Plot 400, Dunsbury Park, Portsmouth

Landscape and Visual Evidence and Appraisal

Volume 2 Landscape and Visual Evidence

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1. Introduction

1.1. Appointment

1.1.1. The terra firma Consultancy was appointed in April 2025 to provide landscape architectural services to accompany the detailed planning application for the proposed development of Plot 400, Dunsbury Park, Havant. Our services involves the production of a Landscape and Visual Evidence and Impact Appraisal (LVA) which, all in light of the client brief, comprises:

- Developing an understanding of the site and its setting;
- Defining what matters most about the landscape and visual aspects;
- Incorporating these into the best possible development proposals which maximises opportunities and potentials; and
- Minimises and mitigates harm;

1.1.2. terra firma previously worked at Dunsbury, firstly producing landscape plans for the road infrastructure and Hermitage Stream enhancements, and later producing a Visual Framework document for Park Lane, and working with the ecologist to produce a Landscape Open Space and Ecology Strategy.

1.1.3. For the purposes of the planning process the above work is presented in two volumes:

- **Volume 1 Landscape and Visual Evidence** comprises our understanding of the site and its setting and the identification of what is important. This is critical in developing context-appropriate proposals and minimising harm and is the starting point for our work. The design and assessment should not be viewed as a linear process but rather an iterative one, with the identification of potential harm and mitigation informing the design at every stage, along with the work of other disciplines.
- **Volume 2 Landscape and Visual Appraisal** will comprise the appraisal section of the final landscape report which will be completed once the final design is confirmed and will be an impartial assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the final proposals.

1.2. Report structure

1.2.1. Volume 2 is set out as below:

- Introduction; report structure; project brief;
- Design evolution
- Proposed development
- Appraisal of landscape effects;
- Additional mitigation and residual landscape effects;
- Appraisal of visual effects;
- Additional mitigation and residual visual effects;
- Conclusions
- References
- Appendix 1: LVIA methodology
- Appendix 2 : Verified Views

