

## **APPENDIX 12.1: TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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**Environmental  
Statement**  
Appendix 12.1 -  
Townscape  
and Visual Impact  
Assessment

August 2021

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Appendix 12.1 to the Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared by Peter Stewart Consultancy. It provides an updated Appendix 12.1, amended to take account of changes since the original 2015 ES (as amended by subsequent submissions) to planning policy and guidance, methodology, baseline conditions, and cumulative effects, as well as an assessment of the effect of the proposed development as amended by the proposed changes on views and townscape.
- 1.2 This Appendix contains the following sections:
- A summary of the planning policy context relevant to the assessment;
  - A description of the method by which the assessment has been carried out, and of how the images in this report have been created;
  - A description and characterisation of the Site and its surroundings as existing;
  - A description and assessment of the proposed development;
  - An assessment of the effect of the proposed development on identified townscape features;
  - An assessment of the visual effect of the proposed development on the identified views, including the effects of construction operations;
  - An assessment of cumulative effects, taking into account other new developments proposed in the area;
  - Consideration of mitigation; and
  - An assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the townscape, and conclusions.
- 1.3 This Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment considers above-ground heritage assets, if relevant, in townscape and visual terms only. An assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the significance of heritage assets, as defined in the NPPF, is provided in the Chapter 9 of the ES, 'Cultural Heritage'.

## 2.0 Legislative and planning policy background

- 2.1 This section contains a brief overview of aspects of national, London-wide and local planning policies and guidance that are particularly relevant to the appearance and visual impact of the proposed development, and which have changed since the consented planning application. For the purposes of this report, it is those policies concerned with design and townscape matters that are of the greatest relevance.

### National planning policy and guidance

#### The National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 2.2 The Government issued the latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref. 1) in July 2021. The NPPF sets out planning policies for England and how these should be applied.
- 2.3 The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which has three overarching objectives; economic, social and environmental. The NPPF states, at paragraph 10, that *'...at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.'*

#### NPPF Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

- 2.4 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with design. At paragraph 126, the NPPF states that *'Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.'*
- 2.5 Paragraph 130 notes that *'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
  - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
  - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
  - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*

*e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*

*f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.'*

- 2.6 Paragraph 134 states that *'proposed development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes'*. It goes on to say that *'Conversely, significant weight should be given to:*

- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or*
- b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.'*

#### Planning Practice Guidance, (2014 – ongoing)

- 2.7 The PPG (Ref 2) includes a section called 'Design: process and tools' which 'provides advice on the key points to take into account on design'. This was issued on 1 October 2019; it replaces a previous section called 'Design'.
- 2.8 The PPG deals with the processes of the planning system with respect to design, and notes that guidance on good design is set out in the National Design Guide.

#### The National Design Guide (2019)

- 2.9 The National Design Guide ('NDG') states (paragraph 3) that it *'forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance'* (Ref 3).
- 2.10 At paragraph 21 the NDG states that well-designed places are achieved by making the right choices at all levels, including:

*'The layout (or masterplan)*

*The form and scale of buildings  
Their appearance  
Landscape  
Materials; and  
Their detailing'*

- 2.11 At paragraph 35 the NDG sets out ten characteristics which contribute to the character of places, nurture and sustain a sense of community, and address issues affecting climate. These are described as follows:

*'Context - enhances the surroundings.  
Identity - attractive and distinctive.  
Built form - a coherent pattern of development.  
Movement - accessible and easy to move around.  
Nature - enhanced and optimised.  
Public spaces - safe, social and inclusive.  
Uses - mixed and integrated.  
Homes and buildings - functional, healthy and sustainable.  
Resources - efficient and resilient.  
Lifespan - made to last.'*

#### **Historic England Advice Note 4 – Tall Buildings (2015)**

- 2.12 This document sets out guidance on dealing with tall buildings in the planning process (Ref. 4). It supersedes the 'Guidance on Tall Buildings' issued by English Heritage and CABE in 2007. The Introduction notes that *"alternative approaches may be equally acceptable, provided they are demonstrably compliant with legislation and national policy objectives."* It notes that what might be considered a tall building will vary from area to area and *"A ten storey building in a mainly two-storey neighbourhood will be thought of as a tall building by those affected, whereas in the centre of a large city it may not."*
- 2.13 Paragraph 1.1 states that, *"in the right place well-designed tall buildings can make a positive contribution to urban life."* The main focus of the guidance is promoting a plan led approach and setting out the relevant consideration tall building policies should address, and setting out the approach and assessments applicants should follow in promoting such development.
- 2.14 At paragraph 4.5 it provides a list of factors a high quality scheme should have a positive relationship with:

