Council as a Local Service Centre and is a sustainable settlement with a range of services and facilities available which would support a modest increase in population.
Site Description and Surrounding Area

2.1 Site Location
Harlaxton village is located 5 kilometres to the south-west of Grantham and situated in a pleasant rural setting to the west of the Lincoln Cliff. Viewed from the A607, the Church and Harlaxton Manor are prominent, viewed against a wooded backdrop.

2.2 Site Description
The proposed development area is situated to the southern edge of the village beyond residential properties associated with Pond Street and Rectory Lane and is currently accessed through a gate on Swinehill.

The site is currently managed as pasture land within the perceived curtilage of the village, being bounded to the north and east by residential development. To the south and west of the site the land is agricultural pasture and arable fields.

In topographical terms, the site reflects broadly level ground which is continuous with adjacent residential properties and the rest of the village. To the south, the land falls steeply to 140m OOD at Lincoln Cliff and becomes more wooded on the slopes.
The site itself is of no particular merit in visual amenity terms, consisting of low level grassland with few landscape features of note. There are clear views out from the site towards the land to the west, which consists of arable fields leading towards blocks of woodland and shelter belt planting which effectively limit the view any further west.

The southern boundary is demarcated by native hedging, managed and maintained at a height of approximately 3.5m, and consisting of native species including hawthorn and blackthorn. In the main, the hedge row is approximately 3m wide and very dense, providing a definitive boundary to the site.

To the east, the site is bounded by the existing residential development along Swinehill, with rear gardens overlooking the site. The existing garden boundary treatment is limited to a mixture of low hedges and fences with some intermittent garden type evergreen trees. The residential properties are single storey dwellings which front the road at Swinehill and form an almost continuous line of development along the eastern boundary of the site.
The northern site boundary is demarcated by a mature dense hedge interspersed with individual trees, the tallest being approximately 18m in height. The hedge runs along the rear of gardens associated with residential properties situated at the southern extent of the village, and also coincides with the alignment of the Moat.

There is a public footpath (Harl4/2) which crosses the land to the west of the site from north to south leading across a stile and into arable land to the south.
2.3 Surrounding Area

There are a limited number of Public Rights of Way extending across the countryside to the south and west of Harlaxton. The site is seen in context with the urban framework of the village when viewed from Harl14/2.

The land immediately to the north of the site falls within the Harlaxton Conservation Area which contains several Listed Buildings and features of interest. The setting of the Conservation Area will be respected and enhanced by any development proposals which will not cause harm to the character of this important area.

Harlaxton Manor is located to the east of the village, and is a Registered Historic Park and Garden. It can be seen through gaps between the residential development and above the bungalows along Swinehill to the east of the village. There is a clear line of sight to the Manor from within the site, and this will be respected and maintained throughout the development proposals.

It is evident from the foregoing analysis that the site clearly relates to the surrounding southern urban fringe environment, both in terms of its physical and visual relationship.
2.4 Listed Buildings and Village Description

Within the village conservation area there are 38 Grade II and one Grade I (the church) listed structures. Many of the older properties have been modified somewhat in the nineteenth century. Whilst the older core buildings at the centre of the village are mostly built of red brick (some with stone window surrounds and mullions), smaller stone cottages coexist with them and are complemented by the newer infill properties predominantly built of brick.

The village scene is further enhanced by the distinctive stone walls surrounding many of the older properties, many of which define private gardens. The Elizabethan style was used by Anthony Salvin for Harlaxton Manor. However, many of the later builds in the 1870s followed the ‘Old English’ style that took inspiration from the modest styles of the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

In the ‘Old English’ style part of village, houses front straight onto the road creating narrow streets approximately 10m in width, adding a sense of enclosure and distinct character to this part of the village. A large proportion of the properties are detached with private driveways. The majority of dwellings are 2-3 storeys in height with steep sloping clay tiled roofs. Many of the windows have leaded lights with stone lintels.

