

THISTLEBOON, SWANSEA

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

November 2019

soltysbrewster

4 Stangate House
Stanwell Road
Penarth
Vale of Glamorgan
CF64 2AA

Telephone:- 029 2040 8476
e-mail:- enquiry@soltysbrewster.co.uk
Web Site:- www.soltysbrewster.com

Landscape **Assessment**
Landscape **Planning**
Landscape **Design**

CarbonNeutral Company

THISTLEBOON, SWANSEA

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Document Ref: 1873202 - SBC - 00 - NA - RP - L - 103

Issue	Revision	Stage	Date	Prepared by	Approved
1	PL01	DRAFT	14.05.19	Christine Jones	Simon Brewster (Director)
2	PL01	PLANNING	11.07.19	Christine Jones	Simon Brewster (Director)
3	PL02	PLANNING	29.10.19	Christine Jones	Simon Brewster (Director)
4	PL03	PLANNING	06.11.19	Christine Jones	Simon Brewster (Director)
5	PL04	PLANNING	21.09.20	Greg.Vaughan (Simon Brewster (Director)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 INTRODUCTION**
- 2.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**
- 3.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**
- 4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS**
- 5.0 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS**
- 6.0 MITIGATION MEASURES**
- 7.0 RESIDUAL IMPACTS**
- 8.0 SUMMARY**

Figures

- Figure 01: Viewpoint Location Plan
- Figure 02: Visual Envelope and ZTV
- Figure 03: Landscape Designations
- Figure 04: LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Level 3 Classification
- Figure 05: LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Overall Evaluation VS50
- Figure 06: LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Scenic Evaluation VS46
- Figure 07: LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Character Evaluation VS48
- Figure 08: LANDMAP Historic Landscape Level 3 Classification
- Figure 09: LANDMAP Historic Landscape Overall Evaluation HL40
- Figure 10: LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Level 3 Classification
- Figure 11: LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Rarity Evaluation CL33
- Figure 12: LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Group Evaluation CL35
- Figure 13: LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Overall Evaluation CL40
- Figure 14: LANDMAP Geological Landscape Level 3 Classification
- Figure 15: LANDMAP Geological Landscape Overall Evaluation GL33
- Figure 16- [LANDMAP Geological Landscape Rarity & Uniqueness Evaluation GL31
- Figure 17: LANDMAP Landscape Character Areas
- Figure 18: Viewpoint 1: Higher Lane
- Figure 19: Viewpoint 2: Wales Coast Path
- Figure 20: Viewpoint 3: Wales Coast Path – Snaple Point

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared by Soltys Brewster on behalf of Coastal Housing Group in association with Edenstone Homes Ltd and assesses the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the landscape, in terms of its effect on character and visual amenity within a study area that is defined and described below.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this study, landscape is defined as “an area perceived by people, whose character is the result of the interaction of natural and/ or human factors” (Council of Europe, 2000).
- 1.3 The elements that are assessed within this chapter include elements of:
 - Residential development, comprising of up to 31 new homes, two and three storeys in height;
 - An area of open space including footpaths.
- 1.4 This LVIA describes and evaluates the existing landscape character and visual amenity, assessing the potential physical effects of the proposed development, including the effect of the proposed development on landscape character and visual amenity within the study area. The assessment covers the construction and operation phases of the proposed development.
- 1.5 The method used follows an accepted approach derived from the published guidance, as outlined below. The guidance is not prescriptive, but recognises that every proposed development will require its own set of criteria and thresholds, tailored to suit local condition and circumstances. In the case of this particular assessment, the approach followed recognises the specific attributes and scale of the proposed development and distinctive characteristics of the surrounding landscapes.

2.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 A review of relevant key statutory and non-statutory landscape planning designations and policies has been carried out as part of this assessment.
- 2.2 Landscape planning designations and policies indicate the value that national and local government, as well as statutory parties, attach to various landscapes or landscape features within a geographic area. Figure 7.3 illustrates the location and context of the application site in relation to landscape policy and designations that lie within the 3km study area.
- 2.3 A brief review of the key landscape relevant planning policy provisions for Swansea Council has been undertaken and the key LDP policy that is of relevance to landscape related issues is summarised below.

Swansea Local Development Plan 2010-2025 (January 2019)

- 2.4 The LDP indicates that the application site is identified as allocated local needs housing exception site H 5.6 Land at Higher Lane, Langland.
- 2.5 Place Making and Development Policy PS 2: Place making and Place Management states:

“Development must enhance the quality of places and spaces, and respond positively to aspects of local context and character that contribute towards a sense of place.

The design, layout and orientation of proposed buildings, and the spaces between them, must provide for an attractive, legible and safe environment, and ensure that no significant adverse impacts would be caused to people’s amenity.

Depending on the nature, scale and siting of the proposal, development must also:

- *Have regard to important elements of local heritage, culture, landscape, townscape, views and vistas;*
- *Ensure neighbourhoods benefit from an appropriate diversity of land uses, community facilities and mix of densities that in combination are capable of sustaining vibrancy;*
- *Create or enhance opportunities for Active Travel and greater use of public transport;*
- *Integrate effectively with the County’s network of multi-functional open spaces and enhance the County’s green infrastructure network;*
- *Enhance public realm quality, incorporating public art where appropriate;*
- *Provide for a hierarchy of interconnected streets and spaces;*
- *Ensure active frontages onto streets and spaces to provide natural surveillance and character;*
- *Provide an accessible environment for all;*

- Provide appropriate parking and circulation areas for cars, cycles, motor bikes and service vehicles;
- Deliver new, and/or enhance existing, connections to essential social infrastructure and community facilities;
- Maximise opportunities for sustainable construction, resource efficiency and contributions towards increased renewable or low carbon energy generation;
- Avoid the loss of land and/or premises that should be retained for its existing use or as an area of open space;
- Avoid unacceptable juxtaposition and/or conflict between residential and non-residential uses;
- Ensure no significant adverse impact on natural heritage and built heritage assets;
- Ensure resilience is not undermined and does not result in significant risk to human health, well-being or quality of life; and
- Ensure that commercial proposals, including change of use proposals:
 - a. incorporate active frontages and shopfront designs that make a positive contribution to the streetscene,
 - b. provide appropriate enclosure,
 - c. relate well to the character of the host building,
 - d. do not compromise the ability to deliver priority regeneration schemes.”

2.6 Housing Policy H5: Local Needs Housing Exception Sites states:

“Sites are allocated at the following locations for local needs housing to meet an identified social and/or economic need:

H 5. 1 Land at Monksland Road, Scurlage

H 5. 2 Land to the east of Gowerton Road, Three Crosses

H 5. 3 Land adjoining Tirmynydd Road, Three Crosses

H 5. 4 Land adjoining Pennard Drive, Pennard

H 5. 5 Land at Summerland Lane, Newton

H 5. 6 Land at Higher Lane, Langland

Development proposals for the six allocated Exception Sites must provide:

- A minimum of 51% (the majority proportion) Affordable Housing for Local Needs; and
- A maximum of 49% (the minority proportion enabling Local Needs Market Housing that meets an identified housing need within the Locality by providing an appropriate range of dwelling sizes, types and design specifications having regard to evidence of financial viability.

The occupancy of the Local Needs Market Housing will be restricted to “persons with a local connection” to be used as “their only or principal home” and will be formally tied to planning consent by means of legal agreements and/or conditions. Proposals that do not provide an appropriate number and range of dwellings to meet the identified social and/or economic needs of “persons with a local connection” within the Locality will not be permitted.”

2.7 Historic and Cultural Environment Policy HC1: Historic and Cultural Environment states:

“The County’s distinctive historic and cultural environment will be preserved or enhanced by:

- *Requiring high quality design standards in all development proposals to respond positively to local character and distinctiveness;*
- *Identifying and safeguarding heritage assets, sites and their settings;*
- *Supporting heritage and cultural led regeneration schemes;*
- *Safeguarding and promoting use of the Welsh language.”*

2.8 Ecosystem and Resilience Policy ER 2: Strategic Green Infrastructure Network states:

“Development will be required to maintain or enhance the extent, quality and connectivity of the County’s multi-functional green infrastructure network, and where appropriate:

- *Create new interconnected areas of green infrastructure between the proposed site and the existing strategic network;*
- *Fill gaps in the existing network to improve connectivity; and/or*
- *In instances where loss of green infrastructure is unavoidable, provide mitigation and compensation for the lost assets.”*

2.9 Ecosystem and Resilience Policy ER 3: Green Belt and Green Wedges states:

“A Green Belt is designated on land between Penllergaer/Kingsbridge and Gowerton/Waunarlwydd/Fforestfach, in order to ensure the land is permanently protected for its openness and to define the absolute limit of the adjoining settlement boundaries.

Green Wedges are allocated between, or within, the following settlements:

- *Birchgrove and Glais*
- *Bishopston and Newton*

- *Dunvant and Three Crosses*
- *Gowerton/Waunarlwydd and Dunvant*
- *Penclawdd and Blue Anchor*
- *Penllergaer and Pontlliw*
- *Penyrheol and Grovesend*

Within the designated Green Belt and Green Wedge areas development will only be permitted if it maintains the openness and character of the land, and limited to:

- *Justified development in association with agriculture, nature conservation, forestry or other rural enterprise;*
- *Essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation or cemetery use;*
- *Limited extension, alteration or restricted replacement of existing dwellings;*
- *Small scale farm diversification;*
- *The re-use of existing permanent/substantial buildings; or*
- *Other uses of land and forms of development that maintain the openness of the Green Belt or Green Wedge and do not conflict with the purpose of the designation to prevent coalescence.*

2.10 Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) ER4 states:

Within the AONB, development must have regard to the purpose of the designation to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. In assessing the likely impact of development proposals on the natural beauty of the AONB, cumulative impact will also be taken into consideration.

Development must:

- i. *Not have a significant adverse impact on the natural assets of the AONB or the resources and ecosystem services on which the local economy and well-being of the area depends;*
- ii. *Contribute to the social and economic well-being of the local community;*
- iii. *Be of a scale, form, design, density and intensity of use that is compatible with the character of the AONB;*
- iv. *Be designed to an appropriately high standard in order to integrate with the existing landscape and where feasible enhance the landscape quality; and*
- v. *Demonstrate how it contributes to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB.*

Development proposals that are outside, but closely interlinked with the AONB must not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the natural beauty of the AONB.

2.11 Ecosystem and Resilience Policy ER 11: Trees and Development states:

“Development that would adversely affect trees, woodlands and hedgerows of public amenity, natural/cultural heritage value, or that provide important ecosystem services will not normally be permitted.

Ancient Woodland, Ancient Woodland Sites, Ancient and Veteran trees merit specific protection and development will not normally be permitted that would result in:

- *Fragmentation or loss of Ancient Woodland;*
- *The loss of an Ancient or Veteran tree;*
- *Ground damage, loss of understorey or ground disturbance to an area of Ancient Woodland or Ancient or Veteran Tree’s root protection area;*
- *A reduction in the area of other semi natural habitats adjoining Ancient Woodland;*
- *Significant alteration to the land use adjoining the Ancient Woodland;*
- *An increase in the likely exposure of Ancient Woodland, Ancient or Veteran Tree to air, water or light pollution from the surrounding area;*
- *Alteration of the hydrology in a way that might impact on Ancient Woodland, Ancient or Veteran Trees;*
- *Destruction of important connecting habitats relating to Ancient Woodland;*
- *Degradation of important archaeological or historical features within Ancient Woodland or associated with Ancient or Veteran trees;*
- *Destruction of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS); and/or*
- *Development within 15m of Ancient Woodland.”*

2.12 Countryside and Village Development Policy CV 2: Development in the Countryside states:

“Outside defined settlement boundaries development will be required to ensure that the integrity of the countryside is conserved and enhanced.

There is a presumption against development in the countryside, except where it is for:

- *The purposes of agriculture, forestry or other rural enterprise;*
- *A rural exception site for housing;*

- *A single dwelling or a pair of semi-detached dwellings for affordable housing to meet local need within an appropriate group of dwellings in the countryside;*
- *One Planet Development;*
- *Necessary infrastructure provision; or*
- *Recreational equine activities.*

Countryside development must be of a sustainable form with prudent management of natural resources and respect for the cultural heritage of the area.

Wherever possible, existing buildings should be re-used or adapted and if this is not feasible new buildings should be located within or close to existing groups of buildings.

One Planet Development will not be supported in protected landscapes.”

- 2.13 Transport Movement and Connectivity Policy T7: Public Rights of Way and Recreational Routes states:

“Development that significantly adversely affects the character, safety, enjoyment and convenient use of a Public Right of Way (PROW) will only be permitted where an acceptable alternative route is identified and provided.

Linkages, and where appropriate extensions, to the existing PROW network will be expected from all new developments, which must have regard to the existing character of the PROW and the aspiration to improve access for all.”

Gower AONB Design Guide – November 2011

- 2.14 Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), the guide sets out the good design objectives to be followed by all in the design and development process, to ensure that development respects the distinctive character of both the natural and built environment of the Gower. There are five main themes to the guide, one of which describes the existing landscape, settlement and built environment character of the AONB. The guide is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for development within the AONB.

Gower AONB Management Plan – 2017

- 2.15 The Gower AONB Management Plan is a statutory five year management plan that sets out the vision for the AONB. Chapter 3 of the plan describes the likely activities and pressures that are expected over the next 20 years.