*"a. Topography  
b. Character of place  
c. Heritage assets and their settings*

*d. Height and scale of development (immediate, intermediate and town- or city-wide)  
e. Urban grain and streetscape  
f. Open spaces  
g. Rivers and waterways  
h. Important views including prospects and panoramas  
i. The impact on the skyline"*

- 2.15 At paragraph 4.8 it set out a list of design criteria a successful application will need to fully address:

*"a. Scale  
b. Form and massing  
c. Proportion and silhouette  
d. Facing materials  
e. Detailed surface design  
f. Relationship to other structures  
g. Impact on streetscape and near views  
h. Impact on cityscape and distant views  
i. Impact on the skyline"*

- 2.16 Paragraph 4.9 states that:

*"Tall buildings need to set exemplary standards in design because of their scale, mass, wide impact and likely longevity. Good design will take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and respond to local character and history (NPPF paragraphs 58 and 64). It is important that the required high standard of architectural quality is maintained throughout the process of procurement, detailed design, and construction, through the use of conditions and reserved matters."*

The references to NPPF paragraphs 58 and 64 have been superseded since the document was issued, and the corresponding paragraphs in the 2021 NPPF are paragraphs 130 and 134 respectively.

- 2.17 Paragraph 4.10 notes that *"consideration needs to be given to a tall building's contribution to public space and facilities. This applies both internally and externally, including the provision of a mix of uses (especially on the ground floor of towers), as part of a well-designed public realm."*
- 2.18 Section 5 deals with assessing proposals. The guidance concludes noting that:
- "If a tall building is harmful to the historic environment, then without a careful examination of the worth of any public benefits that the proposed tall building is*

*said to deliver and of the alternative means of delivering them, the planning authority is unlikely to be able to find a clear and convincing justification for the cumulative harm."*

#### **Historic England Advice Note 4 – Tall Buildings – Second edition consultation draft (2020)**

- 2.19 This draft updated version of the advice note (Ref. 5) issued in 2015 was issued for public consultation in spring 2020. The guidance within the draft Advice Note is not significantly different to that in the existing document, and the updates are primarily designed to reflect changes to the policy and guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide, to take account of changing technology for visualising proposed tall buildings, and to give greater focus to plan-led approaches to tall buildings.

## Regional planning policy and guidance

### **The London Plan (2021)**

- 2.20 The London Plan is *'the overall strategic plan for London'* (Ref. 6). The policies most relevant to townscape and visual impact are found in Chapter 3, 'Design,' and Chapter 7, 'Heritage and Culture.'
- 2.21 Policy D1 on *'London's form, character and capacity for growth'* highlights the necessity for Boroughs to identify an area's capacity for growth by undertaking an assessment of the *'characteristics, qualities and values of different places'*. This should include the consideration of urban form and structure, historical evolution and heritage assets, and views and landmarks.
- 2.22 Policy D3 on *'Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach'* states that *'All development must make the best use of land by following a design-led approach that optimises the capacity of sites, including site allocations.'* The policy states that development proposals should *'enhance local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape, with due regard to existing and emerging street hierarchy, building types, forms and proportions.'* proposed development should *'respond to the existing character of a place'*, and *'provide active frontages and positive reciprocal relationships between what happens inside the buildings and outside in the public realm to generate liveliness and interest.'* The policy further states that development design should *'be of high quality, with architecture that pays attention to detail,'* and use *'attractive, robust materials which weather and mature well'*.
- 2.23 Policy D8 on *'Public realm'* states that development plans and proposals should ensure that the public realm is *'...well-connected, related to the local and historic context...'*. It states that there should be *'a mutually supportive relationship between the space, surrounding buildings and their uses'* and that development should *'ensure that buildings are of a design that activates and defines the public realm, and provides natural surveillance.'*
- 2.24 Policy D9 on *'Tall buildings'* notes that the height of what is considered a tall building should be defined in development plans and identified on maps, and that although this will vary in different parts of London, *'should not be less than 6 storeys or 18 metres'*. The policy also notes that *'tall buildings should only be developed in locations that are identified as suitable in proposed development Plans.'*
- 2.25 Policy D9 also notes that the views of buildings from different distances should be considered. This includes long-range views (developments should make a *'positive contribution to the existing and emerging skyline and not adversely affect local or strategic views'*), mid-range views (developments should make a *'positive contribution to the local townscape in terms of legibility, proportions and materiality'*), and immediate views (developments should *'have a direct relationship with the street, maintaining the pedestrian scale, character and vitality of the street'*). Proposals should *'take account of, and avoid harm to, the significance of London's heritage assets and their settings'* and should *'positively contribute to the character of the area.'* It goes on to note that the architectural quality and materials should be of an exemplary standard. Buildings that are situated in the setting of a World Heritage Site *'must preserve, and not harm, the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site, and the ability to appreciate it.'* Buildings near the River Thames should protect the open quality of the river, including views.
- 2.26 Policy HC3 on *'Strategic and Local Views'* states that *'development proposals must be assessed for their impact on a designated view if they fall within the foreground, middle ground or background of that view.'* The Mayor will identify Strategically-Important landmarks within designated views and will *'seek to protect vistas towards Strategically-Important Landmarks by designating landmark viewing corridors and wider setting consultation areas. These elements together form a Protected Vista'*. The Mayor will *'identify and protect aspects of views that contribute to a viewer's ability to recognise and appreciate a World Heritage Site's authenticity, integrity and attributes.'*
- 2.27 Policy HC4 on the *'London View Management Framework'* states that *'development proposals should not harm, and should seek to make a positive contribution to, the characteristics and composition of Strategic Views and their landmark elements.'* It notes that development should not be *'intrusive, unsightly or prominent to the detriment of the view'*, when it falls within the foreground, middle, or background of a designated view. With regard to

