

6 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) considers the likely significant landscape/townscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development. It describes the methods used to assess these effects and determines the baseline conditions currently existing at the Application Site. Mitigation measures are detailed, where required, to prevent, reduce or offset the effects and the residual effects assessed.

6.1.2 A detailed description of the Proposed Development is provided in **Chapter 3** of this ES. Those elements of the Proposed Development that are of most relevance to landscape and visual matters are those that relate to:

- its location;
- context; and
- the arrangement and height of individual elements of the proposed built form within the Application Site.

6.1.3 Such form of development is characterised by a number of attributes specific to its individual form and to the location, and mass of the built form. These attributes include:

- strong geometric form, particularly visible in the form of elevations and rooftops;
- height;
- lighting associated with the proposals; and
- relationship to the scale and nature of the existing landscape / townscape features.

6.1.4 The perception of these attributes and potential influence over the character of the views gained would vary depending on the location. This study aims to identify these locations and comment on potential visibility of the specific parts of the Proposed Development.

6.1.5 For ease of reference the main details of the Proposed Development considered to be of relevance to this assessment are:

- the building of up to 24m in height;
- a flue / stack of 52m in height; and
- filter dust silos and flue gas filters, generally lower than the proposed building.

6.1.6 The location of the Proposed Development is shown on the Site Location Plan (see **Figure 6.1**).

6.1.7 This Chapter should be read in conjunction with the following Figures:

- Figure 6.1: Site Location Plan.
- Figure 6.2: Landscape Character Areas Plan.
- Figure 6.3: Townscape Character Plan.
- Figure 6.4: Landscape Designations Plan.
- Figure 6.5: Visual Receptors Plan.
- Figure 6.6: Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Viewpoint Locations Plan.
- Figure 6.7: Photoviews.
- Figure 6.8 Photomontages and Wirelines.

6.1.8 This Chapter should also be read in conjunction with the following Appendices:

- Appendix 6.1: Photoview and Photomontage Methodology.
- Appendix 6.2: National Character Area profile: 97 Arden.
- Appendix 6.3: North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment 2010 – extracts.
- Appendix 6.4: Detailed Viewpoint Assessment.

6.2 ASSESSMENT APPROACH

6.2.1 The assessment has been carried out with regard to best practice, as outlined in the published guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) - Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013).
- GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 – Landscape Institute (2013).
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment – Natural England, October 2014.
- The Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment - (2004) Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment.
- Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual assessment (2011) - Landscape Institute Advise Note 01/11.

6.2.2 The study area extends to 5km from the Application Site boundary in order to identify relevant receptors, which may be potentially sensitive. The assessment focuses however, on the close and medium range receptors within 2km study area. Whilst there may be the potential for effects of the Proposed Development to extend beyond this limit, it is considered that any such effect is unlikely to be significant as the visual perception of the Proposed Development within the landscape / townscape diminishes with ever increasing distance. The Proposed Development where visible would be seen as increasingly smaller component of a wider composite landscape / townscape.

Landscape/Townscape Assessment Methodology

6.2.3 The information collated under the baseline study is analysed and an assessment made to review the effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape/townscape character and townscape elements and features (townscape resource receptors) of the Application Site and its surroundings. The assessment is based on the Proposed Development detailed in **Chapter 3**.

6.2.4 The townscape character assessment sets out the landscape baseline under two categories (GLVIA3, page 71):

- townscape elements and features of the Application Site and the surrounding area; and
- landscape / townscape character and key characteristics, including landscape value.

6.2.5 The assessment then identifies landscape/townscape receptors, and assesses the sensitivity of those receptors. The likely effects of the Proposed Development on the receptors is identified and the magnitude of the effects assessed. Combining sensitivity of the receptor and magnitude of effect leads to an assessment of the significance of landscape/townscape effects arising from the Proposed Development.

6.2.6 The assessment considers the sensitivity of the landscape/townscape character and the magnitude of change which would result from the Proposed Development. The sensitivity of landscape/townscape varies depending on factors such as the existing land use, pattern and scale of the landscape/townscape, the degree of openness, condition, the value placed on the landscape and any designations that may apply. In most cases

the landscape/townscape components in the immediate surroundings strongly influence the landscape/townscape character, more so than more distant elements or features. However, at certain viewpoints it is possible to feel a sense of exposure or remoteness due to the absence of such features.

6.2.7 Landscape/townscape value is considered in terms of factors such as the condition and quality of the landscape, the scenic quality, the rarity of the landscape in the locality and at a larger scale, the representativeness of the landscape, the recreation or amenity value of the landscape, its perceptual aspects such as wildness or tranquillity, and any associations that may exist between the local landscape and historical people or events. This list is not necessarily exhaustive or definitive. (GLVIA3, page 84).

6.2.8 The landscape/townscape assessment evaluates the effects of the Proposed Development on individual landscape/townscape elements and features, such as topography, notable buildings, water features, trees and hedges which have been identified within the study area in the baseline survey. The assessment considers the sensitivity of these landscape/townscape resources and identifies the magnitude of change that the Proposed Development would create. The sensitivity of an individual landscape/townscape element or feature is a combination of its value and susceptibility, the latter being made up of factors such as its quality, contribution to landscape/townscape character and the degree to which the element can be replaced. An element or feature may be more sensitive in one location than another. Therefore it is not possible to simply place different types of landscape/townscape elements or features into sensitivity bands. Where individual landscape/townscape elements or features have been affected professional judgement has been used to give an objective evaluation of its sensitivity. Justification is given for this evaluation where necessary.

6.2.9 The significance of effects on landscape/townscape character and landscape/townscape elements and features is determined by combining the sensitivity of the landscape character or features with the magnitude of change. Those effects identified as being of major significance may be regarded as significant effects with respect to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011.

6.2.10 **Tables 6.1 – 6.6** set out the criteria for measuring the effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape/townscape character and landscape/townscape elements and features (the landscape/townscape resource) of the Application Site and surrounding area together with the definition of significance.

6.2.11 The nature of the effects can be either, adverse or beneficial. Unless otherwise stated the effects of the Proposed Development are assessed to be of an adverse nature.

Thresholds – Landscape Resource and Landscape Character Receptors

6.2.12 Sensitivity of landscape/townscape resource receptors is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to (a) landscape/townscape character, feature or element and the susceptibility of the landscape/townscape character, feature or element to changes that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development – see Pages 88-90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

Table 6.1: Sensitivity of Landscape/Townscape Resource Receptors

Susceptibility	Value			
		High	Medium	Low
High		High	High	Medium
Medium		High	Medium	Low
Low		Medium	Low	Low

6.2.13 Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of direct physical impacts on individual existing landscape/townscape features as follows:

Table 6.2: Magnitude of Change for Landscape/Townscape Resource Receptors

High	Total loss or major alteration to (an) existing element or feature
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to (an) existing element or feature
Low	Minor loss or alteration to part of (an) existing element or feature
Negligible/ No Change	No notable loss or alteration to (an) existing element or feature

6.2.14 Sensitivity of landscape character is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a landscape/townscape and the susceptibility of the landscape/townscape to changes that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development – see Pages 88-90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

Table 6.3: Sensitivity of Landscape/Townscape Character

Susceptibility	Value			
		High	Medium	Low
High		High	High	Medium
Medium		High	Medium	Low
Low		Medium	Low	Low

6.3 TABLE 6.4: CRITERIA FOR LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE VALUE

	Criteria
High	<p>Designated areas at an International, Regional, National or Local (including but not limited to World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs, SLAs etc.) and also considered an important component of the country's character, experienced by a high number of people.</p> <p>Landscape and townscape condition is good and components are generally maintained to a high standard.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has an elevated level of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive elements and features are key components that contribute to the character of the area.</p>
Medium	<p>No formal designation but (typically) rural landscapes, important to the setting of villages etc. and also considered to a distinctive component of the regional/county character experienced by a large proportion of its population.</p> <p>Landscape and townscape condition is fair and components are generally well maintained.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has a moderate level of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive elements and features are notable components that contribute to the character of the area.</p>
Low	<p>No formal designations but a landscape of local relevance (including but not limited to public or semi-public open spaces, village greens of allotments) and also green infrastructure and open spaces within residential areas likely to be visited and valued by the local community.</p> <p>Landscape and townscape condition may be poor and components poorly maintained or damaged.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has limited levels of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive elements and features are not notable components that contribute to the character of the area.</p>