3.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Relevant Guidance

- 3.1 The assessment of Landscape and Visual Impacts of the proposed development was undertaken using a methodology developed by Soltys Brewster Consulting and drawn from the following guidance:
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition' (2013): The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
- 3.2 In making judgements on effects, the LVIA makes reference to mapped and documented baseline information and uses photographs and field survey work, together with the professional judgement of experienced landscape assessors. It draws together existing desktop information which is then verified and supplemented by survey work in the field.
- 3.3 The desktop study includes a review of relevant planning policy and existing published landscape character assessments in order to identify any elements or parts of the defined study area which are recognised for their landscape or visual qualities.
- 3.4 Potential significant landscape and visual effects are assessed as separate but linked issues. Both require a combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation. The magnitude of landscape effects is derived from the extent to which physical changes to the landscape cause a change in landscape character and how the landscape is valued. Visual effects are related to changes in the composition of views and people's perception of (and responses to) these physical changes.
- 3.5 For both landscape and visual effects the significance of effects is derived from the assessment of landscape value, sensitivity and magnitude of change and informed by experienced professional judgement.
- 3.6 It is important to recognise that the landscape is constantly evolving, and that opinions on the merits or adverse effects of a proposed development is highly subjective. Change brought about by a proposed development is neither positive nor negative in itself, it is only variation. Whether such change should be considered beneficial or adverse is a matter of judgement. Such judgements are derived from the observer's perceptions. It is likely that there will be a range of perceptions/responses toward any development - which, in some circumstances, may range from the strongly positive to the strongly negative.
- 3.7 For the purposes of this assessment, compliance with EIA Regulations requires that EIA must consider the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long term, permanent, temporary, positive and negative effects of the development. Accordingly, in conducting this assessment, judgements have been made as to the assessor's consideration of whether the likely significant effects of the proposed development are judged to be positive (beneficial), negative (adverse) or neutral in their consequences for landscape or for visual amenity. Judgements have been made and set out in a transparent manner, accepting that this part of the assessment process is particularly subjective. Assessment recognises that there can be an equally

justifiable and legitimate contrary opinion, in some circumstances; however the opinions set out in this assessment are genuinely held and based on professional judgement. GLVIA3 states the following:

“The importance of perceptions of landscape is emphasised by the European Landscape Convention, and others may of course hold difference opinions on whether the effects are positive or negative, but this is not a reason to avoid making this judgement, which will ultimately be weighed against the opinions of others in the decision-making process”¹

Study Area

- 3.8 There is no prescriptive guidance on the size of the study area for the type of development that is being proposed. However, a study area of 3km from the centre of the application site boundary is considered to be an appropriate size of study area for this LVIA, reflecting the likely visual envelope and extent of Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) which may be significantly affected either directly or indirectly by the proposed development.

Desk Study

- 3.9 The desktop study included a review of published OS maps, relevant planning policies and existing landscape character assessments, including LANDMAP 2018/2019 data. This desk-based exercise allowed for the identification of broad, distinct, recognisable and common character areas within the 3km radius study area. These are referred to as Landscape Character Areas (LCAs).

Site Visits

- 3.10 Site visits to undertake viewpoint photography were undertaken in December 2018 and April 2019.

Identification of Landscape Character Areas

- 3.11 The boundaries to LCAs are identified through physical features that may include interactions between different elements such as geology, soils, vegetation and current human influences, plus non-physical features such as historical and cultural associations and references.
- 3.12 Information contained within Natural Resources Wales (NRW) LANDMAP 2018/2019 data for the five Aspect Layers (Cultural Landscape, Geological Landscape, Historic Landscapes, Landscape Habitats and Visual and Sensory) provides the basis for LCAs. Data within the Aspect Layers is combined with field work assessment to define the LCAs.
- 3.13 The indicative methodology set out in NRW LANDMAP Guidance Note 3² establishes an approach to refining an informed list of Aspect Areas to be analysed in detail in baseline assessment. Refinement/ filtering aims to identify Aspect Areas for further investigation and eliminate those Aspect Areas where detailed assessment is not necessary, in accordance with Table 1. Guidance recognises that determining relevant LANDMAP aspect areas to examine further should be based

¹ Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition' (2013) Page 88, paragraph 5.37

² Natural Resources Wales, LANDMAP Guidance Note 3: Guidance for Wales – Using LANDMAP for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of Onshore Wind Turbines (May 2013)

on professional judgement and assessment of available information on a case by case basis, appropriate to the scale and circumstances of the individual assessment.

- 3.14 For the purposes of this assessment, a 3km radius study area has been defined for all five Aspect Layers. The first stage of the assessment is to map all aspect areas within the study area boundary.
- 3.15 Aspect Areas attributed lower evaluation classifications are eliminated from further analysis, retaining those Aspect Areas with higher evaluations for detailed assessment. Aspect Areas that are immediately adjacent to and contained within the application site boundary are most likely to undergo significant change as a result of the proposed development. Therefore these aspect areas are included within the assessment.
- 3.16 The criteria for refining assessment of LANDMAP Aspect Areas is summarised within Table 1 below.

Table 1: Filtering of LANDMAP Areas

Aspect	Evaluation Filtering of Aspect Areas for main focus of study	Figures illustrating thematic maps to inform study
Cultural Landscape	Aspect Areas within or adjacent to the site. Within the Visual Envelope and with outstanding and high evaluation in rarity and group value evaluation criteria	Figures 10-13
Geological Landscape	Aspect Areas within or adjacent to the site and outstanding and high overall evaluation	Figures 14-16
Historic Landscape	Aspect Areas within or adjacent to the site. Within the Visual Envelope and with outstanding and high overall evaluation	Figures 8-9
Landscape Habitats	Aspect Areas within or adjacent to the site and with outstanding and high overall evaluation	N/A
Visual and Sensory	Aspect Areas within or adjacent to the site. Within the Visual Envelope and with outstanding and high overall evaluation plus those with moderate overall evaluation, where scenic quality and/ or character criteria are high or outstanding	Figures 4-7

- 3.17 In addition to the approach outlined above, Aspect Areas containing viewpoint locations are considered to also contain key visual receptors and therefore are also included within the assessment irrespective of their evaluation.
- 3.18 Following this filtering, those Aspect Areas identified for detailed assessment (as illustrated in Figures 4 - 16) are overlaid and combined to create LCAs (as illustrated in Figures 17). The process of combining Aspect Areas involves the amalgamation and division of Aspect Areas to create distinct LCA boundaries, which reflect the interaction between the five LANDMAP Aspect Layers. In combining Aspect Areas, Visual and Sensory Aspect Area boundaries are regarded as the starting point for defining LCAs, further refined by the other four Aspect Layers as appropriate.

Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character

- 3.19 Landscape effects may include direct physical changes to landscape elements caused by the proposed development (e.g. development within the application site boundary) or indirect effects (e.g. effects on the character, quality and setting of a particular landscape) that may arise as a consequence of the construction of the proposed development. The potential landscape effects across the study area are identified by the on-site analysis and verification of landscape character information that is established during the baseline assessment. The landscape assessment criteria described below provide a framework for the assessment of landscape effects. It must be noted that there may be exceptions to these broad categories due to specific local characteristics that may apply in individual circumstances.
- 3.20 The first stage of the assessment establishes the existing character, value and susceptibility of landscape receptors to change.

Landscape Value

- 3.21 The value attributed to the landscape is an important factor to be considered when assessing the sensitivity of a given landscape.
- 3.22 The value of each of the LCAs is derived through field work assessment, desktop assessments and the application of information contained within NRW LANDMAP 2018/2019 data.
- 3.23 The value can then be determined by applying the criteria shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Definition of Landscape Value

Level of Value	Definition
Outstanding	Landscapes, which are outstanding by nature of their scenic quality, which are aesthetically pleasing with a strong sense of place and may be rare in terms of their character type. They may be located away from centres of population, with an undeveloped character and may be difficult to access due to topography. They may also contain sites of historic, cultural, geological or natural habitat importance. These areas may be important tourist destinations and may be of national or international importance as defined by statutory designations.

High	Landscapes with scenes of picturesque quality, which are aesthetically pleasing. They may be located near to centres of population, with some development evident though not dominant. Access may be restricted due to topography. They may also contain sites of historic, cultural, geological or natural habitat importance. These areas may be tourist destinations e.g. Blue Flag Beach and may be of regional or county importance as defined by statutory and local authority designations e.g. Special Landscape Areas.
Moderate	Landscapes with picturesque attributes, which are aesthetically pleasing. Some characteristic features remain unaffected but others are fragmented and/or spoilt. They may be close or within centres of population, with few restrictions to access. The area may have some tourist associations, though tourism is not the primary attraction. Area may contain a network of valued habitats, historic or geological features. These areas may be of local importance as defined by local authority designations.
Low	Landscapes with limited aesthetically pleasing scenes. Few characteristics remain unaffected and may be highly fragmented or spoilt. Very little coherent character and a weak sense of place and are unlikely to be rare in terms of character type. They may be located within centres of population, with easy access. They are unlikely to contain tourist attractions, or to be of local importance as defined by local authority designations.

Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors to Change

3.24 The susceptibility of landscape receptors to the type of change or development proposed is described within GLVIA3 as “the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/ condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/ or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/ or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies” .³

3.25 The relationship between the various landscape character components assists in defining if, and how, the proposed development may be placed in the landscape. It also allows choices to be made on informing design, which will vary according to the characteristics of the receiving landscape. The susceptibility to change of a given landscape is particular to both the specific landscape in question and the specific nature of proposed development⁴. Susceptibility to change of the study area’s component LCA is appraised within this assessment. The range of factors considered include:

- The nature of existing features within the landscape, including the presence of any large scale developments;
- Landscape pattern and scale;
- Stability, robustness and fragility of landscape attributes and ability to be restored;

³ Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition’ (2013) Page 88, paragraph 5.40

⁴ Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition’ (2013) Page 89, paragraph 5.42

- Visual enclosure/ the openness of views within the landscape and visual attributes including the distribution and number of receptors, static and transitory receptors, scope for visual mitigation;
- The condition of the landscape, including the maintenance of individual elements such as beaches, promenades, piers, hedgerows, buildings, woodland;
- The nature of the proposed development, its component parts and character; and
- The extent to which sensitive design consideration and mitigation limit the degree of change.

Table 3: Definition of Susceptibility to Change of Landscape Receptors

Level of Susceptibility	Definition
High	A landscape where the majority of attributes are unlikely to withstand change without causing a change to overall character to the extent that it would be difficult or impossible to restore following construction of the proposed development. Planning policies and/ or strategies may be in place relating to this landscape which impose a presumption against development of the type proposed.
Moderate	A landscape with a combination of attributes that is capable of absorbing some degree of change, following construction of the proposed development, without affecting overall character or resulting undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.
Low	A landscape where the majority of attributes are robust and/ or tolerant of change to the extent that the proposed development would have little or no effect on overall character or maintenance of the baseline situation. It is likely to be easily restored. Development of the type proposed may assist in the achievement of planning policies and/or strategies relating to this landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity

3.26 An assessment of sensitivity is made to determine the degree to which each LCA can accommodate the proposed development or change without unacceptable detrimental impacts on its character. In this assessment ‘sensitivity’ is defined as the stability of character and resilience of the landscape to withstand change and the ability to recuperate from loss or damage due to this change. This is based on a consideration of the interaction between different landscape attributes identified during the process of assessing and recording landscape character.

3.27 The relationship between the various landscape character components assists in defining if, and how, the proposed development may be suitably placed in the landscape. Key landscape attributes that are likely to influence the sensitivity of a given landscape include:

- **Geometry and Landform:** Includes scale and enclosure and whether the landscape is open or enclosed.
- **Man-made Influence:** Some landscapes may contain existing, large-scale elements, such as buildings, structures and transport infrastructure, particularly along the coastline, which indicate the extent to which the character is already shaped by man. A mix of different man-made elements may lead to visual confusion or interruption but landscapes which are already heavily influenced by man-made elements may also be less sensitive to development;
- **Features of Interest:** The presence of natural and cultural heritage features, such as designated habitats, archaeological sites, and specific cultural associations and landmarks which serve to make a landscape particularly special or unique;
- **Rarity:** The frequency, or density, of rare or unusual landscape features which serve to make a landscape particularly special or unique;
- **Tranquillity:** Influenced by the presence of transport routes (including movement, noise), built form, lighting, remoteness, exposure and wilderness.
- **Quality:** Influenced by the physical state of the existing landscape, its intactness and its ability to repair after loss, and;
- **Value:** The value attributed to the landscape is an important factor to be considered when assessing the sensitivity of a given landscape.

3.28 The consideration of each of the key attributes described above in conjunction with susceptibility to change enables a considered judgement to be made on the level of sensitivity to be apportioned to each defined LCA within the study area. Table 4 outlines the general principles that are used to inform and guide the assessment of landscape sensitivity:

Table 4: Definition of Sensitivity of Landscape Character

Level of Sensitivity	Definition
High	A landscape that is very likely to be highly susceptible to the proposed change, and of outstanding or high value due to its special or unique qualities that are likely to be defining the baseline characteristics of the landscape. Conflicting man-made influences are likely to be absent or very minimal. Receptors are more likely to be of rarity, exceptional quality or of natural or cultural heritage interest at a national level

<p>High - Moderate</p>	<p>A landscape that is likely to be of high or moderate susceptibility to the proposed change, and of high or moderate value due to its intrinsic landscape characteristics. Conflicting man-made influences are likely to be minimal. Receptors are likely to be of some rarity, high quality or of some natural or cultural heritage interest at a regional level</p>
<p>Moderate</p>	<p>A landscape that is likely to be of moderate or low susceptibility to the proposed change, and could be of high or moderate value due to its intrinsic landscape characteristics. Conflicting man-made influences may be present. Receptors are likely to be of limited rarity, moderate quality or of some natural or cultural heritage interest at a local level</p>
<p>Moderate - Low</p>	<p>A landscape that is likely to be of moderate or low susceptibility to the proposed change, and of moderate or low value due to indistinct landscape characteristics. Conflicting man-made influences are likely to be evident. Receptors are likely to be relatively commonplace, of moderate or low quality or of limited natural or cultural heritage interest at a local level</p>
<p>Low</p>	<p>A landscape that is likely to be of low susceptibility to the proposed change, and of moderate or low value due to poorly defined or eroded landscape characteristics. Conflicting man-made influences are likely to be present and could be a defining baseline characteristic. Receptors are likely to be commonplace, of moderate or low quality or of no natural or cultural heritage interest. Low sensitivity may also occur where the proposed change is remote or isolated from a particular landscape, including higher value landscapes</p>

Assessment of Impacts on Landscape Character

3.29 Landscape effects may include direct physical changes to landscape elements caused by the proposed development such as development affecting individual components of the landscape within a LCA or indirect effects, such as effects on the character, quality and setting of a particular landscape that may arise as a consequence of the construction of the proposed development. The potential landscape effects across the study area are identified by the on-site analysis and verification of landscape character information that is established during the baseline assessment. The landscape assessment criteria described below provide a framework for the assessment of landscape effects. It must be noted that there may be exceptions to these broad categories due to specific local characteristics that may apply in individual circumstances.

Magnitude of Effects on Landscape Character

3.30 The magnitude of effects on the landscape character is defined as the degree of change that will result from the introduction of the proposed development. It is dependent on a number of factors, including:

- The degree to which landscape character elements will be altered by the proposed development;
- The extent of the proposed development visible within the landscape;
- The relationship of the proposed development to adjoining land uses and the wider landscape context;
- Whether effects are ‘direct’ or ‘indirect’;
- The distance of the proposed development from a specified landscape character area; and
- The duration, permanence and extent of the impact in physical and visual terms.