protected vistas, development should protect and enhance, not harm, the viewer's ability to recognise and appreciate the strategically important landmark, and it should not harm the composition of the protected vista, whether it falls within the wider setting consultation area or not.

**London View Management Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance (March 2012)**

- 2.28 In March 2012 the Mayor published the ‘*London View Management Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance*’ (‘LVMF’) which is designed to provide further clarity and guidance on the London Plan’s policies for the management of these views (Ref. 7). None of the LVMF views are considered relevant to development on the Site.

**London's Natural Signatures: The London Landscape Framework, (prepared for Natural England, January 2011)**

- 2.29 This guidance document was issued by Natural England in 2011 (Ref. 8). It divides London into 22 Natural Landscape Areas and identifies the key natural characteristics, or ‘Natural Signatures’, of those areas. The Site lies within Landscape Area 4, Finchley Ridge, which is described as “*Ridgetop blocks of ancient woodland on former common land.*” Brunswick Park is mentioned as a key environmental asset within the area and is described as having small areas of native woodland on a former pit mound with panoramic views from the top of this “*mount*”.

**Local planning policy and guidance**

**London Borough of Barnet - Core Strategy (2012)**

- 2.30 The Core Strategy (Ref. 9) was adopted in September 2012. Policy CS5: ‘*Protecting and Enhancing Barnet’s Character to Create High Quality Places*’ states that LBB will ensure development in Barnet “*respects local context and distinctive local character, creating places and buildings of high quality design*”. It states that development should address the principles, aims and objectives of national design guidance, including “By Design” and that, inter alia, they should “*protect important local views from places within Barnet (as set out in Map 8)*” and “*enhance the borough’s high quality suburbs and historic areas through the provision of buildings of the highest quality that are sustainable and adaptable.*” Of the views shown on Map 8, only that from King George Playing Fields is considered potentially relevant to the Site and it is provided in the views assessment in this report.

- 2.31 It goes on to state, in terms of “*Heritage and Character*”, that LBB will “*...require proposals within or affecting the setting of heritage assets to provide a site assessment which demonstrates how the proposal will respect and enhance the asset.*”

- 2.32 With regard to “*Tall Buildings*”, which are defined as buildings of eight storeys or more, it is stated that these will be considered in specific locations in accordance with London Plan Policy 7.7 and the CABE/English Heritage (now Historic England) “*Guidance on Tall Buildings*” and will not be supported outside of the identified locations. The Site is not within one of the identified locations.

- 2.33 The Site and Oakleigh Road South are identified as a regeneration/development area in the Core Strategy. Policy CS3 states that “*We will also promote the development area of the North London Business Park and Oakleigh Road South in order to develop in the range of 400 new homes by 2020/21 as part of a mixed use development in accordance with the adopted Planning Brief of June 2006.*”

**London Borough of Barnet Local Plan (proposed development Management Policies) (2012)**

- 2.34 The Local Plan (proposed development Management Policies) (Ref. 10) was adopted in September 2012. Policy DM01: ‘*Protecting Barnet’s character and amenity*’ includes a number of considerations relevant to new development. Those relevant to the considerations of this assessment include:

- “a. All development should represent high quality design which demonstrates high levels of environmental awareness and contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- b. proposed development proposals should be based on an understanding of local characteristics. Proposals should preserve or enhance local character and respect the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets.
- c. proposed development proposals should ensure attractive, safe and, where appropriate, vibrant streets which provide visual interest, particularly at street level and avoid blank walls.
- d. proposed development proposals should create safe and secure environments and reduce opportunities for crime and minimise the fear of crime.
- .....”