6.4 TABLE 6.5: CRITERIA FOR LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY

	Criteria
High	<p>Scale of enclosure – landscapes and townscapes with a low capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form etc.</p> <p>Nature of land use – landscapes with no or little existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p>Nature of existing elements – landscapes with components that are not easily replaced or substituted (e.g. ancient woodland, mature trees, historic parkland etc.).</p> <p>Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is not present or where present has limited influence on the landscape.</p>
Medium	<p>Scale of enclosure – landscapes and townscapes with a medium capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form etc.</p> <p>Nature of land use – landscapes with some existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p>Nature of existing elements – landscapes with components that are easily replaced or substituted.</p> <p>Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is present and has a noticeable influence on the landscape.</p>
Low	<p>Scale of enclosure – landscapes and townscapes with a high capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form etc.</p> <p>Nature of land use – landscapes with extensive existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p>Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is present and has a dominating influence on the landscape.</p>

Table 6.6: Criteria for Magnitude of Change for Landscape/Townscape Character

	Criteria
High	Total or major alteration to existing landscape/townscape character
Medium	Partial alteration to existing landscape/townscape character
Low	Minor alteration to part of existing landscape/townscape character
Negligible/No Change	No notable alteration to existing landscape/townscape character/No visible change

6.5 VISUAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

6.5.1 The comprehensive visual assessment identifies the visual effects that the Proposed Development would have upon the visual amenity of receptors located within the surrounding landscape and townscape. The visual assessment is based on the Proposed Development detailed in **Chapter 3** and assesses the change in the view that would result if the scheme were to be constructed.

6.5.2 The assessment has examined views which would be observed from public locations and it has also considered views from residential properties where appropriate. Two visual assessments have been made (a) during the construction phase; and (b) during the operational phase. The second visual assessments consider views at Year 5, taking into account vegetation growth during the intervening period (assumed to be 0.3-0.5m per year).

6.5.3 The sensitivity of receptor groups depends on factors such as duration of view, the angle at which they would see the Application Site and the nature of the viewer e.g. resident, tourist or worker. In general residential receptors, tourists, recreational users of public rights of way and public open spaces, and views from recognised vantage points are considered to have a higher sensitivity to change than people travelling along highways or at places of work.

6.5.4 Determining levels of magnitude depends on how prominent, or noticeable, the development would be in the landscape. This is affected by factors such as distance - close (up to 500 metres from the receptor), middle distance (500 metres to 2 km from the receptor), and long distance (over 2 km from the receptor), visual screening, the focus of the view and the nature and scale of other landscape/townscape features within the view.

6.5.5 **Tables 6.7 – 6.10** below set out the criteria and significance thresholds for visual receptors. Effect on visual amenity is determined by the relationship between the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change that would result from the Proposed Development.

6.5.6 Effects may be adverse, beneficial or neutral. Unless otherwise stated the effects of the Proposed Development are assessed to be of an adverse nature.

Thresholds – Visual Receptors

6.5.7 Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a view and the susceptibility of the receptor to changes in that view that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development – see Pages 113-114 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

6.5.8 The value attached to a view includes a recognition of value through formal designations (for example landscape designations), and indicators of value attached to views by visitors (for example inclusion on maps or within guidebooks, provision of facilities, presence of interpretation etc.).

Table 6.7: Criteria for Susceptibility for Visual Receptors

High	Views with high scenic value within designated townscapes including but not limited to World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, etc. Likely to include key viewpoints on OS maps or reference within guidebooks, provision of facilities, presence of interpretation boards, etc.
Medium	Views with moderate scenic value within undesignated townscape including urban fringe.
Low	Views with unremarkable scenic value within undesignated townscape with partly degraded visual quality and detractors.

Table 6.8: Criteria for Susceptibility for Visual Receptors

High	Includes occupiers of residential properties in rural areas, and people engaged in recreational activities in the countryside such as using Public Rights of Way.
Medium	Includes occupiers of residential properties in urban areas, people engaged in outdoor sporting activities and people travelling through the landscape on minor roads and trains.
Low	Includes people at place of work e.g. industrial and commercial premises and people travelling through the landscape on A roads and motorways.

Table 6.9: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

	Value			
		High	Medium	Low
Susceptibility	High	High	High	Medium
	Medium	High	Medium	Low
	Low	Medium	Low	Low

Table 6.10: Criteria for Magnitude of Change for Visual Receptors

High	Major change in the view that has a defining influence on the overall view or many visual receptors affected.
Medium	Some change in the view that is clearly visible and forms an important but not defining element in the view.
Low	Some change in the view that is not prominent or few visual receptors affected.
Negligible	No notable change in the view.
No Change	No change in the view as site not visible due to landform etc.

6.5.9 Potential visual receptors relevant to the scheme were identified within the study area of the Proposed Development based on an analysis of publicly available maps and aerial photography, and confirmed by visiting the Application Site and surrounding area. Viewpoints have been selected to represent a range of views and viewer types and are shown on the Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Viewpoint Locations Plan (see

Figure 6.6) and Photoviews (**Figure 6.7**). Photographs have been taken digitally using a 50mm focal length lens camera. All of the representative viewpoints have been taken at 1.6m above ground level. Viewpoints include, where relevant, residential properties, highways, Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) and other places of recreation, and places of work. The baseline data includes:

- Location of viewpoint.
- Nature of visual receptor.
- Sensitivity of visual receptor.
- Distance between the receptor and the Proposed Development.
- Description of the existing view from each viewpoint.

6.5.10 The assessment then provides a description of the predicted change to the view resulting from the Proposed Development.

6.5.11 Photomontages are also provided for a number of the selected viewpoints to show the appearance of the Proposed Development within the existing landscape / townscape (see **Figure 6.8**).

6.5.12 The technical methodology for the production of the visualisations is provided at **Appendix 6.1**.

Assessment of Significance

6.5.13 The significance of effects on landscape/townscape character, landscape/townscape elements and features, and on visual amenity is determined by combining the sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of change. Those effects identified as being of major significance may be regarded as significant effects with respect to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011.

Table 6.10: Degree of Significance Threshold for Landscape and Visual Effects

		Magnitude Of Change			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible/ No Change
Receptor Sensitivity	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor/No effect
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible/No effect
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible/No effect

	Significant
	Not Significant

6.6 TABLE 6.11: DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA FOR LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AND LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE FEATURES AND ELEMENTS

Significance	Criteria
Major Adverse Effect	The proposed scheme would result in effects that are at complete/considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape that cannot be fully mitigated; would permanently degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of valued characteristic features, elements and/or setting; would cause a very high quality landscape of recognised value to be permanently changed and its quality diminished.
Moderate Adverse Effect	The proposed scheme would be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform; will leave an adverse impact on a landscape of recognised quality.
Minor Adverse Effect	The proposed scheme would not quite fit into the landform and scale of the landscape; affect an area of recognised landscape quality.
Negligible/No Effect	The proposed scheme would complement the scale, landform and pattern of landscape, maintain existing landscape quality.
Minor Beneficial Effect	The proposed scheme has the potential to improve the landscape quality and character; fit in with the scale, landscape and the pattern of the landscape; enable the restoration of valued characteristic elements or features partially lost through other land uses.
Moderate Beneficial Effect	The proposed scheme would have the potential to fit in very well with the landscape character; improve the quality of the landscape through removal of damage caused by existing lands uses.
Major Beneficial Effect	The proposed scheme would fit in very well with the landscape character and would significantly improve the quality of the landscape through removal of damage caused by existing land uses.

Table 6.12: Definition of Significance Criteria for Visual Effects

Major Adverse Effect	Where the scheme would cause a significant deterioration in the existing view.
Moderate Adverse Effect	Where the scheme would cause a noticeable deterioration in the existing view.
Minor Adverse Effect	Where the scheme would cause a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view.
Negligible/No Effect	No discernible improvement or deterioration in the existing view.
Minor Beneficial Effect	Where the scheme would cause a barely noticeable improvement in the existing view.
Moderate Beneficial Effect	Where the scheme would cause a noticeable improvement in the existing view.
Major Beneficial Effect	Where the scheme would cause a significant improvement in the existing view.