3.31 The nature of effects is deemed as being either short-term (less than 5 years) medium-term (5 – 10 years) or long term (10 years plus) in timescale. Table 5 outlines the general principles that are used to inform and guide the definition of the magnitude of landscape effects:

Table 5: Definition of Magnitude of Landscape Effects

Level of Magnitude	Definition
High	The proposed development would be immediately apparent and would result in major loss or major alteration to key elements of the landscape character to the extent that there is a fundamental and permanent, or long-term, change to landscape character. The change may occur over an extensive area.
Moderate	The proposed development would be apparent in views and would result in the loss or alteration to key elements of the landscape character to the extent that there is a partial long-term change to landscape character. The change may occur over a limited area.
Low	The proposed development would result in minor loss or alteration to key elements of landscape character to the extent that there may be some slight perception of change to landscape character. The change may be temporary and occur over a limited area.

Negligible	The proposed development would result in such a minor loss or alteration to key elements of landscape character that there would be no fundamental change.
-------------------	--

Significance of Landscape Effects

- 3.32 The significance of landscape effects are dependent on the points considered within the landscape sensitivity appraisal, the factors that influence the magnitude of change upon it, and the relationship between landscape sensitivity and magnitude of landscape change.
- 3.33 Table 6 outlines the general principles that are used to inform and guide the definition of the significance of landscape effects.

Table 6: Definition of Significance of Landscape Effects

Level of Effects	Definition
Major	The proposed development may have direct effects upon characteristic landscape features, altering elements of the landscape that contribute toward distinct character. The Proposed development is likely to become a defining landscape element. Effects of this nature are likely to be contained within the character area in which the Proposed development is located.
Moderate	The proposed development may be a characteristic component of the landscape character, the alteration of which may influence key attributes to the extent that changes to the character of the landscape are easily noticeable, although the development would not become the defining landscape element. The proposed development may be a distinct feature within views from the landscape, or influential although not defining, of the landscape character. The proposed development may be easily noticeable but landscape character would remain less defined by the development than by other landscape attributes.
Minor	If the proposed development could be integrated within the existing site area without the loss of essential landscape features which contribute to landscape character and quality.
Negligible	Where the proposed development can be integrated into the existing landscape, without the loss of key underlying

	landscape attributes. The proposed development would have little, or no, effect on existing landscape character.
--	--

3.34 LCAs from where effects are determined to have major landscape significance are also considered to be significant and conversely any LCAs where it is determined that landscape effects have no significance, are also considered to be not significant.

3.35 Where effects are determined to be of moderate visual significance, whether these effects are significant or not significant will depend on the individual and specific mitigating circumstances from LCA. For example, the proposed development may affect a small proportion of the overall character area, however from the area where it is visible it is considered to be of higher sensitivity than that of the character area as a whole. Therefore while overall effects may be considered moderate, due to the high sensitivity of the landscape from where the development may be visible, effects would be considered significant, as opposed to not significant from other locations within the character area, which are considered to be less sensitive.

3.36 The subjective nature of landscape is acknowledged within current guidance⁵. As such, categorisation of landscape effects as positive or negative is difficult to achieve. It is also possible for effects to be neutral in their consequences on the landscape. An informed discussion is provided within Landscape Assessment on the nature of effects and whether they may be considered to be beneficial, neutral or adverse. Commentary may include consideration of:

- The degree to which the proposal fits with existing character; and
- The contribution to the landscape that the development may make in its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to existing character.

Baseline Visual Assessment

3.37 Visual effects result from changes in the landscape and are defined as "*changes in the appearance of the landscape or seascape, and the impacts of those changes on people*"⁶. Therefore the assessment of effects on visual amenity is concerned with the proposed development and the change that it may have on views, how it is perceived by sensitive receptors (i.e. different groups of people), any change in the focus of views and the overall change in visual amenity. The methodology used to assess the significance of visual effects is described below.

Production of Viewpoint Photographs

3.38 All viewpoint photographs were taken with a Canon EOS 5D Mark II full frame digital camera, with a fixed lens focal length of 50mm and at a height of 1.6 metres above ground level on a professional

⁵ Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition' (2013) Page 88, paragraph 5.37

⁶ Guidance on the Assessment of the Impact of Offshore Wind Farms - Seascape and Visual Impact, (2005) pg. 7:DTI

tripod for true horizontal alignment of photographic frames. The photographs for each viewpoint were then merged together to form panoramic views.

- 3.39 The viewpoint photographs within this LVIA were all produced by Soltys Brewster Consulting.

Visual Envelope Mapping

- 3.40 A Visual Envelope diagram has been produced to illustrate the screening effects of above ground elements (e.g. woodlands, trees, hedgerows and built structure). Visual Envelope mapping is a manual approach, which requires standing within the application site and looking out to identify and map the land that is visible from that and other points within the application site. This can establish the outer limit or 'Visual Envelope' of the land that may be visually connected with the proposal. It is common that views are limited within some specific areas of this Envelope, for example where topography dips and then rises again, allowing visibility, often concealing views of lower laying areas, or screened by vegetation. These areas are not typically excluded from the visual envelope. The Visual Envelope diagram is considered during baseline visual analysis, discussed in paragraphs 4.58 – 4.63 below. The Visual Envelope is illustrated on Figure 2.

Visual Analysis Mapping

- 3.41 To establish the potential extent of visibility of the proposed development, computer generated image have been produced (refer to Figure 2). Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) diagrams are created using digital terrain data provided by Ordnance Survey and specialist software. The ZTV shows in map form where all or parts of the proposed development are potentially visible in worst case form ie based on landform alone without taking into account intervening vegetation or development. From the ZTV, potential locations can be identified within the study area from where further assessment in the field is necessary to determine the limits of visibility once surface features such as vegetation and buildings are taken into account.

Assessment of Effects on Visual Amenity

- 3.42 In order to assess the significance of visual effects, viewpoints were selected from within the 3km study area to represent various receptor groups. These viewpoints included locations frequented by members of the public such as public footpaths, transport routes, and areas that contain public amenities and popular tourist attractions.
- 3.43 Viewpoints frequented by members of the public, such as public rights of way, popular visitor attractions, car parks, and views from settlements, as well as viewpoints located in particularly scenic areas, are favoured because these are likely to represent a greater concentration of sensitive visual receptors. Viewpoints from which the proposed development is likely to be prominent have also been favoured. This is in accordance with current best practice and guidance.
- 3.44 When carrying out viewpoint surveys, the nature of the view was recorded as well as whether partial or full views of the proposed development would be experienced, whether views were static or transitory, how prominent the proposed development may be, and whether large numbers of properties or viewers will experience the view. A desk based analysis was also undertaken in order

to establish the range of potential sensitive receptors that may experience the proposed development from a particular viewpoint.

- 3.45 Additionally, for practical reasons, viewpoints have to be selected from publicly accessible locations and not from private land or property. It is accepted that views may differ from individual private property. However, in residential areas efforts are made to select public locations that will depict a view that represents a particular residential neighbourhood.

Assessment of Viewpoints

- 3.46 From each viewpoint, assessment of the existing view and potential changes that will result from the proposed development will be completed in the field. The impact of the proposed development on the existing view has been assessed using the criteria as set out below. The following elements are considered in the description and assessment of visual effects from each viewpoint:

- The existing visual character and quality of the viewpoint (including whether it is within a designated landscape, the presence of visual detractors, etc.);
- The character of the existing landscape against which the proposed development would be viewed including any screening provided by existing surface features, built form, vegetation and local topography;
- The viewpoint location, the presence and concentration of receptors, and receptor sensitivity (for example, will people view the development area during work or leisure activities, whilst in transit, etc.);
- The proportion of the proposed development that will be visible, its scale, distance from the viewpoint and position in the view in relation to other features within the view including adjacent land uses and pattern of land cover;
- The duration of the potential impact, i.e. is it long term or temporary, continuous or transitory (the latter meaning that the receptor would be exposed to the effects for a short time); and
- Whether effects will occur during construction of the proposed development.

Evaluation of Visual Sensitivity

- 3.47 The sensitivity of visual receptors is dependent on susceptibility to change of the person or group of people likely to be affected, and the value attached to particular views⁷.

⁷ Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition' (2013) Page 113, paragraph 6.31
 Coastal Housing Group
 in association with Edenstone Homes Ltd
Thistleboon, Swansea
 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

20

November 2019
 1873202 - SBC - 00 - NA - RP - L - 103

Susceptibility to Change of Visual Receptors

3.48 The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views relates to their occupation or activity whilst experiencing the view and the resultant extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and the visual amenity experienced⁸.

Table 7: Definition of Susceptibility to Change of Visual Receptors

Level of Susceptibility	Definition
High	May typically include residents of properties, including private houses, caravans, B&Bs, guest houses and hotels where the main view is orientated towards the proposed development, or people undertaking recreation where the landscape within which the development is seen as the primary reason for attraction or reason for visit (e.g. tourists, walkers and hikers on recognised footpaths, open access land, rights of way and promenades, scenic route users, yachts and inshore recreational boat users). Receptors are more likely to be within a designated landscape and could be attracted to visit more frequently, or stay for longer, by virtue of the view.
Moderate	May typically include outdoor workers (e.g. fishermen, farmers) and people undertaking recreational pursuits where the landscape within which the proposed development is seen is not the primary reason for attraction (e.g. golf, water based sports, historic sites). May also include residents of properties where the proposed development would form an ancillary view. Receptors are less likely to be within a designated landscape and could be attracted to visit more frequently or stay for longer by virtue of the facilities and features of the particular attraction rather than by the value of the view.
Low	May typically include people travelling through the landscape by car, train, bus, ferry etc; people in community facilities, industrial/office/shop workers, Receptors are unlikely to be within a designated landscape and are most likely to be present at a given viewpoint by virtue of some other need or necessity unrelated to the appreciation of the landscape or visual value.

Value attached to Views

3.49 In determining visual sensitivity, professional judgements take into account the value attached to the view. Considerations are likely to include the recognised attributes of particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets or through planning designations. Further indicators may include an appearance on tourist maps, provision of facilities for enjoyment such as parking places,

⁸ Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition' (2013) Page 113, paragraph 6.32
 Coastal Housing Group
 in association with Edenstone Homes Ltd
Thistleboon, Swansea
 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

21

November 2019
 1873202 - SBC - 00 - NA - RP - L - 103

sign boards and interpretive materials. Where relevant these considerations are taken into account when making professional judgements regarding the sensitivity of visual receptors.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 3.50 The sensitivity of visual receptors is dependent on the susceptibility of the receptor to change and the value of the view, including other landscape elements within it. Table 8 outlines the general principles that are used to inform and guide the assessment of visual sensitivity at each viewpoint.

Table 8: Definition of Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Level of Sensitivity	Definition
High	Receptors highly responsive to new visual elements of the type proposed, by virtue of their location, nature and/or existing visual qualities and elements. Receptors will be highly susceptible to change and considered to be at a location of high value.
High - Moderate	Receptors responsive, but able to accommodate a small degree of new visual elements of the type proposed, by virtue of their location, nature and/or existing visual qualities and elements. Receptors may be highly susceptible to change and considered to be at a location of high value but not exclusively so.
Moderate	Receptors who are able to accommodate some new visual elements of the type proposed, by virtue of their location, nature and/or existing visual qualities and elements. Receptors may be susceptible to change, although less likely to be at a location of recognised value.
Moderate - Low	Receptors are able to accommodate a high degree of new visual elements of the type proposed, by virtue of their location, nature and/or existing visual qualities and elements. Receptors may be susceptible to change, although less likely to be at a location of recognised value.
Low	Receptors where new visual elements of the type proposed may be readily accommodated, by virtue of location, nature and/or existing visual qualities and elements. Receptors are not likely to be highly susceptible to change or at a location of recognised value.

Magnitude of Visual Effects

- 3.51 The magnitude of impact on visual amenity is defined as the degree of change that will result from the introduction of the proposed development. It is dependent on a number of factors, including:

- Distance between the proposed development and the receptor;
- Prominence of the proposed development in views;
- Extent visible;
- Proportion of the field of view occupied by the proposed development;
- Other development and built structures within the view;
- The backdrop to the proposed development in the view;
- Nature of the foreground in the view;
- Presence of existing retained features in the view; and
- Planned mitigation to reduce potential visual impact and to integrate the proposed development.

3.52 Magnitude of effects on visual amenity (i.e. views and visual appreciation and enjoyment of the landscape) is categorised as high, medium, low and negligible and is defined in Table 9.

Table 9: Definition of Magnitude of Visual Effects

Level of Magnitude	Definition
High	The proposed development would be an immediately apparent feature that would affect and change the overall appearance of the view and to which other features would become subordinate. The proposed development is likely to be visually dominant.
Moderate	The proposed development would form a recognisable new element within the overall view and would be readily observed without changing the overall nature of the view. Overall quality of the view may remain intact. The proposed development is likely to be visually prominent.
Low	The proposed development would form a component of the wider view that might be missed by the casual observer. Awareness of the proposed development would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the view. The proposed development is likely to be visible.
Negligible	The proposed development would be barely perceptible, or imperceptible, and would have no marked effect on the overall quality of the view.

Significance of Visual Effects

3.53 The significance of visual effects is dependent on the points considered within the appraisal of sensitive receptors, the factors that influence the magnitude of visual change, and the relationship between visual sensitivity and magnitude of visual change. Viewpoint assessment included an analysis of viewpoints, illustrating the nature of available views towards the proposed development from locations within the study area. The significance of impact from these locations has been measured against the criteria detailed in Table 10 below, which consider the context within which the proposed development is viewed and the ability of the landscape to absorb visual effects.

Table 10: Definition of Significance of Visual Effects

Level of Effects	Definition
Major	The proposed development would affect existing views to the extent that the existing defining visual elements will become subservient within the view. The proposed development may be seen as conflicting with existing visual character; however existing characteristic elements may be retained as reference points within the view. The degree which existing elements such as skylines, woodland blocks, built form, topography and other structural landscape features are retained will be considered in determining significance.
Moderate	The proposed development would result in alteration to landscape features which contribute to the existing visual character or quality, but the overall integrity of the landscape is maintained. The proposed development may be suitably absorbed or accommodated within the view alongside existing visual elements, without degrading the integrity of existing visual qualities.
Minor	The proposed development would be visually integrated within the existing landscape without the loss of essential landscape features which contribute to landscape character and quality.
Negligible	The proposed development would be integrated into the existing landscape without having a material effect upon the distinctive and valued characteristics of the existing view.