In the old part of the village, the distinctive stone walls (1m high) define the boundaries of the individual properties. In the modern part of the village, houses are set back from the road (10-12m) with large front gardens and private driveways, creating a more open street scene. The vast majority of the dwellings are bungalows and are barely visible from the road due to the high hedges providing a sense of privacy.

The exception to this is the row of bungalows along Swinehill at the eastern edge of the village opposite Harlaxton Manor, which are a distinctive urban element in the landscape.
Proposed Development

3.1 Development Framework

The proposed neighbourhood area lies to the south of Harlaxton village with the northern boundary immediately south of the site of the Old Manor House. The development area will be set back from the southern and western boundaries of the site to provide a landscape buffer to the surrounding countryside. The established hedgerow to the north of the site will be enhanced in order to protect the residential amenity of existing residents and the Conservation Area. The development also incorporates an overflow car park for the existing neighbouring primary school which has been located so as not to interfere with the sight line to Harlaxton Manor. The open space will encompass a children’s play area.

Access to the housing and school car parking area will be achieved off Swinshill, on the eastern boundary, and which has been designed to respect the line of sight to Harlaxton Manor to the east of the village.

The northern boundary of the site will augment the vegetation that surrounds the site of the Old Manor House, which are listed as tree groups of visual importance.
3.2 Landscape Framework

The existing boundary vegetation will be retained. The western site boundary could be formed by a native species hedgerow in keeping with the character of those already in existence in the local area and to provide a buffer to the new development from views from the north west. To the northern part of the site, the setting of the Moat and Conservation Area will be respected by retaining an area of open space surrounding the Moat, and by the enhancement of the existing hedgerow to protect views of the new development from the north. It is proposed to include an area for informal recreation purposes and incorporate a natural play space which will secure a landscaped setting for the new housing, reflecting the more open character of the land south of West End/Rectory Lane.

The line of sight to Harlston Manor will be respected by the careful alignment of the new housing and the planting of associated trees and vegetation to direct the view through and above the existing line of residential development to the east of the site. Key views to the Manor will be integrated within the development layout to ensure that the existing inter-visibility between the Manor and the edge of the settlement at Swinehill will remain unchanged.

To the south of the site, a buffer zone of parkland style planting is proposed, which will form a belt around the southern and western perimeters of the proposed development, in keeping with the existing woodland and parkland character of the surrounding area. This will also create a physical and visual buffer to the southern extent of the village and allow the development to be seen in the urban context with no harm to the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape. The village would be contained by this belt of parkland to the south.
Landscape Features

4.1 Features of the Site

There is a water course in the vicinity of the moat at the northern boundary. The water runs from a formal pond in the village located to the south of the junction between Pond Street and Rectory Lane, southwards along the line of the moat, and into another small natural pond before disappearing underground. The development proposals will not affect the setting of the moat. As part of the landscape framework for the proposed development, a further pond could be created as part of a sustainable drainage scheme which would both retain and enhance the character and setting of the moat, as well as providing interest and opportunities for habitat creation.

The southern boundary of the site is formed by a native hedgerow which is approximately 3m in height and 3m in width. It consists of native species and is well maintained, it forms a structural element in the landscape and will be retained and infill planted to improve the continuity where necessary through the development proposals.

The northern boundary hedgerow runs from the rear gardens of residential properties at Swinehill westwards and along the line of the moat. This landscape feature bounds the gardens of properties along Pond Street and Rectory Lane and will be retained and respected by the development proposals for the site. The setting of the moat is defined by this hedgerow and an area of open space is proposed to the south of the moat in order to protect and conserve this feature.
4.2 Features of the Surrounding Area

Vegetation in rear gardens makes a local contribution to the wider area, particularly two lines of poplar trees which run along the eastern and western edges of the Most. These are notable features in the landscape and help to delineate the line of the Most. The proposal to provide an area of open space directly to the south of the Most ensures that the setting and character of this protected feature is retained without harm, whilst the landscape features within existing gardens are augmented by the landscaped open space elements of the proposed scheme.