Policy FrameworkNational Planning PolicyNational Planning Policy Framework

6.6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework, published on the 27th March 2012, sets out Government planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

6.6.2 The NPPF sets out 12 core planning principles, the most relevant of which to this assessment is '**Conserving and enhancing the natural environment**'. These core aims are designed to guide and influence local authorities developing their local plans demonstrating Government commitment to ensure the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth.

6.6.3 The environmental role of the NPPF states that sustainable development should be achieved by:

"contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use of natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy."

6.6.4 The use of criteria-based policies based upon landscape character assessment is considered as suitable to ensure the protection of locally valued landscapes outside of nationally designated landscapes.

National Planning Policy Guidance

6.6.5 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance website, containing a comprehensive range of guidance of the planning system, went live on 6th March 2014. The guidance should be read alongside the NPPF and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Further details are contained within the Planning Statement that accompanies this application.

Other Relevant National Guidance

6.6.6 Where relevant, reference has also been made to the following guidance documents:

- A design-led approach to infrastructure – The Design Council and The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (2012).
- Guidance on Tall Buildings – Historic England and The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (2007, and 2014 Update (Consultation Version)).

County Level Planning Policy

6.6.7 Details of relevant planning policies are contained in the Planning Statement that accompanies this application. It appears that there are no specific guidelines or site specific Supplementary Planning Guidance documents (SPGs) from Warwickshire County Council that would be relevant to this assessment.

6.6.8 The adopted Core Strategy (2014) of North Warwickshire Borough Council identifies a number of relevant policies. Most importantly, the Core Strategy identifies the Application Site and the surrounding industrial and business area as employment area. This is worthy of note as this influences the character and perception of this area.

6.6.9 Policy NW11 Renewable Energy and Energy Infrastructure states that such development should: **"...respect the capacity and sensitivity of the landscape and communities to accommodate them. In particular, they will be assessed on their individual and cumulative impact on landscape quality, sites or features of natural importance, sites or buildings of historic or cultural importance, residential amenity and the local economy."** This policy links with Policy NW12 Quality of Development, which refers to the quality of design, settlement's character, appearance and historic environment.

6.6.10 Policy NW13 Natural Environment states: "The quality, character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the natural environment will be protected and enhanced. In particular within identified landscape character areas development will conserve, enhance and where appropriate, restore landscape character as well as promote a resilient, functional landscape able to adapt to climate change. Specific landscape, geo-diversity, wildlife and historic features which contribute to local character will be protected and enhanced." (Underlining is the author's observation).

6.6.11 Similarly, Policy NW14 Historic Environment focuses on the historic landscape and assets, referring to historic landscape character areas.

6.6.12 Policy NW3 Green Belt, is a spatial policy and not relevant to the Proposed Development from a landscape and visual point of view.

Scoping Criteria

6.6.13 The following scope for this LVIA/TVIA has been agreed with Warwickshire County Council (the Council) as follows.

Study area

6.6.14 Based on knowledge of the local townscape / landscape and particularly the existing large industrial units in the vicinity of the Application Site, a 2km study area has been considered appropriate as the main focus of the assessments. It is shown on the Site Context Plan (see **Figure 6.1**).

6.6.15 This study area would apply to the baseline section, assessment of townscape receptors (townscape character areas and designations), and visual receptors (for example people visiting/using designated viewpoints, Public Rights of Way (PRoW), roads and residential areas).

Methodology

6.6.16 The methodology, as detailed above, has been discussed with the Council, and the approach accepted as appropriate.

Local Landscape and Townscape Character

6.6.17 The following published landscape character assessment has been reviewed as part of the assessment of landscape and townscape character:

- NCA97: Arden.
- The North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment (2010).

Landscape Features and Elements and Planning Policies

6.6.18 Relevant policies from the adopted Core Strategy (2014) have been reviewed.

Visual Receptors and Views

6.6.19 Representative and illustrative viewpoint locations from which to undertake the assessment of effects on visual amenity have been discussed and agreed with the Council. The identified viewpoint locations have been selected through desk-based analysis of maps and aerial imagery, the field survey, and discussions with the Council. North Warwickshire Borough Council were consulted but no response received.

Limitations to the Assessment

6.6.20 The landscape/townscape resource survey work and visual assessment for the Proposed Development was undertaken in mid May 2016. Therefore there was a considerable leaf cover.

6.7 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Site Description and Context

Site Description

6.7.1 A detailed site description is provided at **Chapter 3** of this ES. The following paragraphs provide for a brief description of the Application Site and its surrounding area, as a background information. Features and characteristics of the Application Site and surrounding area that are considered to be of particular relevance to this assessment are discussed in detail later in this Section, in the context of published landscape character assessments.

6.7.2 The Application Site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory landscape designation.

6.7.3 The Application Site falls within the Hams Hall Distribution Park, an industrial area located either side of Faraday Avenue. It is currently owned by the National Grid and contained once a large scale substation infrastructure, associated with the Hams Hall coal-fired power station, demolished in the 1990s. The majority of this infrastructure, except for the pylons, have been recently removed. Electricity pylons are the most visible element within and adjacent to the Application Site. They connect with a small scale substation, which is the only remaining part of the once more extensive infrastructure, and is located near its north eastern corner. Relatively tall lighting columns with flood lights are located in the plot adjacent to the north.

6.7.4 The south eastern and south western perimeter of the Application Site, and along Faraday Avenue, is secured by an approximately 2.4m high solid concrete wall, which restricts views in. The access gate and the fence to the left of it is a palisade fencing and allows for restricted views into and across the Application Site. This boundary is further secured by additional barbed wire fencing atop the wall and palisade fencing giving it a strong industrial and unsettled character. Palisade fencing continues along the north western boundary. A low earth bund follows the southern perimeter of the Application Site, sloping from its south eastern corner and meeting the ground levels near the access gate.

6.7.5 The surface is partially tarmacked with some loose rubble / gravel and being gradually colonised by pioneer species, mostly grass. Part of the Application Site is used as a car park. There are no notable areas of shrub or tree vegetation. Mature trees are however present outside and adjacent to the boundaries of the Application Site. There are no obvious or notable water features within or adjacent to the Application Site.

6.7.6 Topographically, the Application Site appears level with little change to the contours across the site. Its south eastern corner is located at approximately 79.22m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) with the contours rising to approximately 81m AOD in the south western corner, near the existing access gate. The north eastern boundary is located slightly lower and between 79.80m to 78.60m AOD.

6.7.7 Views in and out are restricted by the perimeter wall and tree vegetation in the adjacent plots. Large scale and relatively tall industrial buildings, located to the east restrict views further. The Application Site feels isolated with no inter-visibility except for views of Faraday Avenue, through the access gate.

6.7.8 There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) within or adjacent to the Application Site. A public highway, which is located to the north west leads to a car park and has a restricted access.

Surrounding Area

6.7.9 The surrounding area is best described as industrial in character, with relatively tall units and of large footprints. Hams Hall Distribution Park stretches north of the Application Site with the railway line limiting its north western extent. Areas of hard standing and built form continue further north towards the southern outskirts of Lea Marston and St. John the Baptist Church.

6.7.10 Built form within the Hams Hall Distribution Park is of large scale and footprint. Each plot is generally well screened by managed hedgerows and belt of trees with upper parts of the buildings often visible above and amongst the tree canopies. Faraday Avenue is particularly characterised by a strong presence of trees and hedgerows. DHL buildings, located at the junction of Edison Road and Faraday Avenue are more visible due to limited tree cover along this section of Edison Road. Views of other buildings along Faraday Avenue vary. Views of buildings of Uni Per, on the southern side of Faraday Avenue, are glimpsed and restricted gained only through the access gate. The buildings in the plot adjacent east are visible over the surrounding tree vegetation due to their height and colour. Other buildings along the eastern section of Faraday Avenue are more visible with less tree cover. In terms of the prevailing form, a simple flat roof rectangular shaped buildings are the most characteristic for this road.