3.54 Viewpoint locations from where effects are determined to have major visual significance are also considered to be significant and conversely any locations where it is determined that visual effects have no visual significance, are also considered to be not significant.

3.55 Where effects are determined to be of moderate visual significance, whether these effects are significant or not significant will depend on the individual and specific mitigating circumstances from each viewpoint. For example effects from a viewpoint may be considered to be of moderate visual

significance; however the broad nature of the view in which the development would be seen may reduce these impacts to an extent where effects would still be considered to be moderate though not considered to be significant.

Landscape and Visual Contribution

3.56 The importance of perceptions of landscape is emphasised by the European Landscape Convention, and GLVIA3 recognises the need for judgements on whether effects are positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) to be weighed against the opinions of others in the decision-making process.

3.57 Within this assessment, when determining the significance of landscape and visual effects, a reasoned judgement has been included which sets out the assessor's conclusions on the beneficial or adverse nature of the effects. In response to this particularly subjective nature of this part of the assessment process, effort has been made to itemise the reasoned, professional judgements made. Typically, considerations might include:

- Does the scheme complement existing landscape elements and character?
- Is the scheme of importance to perceptions of cultural associations – for example, as a landmark hub for leisure or tourism?
- Are there social and/ or community benefits – such as through the creation of sense of local pride or cultural 'ownership' of the landscape?
- Does the scheme enhance local sense of place – for example through an improved public realm?
- Does the scheme contribute positively to a declining landscape? Or assist in securing positive landscape management objectives for the area?
- By nature and/ or design, does the scheme help address specific issues and/ or opportunities such as the restoration of derelict land, or opportunities for habitat enhancement?
- Does the scheme improve visual amenity? By virtue of the design qualities and visual elements of the scheme, is there visual assimilation with existing forms and qualities within views?
- Has the scheme responded to local landscape constraints, including protected landscapes and features?
- Does the scheme make the best possible use of existing landscape attributes and features – such as access points, structural vegetation, landforms and other elements of the application site?

3.58 Where the above considerations have influenced an iterative design process, appropriately responding to landscape and visual mitigation and enhancement opportunities it is possible that the landscape and visual effects of the proposed scheme may be considered beneficial. Adverse effects may arise where the above considerations have not been appropriately addressed. It is possible

that effects may be considered to be neutral where no fundamental change to landscape or visual qualities is expected, or where the weighing of beneficial and adverse contributions is considered to result in a neutral overall effect.

4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Study Area and Context

- 4.1 This section of the LVIA establishes the baseline landscape and visual character of the study area by drawing together existing desktop information such as maps, planning designations and historic references and verifying and expanding upon this information through site survey. The references to documents used within this section of the LVIA are listed at the end of this report.
- 4.2 The LVIA study covers a 3km radius from the centre of the application site (as illustrated in Figure 3: Landscape Designations) and lies within the administrative authority of Swansea County Council.
- 4.3 The study area is principally formed by the Bristol Channel and Swansea West, which takes in The Mumbles, Oystermouth, Newton, Langland, Limeslade, Norton and Thistleboon and is shaped by the distinctive rocky Mumbles Headland, Swansea Bay, Langland Bay and Caswell Bay.
- 4.4 To the north of the application site lays the residential properties of Channel View. Beyond lies further residential development and pocket green spaces, such as Thistleboon, the Mumbles and Underhill Park.
- 4.5 To west of the application site lies Beaufort Avenue and the residential development of Thistleboon. Beyond lays Langland Bay and Langland Bay Golf Club.
- 4.6 Beyond, to the north-west of the site lie a matrix of pastoral fields and the lowland common land of Clyne Common.
- 4.7 To the east lies a single residential house, 104 Higher Lane and pastoral fields. Beyond lies the far most southern extent of the residential development of the Mumbles, Mumbles Hill and Mumbles Head. To the south lie pastoral fields, with the rocky coastal cliffs beyond.

Transport Routes

- 4.8 There are no major transport corridors within the study area; the M4 is located some 12km north of the site at its closest point.
- 4.9 The A4067 Mumbles Road, which heads south through the centre of the study area along the coast line of Swansea Bay, forms part of the network of roads that connect the Mumbles and the Gower to the main body of Swansea and to the M4 to the north.
- 4.10 The B4436, which links the village of Murton to the main body of Swansea via Clyne Common and the A4067, just passes through the study area, to the far north-west. The B4593 links Caswell Bay to the A4067 via Newton and Oystermouth.
- 4.11 The study area is also crossed by a network of smaller roads and minor routes, linking the surrounding countryside, smaller settlements and farmsteads. These smaller roads and minor routes also include Higher Lane which forms the northern boundary of the site.

Settlements

- 4.12 The distribution of residential areas is predominantly in the centre and north-west areas of the study area. The study area is dominated by the dense settlement of Swansea West, which takes in The Mumbles, Oystermouth, Newton, Langland, Limeslade, Norton and Thistleboon.
- 4.13 The smaller settlements of Creswell and Mansfield area located approximately 2.3km to the west

and north-west respectively. Farmsteads and individual dwellings are typically evenly distributed throughout the remaining study area.

Topography

- 4.14 The application site is located on a gentle south-west facing slope, presenting the most open views to the south and west and to lesser degree the south-east. Overall within the application site from the south to the north-east there is a change in datum height of approximately 12 metres, peaking around 57metres AOD.
- 4.15 To the west the land generally falls forming the settlement of Langland and Langland Bay. To the east the land generally rises forming Mumbles Hill, both of which creates a strong coastal character to the area.

Land Use

- 4.16 The application site comprises part of Higher Lane and associated vereges, one field and a small section of a second much larger field. Both fields are broadly rectangular in shape and consisting of improved grassland. Combined the two fields are approximately 1.3ha in size. The site in total is approximately 1.47ha. The two fields are bound by a mix of mature trees, hedgerows, scrub planting and post and wire fence. Mature trees are more frequent along the western and south-western field boundaries.
- 4.17 To the north the application site boundary consists of the walled boundary of the properties along Channel View. A gappy hedgerow with semi mature trees varying from approximately 2.0 – 5.0m in height and forms the southern edge of Higher Lane. To the east, the application site boundary consists of a post and wire fence, which sits immediately adjacent to a approximate 3.0-4.0m high hedge on an bank boundary to the adjacent residential property.
- 4.18 The southern application site boundary is formed by a linear area of scrub and bank with open pastoral fields immediately adjacent. The western application site boundary is formed of a mix of mature trees approximately 6.0m high and scrub planting, approximately 3.0-6.0m high. Immediately adjacent to which lies a track which acts as an informal footpath.
- 4.19 The south-western edge of the larger field also forms the eastern edge of the smaller field, consists of a group of trees and shrubs approximately 3.0 – 6.0m in height.
- 4.20 The northern and western edge of the smaller field which runs adjacent to Public Right of Way - MU/5/3 consists of tree and shrub planting, approximately 3.0 -5.0m in height.
- 4.21 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been prepared to inform the application, this is included as a standalone document that accompanies this planning application.

Landscape Designations

- 4.22 A review of relevant statutory and non-statutory landscape classifications has been carried out as part of this LVIA. Designations are one of the criteria that are considered when defining sensitivity and when assessing the significance of effects on landscape character. The value placed on a landscape through designation may also have a bearing on the sensitivity of visual receptors. For instance, walkers within an AONB (for the purpose of hiking to observe and experience a nationally renowned landscape) may be of higher sensitivity than people using a local footpath where observation and experience of the landscape may be secondary.

- 4.23 Landscape designations provide an indication of the value that national and local government, plus other agencies attached to various landscape types. Landscapes can be designated by statute, in order to conserve and enhance their natural beauty and are included in policies within Development Plans.
- 4.24 Landscape classifications identify landscapes or elements within the landscapes that are still recognised as being important by virtue of being marked as attractions or identified in non-statutory documentation in the public realm but have no protection in law. Within the study area there are a range of national, regional and local designations that have been identified as the key designations relevant to the landscape and visual character of this study area.
- 4.25 Both statutory and non-statutory designations are described below and are illustrated in Figure 3: Landscape Designations.

Statutory Designations

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

- 4.26 The application site just falls within the Gower AONB. Views towards the application site, from within the AONB, are generally restricted to the south-eastern areas of the AONB by topography, built form, local vegetation and distance.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)

- 4.27 There are three SAMs that fall within the 3km study area. The nearest SAM is Oystermouth Castle, which is approximately 950m to the north of the site. To the west of the application site, there is Caswell Cliff Fort SAM which is located on Redley Cliff and St Peters Well SAM located south of the settlement of Manselfield. Based on the ZTV the proposed development will not be visible from these locations. Therefore, the significance of the effects of the development on the SAM's are considered to be negligible and therefore not considered any further in this assessment.

Conservation Areas

- 4.28 There are four Conservation Areas which fall within the 3km study area. The closest is the Mumbles, located approximately 270m to the north-east of the application site at its nearest point. Langland Bay is located approximately 470m to the west and Holts Field and Newton are located approximately 2.4km and 980m to the north-west, respectively.
- 4.29 Holts Field does not fall within the ZTV, therefore, the significance of the effects of the development are considered to be negligible and therefore Holts Field Conservation Area is not considered any further in this assessment.

Non Statutory Designations

Heritage Coast

- 4.30 The Gower Heritage Coast's far eastern edge falls within the 3km study area. The 33 mile long heritage coast runs from Caswell Bay to Salthouse Point. A small part of the far eastern edge of the Gower Heritage Coast, at Snaple Point falls within the ZTV.

Sustrans National Cycle Routes

- 4.31 The southern spur of Sustrans National Cycle Route 4 at Swansea/Mumbles heads south through the centre of the study area. The route is a 432 mile long route between London and Fishguard, via Reading, Bath, Bristol, Newport, Swansea, Carmarthen, Tenby, Haverfordwest and St. David's. The section of the route which cuts through the study area follows the Wales Coast Path along Swansea Bay. Based on the ZTV the proposed development will not be visible from these locations. Therefore, the significance of the effects of the development on Sustrans National Cycle Route 4 are considered to be negligible and therefore not considered any further in this assessment.

Long Distance Trails

- 4.32 The Wales Coast Path provides a continuous walking route around the whole coast of Wales and is 870 miles long. The path passes through landscapes of historical, ecological and scenic interest, predominantly coastal with some inlet/inland sections. The section of the route which lies within the study area follows Swansea Bay, around Mumbles Head and along the southern coast in an east/west alignment. The Wales Coast Path is located approximately 215m to the south-west of the application site boundary at its closest point.

Common Land/Open Access

- 4.33 A number of areas of common land fall within the study area. The closest being the cliff area to the south of the application site, approximately 100m to the south-west at its closest point. Another areas of common land to note area the area that covers Mumbles Hill to the east of the application site and Clyne Common to the north-west.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 4.34 There are a number of public rights of way within the study area and one (MU5) passes through the application site. The public footpath MU5 currently cuts through the site in and north-east/south-west direction. The footpath enters the application site from Higher Lane in the far north-east corner, runs through the application site and exits mid-way along the western site boundary, where it continues south-west until it meets the Wales Coast Path.
- 4.35 Footpath MU3 is located approximately 180m to the south of the application site at its closest point. It runs broadly in an east/west direction along the top of the cliff, parallel to the Wales Coast Path to the south of the site. MU3 provides a cliff top link between the Wales Coast Path to Mumbles Road. MU4 is located approximately 180m to the south-east of the application site, where it runs in a south-west/north-east direction from MU3 to Plunch Lane.

Green Wedge

- 4.36 There is one green wedge which falls within the study area. Bishopston and Newton is located 1.9km to the north-west at its closest point. Based on the ZTV the proposed development will not be visible from this location. Therefore, the significance of the effects of the development on the Green Wedge are considered to be negligible and therefore not considered any further in this assessment.

Baseline Landscape Character

- 4.37 The main framework for landscape character is provided by the Visual and Sensory Aspect layer of mapping, although other aspect layers of mapping and database information also inform the assessment of character and landscape sensitivity to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the specific study area.
- 4.38 Figures 4 - 16 provide the LANDMAP GIS mapping for these relevant Aspect Layers within the 3km study area of the site. It should be noted that Landscape Habitat Aspects Areas have been scoped out due to their Moderate and Low evaluations.
- 4.39 The relevant LANDMAP description for the Visual and Sensory aspect layer is provided within paragraph 4.40 below.
- 4.40 Table 11 below summarises the Aspect Areas for the Aspect Layers which the site is located in, which have been considered as part of this assessment:

Table 11: LANDMAP Aspect Areas

Aspect Layer	Aspect Area	Unique ID	Level Classification ³	LANDMAP Overall Evaluation
Cultural Landscape	Mumbles, Newton etc	SWNSCL036	Urban Settlement	High
Historic Landscape	H3 Gower Subboscus Agricultural	SWNSHL726	Other Fieldsapes	Outstanding
Visual and Sensory	Swansea West	SWNSVS003	Urban	-
Geological Landscape	Langland Newton	SWNSGL049	Lowland Plateau	High

- 4.41 The site is located within the LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Area SWNSVS003 Swansea West, classified as Urban (Level 3), which has not been evaluated to date. This aspect area is described as follows:

“ The city west of the River Tawe forms the majority of the city of Swansea. It runs from the Swansea Bay waterfront up the slopes of Townhill, along the River Tawe, and up the various valley slopes and hills to the north and west, towards Gower. To the south it includes the suburbs of Oystermouth and Mumbles. The city centre suffered major damage during World War II and was redeveloped post war. This development lacked a sense of place and the area continues to undergo redevelopment to improve its character and offer. Highlights include the Maritime quarter including the Marina which is popular for leisure boats and associate recreation, and the National Waterfront Museum. The tower at Meridian Quay is the tallest building in Wales and forms a strong simple landmark visible across Swansea Bay and from the north. Swansea’s key characteristic is its relationship to the sweeping curve of Swansea Bay.

Dense urban development on hillsides fringing the bay is a characteristic with the regimented rows of

housing at Townhill particularly prominent. The University and Singleton Hospital are other large structures noticeable across the bay. These are softened to an extent by the adjoining park and vegetation. The waterfront buildings and core of Oystermouth/Mumbles have a positive former fishing village character which complements the waterfront. The 20th century residential estates running to the west towards Gower have limited coherent pattern or character although some roads are treed and well heeled. The residential and commercial development spreading to the north of Swansea centre generally lacks sense of place, coherence and understandable pattern.”⁹

4.42 Based on LANDMAP Aspect Areas, four Character Areas have been identified, as shown on Figure 17. These four LCAs are listed below:

- LCA 1: Swansea West and Bishopston
- LCA 2: Mumbles Cliffs
- LCA 3: Mumbles Hinterland
- LCA 4: South East Gower

4.43 The proposed development is located within LCA 1: Swansea West and Bishopston. The existing baseline conditions, as described by LANDMAP, of the remaining 8 LCAs identified are described below.