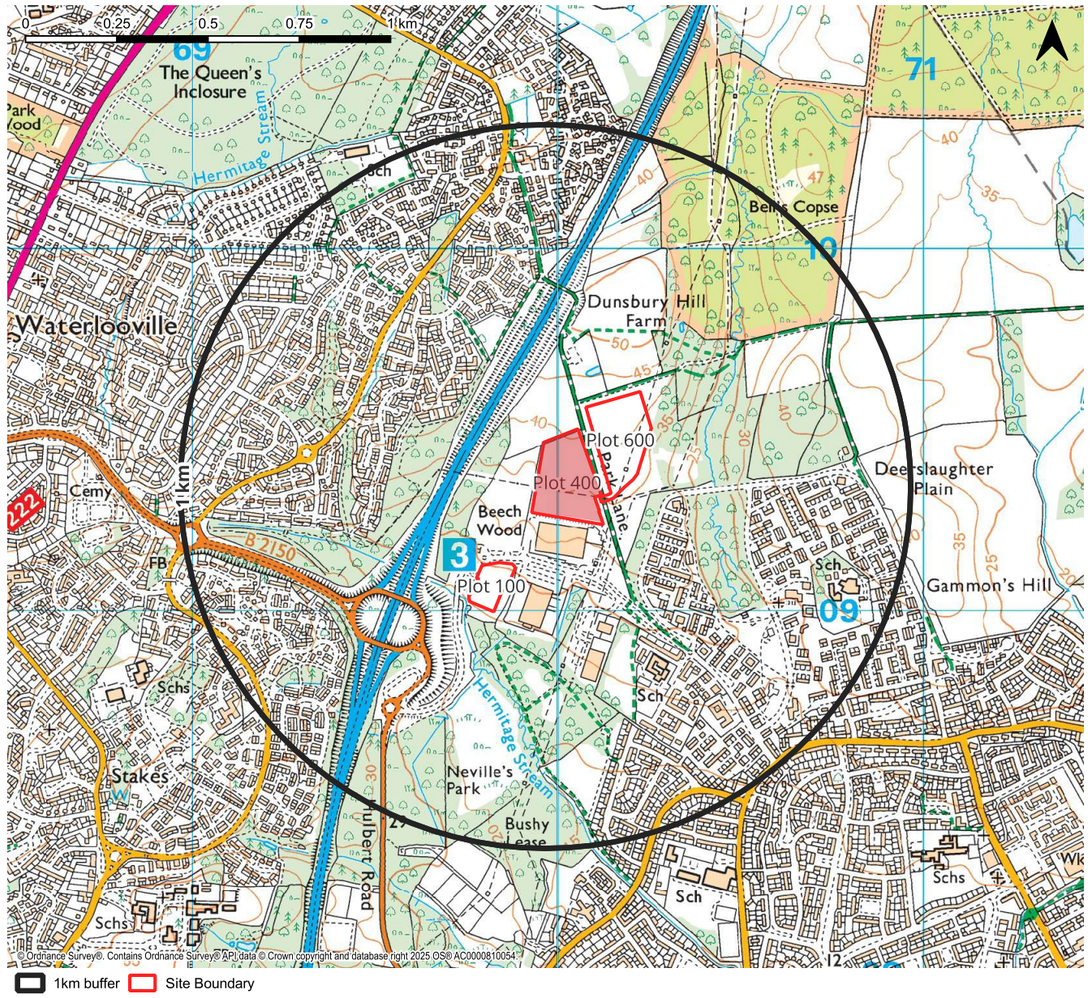
1.3. Project brief

1.3.1. The brief for the design team is to produce a detailed planning application for the development comprising an industrial building with associated loading yard and car parking. The brief for landscape architectural input is to advise on landscape mitigation measures and set out likely landscape and visual effects.

1.3.2. The proposed development relates to plot 400, as illustrated in Figure 1.

1.3.3. Verified views have been prepared by HCUK for selected viewpoints in this LVA, where it was considered these would further inform the visual appraisal. Verified views have been prepared for viewpoints 5, 6, 10, 13 and 15, and are contained in Appendix 2. Effects on view receptors have been reviewed to reflect the verified views. The inclusion of a limited number of viewpoints rather than all viewpoints is standard practice in the process of landscape and visual appraisal, and reflects guidance set out in GLVIA (Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment). GLVIA states that the scope of LVA and the approach to illustrative material should be proportionate and a matter of professional judgement. The selection of the 5 viewpoints was made by terra firma following fieldwork and reflects key views with higher sensitivity and most likely to have the greatest effect.

Figure 1 - Site location (Plot 400)



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2. Design evolution

2.1. Volume 1 identified a number of landscape and visual sensitivities, constraints and opportunities which were considered by the design team. These were balanced against other considerations and, where possible, incorporated into the final design proposals to eventually form the basis for the appraisal of effects.

2.2. The eastern site boundary of plot 400 was adjusted to avoid the root protection areas of mature trees along Park Lane.

2.3. The layout of parking was adjusted to maximise the quantum of space for planting in the southern part of the site and space has been created along the foot of the retaining wall - which is required around parts of the boundary - in order to provide some planting up the wall to green up the perimeter of the service yard.

3. Proposed development (ref to figure 2)

3.1. Figure 2 shows the proposed layout and planting proposals for plot 400 which are being submitted for consideration by the planning authority and against which likely landscape and visual effects have been assessed.

3.1.1. A staff breakout space is provided within close to the building entrance in the north section of the parking area. This will provide an easily accessible area for staff amenity with seating and planting, screened from the road, service yard and car park.

3.2. Planting proposals

3.2.1. Proposals for planting have been developed in consultation with the team's ecologist to maximise biodiversity value and the following soft landscape recommendations have been incorporated:

- Wildflower and amenity grassland mixes to boost invertebrate diversity.
- Native tree and shrub planting underplanted with species such as primrose and bluebell to provide structure and seasonal resources.
- Retention and enhancement of boundary woodland/scrub with gapping-up and sensitive long-term management.

3.2.2. Inclusion of biodiverse green roofs was recommended however it was not possible to include this.

3.2.3. The proposed landscape includes a triangular area in the north of plot 400 which is a nature area comprising native scrub and wildflower meadow as well as new native trees. This planting contributes to biodiversity net gain and the naturalistic character integrates well with the surrounding landscape.