6.7.11 The Hams Hall Distribution Park is wedged between a railway line corridor to the north west and north, with the River Tame corridor and various small waterbodies enclosing it to the north east and east, and continuing south and to the west effectively encircling it. Further south the railway line with the Coleshill Train Station characterises the area with various business premises continuing south along Station Road and forming the northern outskirts of Grimstock Hill. The settlement of Coleshill lies further south.

6.7.12 Internal roads connect the individual units to Faraday Avenue, which in turn link to the M42 via the A446. The industrial area stretches further south towards Coleshill and this part is known as Coleshill Industrial Estate. The River Tame separates this area from the open countryside and small settlements of Lea Marston to the north (approximately 0.9km to the north), Whitacre Heath (approximately 1.5km to the north east), and Hoggrill's End (approximately 2.6km to the east). Shustoke Reservoir is located between Hoggrill's End and Shustoke, and provides recreational opportunities. A number of waterbodies, associated with the past extraction works in the area, are located along the river and to the north of the Application Site. Settlements in the northern and eastern part of the study area are connected by minor roads and the landscape, broadly speaking, is rural in character.

6.7.13 This contrasts with the landscape in the western part of the study area, which is characterised by large scale settlements, major highways and other elements of infrastructure. The M42, M6, and M6 Toll separate the Birmingham conurbation from the open countryside with some small pockets of agricultural land located between the motorways and the urban edge. The industrial area around the Application Site and Coleshill form a large pocket of townscape and connect, in their character, to the urban environment around Birmingham. This includes the area around the Birmingham Airport and the industrial area stretching from Water Orton to the Birmingham city centre.

6.7.14 The landscape around the Application Site is analysed in more detail later in this Section.

Baseline Survey Information

Landscape/Townscape Character

National Landscape Character Area

6.7.15 National Landscape Character Areas (NCAs) are based on the former Joint Character Areas originally prepared by the former Countryside Agency. NCAs are now managed by Natural England. The Application Site is located within the NCA 97 – Arden (see **Appendix 6.2**). The published document for this NCA identifies a number of key landscape characteristics, quoted below:

- **“Well-wooded farmland landscape with rolling landform.**
- **Geologically diverse with rocks ranging from the Precambrian to the Jurassic and overlain by superficial Quaternary deposits.**
- **Mature oaks, mostly found within hedgerows, together with ancient woodlands, and plantation woodlands that often date from the time of enclosure. Woodlands include historic coppice bounded by woodbanks.**
- **Narrow, meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows; the River Blythe SSSI lying between the cities of Coventry and Birmingham is a good example of this.**
- **Numerous areas of former wood-pasture with large, old, oak trees often associated with isolated remnants of more extensive heathlands. Village greens/commons have a strong association with remnant lowland heath. Fragmented heathland persists on poorer soils in central and northern areas.**
- **Diverse field patterns, ranging from well hedged, irregular fields and small woodlands that contrast with larger semi regular fields on former deer park estates, such as, Packington Hall and Stoneleigh Park.**
- **Complex and contrasting settlement pattern with some densely populated where traditional settlements have amalgamated to form the major West Midlands conurbation while some settlements remain distinct and relatively well dispersed.**

- **North-eastern industrial area based around former Warwickshire coalfield, with distinctive colliery settlements. North-western area dominated by urban development and associated urban edge landscapes such as managed greenspace, for example allotments, gardens, parks, golf courses (rough areas) and public open spaces; playing fields, churchyards, cemeteries and institutional grounds (schools, hospitals).**
- **Transport infrastructure, the M42, M40, M6 and M5 are major transport corridors that sit within the landscape of this NCA.**
- **Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden, featured in 'As You Like It, is still reflected through the woodland cover, mature oaks, small ancient woodlands and former wood pasture.'**

Local Level Landscape Character Assessment

6.7.16 Warwickshire County Council published in 1993 Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines, which covers the area around Arden, Avon, and Dunsmore. It appears that there are no other, more recent published assessment available from the County Council.

6.7.17 The North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment was published by North Warwickshire District Council in 2010. It identifies the Application Site and the adjacent areas as urban environment. The published document states that **"...urban areas were not surveyed but the interface of the settlements with the rural areas has been considered."** The urban area of the Hams Hall Distribution Park is not described in the document.

6.7.18 In terms of the wider surrounding areas, as identified in the published landscape character assessment (2010), the northern and central part of the urban area associated with the Application Site is adjacent by three Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). Collectively with other smaller urban areas they define the majority of the 2km study area:

- LCA 12 Middleton to Curdworth Tame Valley Farmlands to the north west and north;
- LCA 11 Tame Valley Wetlands to the north, east, and south east; and
- LCA 10 Cole Valley to the south west and west.

6.7.19 The spatial arrangement and distance to other LCAs within the 5km study area is shown on the Landscape Character Areas Plan (see **Figure 6.2**). The following paragraphs provide for a brief description of the three closest neighbouring LCAs.

6.7.20 The key characteristics of the LCA 12 Middleton to Curdworth Tame Valley Farmlands, quoted from the published assessment, are:

- **"Gently undulating east facing slopes cut by small watercourses that drain towards the River Tame including the Langley Brook;**
- **A predominantly open arable landscape with large fields divided by low, tightly trimmed hedges with few hedgerow trees;**
- **A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets, villages and farmsteads, some with modern farm sheds;**
- **The settlements are contained by peripheral small hedged pastoral fields and woodland;**

- **Dispersed network of busy A roads and a few smaller quieter lanes connecting the settlements;**
- **The M42 / M6 toll junction within the south and nearby visible industry has a substantial influence upon the open landscape;**
- **Several golf courses in the area, the largest being the Belfry Hotel;**
- **The Birmingham and Fazeley Canal passes discretely through the**
- **area;**
- **Long and panoramic views to the east from elevated open slopes.”**

6.7.21 The key characteristics of the LCA 11 Tame Valley Wetlands, quoted from the published assessment, are:

- **“Alluvial river terraces of the very flat broad valley bottom;**
- **Extensive central network of restored former gravel workings with significant areas of wetland scrub and woodland centred on Kingsbury Water Park;**
- **Middleton Hall and gravel workings are contained within a Parkland and wetland landscape;**
- **Recently restored workings at Cliff Pool Nature Reserve to the north are yet to establish a landscape structure;**
- **Historic flood meadows and riparian vegetation at Whitacre Heath and Ladywalk Nature Reserves in the south;**
- **To the far south at the confluence of the Cole and Blythe with the Tame the landscape is disturbed by historic and modern small scale works set against the open backdrop of the Hams Hall industrial estates;**
- **The river Tame winds unobtrusively through the wetlands;**
- **Birmingham and Fazeley canal passes through the north;**
- **Settlements of Whitacre Heath, Nether Whitacre Heath, Lea Marston and Marston include typical red brick vernacular, with peripheral pastoral fields, there are few other properties within the area;**
- **A low lying landscape, visually contained by wetland vegetation, and the adjacent Hams Hall power station and pylons have little visual influence.”**

6.7.22 The key characteristics of the LCA 10 Cole Valley, quoted from the published assessment, are:

- **“Flat broad valley;**
- **Dominated by busy roads including the M42, M6 and A446;**
- **Contained by the urban areas of Birmingham, Coleshill and Water**
- **Orton;**
- **Substantial industrial influences within the north include Hams Hall power station and lines of pylons;**
- **Remnants of historical parkland landscapes around Coleshill Manor (now converted to offices) and Gilson Hall;**
- **Isolated and fragmented mixed arable and pastoral landscape between the urban uses;**
- **Urban and industrial views across the open valley.”**

6.7.23 The extract from the published report can be found in **Appendix 6.3**

Author's Own Assessment of Local Landscape/Townscape Character within 2km of the Application SiteLandscape/Townscape Scale

6.7.24 The scale of the urban environment / townscape is large reflecting the mass and height of the built form in the Hams Hall Distribution Park and Coleshill Industrial Park. This is reinforced by the large scale and linear form of the M42 and M6 Toll corridors, and railway lines. Shustoke Reservoir and the Kingsbury Water Park are located in the more distant landscape and contribute to its large scale. The River Tame and associated waterbodies reinforce the large scale of the landscape around the Application Site. There are no large scale features associated with forestry or agricultural landscape. Its scale is much closer to the one of medium landscape with hedgerow lines and tree belts, and medium scale field pattern.