4.44 In the interests of brevity, the summaries do not attempt to extract or replicate all aspect layer information from the NRW LANDMAP database, merely focus on what is most significant in defining the landscape baseline. For detailed information on each aspect layer, cross reference should be made to the NRW LANDMAP website¹⁰ if needed.

LCA 1: Swansea West and Bishopston

Description:

4.45 This LCA is a large scale urban area. Consisting of a mix of built residential and commercial development and small pockets open green space. Its sense of enclosure is enclosed, with internal unattractive views. Attractive views out are mainly to the east south towards the coast line and Swansea Bay.

4.46 This LCA encompasses and includes part of the following Aspect Areas:

Geological Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSGL049 – Llangland - Newton

Evaluation: High

Visual and Sensory LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSVS003 – Swansea West

⁹<https://landmap-maps.naturalresources.wales/PrintExtendedResults.aspx?filter=VS|SWNSVS003&MapCollectionName=LandMap&Layer01=VS;SWNSVS003>

¹⁰ <http://www.ccw.gov.uk/interactive-maps/landmap.aspx>

Evaluation: Unassessed

Historic Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSHL526 - H3 Gower Subboscus Agricultural

Evaluation: Outstanding

Cultural Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSCL036 – Mumbles, Newton etc

Evaluation: High

- SWNSCL037 - Langland & Rotherslade

Evacuation: Moderate

Value:

4.47 This is a landscape of limited aesthetic value, with moderate scenic quality and character. LANDMAP Aspect Layer data includes 1 Unassessed, 1 Moderate, 2 High and 1 outstanding evaluation; however the outstanding evaluation is limited to the Historic Aspect Area. This is due to the number of SAMs and the integrity of the historic field pattern. Culturally, this LCA is representative and common place but as a group this LCA forms part of a highly desirable residential area. From a visual and sensory perspective, this character type is not particularly rare and the built form lacks a sense of place and the area continues to undergo redevelopment to improve its character. The southern fields of this LCA fall within the Mumbles AONB. Overall the value of this LCA is assessed as Moderate.

LCA 2: Mumbles Cliffs

Description:

4.48 This LCA is a mix of coastal cliffs, steep land and Mumbles Hill which is a scrubby coastal heath covered headland. Part of this LCA forms the south western most part of Swansea Bay enclosing and separating it from the Gower to the west. Its sense of enclosure is open, with unattractive views out towards the urban edge to the west and attractive view internally and out to the north, east and south. There is a number of scheduled ancient monument within this LCA and it forms part of the Mumbles AONB.

4.49 This LCA encompasses and includes part of the following Aspect Areas:

Geological Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- * N/A

Visual and Sensory LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSVS004 – Mumbles Hill

Evaluation: Outstanding

- SWNSVS105 – Limeslade to Langland Bay

Evaluation: High

Historic Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSHL726 - H3 Gower Subboscus Agricultural

Evaluation: Outstanding

- SWNSHL400 – H10 South Gower Cliffs

Evaluation: Outstanding

Cultural Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSCL034 – AONB

Evaluation: Outstanding

- SWNSCL037 – Langland & Rotherlade

Evaluation: Moderate

- SWNSCL038 – Caswell Bay

Evaluation: High

Value:

4.50 This is a landscape with outstanding scenic quality and character. LANDMAP Aspect Layer data includes 1 Moderate, 2 High and 4 outstanding evaluations. The high and outstanding evaluations are limited to the Visual and Sensory, Historic and Cultural Aspect Areas. From a visual and sensory perspective, although the built urban form is a visual and sensory detractor from some locations, this LCA falls within the Mumbles AONB and perceptual qualities of this LCA are described as attractive and exposed. Its sense of place is strong. Overall the value of this LCA is assessed as Outstanding.

4.51 *N/A denotes that no Aspect Areas are considered to be relevant for further analysis, as a result of filtering in accordance with paragraphs 3.11 to 3.18 and Table 1.

LCA 3: Mumbles Hinterland

Description:

4.52 This LCA is an area of rock platform with loose rock, scattered pools and caves. Mumbles Head forms the southernmost point of Swansea Bay. There are a number of scheduled ancient

monuments within this LCA and its sense of enclosure is exposed with attractive views in and out. Some detractive views towards the neighbouring LCA: Swansea West and Bishopston.

4.53 This LCA encompasses and includes part of the following Aspect Areas:

Geological Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- * N/A

Visual and Sensory LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSVS541 – Mumbles Head west to Caswell Bay

Evaluation: High

- SWNSVS847 – The Knab

Evaluation: High

Historic Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSHL400 - H10 South Gower Cliffs

Evaluation: Outstanding

- SWNSHL993 – H2 Foreshore

Evaluation: Unassessed

Cultural Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSCL038 – Caswell Bay

Evaluation: High

Value:

4.54 This is a landscape with outstanding scenic quality and character. LANDMAP Aspect Layer data includes 1 Unassessed, 3 High and 1 outstanding evaluations. The high and outstanding evaluations are limited to the Visual and Sensory, Historic and Cultural Aspect Areas. This LCA falls within the Mumbles AONB and perceptual qualities of this LCA are described as exposed. Its sense of place is strong. Overall the value of this LCA is assessed as Outstanding.

4.55 *N/A denotes that no Aspect Areas are considered to be relevant for further analysis, as a result of filtering in accordance with paragraphs 3.11 to 3.18 and Table 1.

LCA 4: South East Gower

Description:

4.56 This LCA is an dissected plateau in the south eastern part of the Gower. The urban influence of Swansea West is strong towards the east. Its sense of enclosure is open, with attractive views out towards the coast to the south and west. There are a number of scheduled ancient monument within this LCA. This LCA forms part of the land between the settlements that are otherwise extended urban areas around Swansea. This LCA form part of the welcome relief of green space between the urban and industrial areas.

Geological Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- * N/A

Visual and Sensory LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSVS881 – South East Gower

Evaluation: High

Historic Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSHL726 - H3 Gower Subboscus Agricultural

Evaluation: Outstanding

- SWNSHL993 – H16 Bishopston

Evaluation: Outstanding

Cultural Landscape LANDMAP Aspect Layers

- SWNSCL014 – Gold Courses

Evaluation: High

- SWNSCL038 – Caswell Bay

Evaluation: High

- SWNSCL034 – AONB

Evaluation: Outstanding

- SWNSCL039 – Bishopston, Holts Field etc

Evaluation: Moderate

Value:

- 4.53 This is a landscape with outstanding scenic quality and character. LANDMAP Aspect Layer data includes 1 Moderate, 3 High and 3 Outstanding evaluations. The high and outstanding evaluations are limited to the Visual and Sensory, Historic and Cultural Aspect Areas. The southern part of this LCA falls within the Mumbles AONB and perceptual qualities of this LCA are described as settled, attractive, noisy and safe. Its sense of place is strong. Overall the value of this LCA is assessed as Outstanding.
- 4.54 *N/A denotes that no Aspect Areas are considered to be relevant for further analysis, as a result of filtering in accordance with paragraphs 3.11 to 3.18 and Table 1.

Summary of Landscape Character Areas

- 4.57 Table 12 below summarises the 3 Landscape Character Areas within the study area.

Table 12: Summary of Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Area	Landscape Value
LCA1: Swansea West and Bishopston	Moderate
LCA2: Mumbles Cliffs	Outstanding
LCA3: Mumbles Hinterland	Outstanding
LCA4: South East Gower	Outstanding

Baseline Visual Assessment

- 4.58 A Visual Envelope has been produced as a means of illustrating the screening effects of surface elements within the application site and study area. This has been produced manually and maps the outer limit of visibility when looking from the application site outward into the surrounding landscape.
- 4.59 The visual envelope indicates that visibility of the application site is not likely from the majority of the study area.
- 4.60 The ZTV has also been produced for the 3km study area from the centre of the site, refer to Figure 2. The ZTV indicates the proposed theoretical visibility of the proposed development, based on a maximum ridgeline height of 9.085m and therefore can be considered a worst case scenario.
- 4.61 The ZTV indicates that views of the development would be predominately restricted to locations such as Higher Lane, Beaufort Avenue and Channel View, which lie immediately adjacent to the proposed site, extending south towards the coastal edge and north to the residential properties along Amberley Drive and Hill Crest. Further to the east there may also be potential views from Mumbles Hill. From locations to the west, any potential views are predicted to be restricted to

locations from Langland Bay Golf Club and residential areas located between Langland, Newton and Oystermouth.

- 4.62 Visibility of the proposed development is predicted to be predominantly from locations to the south west of the site, within the Bristol Channel. To the north, apart from the areas identified above, there will be no views of the proposed development. In reality areas from where the proposed development will be seen are likely to be significantly reduced further by the screening effects of built form and vegetation, which are not taken account of within the ZTV
- 4.63 The key receptor groups contained within the ZTV are discussed below, with a view to establishing key locations for detailed field analysis and viewpoint assessment.

Receptor Groups

- Residents of Key Settlements:

This group of receptors is considered to be amongst the high sensitivity groups within the study area because they are static receptors that will experience views for long periods of time. However, sensitivity is limited in that views will be heavily influenced by existing man-made, urban elements. The ZTV within the 3km study area extends principally across residential areas at Newtown, Langland and immediately adjacent to the site to the north and west at Thistleboon. The ZTV also extends across more elevated residential areas at Mumble Hill, around 500m to the east. In all cases views will be constrained by intervening buildings and vegetation.

- Residents of Small Settlements and Individual Dwellings:

This group of receptors is judged to be highly sensitive because they are static receptors that will experience views for long periods of time. Individual dwellings within the countryside may be historically located in order to take advantage of high quality landscapes or views. There are a number of scattered farmsteads and individual dwellings within the 3km study area, particularly north and west of Newton as well as more dispersed settlements at, for example, Caswell and Manselfield. However, these areas are largely outside the ZTV and visibility is unlikely to be significant.

- People Undertaking Recreation within the wider landscape:

Recreational users include walkers on the network of surrounding footpaths (MU5 and MU3), walkers along the long distance Wales Coast Path to the south and users of the Common Land/Open Access Land fringing the coast to the south and at Mumbles Hill to the east. The Visual Envelope suggests that some views from the Wales Coast Path are available, although site investigation suggests that views of the proposed development are limited to glimpsed views from above and between close intervening vegetation and built development.

- Visitors Undertaking Active Outdoor Recreation Activities that are not Directly Associated with the Enjoyment of Scenery:

This receptor group is judged to have medium sensitivity because they are not always located in designated or highly scenic landscapes and their primary reason for being in the landscape is not the appreciation of its character and appearance.

- Outdoor Workers:

This group of receptors is considered to be of medium sensitivity because they are mobile receptors that will engage in active work. The quality of landscape and visual character will not influence their presence or length of stay but they are likely to spend prolonged periods of time outdoors and this time may be enhanced by scenic quality. They are most likely to include agricultural and forestry workers who will be located in proximity to the development and also throughout the study area.

- Users of Indoor Workplaces and Community Facilities:

This group of receptors is judged to be of low sensitivity because they will spend only short periods of time in the landscape for reasons that are not related to or affected by landscape and visual quality. They will experience temporary or transitory views whilst engaged in other activities. This group of receptors may include churchgoers, customers at petrol stations and garages, public houses, leisure centres and other community facilities. They are most likely to be located within settlements and on the primary or secondary road networks and will occur in moderate to large numbers across the study area.

- Road users:

This group of receptors is also judged to be of low sensitivity because they will spend only short periods of time in the landscape for reasons that are not related to or affected by landscape and visual quality. They will experience temporary and transitory views whilst engaged in other activities. This group of receptors may include users of the A4062, A4067 and B4436 and other minor roads within the study area, including Higher Lane.

Viewpoints

4.64 To assess the potential effects of the proposed development on key receptors groups and from key parts of the study area, three viewpoints have been selected, all of which have been developed in consultation with Swansea County Council officers at an early stage of scoping. The viewpoints were chosen as being representative of publicly accessible land within approximately 3km of the application site. The locations of the selected viewpoints are illustrated in Figure 1 and detailed in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Viewpoint Locations

Viewpoint No.	Location	Grid Reference	Approx. Distance from Site	Reasons for Choice
1	Higher Lane	261660, 187450	0.15km	Represents sensitive residential receptors along Higher Lane. Views toward application site from the north-east. Short distance viewpoint (≤ 1 km).
2	Wales Coast Path	261405, 187165	0.23km	Represents sensitive, recreational users of the Wales Coast Path Views toward application site from the south - west. Short distance viewpoint (≤ 1 km).
3	Wales Coast Path - Snaple Point	260478, 196988	1.13km	Represents sensitive, recreational users of the Wales Coast Path Views toward application site from the west. Medium distance viewpoint (Between 1-3km).

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

5.1 This section provides a description of the potential significant effects that could arise from the proposed development during construction and once operational. Assessment of the magnitude of effects and their significance is made on the basis of the criteria set out in the Assessment Methodology and the assessment of the baseline landscape and visual character.

5.2 The assessment of effects takes consideration of the following issues:

- Direct and indirect effects on landscape character and changes to the landscape;
- Effects on the visual amenity of the study area and from the selected viewpoints including changes to the composition of views and the perception and response by receptor groups to these changes;
- The magnitude, duration and level of permanence of effects; and
- The effects during the construction and operation phases of the proposed development.

Construction Effects

- 5.3 This section looks at both the effects on landscape character and the visual effects during the temporary construction phase of the proposed development. Given the size of the site and the nature of the application, the proposed development will be undertaken in one Phase.
- 5.4 For the construction it is assumed to include the following activities:
- Limited demolition and clearance of existing structures on site;
 - Ground excavation works, including topsoil stripping, levelling and cut and fill activities;
 - Movement and storage of plant, equipment and construction materials both within and to the site;
 - Erection of construction infrastructure (e.g. scaffolding, security hoardings and mobile cranes); and
 - Construction of new infrastructure and buildings.