The landscape to the south of the site forms an attractive environment of sloping topography and landscape features including woodland blocks and field boundaries. As no works are proposed off site, the physical fabric of this environment in respect of its component parts such as field pattern, hedgerows, tree cover, topography and land use would all remain unchanged with the proposed development in place.

To the south of the residential properties along Swinehill is a block of woodland planting which runs along the line of the former railway in an east-west direction. This woodland block is a dense area of native trees approximately 20m tall which aligns with the Swinehill Plantations woodland to the east. The line of the disused railway can be seen further to the west where woodland shelter belts form features of the local landscape. The proposed housing/car parking area will not result in change to the existing features in this area.

To the west, smaller shelter belts of woodland are evident dissecting the arable fields and continuing the curve of the woodland areas in line with the contours of the landscape. The character and visual amenity of these features would not be harmed by the development proposals. The introduction of a new native hedge row along the western boundary of the site would further reinforce the field boundaries that are features within the local area and clearly delineate the layout of the fields to the south and west of the proposed development.
Visual Amenity

5.1 Visual Assessment

A visual assessment of the proposed development area has been undertaken to ascertain the degree to which the scheme would have any bearing upon the visual amenity of the surrounding countryside, the village and Conservation Area, and Harleston Manor. This was undertaken early in the year when foliage is still mainly absent which enables the worst case scenario to be considered in terms of visual amenity. The assessment is based on best practice principles set out by the Landscape Institute guidance.

Having undertaken the visual assessment, it is evident that the zone of visual influence (i.e. the visual envelope) associated with the proposed development area would be limited mainly to views from the south on rising ground, and close quarter glimpsed views from the village itself. The site is well contained being bounded to the north and east by existing residential properties and development can be effectively integrated within the urban framework of the village.

5.2 Effect on Visual Amenity

In terms of views of the proposals from the north, the area is residential in nature and accommodates a limited number of residential properties situated away from the site's northern boundary. As a consequence of this existing development form and associated vegetation, the opportunity to gain views of the proposed scheme from public vantage points is severely restricted. There is a strong landscaped interface between the site and the adjoining properties. This landscaping will be augmented by the open space/planting proposals that will form an intrinsic component of the development package. The scheme will not materially change the visual amenity of this residential fringe environment, and there will be no harm to the setting of the Conservation Area or Listed Buildings within the village.

Similarly, in terms of views from the east, this is a residential area comprising single storey buildings which abut the eastern boundary of the site. These dwellings interrupt views in the intervening distance towards the proposed development and significantly screen the proposals in visual terms. There are glimpsed framed views available between existing residential properties of the proposed development, which would be seen in context with the urban framework of the settlement.

Views towards the development from Harleston Manor would be screened by the existing residential development to the east of the village along Swinehill, preserving the existing inter-visibility between the Manor and the urban edge.
From footpath to west at junction with A607. The proposed development will be seen in context with the existing urban framework.

From footpath Harl/42 at highest point looking north to Harlaxton. The proposed development will be seen in context with the existing village settlement without encroaching into the surrounding landscape.
of Harlaxton. The scheme will not materially change the visual amenity of this area; there will be no change to the development interface and no harm to the parkland or Listed Building.

From the west, the nature of the topography and intervening shelter belt planting allows only limited glimpsed views towards the proposed development. From this direction, the proposed development would be seen within the context of the urban framework of Harlaxton, and the proposed planting and open space would filter views of the development whilst maintaining the character of the countryside to the west. In this context, the scheme will not materially change the visual amenity of this urban fringe environment.