Landform and Enclosure

6.7.25 The landform is gently undulating with changes in levels reflecting the presence of the River Tame and its valley. Topography gently rises to the north west and east, with some more distant higher ground to the east. The level of enclosure is generally high, with field boundary vegetation, the well treed valley of the River Tame, and screening around the Hams Hall Distribution Park limiting views and creating a high level of containment.

Townscape / Landscape Pattern and Complexity, and Human Influences

6.7.26 The townscape pattern is largely of industrial built form, of large mass and footprint. The buildings are in a regular arrangement, and connected by a network of roads. It has a distinctive repetitive pattern and regularity. The Coleshill Industrial Park is somewhat more complex with the built form often of smaller footprint and different alignment. The Hams Hall electricity sub-station and electricity pylons add to this complexity, further reinforced by the presence of the motorways and railway lines.

6.7.27 The landscape surrounding the Hams Hall Distribution Park and Coleshill Industrial Park is mostly of agriculture with some recreational land uses such as the golf course, located to the north of Lea Marston. It's not complex and in its character reflects the proximity to the urban environment.

6.7.28 Human presence is frequent and particularly evident in the western and central part of the 2km study area. Traffic, major highways and other built infrastructure has transformed this landscape to one of industrial character. Elsewhere, minor roads connect small settlements with agricultural fields separating them. Human presence is nevertheless evident.

Skylines

6.7.29 Frequent tree vegetation forms the predominant feature on the skyline. Where built form of the Hams Hall Distribution Park and Coleshill Industrial Park is visible the rooftops appear as simple, large scale and relatively tall features in the view, clearly identifiable on the horizon. Due to the presence of the Hams Hall electricity sub-station there are a number of overhead electricity cables and electricity pylons that cross the landscape, and they appear as relatively strong features against the sky, in the majority of the views. Overall, there are frequent vertical elements in views, particularly around the Hams Hall Distribution Park.

6.7.30 The motorways are largely screened by tree vegetation, except for the elevated section over the River Tame. Views along the river valley therefore include this major

highway but are limited geographically. Skylines, as perceived from the motorways are simple and distant, and in views to the west include the built form in Birmingham.

Inter-visibility

6.7.31 The level of inter-visibility is limited and views are generally short range and restricted. The elevated sections of the M42 and M6 Toll offer some views of the surrounding landscape but these are glimpsed with views generally confined to the motorway corridors. The elevated topography in the north western part of the study area, near Dunton Hall / Junction 9 of the M42 offers views of the more distant and higher ground to the east. There is no specific relationship between these landscapes however, due to the distance and less pronounced changes in levels.

Tranquillity

6.7.32 The level of tranquillity varies considerably. The western part of the study area is influenced by the traffic movement and noise of the M42, other major roads, railway lines, and townscape of Curdworth and Water Orton. Further west beyond the 2km radii the urban environment of Birmingham and Solihull and the M6 Toll, and the M6 continue to reduce the level of tranquillity. The landscape between the A446 and Lea Marston is agricultural in character but there is a frequent movement along Kingsbury Road and human presence within the Marston Lakes Golf Club. The central and southern part is influenced by movement within the Hams Hall Distribution Park and Coleshill Industrial Park.

6.7.33 The northern and eastern part of the study contrasts with this more developed and urban environment. This agricultural landscape is rural, and less busy, and is best described as settled. Human presence is nevertheless evident albeit less frequent.

Landscape Designations

6.7.34 There are no landscape related designations in place on the Application Site, adjacent to or within the 5km study area. The nearest statutory protected landscape is Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), approximately 23km to the north west. Due to the distance and limited potential for inter-visibility effects upon this statutory landscape designation are not considered in this Chapter.

6.7.35 It appears that there are also no non-statutory local landscape designations within the administrative boundaries of North Warwickshire Borough Council.

Visual Amenity

Visual Context – Views from the Application Site

6.7.36 Views are relatively enclosed due to the presence of large scale built form within the Hams Hall Distribution Park and adjacent to the Application Site. The perimeter wall, along the south eastern and south western boundaries limits inter-visibility. Views of the relatively tall and large scale buildings to the east are gained over the wall. The perimeter fencing that secures the Application Site to the north west and north east allows for some views in and out but these are limited by vegetation. There are no areas of higher ground in the surrounding landscape that would be visible from within or near the Application Site. The plot adjacent to west is currently used as the APH Airport parking facilities, and the character of the views in that direction reflects the nature of this business.

Public Highways

6.7.37 Views of the industrial areas can be gained from the surrounding roads, but are mostly limited. Some glimpsed and restricted views of the Hams Hall electricity sub-station, on the western side of the Hams Hall Distribution Park, were observed from the elevated section of the M42. Other built form within the Distribution Park however, was not visible.

6.7.38 Views from other road such as the A446 to the west and Coton Road / Station Road to the east are frequently screened or restricted. Earth bunds along the A446 further limit such opportunities and views of the built form of the Distribution Park were not gained from this road, between Junction 9 of the M42 and the roundabout with Faraday Avenue. There is a considerable amount of tree vegetation along the River Tame. The layering effect of this intervening vegetation further limits the opportunities to gain views of the existing industrial facilities and electricity pylons in Hams Hall Distribution Park. This is particularly true for the local roads around Whitacre Heath, Nether Whitacre and Hoggrill's End, further east. Similarly, views from roads around Blyth End, to the south east are restricted by the intervening vegetation.

Public Rights of Way

6.7.39 There are limited number of PRowS that would offer close range views, with the public footpath M30 being the only one with less restricted views towards the Application Site. It leads along local roads and tracks from the Coleshill Industrial Area, through the southern part of the Hams Hall Distribution Park and terminates near Faraday Avenue as it goes over the railway line.

6.7.40 The Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 232 shows a limited number of PRowS along the valley of the River Tame, and mostly between Lea Marston and Kingsbury, in the northern part of the study area, and around the Shustoke Reservoir, to the south east.

6.7.41 A number of PRowS are located near and around Lea Marston to the north but offer limited opportunities to gain views of the existing industrial facilities, with some upper parts visible amongst tree canopies. The Centenary Way that leads from the settlement towards Whitacre Heath, Hoggrill's End, and Shustoke benefits from screening provided by roadside vegetation and trees in the intervening landscape. Similarly, PRowS to the south east of the Hams Hall Distribution Park, and near Blyth End are also screened with glimpsed and restricted views of the existing industrial units in the southern part of the Hams Hall Distribution Park. A number of PRowS have been visited as part of the site visit, and where judged to be relevant, included in this LVIA.

Residential Receptors and Settlements

6.7.42 Keeper's Cottage, Lea Ford Cottage and Hams Gardens Cottage are the closest residential properties and are located to the north, over 450m away. They, broadly speaking, fall within Lea Marston but are relatively isolated from the settlement.

6.7.43 Other residential properties and settlement are located further away with their views already influenced by the built form in the Hams Hall Distribution Park, highways and electricity pylons. Settlements in the western part of the study area are separated from the Hams Hall Distribution Park by the motorway and railway corridors with tree vegetation limiting views of its infrastructure, including electricity pylons. The selected viewpoints illustrate the visibility from areas around these settlements. The majority of views from within and on the approach to these settlements are however screened by the roadside and intervening vegetation.

Other Visual Receptors

6.7.44 The corridor of the River Tame is lined with a number of nature reserves but not all of them are open to the public. The Whitacre Heath Nature Reserve is one of the closest one and accessible to visitors. Views from this nature reserve are restricted and screened by the intervening vegetation, views are generally inward looking or focused on the nearby River Tame.