Potential Construction Effects on Landscape Character

- 5.5 The application site falls within LCA1: Swansea West and Bishopston. Direct effects on landscape character during this part of the works will be confined to LCA 1 and will be short term in duration.
- 5.6 Direct changes to the landscape character during the construction activities would include partial removal of field boundaries, removal of associated ground cover and vegetation, potential land remediation and importation/ excavation of material to create development site levels. These construction activities would also be a result of earth moving, construction equipment and material storage such as scaffolding, cement silos, spoil heaps, site huts, the movement of construction traffic and the infrastructure and buildings construction activities within the application site.
- 5.7 Impacts of construction activity on areas of LCA1 outside of the application site will be indirect and will be limited to increased vehicular movement within the vicinity of the application site, and locations from where the proposed application site and associated movement of plant and cranes, which may be visible from greater distances than other construction activities, given their increased height are perceptible.
- 5.8 Magnitude of direct landscape effects of the anticipated construction activities of the proposed development on LCA1 is high due to the change in land cover and use. Although, direct landscape effects will be limited to a very small proportion of the LCA as a whole. Overall, the above construction activities will have limited direct, indirect and temporary effects. The landscape sensitivity of LCA1 is considered to be moderate and overall magnitude of landscape effects of the anticipated construction activities on LCA 1a is medium to low. Effects are therefore considered to be moderate to minor, not significant.

- 5.9 From within the remaining LCA's, the construction activity of the proposed development, including the movement of plant and cranes, given their increased height would be perceived from specific high and open locations. Construction activity is predicted to have low to negligible magnitude as open views towards the development are generally wide open from limited locations and encompass views west and south out towards the coast and sea and north and east towards the urban area of Swansea. Landscape sensitivity is moderate to high, therefore effects are considered to be minor to negligible, not significant.

Potential Construction Effects on Visual Amenity

- 5.10 The visual effects of construction are expected to be short-term in duration and varied with the sequence of construction.

Viewpoint 1: View south-west from Higher Lane

- 5.11 Within the very close setting of the application site, Viewpoint 1 would be subject to visual effects resulting from site clearance, preparation and construction activities largely occurring as a result of layout and access changes are made to Higher Lane and as development is built in the most north-eastern corner of the application site.
- 5.12 Site clearance, preparation and construction activities will be clearly perceptible in the centre of the view. Visual intrusion as a result of initial site clearance, preparation and construction mobilisation and activities including earth moving, construction equipment and material storage such as scaffolding, cement silos, soil heaps and huts will occur from Viewpoint 1.
- 5.13 These activities would be short-term and temporary in duration. Construction activities of the proposed development are considered to be of high visual magnitude. Subsequent significance of visual effects is considered to be major, significant and adverse, due to its close proximity.

Viewpoint 2: View north-east from Wales Coast Path

- 5.14 Within the close setting of the application site, the visual effects of site clearance and preparation activities on Viewpoint 2 will be perceptible. Visual intrusion as a result of initial site clearance, preparation and construction mobilisation and activities including earth moving, construction equipment and material storage such as scaffolding, cement silos, soil heaps and huts will occur from Viewpoint 2. Although, the most significant construction effects on Viewpoint 2 are likely to be those resulting from the erection and movement of plant and cranes, which will be visible from greater distances than other construction activities, given their increased height. These activities would be short-term and temporary in duration and would typically be visible within the context of the retained landscape framework and the settlement of Thistleboon to the north of the viewpoint.
- 5.15 As such, these activities are considered to be moderate to low visual magnitude. Subsequent significance of visual effects is considered to be moderate to minor, not significant and slight adverse.

Viewpoint 3: View east from Wales Coast Path – Snaple Point

- 5.16 Within the wider landscape to the west, assessed in Viewpoint 3, the visual effects of site clearance, preparation and construction activities will be perceptible. The most significant construction effects on Viewpoint 3 are likely to be those resulting from the erection and movement of plant and cranes, which will be visible from greater distances than other construction activities, given their increased height. These activities would be short-term and temporary in duration and would typically be visible within the context of the retained landscape framework and the settlement of Thistleboon along the skyline and Langland Bay below the viewpoint. The open and more panoramic nature of the view would help reduce the overall effects of the proposed construction.
- 5.17 Viewpoint 3 would be subject to some changes as a result of site clearance, preparation and construction activities; although the intervening built form of Thistleboon will partially screen the lower level site clearance, preparation and construction activities. As such, these activities are considered to be of low to negligible visual magnitude. Subsequent significance of visual effects is considered to be minor to negligible, not significant and neutral.

Operational Effects

- 5.18 This section looks at both the effects on landscape character and the visual effects during the operational phase of the proposed development.

Potential Operation Effects on Landscape Character

- 5.19 Effects on landscape character as a result of the proposed development will predominantly occur from locations within the immediate surroundings of the application site.

Landscape Character Area 1: Swansea West and Bishopston

- 5.20 Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors to Change: Parts of this LCA (which contains the application site) are located within the Gower AONB and land allocated as a LDP Local Needs Housing Exception Sites within the LDP which may influence future landscape character and lessen susceptibility to change. As such, development of the type proposed may assist in the achievement of LDP planning policies relating to this landscape. Within this LCA, the landscape is considered capable of absorbing some degree of change as a result of the physical and perceptual characteristics of the LCA. Susceptibility to landscape change is therefore considered to be low to moderate.
- 5.21 Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape value is considered to be moderate and susceptibility of landscape receptors to change is low to moderate. Therefore, on balance, landscape sensitivity is considered to be moderate.
- 5.22 Magnitude of Landscape Effects: Long term direct effects on landscape character will occur as the proposed development falls within this LCA.
- 5.23 The main change in character will be the introduction of residential development and infrastructure into the landscape. The extent to which the change in/ addition of/ partial loss of landscape elements is likely to be perceived would vary across the LCA.

- 5.24 Where direct physical effects occur there is likely to be a large change in landscape character as development becomes a dominant, long-term feature within the landscape. Individual existing components of the landscape are likely to be affected, including the relationship of the existing Higher Lane roadway boundaries with proposed access point, the loss of structural tree and hedgerow and re-graded topography.
- 5.25 A detailed landscape design is also proposed and would function as key landscape mitigation, screening the proposed development and assisting in its absorption into the surrounding landscape. Retained reference points – such as the mature trees which form the western site boundary, will assist with the assimilation of the development into the landscape. Magnitude of landscape effects within the part of the LCA that is within application site boundary is assessed as high, given the likely defining presence of the proposed development.
- 5.26 Outside of the application site boundary, it is predicted that there will be long-term, indirect effects on landscape character. From some locations within close proximity of the application site boundary, elements of the proposed development are expected to become defining features; however within the wider area of the LCA, potential effects on landscape character are likely to be more limited. The nature and prominence of views toward the development is expected to be varied with location, however given the level of vegetative screening within the surrounding fieldscape and remaining landscape framework of the wider application site, characteristic views are expected to remain largely unchanged across much of this LCA. From these wider areas, key landscape characteristics, including the undulating landform, fieldscape qualities and sense of openness are likely to remain prevalent.
- 5.27 Magnitude of landscape effects is likely to be varied across this LCA; however, the development may result in changes to characteristic landscape elements across parts of the LCA. Factors which limit magnitude of effects include the screening effects of existing retained landscape elements, such as the built form of Swansea West, existing landscape characteristics, including landform and embedded mitigation resulting from the proposed landscape elements. On balance, the overall magnitude of landscape effects as a result of the proposed development within this LCA is considered to be moderate to low.
- 5.28 Significance of landscape effects: The landscape is considered to be of moderate landscape sensitivity and the overall magnitude of effects moderate to low. There will be some direct effects within a very small part of the LCA, however effects within the wider LCA are likely to be very limited. Where effects do occur, the proposed development will fit in with the urban fridge setting in which it will be perceived from and will form an extension to the existing urban area of Thistleboon. From the majority of the LCA, the character is predicted to remain intact. Changes will not become defining of the overall landscape character of this LCA.
- 5.29 The potential extent of development impacts on the character of this LCA are mitigated in part by the landscape characteristics of the retained landscape components of the application site; including hedgerow and trees, along with the proposed detailed landscape proposals, particularly along application site boundaries. The proposed development is considered to make good use of existing landscape features and attributes such as structural vegetation assisting with the positive integration

of the proposed scheme within the LCA. Therefore, effects are considered to be minor, not significant and neutral.

Landscape Character Area 2: Mumbles Cliffs

- 5.30 Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors to Change: This LCA falls within the Gower ANOB, although perceptibility of the application site is limited from within this LCA due to intervening topography, built form and vegetative screening. Within this LCA, the landscape is considered capable of absorbing some degree of change due to its physical and perceptual links with neighbouring LCA: Swansea West and Bishopston.
- 5.31 Views to existing and proposed perceptual detractors in the form of residential development, affect existing landscape character and susceptibility to change in places. Susceptibility to change is therefore considered moderate as the proposed development may be accommodated within the landscape without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.
- 5.32 Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape value is considered to be outstanding and susceptibility of landscape receptors to change is moderate. Therefore, on balance, landscape sensitivity is also considered to be high to moderate.
- 5.33 Magnitude of Landscape Effects: There will be no direct effects on landscape character within this LCA. Long term indirect effects would be limited to parts of the LCA where views toward the proposed development are available. These are likely to be contained to the western and northern areas, as indicated by Figure 2 - Visual Envelope and Viewpoint Location Plan. Elsewhere within the LCA, landform and vegetative enclosure limit the degree to which the proposed development will be perceived within the landscape. Existing landscape character elements across much of this LCA are therefore expected to remain unaffected by the proposed development.
- 5.34 Where the proposed development is perceptible within the adjoining landscape, a limited extent of the roofscape along the eastern edge would be visible through filtered views from the summit of Mumbles Hill and from along MU3 footpath which runs along the northern boundary of the LCA to the south of the application site. The proposed development will be viewed in conjunction with the existing urban edge, consisting of residential properties along Higher Lane, Beaufort Ave and Channel View. The proposed development along with its sympathetic street pattern, scale and use of materials and framework of structural landscape will in time be absorbed into the existing urban edge. On balance, magnitude of effects is considered to be moderate to low.
- 5.35 Significance of landscape effects: The landscape is considered to be of high to moderate landscape sensitivity and the overall magnitude of effects moderate to low. The proposed development would result in a minor loss or alteration to elements of the landscape character within a limited area of the LCA, to the extent that it would be visible as an additional element within views from a very limited geographical area. The proposed and retained landscape framework) would also aid the integration of the proposed development into the existing landscape. Therefore, following the construction, it is considered that there will be no fundamental change to the existing landscape character. As such, effects are considered to be moderate to minor, not significant and neutral.

Landscape Character Area 3: Mumbles Hinterland

- 5.36 Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors to Change: This LCA falls within the Gower ANOB, although perceptibility of the application site is very limited from within this LCA due to intervening topography, built form and vegetative screening. Within this LCA, the landscape is considered capable of absorbing some degree of change due to its physical and perceptual links with neighbouring LCA: Swansea West and Bishopston.
- 5.37 Views to existing and proposed perceptual detractors in the form of residential development, affect existing landscape character and susceptibility to change in places. Susceptibility to change is therefore considered moderate as the proposed development may be accommodated within the landscape without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.
- 5.38 Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape value is considered to be outstanding and susceptibility of landscape receptors to change is moderate. Therefore, on balance, landscape sensitivity is also considered to be high to moderate.
- 5.39 Magnitude of Landscape Effects: There will be no direct effects on landscape character within this LCA. Long term indirect effects would be limited to parts of the LCA where views toward the proposed development are available. These are likely to be contained to a very small area along the eastern edge of Snaple Point to the west of the application site, as indicated by Figure 2 - Visual Envelope and Viewpoint Location Plan. Elsewhere within the LCA, landform and vegetative enclosure limit the degree to which the proposed development will be perceived within the landscape. Existing landscape character elements across the majority of this LCA are therefore expected to remain unaffected by the proposed development.
- 5.40 Where the proposed development is perceptible within the adjoining landscape, a limited extent of the roofscape, exterior profiles of residential plots along the western and southern boundaries of the development and the proposed structural landscape, partially screened by retained vegetation along its western boundary and properties along Beaufort Avenue. The proposed development will be viewed in conjunction with the existing urban edge, consisting of residential properties along Higher Lane, Beaufort Ave and Channel View. The proposed development along with its sympathetic street pattern, scale and use of materials and framework of structural landscape will in time be absorbed into the existing urban edge. On balance, magnitude of effects is considered to be low to negligible.
- 5.41 Significance of landscape effects: The landscape is considered to be of high to moderate landscape sensitivity and the overall magnitude of effects low to negligible. The proposed development would result in a minor loss or alteration to elements of the landscape character within a limited area of the LCA, to the extent that it would be visible as an additional element within views from a very limited geographical area. The proposed and retained landscape framework) would also aid the integration of the proposed development into the existing landscape. Therefore, following the construction, it is considered that there will be no fundamental change to the existing landscape character. As such, effects are considered to be minor to negligible, not significant and neutral.

Landscape Character Area 4: South East Gower

- 5.42 Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors to Change: Parts of this LCA falls within the Gower ANOB, although perceptibility of the application site is very limited from within this LCA due to intervening topography, built form and vegetative screening. Within this LCA, the landscape is considered capable of absorbing some degree of change due to its physical and perceptual links with neighbouring LCA: Swansea West and Bishopston.
- 5.43 Views to existing and proposed perceptual detractors in the form of residential development, affect existing landscape character and susceptibility to change in places. Susceptibility to change is therefore considered moderate as the proposed development may be accommodated within the landscape without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.
- 5.44 Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape value is considered to be outstanding and susceptibility of landscape receptors to change is moderate. Therefore, on balance, landscape sensitivity is also considered to be high to moderate.
- 5.45 Magnitude of Landscape Effects: There will be no direct effects on landscape character within this LCA. Long term indirect effects would be limited to parts of the LCA where views toward the proposed development are available. These are likely to be contained to a very small area on Snaple Point to the west of the application site and to the north-west of Caswell ay, as indicated by Figure 2 - Visual Envelope and Viewpoint Location Plan. Elsewhere within the LCA, landform and vegetative enclosure limit the degree to which the proposed development will be perceived within the landscape. Existing landscape character elements across the majority of this LCA are therefore expected to remain unaffected by the proposed development.
- 5.46 Where the proposed development is perceptible within the adjoining landscape, a very limited extent of the roofscape, exterior profiles of residential plots along the western and southern boundaries of the development and the proposed structural landscape, partially screened by intervening built form of Llangland and Thistleboon and the retained vegetation along its western boundary. The proposed development will be viewed in conjunction with the existing urban edge, consisting of residential properties along Higher Lane, Beaufort Ave and Channel View. The proposed development along with its sympathetic street pattern, scale and use of materials and its framework of structural landscape will in time be absorbed into the existing urban edge. On balance, magnitude of effects is considered to be low to negligible.
- 5.47 Significance of landscape effects: The landscape is considered to be of high to moderate landscape sensitivity and the overall magnitude of effects low to negligible. The proposed development would result in a minor loss or alteration to elements of the landscape character within a limited area of the LCA, to the extent that it would be visible as an additional element within views from a very limited geographical area. The proposed and retained landscape framework would also aid the integration of the proposed development into the existing landscape. Therefore, following the construction, it is considered that there will be no fundamental change to the existing landscape character. As such, effects are considered to be minor to negligible, not significant and neutral.