Views from the south are the most extensively achieved towards the site, although there are limited locations from where the proposed development can be seen. From footpath Harl/4/2 linking Rectory Lane to Westmore Lodge Farm, there are elevated views northwards towards Harlaxton. From these vantage points, the proposed development would be seen to be forming the definitive southern boundary of the village and in context with the existing residential character and urban framework of the area. The proposed development will not extend built form any further south than is presently the case with the disposition of the bungalows on the western side of Swinestill.

Elevated distant views from the Hungerford to Denton road to the south west of the site are achieved between the existing intervening woodland blocks and shelter belts that have colonised the slopes. The proposed development will be screened by the buffer planting to the south of the site which will in turn further screen the existing glimpses of Harlaxton village.

The visual effect of the proposed scheme is geographically very limited due to topography and vegetation cover. Where there are a few isolated viewpoints these are heavily filtered and framed by treecover and topography and as a consequence the proposals would not materially change the visual amenity of the surrounding area. The proposed expanse of parkland landscaping to the south and west of the site will effectively consolidate the settlement limits of the village. When viewed from the footpath to the west of the site, the proposed open space area and housing will be seen in the context of existing dwellings of Swinestill.
Design and Access

6.1 Access

The development proposals are to be accessed via a new link from Swinehill. A range of house types, sizes and tenures is envisaged in order to accommodate a variety of household types. The new structural landscaping buffer to the south of the site and the existing urban area will clearly define the extent of the built development. The distribution of land uses will be designed to ensure minimal impact on the surrounding area and existing residents.

A pedestrian/cycle link will be created between Swinehill and the site. This will facilitate ready pedestrian connectivity between the primary school and the car parking area to be provided in association with the proposed housing.

6.2 Design

The design of the development proposals will ensure a landscape dominated environment to the lower density southern edges. This continuity to the built form and change in character assists in defining the public realm, creating legibility and the promotion of an active street scene that will create a safe and attractive environment. Development plots will be defined by a range of boundary treatments including railings, walls, hedging and timber bollards that will help clearly define public and private spaces.

The character of the development will vary throughout the site through the change of urban form, massing and scale. The proposals aim to establish a varied approach to the architectural form of the development. As found within traditional townscapes, a hierarchy of dwellings will be proposed ranging from large buildings and detached properties through to smaller units, reflecting the existing character of the village.
Landscape Character

7.1 Effect on Landscape Character

It is evident that the environment to the north of the site is residential in nature. Within the urban fabric there would be no off-site effects as a result of the proposed development. The character of these adjacent properties would remain unchanged. The development of the site will consolidate the settlement of Harlaxton within the landscape, and provide a definitive edge to the urban fabric of the village.

The Moat which is situated to the north of the site is characterised by native trees which have grown along the alignment of the feature. The proposals will respect the setting of the Moat by creating an area of open space to augment and enhance its setting. The existing vegetation will be retained which will ensure no change to the character of the northern boundary of the site.

Harlaxton Manor to the east of the site has a parkland character to its setting. The appreciation of this feature will be respected and retained through the inter-visibility with the existing building line along Swinahill. The proposed development is located to the rear of these properties and will therefore be seen in the context of the existing village fringe. The character of the parkland at Harlaxton Manor will not be affected by the proposed development.

There are several large areas of woodland to the south of the site that follow the local topography and the line of a dismantled railway which has become well vegetated with native trees. Evidence of the old railway line can be seen by the locations of wooded shelter belts in the local area. The visual amenity of these woodland areas will remain with the development proposals in place. The landscape framework for the site proposes further woodland planting to create a buffer zone along the southern edge of the site, reinforcing and enhancing the local character, and forming a definitive edge to the village of Harlaxton.

The introduction of a new hedgerow along the western boundary of the site would further reinforce the field boundaries characteristic in the local area, and would be appropriate to the character associated with tree cover and hedgerows in the vicinity.

To the north of the site, a large section of the village falls within the Harlaxton Conservation Area boundary. The character of this area and the listed buildings within it would not be materially affected by the proposed development, as the boundary treatment of the site will remain intact. Their setting and character will be respected by the provision of open space to the northern part of the site.