6.7.45 Shustoke Reservoir has a picnic area and sailing club with a permissive footpath encircling the reservoir and linking with the Centenary Way and the Heart of England Way. Due to low elevation of this landscape views are screened and substantially restricted. Some built form in the Hams Hall Distribution Park is visible however, mainly to those located in its eastern part such as Sainsbury Distribution Centre. Other areas offering recreational opportunities such as those located the Kingsbury Water Park, camping sites, car parks, picnic areas and visitor centres, lie in the valley of the River Tame, with views of the built form in the Hams Hall Distribution Park not gained.

6.7.46 The aforementioned Centenary Way and the Heart of England Way are the only two promoted recreational routes that fall within the study area. There are no Sustrans cycle routes or other known recreational routes.

6.7.47 There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the 5km study area.

Viewpoints

6.7.48 Initially 8 preliminary viewpoints were selected based on desk top research and available background information such as maps and aerial photographs. Following the consultation with the Council additional viewpoints from Faraday Avenue and areas around Hoggrill's End and Nether Whitacre have been considered. Following the site visit, the viewpoint selection was rationalised with 10 viewpoints included in the assessment. These are shown on Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Viewpoint Locations Plan (see **Figure 6.6**).

6.7.49 Saint John the Baptist Church on the southern outskirts of Lea Marston was visited but due to dense tree vegetation views of the built form in the Hams Hall Distribution Park were not gained. Instead, photographs from the nearby playing fields were taken and this viewpoint is included in the assessment. Similarly, views from the settlement of Whitacre heath were not gained and this location omitted from the viewpoint assessment.

6.7.50 The location of the viewpoints are dictated by the pattern of the 'screened' Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and viewpoints are generally selected to illustrate the worst case scenario of visibility of the Proposed Development. Table 6.13 below list the selected viewpoints, their name and location.

Table 6.13: List of Viewpoints

Nr	Name	Location	Distance (km)	Direction of view
1	Public footpath along the River Tame.	Water Orton.	1.94	East.
2	Public footpath leading from Kingsbury Road to Lea Marston.	Dunton Wood.	1.43	South.
3	Public footpath leading from the A446 to Lea Marston.	Lea Marston.	0.88	South east.
4	Grass verge along Hams Lane.	Lea Marston.	0.99	South.
5	Lea Bridge.	Lea Marston.	1.36	South west.
6	Playing fields near the Saint John the Baptist Church.	Lea Marston.	0.64	South west.
7	Public footpath along Faraday Avenue.	Hams Hall Distribution Park.	0.26	East.
8	Public footpath leading from Blyth End to the Coleshill Industrial Park.	Blyth End.	1.59	North west.
9	Path along the Shustoke Reservoir, near the visitors' car park.	Shustoke.	2.81	North west.
10	Heart of England Way, near Halloughton Lane.	Nether Whitacre.	2.98	South West.

6.7.51 The above listed viewpoints are assessed in detail and provide evidence in discussing effects on the character of the landscape / townscape, and visual amenity.

Cumulative Developments

6.7.52 There are no cumulative developments that would be relevant to this assessment from a landscape and visual point of view.

6.8 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

Effects on Landscape / Townscape Features and Elements of the Application Site – Construction Phase, including demolition

6.8.1 During the construction phase of the Proposed Development, the existing facilities and surface would be removed and replaced with new buildings and structures, including a 52m stack. The construction phase is expected to last approximately 24 months. Construction activities would include:

- Removal of the existing surface;
- Movement of materials and plant (construction plant and fixed plant) to and from the Application Site;
- Excavations for footings, tip bunkers etc., and construction of footings;
- Installation of main items of plant;
- Construction of stack;
- Construction of main building around installed plant;
- Construction of roadways, yard surfacing etc; and
- Tree planting and any other landscaping.

Trees and Vegetation

6.8.2 There is lack of any structure vegetation within the Application Site that would be affected by the demolition and construction phase of the Proposed Development. Therefore it follows, there would be no effect upon these landscape elements. The existing small areas of grass are of no material concern due to their low visual quality and limited extent.

6.8.3 Trees and hedgerows are not characteristic for the Application Site and there is currently absence of any structural vegetation, which could be regarded as contributing to its character or indeed the wider townscape. Such form of vegetation is however frequent along Faraday Avenue, roads and around nearby buildings.

6.8.4 The value of the nearby existing vegetation is considered medium as contributing to the character of the Hams Hall Distribution Park. The susceptibility of tree vegetation would be high due to time constraints needed to replace such landscape elements. Shrub and hedgerow vegetation would fall within medium level of susceptibility. Overall, trees within the Hams Hall Distribution Park are considered to have a high sensitivity to the Proposed Development. Shrub and hedgerow vegetation would be of medium sensitivity.

6.8.5 The proposed trees and enhancement to the street scene would reinforce the well vegetated character of this section of Faraday Avenue. The density of vegetation would be lower allowing for some inter-visibility with the proposed built form, part of the design strategy for the Proposed Development.

6.8.6 There would be a medium magnitude of change upon this landscape resource within the Application Site with new and relatively well developed trees being introduced. Therefore it follows, there would be a major beneficial and significant degree of effects. This would translate to a low magnitude of change upon the tree resource with the Hams Hall Distributing Park, resulting in moderate beneficial effects. This is not considered to be significant.

6.8.7 In terms of shrub / hedgerow vegetation the new planting would have similar degree of effects, with medium magnitude of change within the Application Site translating to low across the Hams Hall Distribution Park. The effects would be therefore moderate beneficial and not significant when considering the Application Site. This would translate to minor beneficial effects upon shrub / hedgerow resource across the Distribution Park.

Land Use / Built Form

6.8.8 The Proposed Development involves a change in land use on the Application Site from a car storage with little built form present to an industrial building, which would occupy the majority of the Application Site. The perception of the industrial character of the Application Site would change to a degree, with an increasing level of enclosure, as the construction work progresses and movement.

6.8.9 The industrial character of the Hams Hall Distribution Park results in a relatively high level of traffic with frequent movement of Heavy Good Vehicles (HGVs). Views of the construction traffic would increase the human presence and movement along Faraday Avenue and within the Application Site. Movement of plant and cranes, and on-going construction traffic would add to the industrial character of the area.

6.8.10 The change upon this factor of the townscape character, during the construction phase is considered to be compatible with the existing characteristics of the townscape along Faraday Avenue. Such effects cannot be however quantified.

Topography

6.8.11 The topography of the Application Site is typical for the area, being positioned in the valley of the River Tame. There is little perception of the river corridor with the built form limiting views and the focus being on the built form, and road infrastructure rather than landform. There is no clear relationship between the valley floor and the Hams Hall Distribution Park, and the value of the local topography is considered to be low. Being largely flat, the susceptibility of such landform is considered low, being easily remediated and returned to its previous condition. The overall sensitivity of the topography is therefore considered to be low.

6.8.12 The Proposed Development does not require major earthworks or change in levels, except for building platforms and sunken storage tanks, which would be housed within a building. The introduction of the Proposed Development would not result in notable changes to the topography of the Application Site (as perceived from outside), though there would be some excavation to construct tip bunkers and install some items of equipment. The proposed access would utilise the existing access from Faraday Avenue and the perception of the changes in levels across the Application Site would be broadly the same. The relationship with the surrounding topography would not be changed to a noticeable degree.

6.8.13 This is considered as giving rise to a negligible magnitude of change (in landscape terms), and with low sensitivity a negligible neutral effect. This is not considered to be significant.

PRoWs

6.8.14 As stated in the baseline section of this Chapter, there are no PRoWs within the Application Site, or adjacent to it that would be physically affected. Potential effects on visual amenity experienced by users of the local PRoW network are considered later in this Section.

Watercourses and Waterbodies

6.8.15 There are no surface watercourses or waterbodies within the Application Site which would be affected (in landscape terms) by the Proposed Development. Effects on water features and hydrology are considered in more detail in **Chapter 8** of this ES.

Cultural Heritage Assets

6.8.16 There are no cultural heritage or archaeological assets within the Application Site that would be affected (in landscape or visual terms) by the Proposed Development. Effects on Cultural Heritage Assets are considered in more detail in **Chapter 12** of the ES.