Summary of Potential Operational Effects on Landscape Character

5.48 Below, Table 14 summarises the potential effects on landscape character within the 4 LCAs.

Table 14: Summary of Potential Operational Effects on Landscape Character

Receptor	Sensitivity	Impact	Magnitude	Significance
LCA 1: Swansea West and Bishopston	Moderate	Direct and Indirect	Moderate to Low	Moderate - Minor, not significant, neutral
LCA 2: Mumbles Cliffs	High to Moderate	Indirect	Moderate to Low	Moderate to Minor, not significant, neutral
LCA 3: Mumbles Hinterland	High to Moderate	Indirect	Low to Negligible	Minor to Negligible, not significant, neutral
LCA4: South East Gower	High to Moderate	Indirect	Low to Negligible	Minor to Negligible, not significant, neutral

Effects on Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations

Statutory Designations

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 5.49 The application site falls within the Mumbles AONB, therefore, direct effects will occur but will be limited to within the application site boundary. Where direct physical effects occur, there is likely to be a large change in landscape character as development becomes a dominant, long-term feature within the AONB designation.
- 5.50 Outside of the application site boundary, it is predicted that there will be long-term, indirect effects on the landscape character of the AONB. From some locations within close proximity of the proposed application site boundary, elements of the proposed development are expected to become defining features; however within the wider area of the AONB, potential effects on landscape character are likely to be more limited.
- 5.51 Only a relatively small proportion of the extensive AONB will be affected and the overall landscape qualities which define the AONB will not be completely eroded. Additionally, although the

proposed development will introduce an additional landscape and visual element to the AONB, the nature of the proposed development; including its size, form, density and proposed framework of structural landscape will in time enable the proposed development to be absorbed into the existing landscape. In time, the proposed development will be viewed as part of the existing urban fabric within this part of the Gower AONB. Overall effects are predicted to be moderate to low, not significant and neutral.

Conservation Areas

- 5.0 As there will be no direct impacts on Conservation areas within the 3km study area, all impacts will be indirect and limited to locations from where the proposed development is visible.
- 5.1 Although small sections of both the Mumbles and Newton Conservation Areas fall within the ZTV, in reality intervening built form and vegetation will screen views of the proposed development. Therefore, landscape and visual impacts are predicted to be of negligible effects, and therefore not significant for both the Mumbles and Newton Conservation Areas.
- 5.2 The far south-western edge of Langland Bay Conservation Area falls within the ZTV. This part of the Conservation Area forms the far eastern section of Langland Bay Golf Course. Glimpsed views of the proposed roofscape may just be perceptible from these locations above and between intervening landform, built form and vegetation. Although the proposed development will introduce an additional landscape and visual element to the view, the nature of the proposed development; including its size, form, density and proposed framework of structural landscape will in time enable the proposed development to be absorbed into the existing landscape. In time, the proposed development will be viewed as part of the existing urban fabric. Whilst the landscape may contain sensitive receptors, overall landscape and visual impacts are predicted to be of low to negligible effects, not significant and neutral.

Non-Statutory Designations

Heritage Coast

- 5.3 There will be no direct impacts on the Gower Heritage Coast within the 3km study area; all impacts will be indirect and limited to locations from where the proposed development is visible.
- 5.4 From the small area of the Heritage Coast which falls within the, the proposed development will be perceptible above and between intervening topography and vegetation to the north-east. These views will remain largely intact and will continue to be heavily influenced by the existing settlement edge of Thistleboon to the north and the Bristol Channel to the south in the opposite direction to the proposed development. Please refer to the visual assessment of Viewpoint 2 for further detail.

Common Land/Open Access

- 5.5 As there will be no direct impacts on Common Land/Open Access land within the 3km study area, all impacts will be indirect and limited to locations from where the proposed development is visible.

- 5.6 Views of the proposed roofscape may be perceptible from the area of Common Land along Mumbles Hill, above and between intervening built form and vegetation. Although, this area may contain sensitive receptors the proposed development will be viewed in conjunction with the existing urban edge, consisting of residential properties along Higher Lane, Beaufort Ave and Channel View. The proposed development will only occupy a very small slither of the existing view and along with its framework of structural landscape will in time be absorbed into the existing urban edge. It is assessed that these views will remain intact and will continue to be heavily influenced by the urban settlement of Thistleboon and Limeslade to the west and dominated by the coastal edge and Bristol Channel to the south. Therefore, overall landscape and visual impacts are predicted to be of negligible, not significant and neutral.
- 5.7 Views from of the proposed development will only be available from the very northern edge of the Common Land due to the steep southerly sloping cliff edge. From this northern edge views will have similar effects as Viewpoint 2 and Footpath MU3 as these two locations follow the northern edge of the Common Land. It is assessed that these views will remain largely intact and will continue to be heavily influenced by the urban settlement of Thistleboon and Limeslade to the north and east and dominated by the coastal edge and Bristol Channel to the west and south. Additionally, although the proposed development will introduce an additional landscape and visual element to the view, the nature of the proposed development; including its size, form, density and proposed framework of structural landscape will in time enable the proposed development to be absorbed into the existing landscape. In time, the proposed development will be viewed as part of the existing urban fabric. Therefore, overall landscape and visual impacts are predicted to be of moderate to low magnitude, not significant and neutral.
- 5.8 Views from the Common Land which encompasses Langland Bay will be limited to its far south-western edge. From here, glimpsed views of the proposed roofscape may just be perceptible above and between intervening landform, built form and vegetation. Whilst the landscape may contain sensitive receptors, overall landscape and visual impacts are predicted to be of low to negligible effects, and therefore not significant.

Long Distance Trails

- 5.9 Small sections of the Wales Coast Path cross within the ZTV at its connection point with MU5 to the south-west of the application site and at Snaple Point, as illustrated on Figure xxx. Receptors along this route are considered to be of high susceptibility to change and high sensitivity, views of the proposed development from this trail will be for the most part restricted by intervening vegetation, built form and topography, which restricts the vast majority of views towards the proposed development.
- 5.10 From the short section of trail which falls within the ZTV at its connection with MU5, the proposed development will be perceptible above and between intervening topography and vegetation to the north-east. These views will remain largely intact and will continue to be heavily influenced by the existing settlement edge of Thistleboon to the north and the Bristol Channel to the south in the opposite direction to the proposed development. Please refer to the visual assessment of Viewpoint 2 for further detail.

- 5.11 From the small section that passes through the ZTV at Snaple Point, the roofscape of the proposed development may just be perceptible above and between intervening built form and vegetation. These views to the east from Snaple Point will remain intact and will continue to be heavily influenced by the existing southern settlement edge of Thistleboon and Langland Bay to the east and the Bristol Channel to the south in the opposite direction to the proposed development. Please refer to the visual assessment of Viewpoint 3 for further detail.
- 5.12 Through a combination of the retained and similar in nature reference points along the footpath and the sympathetic street pattern, scale and use of materials and proposed framework of structural landscape within the proposed development, the proposal will be easily absorbed into the existing views from along this stretch of footpath. Whilst the landscape may contain highly sensitive receptors, overall landscape and visual impacts are predicted to be of low to negligible effects, and therefore not significant.

Public Rights of Way

MU5

- 5.13 As public footpath MU5 passes through the proposed development, this is the only public right of way that will be directly affected by the proposal. As part of the proposal, the northern section of this footpath will be redirected along the developments main central access road. MU5 will still enter from the north, off Higher Lane and exit near the far south-west corner. With this, MU5 is currently influenced by built form due to its close proximity to the southern edge or the settlement of Thistleboon.
- 5.14 As the footpath heads south-west from Higher Lane, the proposed development will be clearly perceptible. A large change in landscape character is anticipated, as development becomes the dominant, long-term feature within the immediate landscape surroundings the northern section of this footpath.
- 5.15 As the footpath exits the proposed development, its existing character will remain intact and will continue to be influenced by the urban form to its north and dominating coastal character of the Bristol Channel to the south. The southern section of the footpath will not experience any direct effects of the proposed development, although as the footpath heads north-east towards the proposed development its roofscape will be perceptible above and between intervening vegetation.
- 5.16 Through a combination of the retained and similar in nature reference points along the footpath and the proposed framework of structural landscape, the proposed development will in part be absorbed into the existing views from along the southern section of this footpath. Whilst the landscape may contain sensitive receptors and the northern section of this footpath will experience high effects due to the change of character, this footpath is at present influenced by existing built form and the dominating coastal character of the Bristol Channel to the south will remain intact. It is therefore assessed that the overall landscape and visual impacts are predicted to be of moderate magnitude and therefore not significant.

MU3

- 5.17 Almost the entire length of footpath MU3 passes through the ZTV as it runs along the top of the cliff to the south of the application site. As the footpath heads east/west from the residential area of Limeslade towards the Wales Coast Path, views of the roofscape and southern edge of the proposed development will be perceptible above and between intervening vegetation to the north. The proposed development will be viewed in conjunction with the existing urban edge, consisting of residential properties along Higher Lane, Beaufort Ave and Channel View. The proposed development along with its framework of structural landscape will in time be absorbed into the existing urban edge. It is assessed that these views will remain largely intact and will continue to be heavily influenced by the urban settlement of Thistleboon and Limeslade to the north and east and dominated by the coastal edge and Bristol Channel to the west and south. Therefore, overall landscape and visual impacts are predicted to be of moderate to low magnitude and not significant

MU4

- 5.18 Footpath MU4 passes through the ZTV as it passes between the Cricket Grounds and its connection with MU3. As the footpath heads south –west/north-east from MU3 to the Cricket grounds and the residential area of Limeslade, views of the roofscape and the southern edge of the proposed development will be perceptible above and between intervening vegetation to the north-west. The proposed development will be viewed in conjunction with the existing urban edge, consisting of residential properties along Higher Lane, Beaufort Ave and Channel View. As within views from the nearby footpath MU3, the proposed development along with its sympathetic street pattern, scale and use of materials and framework of structural landscape will in time be absorbed into the existing urban edge. It is assessed that these views will remain largely intact and will continue to be heavily influenced by the urban settlement of Thistleboon and Limeslade to the north, north-west and east. Therefore, overall landscape and visual impacts are predicted to be of moderate to low magnitude and not significant

Potential Operational Effects on Visual Amenity

- 5.19 The significance of visual effects as a result of the proposed development during the operational phase, from each of the three selected viewpoints has been assessed against the significance criteria defined in Table 10 above.
- 5.20 Annotated photographs of the application site have been used to aid this assessment and are provided in Figures 18 - 20.

Viewpoint 1: Higher Lane

- 5.21 Value of Visual Receptors: This viewpoint is not of recognised value through planning or heritage designation; neither is the viewpoint of cultural value, for example through recognition on tourist publications or paintings. Although the viewpoint is located immediately adjacent to the Gower AONB. Therefore, its value is considered to be High to Moderate.

- 5.22 Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to Change: Located on the roadside, within the urban area of Thistleboon, typical receptors include local residents and people travelling through the landscape by car, motorbike, bicycle and by foot. Susceptibility of visual receptors to change is therefore assessed as High.
- 5.23 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors: Receptors are considered to be of High to Moderate sensitivity to change as more sensitive receptors; the local resident's, main view is orientated towards the application site.
- 5.24 Existing View: The viewpoint is taken from Higher Lane, looking in a south-westerly direction into the application site. The viewpoint was chosen for its close southerly view into the proposed development. The application site is located in the near distance, spanning across the width of the view. The southern boundary wall of the properties along Channel View, which form the northern site boundary, can be seen to the far right. No.104 Higher Lane, which forms part of the eastern site boundary, can be seen to the left of the view. Higher Lane crosses the view, where its southern boundary which is formed by a gappy hedgerow with trees, forms the middle distance. This middle distance vegetation partially screens the far distance, with the exception of the break where the access gate to the larger of the sites two fields is located. Here the access gate allows views into the larger field and beyond, where pastoral fields and the Bristol Channel can be seen forming the far distance. To the right of the view, the properties along Beaufort Avenue can be seen, partially screened by middle distance vegetation.
- 5.25 Predicted View: The proposed development will be clearly perceptible across the majority of the view. The widening and realigned associated footpath of Higher Lane will be clearly perceptible in the near distance. The north facing elevations of the residential units along the southern edge of Higher Lane would be viewed above and between the translocated northern field boundary hedgerow. The line of proposed trees, which forms part of the proposed internal framework of structural landscape, would also contribute to the partial screening of the residential elevations from this viewpoint. Clear views in to the proposed development would be available at two openings along Higher Lane; the first is at the narrow footpath (MU5) opening in the north-east corner of the site and at the site main entrance onto Higher Lane, located at the centre of the larger field's boundary. The existing boundary wall to the properties along Channel View, No. 104 Higher Lane and the roofscape of the properties along Beaufort Avenue will remain visible.
- 5.26 Magnitude of Visual Effects: A relatively large proportion of the view would be affected by the proposed development. Additional features would be clearly perceptible, although these features will be of the same nature as existing features within the view. The additional elements contained within the view as a result of the proposed development would integrate with the existing visual character and their integration within the landscape would be assisted by the retention of key existing features such as No. 104 Higher Lane, the Channel View properties boundary wall, translocated northern field boundary hedgerow and proposed structural landscape. There may be some slight erosion of the existing semi-rural character of the view, but the combinations of the translocated hedgerow, proposed landscape infrastructure framework and sensitive architectural design will in time allow the proposed development to visually integrate into the view. On balance, magnitude of visual effects is assessed as Moderate.

- 5.27 Significance of Visual Effects: Visual receptors are considered to be of high sensitivity to change and visual magnitude of the proposed development moderate. The proposed development will form a large component of the visual structure of the view, although the proposed additional elements, which include a sympathetic street pattern, scale and use of materials and proposed internal framework of structural landscape, will be assimilated within the visual context alongside retained reference points. As such, significance of visual effects of the proposed development is considered to be moderate, not significant and slight adverse.
- 5.28 Whilst there may be some perception of adverse effects in changing views of hedgerow and open field beyond to developed land, this is balanced with the potential beneficial effects of the development, including the translocated northern site boundary hedge with improved associated management, a positive sense of place and the contribution of proposed strategic landscape. On balance, effects are considered to be neutral.