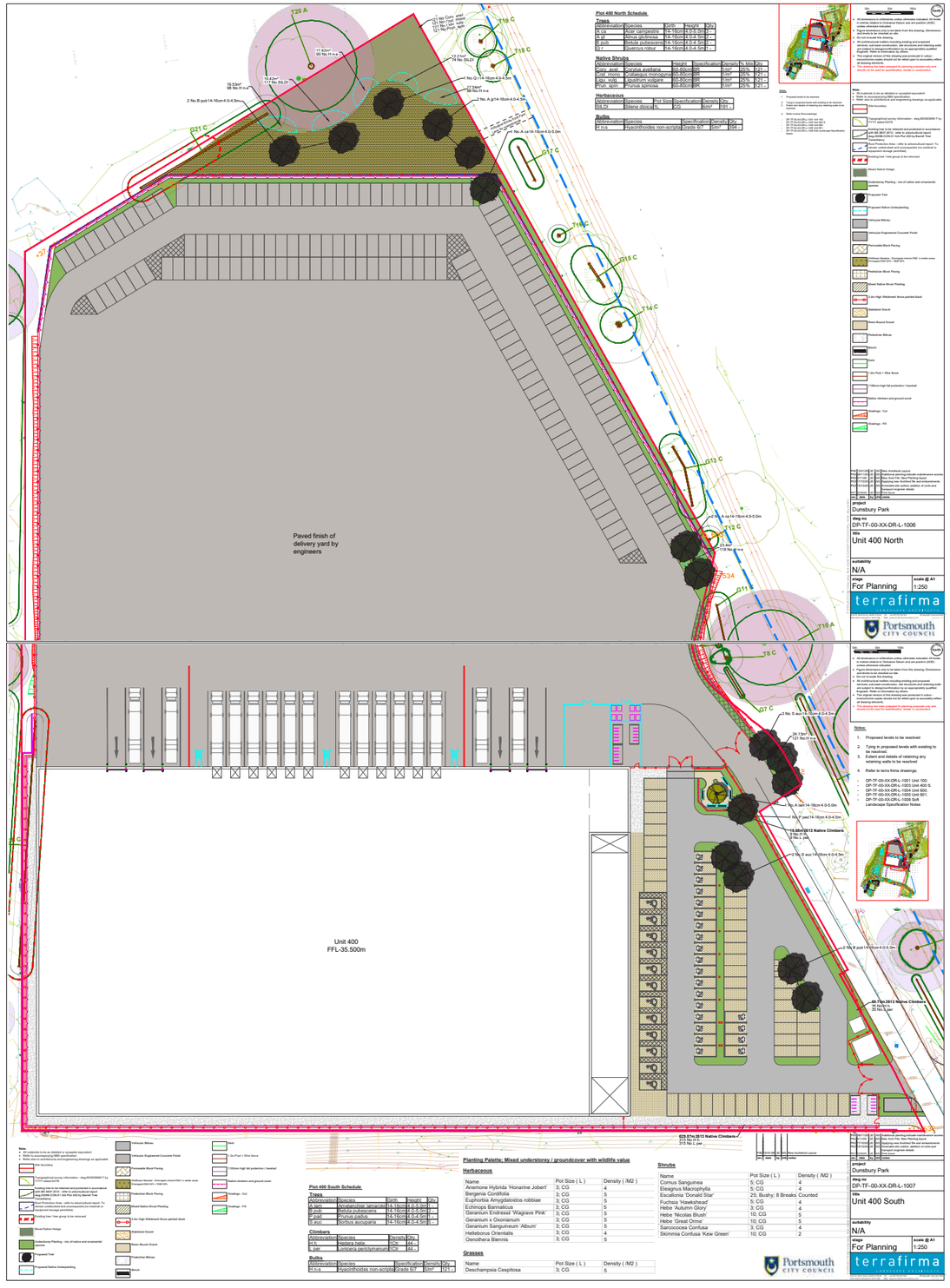
3.2.4. Native groundcover and climbers are proposed along the foot of the retaining wall and further planting is proposed in the car park in the south-east and around the base of security fencing to the boundaries This planting will comprise a mix of pollen producing and native plants.

3.3. Hard landscape proposals

3.3.1. In order to accommodate the level difference the team is proposing a finished floor level of 35.5m in order to tie in to the access road. In order to create acceptable levels for the service yard a retaining wall is needed around parts of the boundary, varying in height from 3.5m along the northern edge, lowering to 1m along the east and north-west (see civil engineer's details). Maintenance access to the higher ground in the northern end of the site will be via the adjacent PRoW.

3.3.2. Site security is provided by 2.4m high weldmesh fencing to the outer perimeter and necessary fall guarding at the top of retaining walls.

Figure 2 - Development proposals; plot 400



4. Appraisal of landscape effects

4.1. Landscape receptors and their sensitivities are set out in Volume 1. Landscape effects are considered through the appraisal of the sensitivity of the receptor (value and susceptibility to change – refer to Volume 1) and the magnitude of the landscape effect (size or scale, duration and reversibility) as described in the evaluation criteria (Appendix 1). The magnitude of effect is based on the mitigation measures included within the final proposals after 5 years.