Effects on Landscape / Townscape Features and Elements of the Application Site (Operational Phase)

Trees and Vegetation

6.8.17 The new trees and shrub / hedgerows within the Application Site would be managed to maximise their longevity and health throughout the operational phase of the Proposed Development. This ongoing active good management, combined with the successful establishment and development of the proposed new trees and shrub / hedgerows, is assessed as giving rise to a low beneficial magnitude of change during the operational phase of the Proposed Development. With high to medium sensitivity, this is

assessed as giving rise to a moderate to minor beneficial effect which is not considered to be significant.

Land Use

6.8.18 The proposed built form would be similar in design to the surrounding premises respecting the prevailing architectural form of strong and rectangular buildings. The height of the main building would be taller than the adjacent built form with the addition of a stack. This change would reinforce the current character of the area, adjacent to the Application Site and along Faraday Avenue. This is further explained in the assessment of effects on the wider landscape / townscape character during the operational phase, later in this section.

Topography

6.8.19 There would be no further changes to the topography of the Application Site during the operational phase of the Proposed Development.

Effects on Landscape / Townscape Character – Construction Phase, including demolition

6.8.20 Based on the information provided in the baseline section, the value of the landscape / townscape around the Application Site and within the 2km radii is considered medium being a non-designated landscape and strongly influenced by industrial built form. The local landscape has some historic associations but these are considerably changed, not easily appreciated and have a limited influence. In terms of its susceptibility the current landscape / townscape characteristics, analysed earlier in this Chapter suggests it would be low. Overall, the sensitivity of the local landscape / townscape to the development of the type proposed would be low.

6.8.21 Construction activities would extend over the entire Application Site, appearing as the removal of the existing facilities with the construction of new and relatively tall buildings and other structures, including the stack. Construction plant would be visible during this period, including (at times) cranes which would appear above the surrounding buildings, and in the context of the existing electricity pylons.

6.8.22 As the construction phase progresses, the increased height of the new structures and building would become more apparent, though these would continue to be experienced in the context of the existing industrial development that surrounds the Application Site.

6.8.23 The construction phase is therefore assessed as giving rise to a low magnitude of change to the character of the Application Site itself, and the townscape of the Hams Hall Distribution Park. Based on the low sensitivity of this townscape this would give rise to a negligible and neutral effect. This effect on the character of the Application Site and the Hams Hall Distribution Park is not considered to be significant.

6.8.24 Such negligible effects would translate to negligible effects on the character of the NCA 97 – Arden during the construction phase, as a host landscape character area.

6.8.25 The Application Site falls within the urban environment and is not covered by the landscape character assessment of the North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment (2010). Therefore any effects upon the neighbouring LCAs, as identified in the published assessment would relate only to their perceptual and sensory factors.

6.8.26 Considering that the effects upon the character of the Application Site and the host NCA 97 – Arden were assessed as negligible, the construction activities associated

with the Proposed Development are likely to give rise to a similar and negligible scale of effects upon the adjacent LCAs such as LCA 12 Middleton to Curdworth Tame Valley Farmlands; LCA 11 Tame Valley Wetlands; and LCA 10 Cole Valley.

6.8.27 It is worth reiterating that such effects would relate to the effects upon skylines, inter-visibility, human presence and tranquillity. These factors are already affected by the existing industrial facilities along the River Tame and the presence of the motorways. Views of the construction activities would be seen in the direct context of large scale industrial buildings and facilities of the Hams Hall Distribution Park and frequently interrupted by lines of electricity pylons. The effects would be therefore negligible and neutral, and not significant.

Effects on Landscape/Townscape Character (Operational Phase)

6.8.28 The Proposed Development would reinforce the industrial character of the built form along Faraday Avenue and slightly increase the level of enclosure along its western end. The grain of the built form would not be redefined and the land use reinforced. The height of the proposed built form would be similar or slightly taller than other buildings in the vicinity. The offset from the road and the smaller footprint of the Waste Reception building would help to reduce the perceived height and mass of the proposed built form, which would be partially screened by the perimeter fence and vegetation. The various industrial paraphernalia such as filter dust silos and flue gas filters would be located in the northern part of the Proposed Development and behind the main building. This would limit the perception of clutter and help retain the focus on the simple and geometric form of the building perceived in the context of shrub / hedgerow and tree vegetation along Faraday Avenue.

6.8.29 It is evident that the character of the townscape in this part of Hams Hall Distribution Park would not be changed or redefined, and would be simply reinforced. The magnitude of change, in townscape terms, would be negligible.

6.8.30 The surrounding areas of landscape namely the adjacent LCA 12 Middleton to Curdworth Tame Valley Farmlands; LCA 11 Tame Valley Wetlands; and LCA 10 Cole Valley would be subject to a negligible magnitude of change. This assessment is supported by the assessment of visual effects upon ten viewpoints, described later in this Section. Considering the low sensitivity of the local landscape and the associated LCAs, the introduction of the Proposed Development would result in long term negligible and neutral landscape / townscape effects. Such effects are considered not significant.

Effects on Visual Amenity - Viewpoints

6.8.31 Based on an analysis of publicly available maps and aerial photography, and confirmed by visiting the Application Site and surrounding area, a series of 10 viewpoints were identified that are considered to be representative of receptors within the study area or are illustrative of particular view. These viewpoint locations were agreed with the Council and the suggested additional locations also considered. The viewpoints however, are not intended to be an exhaustive record of all potential views.

6.8.32 The visual assessment has taken into account the proposed planting that is an integral part of the Proposed Development considered to be in place. However, these enhancement measures are unlikely to provide screening or reduce the visual effects. They do however, help create a more attractive street scene along Faraday Avenue, responding positively to the existing character of this road.

6.8.33 Photoviews have been prepared based on the location of the selected ten viewpoints and provide photographic evidence of the local landscape / townscape and views (see **Figure 6.7**). In addition wirelines have been prepared for all the viewpoints

with photomontages created for three the most relevant viewpoints (see **Figure 6.8**). A detailed assessment of the visual effects of the Proposed Development on the ten identified viewpoints is provided at **Appendix 6.4**. A summary of the results of this assessment is set out below.

Summary of Visual Assessment – Construction Phase, including demolition

Distant Views

6.8.34 Two of the selected viewpoints are over 2km distance from the Proposed Development. They differ in terms of their elevation, context and level of inter-visibility with the Hams Hall Distribution Park. In both views however, the existing large scale industrial built form is visible, albeit to a varying degree. The construction activities associated with the Proposed Development would not result in significant visual effects at any of the identified long distance viewpoints. The effects on these viewpoints during the construction phase are summarised in **Table 6.15** below:

Table 6.15: Summary of Construction Phase Effects on Long Distance Viewpoints

Viewpoint No.	Receptor Type	Scale of Effect
9	Recreational receptors	Minor
10	Recreational receptors and road users	Minor to Negligible

Medium Range Views

6.8.35 The majority of the identified viewpoints fall within the medium range between 2km and 0.5km distance. None of them were assessed as subject to significant visual effects during the construction phase of the Proposed Development with a number of them assessed as subject to 'no change' scenario due to the vegetative screening. The effects on these viewpoints during the construction phase are summarised in **Table 6.16** below.

Table 6.16: Summary of Construction Phase Effects on Medium Distance Viewpoints

Viewpoint No.	Receptor Type	Scale of Effect
1	Recreational and residential receptors	Minor
2	Recreational receptors	Minor
3	Recreational receptors	Minor
4	Residential receptors and road users	No change
5	Road users	No change
6	Recreational receptors (sport facilities)	No change
8	Recreational receptors	No change

Short Range Views

6.8.36 Only one of the ten viewpoints is short range, Viewpoint 7, which is located at the roundabout of Faraday Avenue and Edison Road. The visual effects of the construction phase were assessed as varying from major and significant to moderate not significant depending on the sensitivity of visual receptors with views gained by recreational receptors and road users respectively.

Summary of Visual Assessment – Operational Phase

6.8.37 The effects on visual amenity experienced during the operational phase of the Proposed Development would be broadly similar to those experienced during construction stage, albeit long term.

Distant Views

6.8.38 Once completed and operational the Proposed Development would have some effects on the visual amenity of the receptors. Such effects however would not be significant as indicated by the assessment of Viewpoint 9 and 10. This is due to the distance, context and intervening vegetation that collectively limit opportunities to gain views of the Proposed Development.