Viewpoint 2: Wales Coast Path

- 5.29 Value of Visual Receptors: This viewpoint has a recognised value through the planning designation; Gower AONB and Wales Coast Path and is recognised for its cultural value, through recognition on tourist publications.
- 5.30 Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to Change: This viewpoint is located within the Gower AONB and from along the Wales Coast Path and therefore visual receptors are categorised as more susceptible to change as they may be engaged in outdoor recreation, focussed within the landscape. Susceptibility of visual receptors to change is therefore assessed as High.
- 5.31 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors: Visitors are likely to be of high sensitivity to change, as receptors are likely to be present at the viewpoint for reasons related to the appreciation of the landscape.
- 5.32 Existing View: The Viewpoint is taken from the Wales Coast Path within the Gower AONB to the south-west of the application site. The view is over rough grassland towards the application site and the rear of properties along Beaufort Avenue, Higher Lane and Channel View and the pastoral fields to the south of the application site beyond. All of which create an urban fringe character to the view. The near and middle distance is dominated by rough grassland, mature field boundary vegetation and a field occupied by green sheds. The application site lies just above the field of green sheds and to the right of the properties along Beaufort Avenue in the central far distance. The boundary wall of the properties along Channel View, of which forms the northern boundary of the application site can just be seen in a gap in vegetation in the middle distance.
- 5.33 Predicted View: Rear and side elevations of the residential units along the south - western edge of the proposed development will be perceptible above and between intervening vegetation and built form in the centre of the upper middle distance. The existing southern field boundary, strengthened by proposed hedgerow planting would partially screen the lower sections of the residential plots along the southern edge of the proposed development. A framework of proposed structural landscape and site boundary vegetation will also be visible in and around the development plots. Typically, only views of the south - western and southern residential plots would be available, as the north-western and eastern plots would be heavily screened by the proposed intervening south-

western plots, the internal landscape structure and site boundary vegetation. No. 104 Higher Lane and properties along Channel View would be heavily screened by the proposed development. Although the roofscape of the properties along Beaufort Avenue will remain visible, although partially screened by the proposed internal landscape structure.

- 5.34 Magnitude of Visual Effects: A relatively small proportion of the wider field of view would be affected by the proposed development. Additional features would be perceptible, although these features, due to their location, would be perceived as an extension to Thistleboon and will be of the same nature as existing and proposed features within the view, such as the existing residential properties along Higher Lane and Beaufort Avenue. The additional elements contained within the view as a result of the proposed development would assimilate into the existing visual character and their integration within the landscape would be assisted by retained and proposed structural landscape. The view will remain dominated by its retained urban fringe character, with visually integrated rural and urban components. On balance, magnitude of visual effects is assessed as low.
- 5.35 Significance of Visual Effects: Visual receptors are considered to be of high sensitivity to change and visual magnitude of the proposed development low. Additional elements of the proposed development form a small component of the visual structure of the view, easily overlooked by the casual observer. These additional elements include a small part of the constructed development and proposed structural landscape, assimilated within the visual context alongside retained reference points. As such, significance of visual effects of the proposed development is considered to be minor, not significant and neutral.

Viewpoint 3: Wale Coast Path Snaple Point

- 5.36 Value of Visual Receptors: This viewpoint has a recognised value through the planning designation; Gower AONB and Wales Coast Path and is recognised for its cultural value, through recognition on tourist publications.
- 5.37 Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to Change: This viewpoint is located within the Gower AONB and from along the Wales Coast Path and therefore visual receptors are categorised as more susceptible to change as they may be engaged in outdoor recreation, focussed within the landscape. Susceptibility of visual receptors to change is therefore assessed as High.
- 5.38 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors: Visitors are likely to be of high sensitivity to change, as receptors are likely to be present at the viewpoint for reasons related to the appreciation of the landscape.
- 5.39 Existing View: The Viewpoint is taken from the Wales Coast Path at Snaple Point, within the Gower AONB to the west of the application site. This panoramic and open view is over a rough grassland/bracken covered cliff top and Langland Bay towards the application site and pastoral fields and cliffs to the south of the application site. The near distance is dominated by the sudden drop of cliff and the middle distance is dominated by Langland Bay, the settlement of Langland to the left and cliff face to the right of the view. The rear of properties along Beaufort Avenue form the central far distance, along with Langland to the left and pastoral fields to the right of the view. The application site lies just to the right and behind the properties along Beaufort Avenue.

- 5.40 Predicted View: The proposed development will result in a small number of additional elements within the view but will only occupy a very small, narrow section of the far distance. The visible elements of the proposed development will be viewed beyond and above the cliffs to the right of Langland Bay and adjacent to the existing properties along Beaufort Avenue. These distance views of the development would be limited to the addition of roofscape, exterior profiles of residential plots along the western and southern boundaries of the development and the proposed structural landscape, partially screened by retained vegetation along its western boundary and properties along Beaufort Avenue.
- 5.41 Magnitude of Visual Effects: The proposed development will result in a minor addition of elements within the far distance of the view. The western plot boundaries and proposed structural landscape will be the most discernible feature, although these will be partially screened by retained boundary hedgerow and tree planting and the properties along Beaufort Avenue. These additional features will also be viewed as part of the settlement of Thistleboon. Changes would affect a very small proportion of the view only – which is expansive and far reaching. Visual change will be integrated with the existing remaining landscape elements of the wider view, through development form, scale and the proposed landscape framework. Magnitude of visual effects is considered to be minor to negligible.
- 5.42 Significance of Visual Effects: Visual receptors are considered to be of high sensitivity to change and visual magnitude of the proposed development low to negligible. The proposed development would result in a slight introduction of additional landscape features which contribute to the existing visual character, but these additional features are of the same nature as existing dominating visual elements. The overall visual quality and composition of the view, characterised by the coastal location, would remain prevalent and the proposed development would be perceived as part of the existing settlement of Thistleboon. Crucial visual qualities would not be fundamentally affected, and the proposed development would be readily absorbed within the expansive view. As such significance of visual effects is therefore assessed as minor to negligible, not significant and neutral.

Table 15: Summary of Potential Operational Effects on Viewpoint Locations

Receptor	Sensitivity	Impact	Magnitude	Significance
Viewpoint 1: Higher Lane	High	Direct	Moderate	Moderate, Not significant and Neutral
Viewpoint 2: Wales Coast Path	High	Indirect	Minor	Minor, Not Significant and Neutral
Viewpoint 3: Wales Coast Path – Snaple Point	High	Indirect	Minor to Negligible	Minor to Negligible, Not Significant and Neutral

6.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

- 6.1 During the course of the layout of the proposed development has changed as part of an iterative assessment and design process. Mitigation measures used to avoid or reduce landscape and visual effects have been considered as part of this process.
- 6.2 Analysis of the landscape, visual constraints of the application site was undertaken through field investigation and mapping exercises. This included the capture and analysis of viewpoint photography from a number of vantage points and a site walkover a ‘Constraints, Opportunities & Landscape Strategy Plan’ was produced, illustrating the key constraints to development and likely layout influences from a landscape and visual perspective. The Proposed Site Layout has been informed by this framework of constraints and key influences from the offset, and has therefore allowed the incorporation of a number of embedded mitigation measures within the design, as listed in Table 7.19 and 7.20 below. These measures have been incorporated within the scheme layout to assist in reducing the direct and indirect effects on landscape character and visual amenity resulting from the proposed development.
- 6.3 Following the application of embedded mitigation measures in relation to physical site constraints, the proposed development has been considered from the perspective of the identified viewpoints and landscape character areas, as assessed in paragraphs 5.5 – 5.81 above.

Table 16: Summary of Embedded Mitigation Measures – Construction Effects

Embedded Mitigation Element	Description
Use of site hoardings	Reduces visibility of construction activity
Construction phasing	Single Phase of work (approximately 15 months) to minimise duration of construction activity
Implementation of structural planting	Key structural planting to occur early during the construction programme, to allow for establishment early on and maximise screening effects during construction and operation, where feasible.

Table 17: Summary of Embedded Mitigation Measures – Operational Effects

Embedded Mitigation Element	Description
Retain existing key hedgerows and individual trees, where appropriate	Maximises screening and visual integration. Ensures additional elements within views are accommodated alongside existing retained reference points, assisting with landscape character

Strengthen the retained structural landscape network of trees	Introduce new trees to strengthen the retained network of landscape features, within which development is partially, screened and visually integrated, from key views. Refer to drawing 1873201-SBC-00-NA-GA-L-301-Soft Landscape Plan-P07
Site boundary buffering through structural planting	Screen boundaries to minimise visual effects, within local views and at distance. Enhance existing vegetative framework. Refer to drawing 1873201-SBC-00-NA-GA-L-301-Soft Landscape Plan-P07
Consideration of visually prominent areas of the site	To maximise visual integration of operational development within the local setting and accommodation within contextual views
Strategic location of access points	To reflect local setting and character and create ‘gateway’ access points where appropriate, positively contributing to landscape and visual character.
Street pattern, scale and use of materials to reflect the setting and the local building vernacular, as appropriate	So as to complement local townscape and minimise conflicts with existing landscape context and integrating appropriate landscape features within development parcels. Refer to drawing 1873201-SBC-00-NA-GA-L-301-Soft Landscape Plan-P07

7.0 RESIDUAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 Mitigation measures, as outlined in Table 16 and 17 above, are embedded within the design of the development. Residual effects are therefore equivalent to those effects already assessed within the assessment of effects on landscape character and visual amenity during the construction and operational phases of the development (refer to paragraphs 5.5 - 5.81).

8.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

- 8.1 No formal assessment of Cumulative Effects has been undertaken as cumulative impacts, as defined in GLVIA 3, are not considered relevant or proportionate to the scope of this assessment and the form of development, given the preceding LDP sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment which has resulted in identification of this Local Needs Housing Exception Site in the adopted LDP.

9.0 SUMMARY

Landscape Character

- 9.1 Landscape and visual assessment has indicated that the effects resulting from the proposed development are limited by the nature of the surrounding landscape context, which is characteristically rolling and contains a well-established structure of trees and hedgerow boundary vegetation and built urban form. The rolling lowland of the Swansea landscape to the north affords limited views toward the application site. Within north, east and west-facing views from the more elevated areas, the application site is typically absorbed within broad and far-reaching views over the wider coastal edge and Bristol Channel. Further to this, the application site itself is characterised by its south-west sloping topography and its close proximity to the urban settlement of Thistleboon, assisting in the integration of the scheme within its landscape setting and providing a structure of landscape and visual reference features. The proposed strategic landscape incorporates visual screening which integrates with and reflects the existing structural landscape elements on site, strengthening the existing landscape framework and providing further landscape and visual enhancement and mitigation.
- 9.2 The assessment of effects on landscape character concludes that during the construction phase of the works, there will be no significant change in landscape character from within the majority of the study area. This is due in part to the nature of construction activities and the limited extent to which they may be perceived in the landscape as a result of landform, built form and vegetation cover. Further to this, construction effects are limited by the short-term and temporary nature of activities during this phase of the proposed development.
- 9.3 Effects on visual amenity during the construction phase of the proposed development will predominantly be most significant from locations within the application site boundary and immediately adjacent, where direct effects occur. This includes locations along Higher Lane and from rear views from properties along Beaufort Avenue which bound the application site to the north and west. The significance of effects on visual amenity of construction activities will diminish

with distance, as construction activity will predominantly be viewed as a small component of wider views, typically filtered by intervening vegetation.

- 9.4 Effects on landscape character during the operational phase of the proposed development are predicted to be significant from locations within the application site boundary, where direct effects occur and from immediately adjacent areas. These effects will occur within LCA 1: Swansea West and Bishopston. The extent to which the change in/ addition of/ partial loss of landscape elements is likely to be perceived would vary across the LCA; however the small part of the LCA where direct physical effects would occur would be subject to a substantial change in landscape character as development becomes a dominant, long-term feature within the landscape.
- 9.5 Assessment of operational landscape effects on LCA 1: Swansea West and Bishopston during indicates that permanent, indirect effects will occur from some locations, where the change in character resulting from the introduction of residential development and infrastructure into the landscape will be perceived and influence key attributes of landscape character. However, the nature of prominence of views toward the application site is expected to be varied with location within the LCA. The level of vegetative screening within the application site and the surrounding fieldscape, strengthened by the proposed landscape framework will assist in the integration of the proposed development into the landscape. Overall landscape effects on LCA 1 are considered to be moderate to minor, not significant and neutral.
- 9.6 Across the remaining LCAs, effects on landscape character are predicted to be indirect, no more than moderate to minor, not significant and neutral. Assessment indicates that moderate to minor; neutral effects are largely attributed to the balanced well-integrated design of the proposed development and embedded mitigation measures.
- 9.7 Across the LCAs, no fundamental change to the existing landscape character is expected to occur as a result of the proposed development and effects are therefore considered to be neutral.

Statutory Designations

- 9.8 Although the proposed development falls with the Gower AONB, direct effects will be limited to the within the application site boundary. But as only a very small proportion of the ANOB will be affected the overall landscape qualities which define the AONB will not be completely eroded. Effects are therefore not predicted to be significant on the Gower AONB.
- 9.9 Effects on other Statutory and Non Statutory Landscape Designations are also predicted to be not significant.

Visual Amenity

- 9.10 Significant effects on visual amenity during the operational phase of the proposed development will predominantly occur from locations within the application site and within close proximity, typically from the backs of private residential properties along the north, east and west application site boundary edge and footpath MU5.

- 9.11 From short distance locations, including Viewpoints 1 and 2, the proposed development will be a perceptible feature within views, although additional elements are not considered to be the dominant visual elements. The function of retained and proposed landscape elements, are of importance from these viewpoint locations as retained visual reference points and as a structure to views, which will assist in the visual assimilation of the scheme within the surrounding landscape. Other retained visual elements, including the residential properties along Beaufort Avenue, Higher Lane and Channel View are key visual reference points. Effects are considered to be moderate to minor, not significant and slight adverse to neutral.
- 9.12 From medium distance locations (such as Viewpoints 3), the proposed development may be absorbed within the view without having significant effects, partly as a result of the breadth of the expansive views available and the nature of the existing landscape which is dominated by and built urban cover, which includes the existing settlements of Swansea West. As no fundamental change to the visual qualities of views from these locations is expected to occur, effects are typically considered to be minor to negligible, not significant and neutral.