Overall, there would be no harm to the rural character of the land to the south of the site, the setting of the Conservation Area or the Moat. The parkland associated with Harlaxton Manor would not be affected as the inter-visibility between the manor and the urban environment of Harlaxton will not change.
Conclusions

This document has analysed the character and visual amenity of the proposed development in association with the existing settlement of Harlaxton. The site is capable of accommodating sustainable development which can be effectively integrated with no adverse impact upon the character or visual amenity of the surrounding area. Harlaxton is a sustainable settlement with a range of services and facilities available which would meet the needs of the residents of the proposed development. The Estate’s approach to the development of this area will take into account the guidelines set out in the Village Design Statement.

The development proposals will make a positive contribution to Harlaxton’s sense of place through the creation of an interconnecting network of streets, play space and green spaces defined by a new townscape tailored to respond to the specific opportunities/attributes of the site. Amongst the benefits that the development will contribute to the village, parking provision will be created for the school. This will address the present problem of cars parked on Swinehill, which is particularly acute during the morning and afternoon peaks.

Overall the aim is to create a place that addresses sustainable design objectives providing:

- A place with human scale;
- A place that fits into its surroundings;
- A place with its own character;
- A place with lasting qualities; and
- A place that people will enjoy living and working in.

The site itself is of no particular merit in visual amenity terms, consisting of low level grassland with little internal landscape features of note. Harlaxton Manor is located some distance to the east of the site, and is a Registered Historic Park and Garden. It can be seen through gaps between the residential development and above the bungalows along Swinehill to the east of the village. There is a clear line of sight to the Manor from the footpath crossing the site, and this will be respected and maintained through the development proposals.

To the northern part of the site, the setting of the Moat and Conservation Area will be respected by retaining an area of open space surrounding the Moat, and by the creation of an area of planting to protect views of the new development from the north. The line of sight to Harlaxton Manor will be respected by the careful alignment of the housing and the planting of associated trees and vegetation to direct the view through and above the existing line of residential development to the east of the site.

To the south of the site, a zone of parkland style planting is proposed, which will form a belt around the southern and western perimeters of the site, in keeping with the existing woodland and parkland character of the
surrounding area. This will also create a physical and visual buffer to the southern extent of the village and allow the development to be seen in context, with no harm to the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape. The village would be contained by this belt of parkland to the south.

Having undertaken the visual assessment, it is evident that the zone of visual influence (i.e., the visual envelope) associated with the proposed development would be limited mainly to views from the south on rising ground, and close quarter glimpsed views from the village itself.

In terms of views of the proposals from the north, the scheme will not materially change the visual amenity of this residential fringe environment, and there will be no harm to the setting of the Conservation Area or Listed Buildings within the village.

Views towards the development from Harlaxton Manor would be screened by the existing residential development to the east of the village along Swinhill, preserving the existing inter-visibility between the Manor and the urban edge of Harlaxton. The scheme will not materially change the visual amenity of this area; there will be no change to the development interface and no harm to the parkland or Listed Building.

From the west, the proposed development would be seen within the context of the urban framework of Harlaxton, and the scheme will not materially change the visual amenity of this urban fringe environment.

Views from the south are the most extensively achieved towards the site, although there are limited locations from where the proposed development can be seen. The proposed development would be seen to be forming the definitive southern boundary of the village and in context with the existing residential character and urban framework of the area.

The proposed development will consolidate and round off the built fabric between Swinhill and Pond Street. It can be achieved in a manner which reflects and implements Policy EN1 of the South Kesteven Core Strategy Submission Version (January 2009). This study has been prepared in response to the comments at paragraph 4.1.6 of that Submission Version and demonstrates that a limited development can be achieved off Swinhill without having a harmful impact upon the village or its landscape context.