Table 6.17: Summary of Operational Phase Effects on Long Distance Viewpoints

Viewpoint No.	Receptor Type	Scale of Effect
9	Recreational receptors	Minor
10	Recreational receptors and road users	Minor to Negligible

Medium Range Views

6.8.39 Of the seven medium range views all have been assessed as not significantly affected by the introduction of the Proposed Development. Receptors at Viewpoint 2 were assessed as experiencing moderate visual effects. This moderate degree of change reflects the high sensitivity of receptors. Nevertheless these effects remain not significant. The remaining medium range views are assessed subject to 'no change' scenario due to the presence of intervening vegetation.

Table 6.18: Summary of Operational Phase Effects on Medium Distance Viewpoints

Viewpoint No.	Receptor Type	Scale of Effect
1	Recreational and residential receptors	Minor
2	Recreational receptors	Moderate
3	Recreational receptors	Minor
4	Residential receptors and road users	No change
5	Road users	No change
6	Recreational receptors (sport facilities)	No change
8	Recreational receptors	No change

Short Range Views

6.8.40 The only close range location, Viewpoint 7 has been assessed as subject to major and significant effects upon recreational receptors and road users. Broadly speaking these effects are representative of the scale of visual effects gained by receptors along this section of Faraday Avenue. Effects upon receptors along the eastern section of the road would be however, lower and unlikely to be significant.

Effects on Visual Amenity – Other Visual Receptors – Operational Phase

6.8.41 Considering the limited effects during the construction phase of the Proposed Development, the assessment of visual effects upon the remaining visual receptors focuses on the long term operational phase.

6.8.42 A number of visual receptors have been identified and depicted in Visual Receptors Plan (see **Figure 6.5**). Based on the extent of the ZTV both for the main buildings and the chimney stack (see **Figure 6.6**), and viewpoint assessment it transpires that only some of them are relevant, those located within medium distance and in the northern part of the 2km radii study area.

6.8.43 Based on the assessment of viewpoints, site visit, and the level of screening along the River Tame, the closest visual receptors along the PRowS and other footpaths within the nearby nature reserves, have been considered not significantly affected. The context provided by the surrounding industrial built form and tree vegetation would result in limited visibility of the main building. The proposed chimney stack is likely to be more visible due to its height but in reality the tree canopies would filter views, which would be glimpsed and transitional.

6.8.44 Other visual receptors, residents and road users, and those travelling along recreational routes, are more distant and over 1km away. With the increasing level of screening provided by the intervening built form in the Hams Hall Distribution Park and tree vegetation the visual influence of the Proposed Development would diminish. Based on the assessment of Viewpoints 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8, it transpires that effects upon visual receptors within the low lying parts of the valley of the River Tame would vary between minor and not significant, to 'no change' scenario. This includes residents of Lea Marston and Whitacre Heath. Residents of more distant and more elevated areas to the east and north east would also be subject to minor and not significant visual effects.

6.8.45 In summary, none of the identified visual receptors depicted in the Visual Receptors Plan (see **Figure 6.5**) would be subject to significant visual effects as a result of the Proposed Development.

Visual Assessment – Night-Time Effects

6.8.46 There would be very limited external lighting over and above that which is already present along Faraday Avenue and in other parts of the Hams Hall Distribution Park. There would be some additional limited lighting on the proposed stack, as required by the Civil Aviation Authority.

6.8.47 The very limited increase in lighting levels on the Application Site is not considered likely to give rise to any significant effects on night-time visual amenity as experienced from the local area.

6.9 MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT**Mitigation by Design****Construction Phase**

6.9.1 The construction phase would be expected to last approximately 24 months. There would be a temporary but substantial increase in activities, over and above those associated with existing activities on the Application Site, and also an increase in the number of vehicles entering and leaving the Application Site via Faraday Avenue and the A446.

6.9.2 The proposed tree and shrub planting that forms an integral part of the design for the Proposed Development would be undertaken during the first planting season after completion of construction in order to maximise establishment success.

Operational Phase

6.9.3 The proposed stack for the plant has been designed to be as narrow as possible. The height of the stack, at 52m, is the minimum that can be used in order to meet the relevant emissions targets as set by the Environment Agency. Its height would be taller than the surrounding built form of the Hams Hall Distribution Park and electricity pylons. Its location, within the Distribution Park, and by being surrounded by a number of relatively tall vertical elements would reduce its visual effects. This is further explained in the assessment of visual effects.

6.9.4 The main building and other structures within the Proposed Development have been designed to be as small as possible whilst still accommodating the necessary plant and machinery. Most importantly, its height and form would resemble those found along Faraday Avenue and in the Hams Hall Distribution Park.

6.9.5 The main building and other structures within the Proposed Development would be clad using materials coloured to minimise the visual effects of the buildings and structures. Where the buildings and structures extend above the height of the surrounding existing buildings, they would be clad with materials of lighter colours in order to reduce the apparent massing of the buildings and structures when seen against the sky – see **Chapter 3** of the ES and the Design and Access Statement which accompanies this application.

Enhancements

6.9.6 The proposed new hedgerow and tree planting would result in a net increase in the amount of vegetation within the Application Site. This increase in the landscape resource is considered to be a small enhancement but beneficial in terms of street scene along Faraday Avenue.

6.10 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE AND ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS**Introduction**

6.10.1 This landscape and visual impact assessment has assessed the likely effects of the Proposed Development on landscape / townscape features and elements within the Application Site, landscape / townscape character of the local area, and on local visual amenity. The assessment has been undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect, with regard to best practice, particularly the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (2013), as published by IEMA and the Landscape Institute.

Baseline Conditions

6.10.2 The Application Site lies outside of any statutory or local/non-statutory landscape designations and falls within the Hams Hall Distribution Park, which is characterised by industrial units. The Application Site is currently utilised as car storage with no notable vegetation or built form. There are no notable areas of tree or shrub vegetation. Grass and naturalised perennial vegetation cover areas of soft ground. Trees are present around the Application Site but not within. The topography of the Application Site is simple and relatively level with changes in the contours limited.

6.10.3 Large scale buildings abut the Application Site to the east and along with tree vegetation restrict views of the surrounding landscape. The boundary is secured by a palisade fencing and concrete wall restricting views from Faraday Avenue, which is adjacent south. A number of relatively tall electricity pylons are located adjacent to the Application Site and connect to the nearby Hams Hall Electricity Sub-station, located to the west. The surrounding area falls within the Hams Hall Distribution Park, which is characterised by industrial buildings of varied height with its built form frequently screened and restricted by roadside vegetation.

Other Features

6.10.4 There are no PRowS within the Application Site, any apparent watercourses or waterbodies, or heritage assets that would be relevant from a landscape or visual point of view.

Likely Significant Effects

6.10.5 The assessment has not identified any significant landscape effects which would arise as a result of the Proposed Development, when considered in isolation. All identified visual receptors and the majority of the selected viewpoints have been assessed as subject to not significant visual effects. Receptors at only one identified location, at Viewpoint 7, have been assessed as experiencing significant visual effects due to proximity and inter-visibility with the Proposed Development.

Mitigation and Enhancement

6.10.6 Mitigation measures (such as design evolution of the proposed built form, and gradation in colours of different parts of the Proposed Development to minimise the perceived massing of the buildings) have been incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development as part of the iterative design process. The colour palette has been selected to make the Proposed Development more recessive in views thus having a lesser degree of effects upon the perception of the local landscape / townscape, and visual amenity. The measures are therefore an integral part of the development and no further additional mitigation is considered necessary from a landscape and visual perspective.

6.11 CONCLUSION

6.11.1 The nature of the Proposed Development, together with the context provided by the land uses surrounding the Application Site, would mean that the Proposed Development is considered to be appropriate to the setting and townscape character of the site and the Hams Hall Distribution Park. The introduction of the Proposed Development would not result in any significant effects on local landscape or townscape features or elements, or the character of the landscape / townscape within and around it.

6.11.2 Effects upon visual amenity would also be generally not significant with only one location assessed as subject to significant visual effects. Such higher degree of effects reflects close proximity and relatively open views towards the Proposed Development.