4.2. Topography

4.2.1. Plot 400 is made up of undulating spoil deposits and a series of plateaux with steep banks. The levels fall from 41.50m in the north-east corner to 38.00 in the north-west corner, and from the northern boundary to the southern edge the level changes overall by 6-8m. South of the southern boundary there is a further steep bank dropping another 2m.

4.2.2. The man-made landform of the site is of low value. The susceptibility of the site's landform to the type of development proposed is low, being already artificial and not representative of the natural landform locally. The sensitivity of the landform is therefore low.

4.2.3. The proposed building and parking in the south part of the site with the service yard to the north requires levelling out of the landform and retaining walls around parts of the boundary, varying in height from 3.5m along the northern edge, lowering to 1m along the east and north-west (see civil engineer's details). The levels around the northern and eastern sides of the site are partly within root protection areas of retained trees and will therefore be left largely untouched. The changes proposed to topography would result in nil effect. Combined with a low sensitivity, the overall landscape effect on topography would be neutral.

4.3. Vegetation

4.3.1. The value of the site's vegetation in landscape terms relates to the mature oaks and thick hedgerows along Park Lane and around the boundaries of the site which are key characteristics of the wider landscape and important in the setting of the Park Lane PRoW and are judged to be of local authority value.

4.3.2. The susceptibility of the site's vegetation to the type of development proposed is high due to the likely need for creating level platforms for the large buildings and service areas.

4.3.3. Combining the local authority value and the high susceptibility, the site's vegetation comprising the mature trees and hedgerows around the site and along Park Lane has a high sensitivity.

4.3.4. The boundary alignment and proposed retaining wall have been adjusted to avoid the root protection areas of key trees and most of the hedgerow vegetation. There are 2 short sections of linear grouped trees to be removed; a partial section along the northern edge and a linear group along the western boundary. This would result in a low adverse magnitude of effect. Combined with a high sensitivity, the overall landscape effect on vegetation would be moderate adverse.

4.4. Pattern of landscape and settlement

4.4.1. The straight route of the Park Lane PRoW along the eastern side of plot 400 is an historic route in existence since at least the early 19th century.

4.4.2. The value of the pattern of the PRoW is judged to be of community value.

4.4.3. The susceptibility of the landscape pattern of the PRoW to the type of development proposed is medium.

4.4.4. Combining the community value and the medium susceptibility, the pattern of the PRoW has a medium sensitivity.

4.5. The proposed layout would not affect the alignment of the PRoW and would result in nil magnitude of effect. Combined with a medium sensitivity, the overall landscape effect on landscape pattern would be neutral.

4.6. Access and recreation

4.6.1. The value of the site's public access is related to the public footpath along the eastern side - Park Lane (PRoW 108/123/2-4). This is judged to be of local authority value as a local footpath.

4.6.2. The susceptibility of the public footpath route to the type of development proposed is high/medium; the route of Park Lane could be affected. Note that views from the PRoW will be covered in section 6.

4.6.3. Combining the local authority value and the high/medium susceptibility, on balance the public access routes have a high/medium sensitivity.

4.6.4. The proposed development is adjacent to the PRoW but does not alter its alignment or use and would result in nil magnitude of effect. Combined with a high/medium sensitivity, the overall landscape effect on access would be neutral.

4.7. Perceptual qualities

4.7.1. West of Park Lane the character is urban / industrial with the large buildings, road, car parks, security fencing, lighting, noise from the A3 and power lines / pylons with no sense of tranquillity. The setting of the Park Lane PRoW is largely contained by trees and hedges with few gaps and has a sense of rurality, albeit with some views and sounds of the existing business park perceptible.

4.7.2. The value of the perceptual qualities of the site west of Park Lane is low. Park Lane has a higher perceptual value with greater rurality and tranquillity, less urban influence, and therefore judged to be of community value.

4.7.3. The susceptibility to the type of development proposed on the sense of rurality and tranquillity of Park Lane is medium; the proposed change will bring buildings and activities closer.

4.7.4. Combining the community value and the medium susceptibility, the positive perceptual qualities of Park Lane have a medium sensitivity.

4.7.5. The proposed introduction of buildings, parking and intensified use would result in a medium adverse magnitude of effect. Combined with a medium sensitivity, the overall landscape effect on Park Lane's sense of rurality would be moderate adverse.

5. Summary of landscape effects

5.1. The following table (Figure 3) comprises a summary of the effects on landscape receptors likely to be adversely affected by the proposed development.

5.2. The mature oaks and hedgerows and the public access to Park Lane are of the highest sensitivity within the context of this study. Adherence to the tree protection measures set out by the arboriculturist and ongoing management of the trees would minimise effects and the public access to Park Lane would remain unchanged.