- 2.35 Policy DM05, “*Tall Buildings*”, states that tall buildings outside the strategic locations identified in the Core Strategy will not be considered acceptable and proposals for tall buildings will need to demonstrate



- i. *“An active street frontage where appropriate*
- ii. *Successful integration into the existing urban fabric*
- iii. *A regard to topography and no adverse impact on Local Viewing Corridors, local views and the skyline*
- iv. *Not cause harm to heritage assets and their setting...*”

2.36 Policy DM06, “*Barnet’s Heritage and Conservation*”, states that proposals involving or affecting Barnet’s heritage assets should demonstrate, inter alia, “*the impact of the proposal on the setting of the heritage asset.*”

#### **Characterisation Study of London Borough of Barnet Final Report, May 2010**

2.37 The characterisation study was prepared as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy (Ref. 11). It provides a detailed understanding of the Borough’s urban character. It identifies character typologies (primary and secondary) as well as geographic character areas.

2.38 The Site falls within the “campus” primary typology area as defined in the Council’s document (no secondary areas are defined for this primary typology). The campus typology is described at page 51 as being “*primarily distinguished by its large urban scale and coarse grain, as buildings have large floor plans.*”

2.39 The Site falls within the Friern Barnet and Brunswick Park character area. The character area is described as “*a disparate area*” with a street pattern that is “*broken up by large areas of open space, and smaller areas of non-permeable layouts including big box, campus and residential estate typologies.*”

2.40 The Oakleigh Park and East Barnet character area lies immediately north of the Site and is described as “*generally consistent, comprised of detached and semi-detached houses on regular streets, most of it being inter-war housing.*”

#### **Residential Design Guidance SPD, April 2013**

2.41 The Residential Design Guidance SPD was adopted in April 2013 (Ref. 12). Its aim is to help ensure that design appropriate to LB Barnet’s suburban context is achieved. It goes on to list a variety of requirements ranging from appropriate patterns of development to specific design guidelines for houses.

2.42 In section 6 ‘Enhancing local character’ it states in the sub section on the pattern of development:

*“The design and layout of new development should be informed by the local pattern of development. The continuity of building lines, forecourt depths, road*

*layout, space about the building and rear garden areas are all likely to be significant factors when redeveloping sites within existing residential areas, or at the interface of larger development sites and existing housing (para 6.6)”*

2.43 It goes on to say cul-de-sac forms of developments are generally discouraged but that they may be acceptable in certain cases provided they are shown to be part of a wider, well connected network. This section of the SPD concludes with a list of principles new development should follow which include to:

- complement or improve the character of the area through its appearance, architectural detailing, siting, use of materials, layout and integration with surrounding land, boundaries, building lines, setbacks, fronts and backs
- respond to distinctive local building forms and patterns of development by respecting scale, massing and height of surrounding buildings.

#### **London Borough of Barnet – Planning Brief, North London Business Park Planning Brief (2016)**

2.44 This Planning Brief for the Site was adopted in March 2016 with the aim of providing a ‘*vision for the transformation of the site*’ (Ref. 13). This brief acknowledges that the kind of redevelopment that was envisaged in a previous 2006 planning brief – i.e. mixed use, protecting existing operational employment uses - had not revitalised the Site.

2.45 The brief notes that the Site ‘*...is large enough to have its own character...*’. In respect of views, it notes that there are views into the site from Weirdale Avenue and the disused Weirdale Avenue entrance, from Brunswick Park Gardens/ Howard Close, and from the south along Brunswick Avenue. The trees along these boundaries, the landscaped boundary along Brunswick Park Road, and the view along the entrance from Brunswick Park Road are identified as “*features*” of the Site. The large mound at the northern end of the Site and the existing NLBP buildings are noted as being prominent from houses in Brunswick Park Gardens.

2.46 Mature trees are noted as the main feature when viewing the Site entrance from Oakleigh Road South. The draft brief notes that glimpses of the existing buildings and the row of Leylandii on the Site can be seen from the west; the existing telecommunications mast is seen from Denham Road and Weirdale Avenue; and more distant views of the Site are possible from roads on the hillside to the east.

2.47 In terms of the approach to redevelopment, the brief notes that ‘*The higher density residential areas should create a central heart to the development. The scale will need to consider views from surrounding adjacent suburban housing,*

*in particular Brunswick Park Crescent, Oakleigh Road North and from development on the higher ground to the north.* It goes on to state that the school should be located adjacent to Brunswick Park Road, while maintaining where feasible the landscape buffer, and lower density development would be located along the northern boundary on the existing playing field. It states that *'Existing trees and landscaping areas should be valued as assets to enhance the setting of proposals and public open spaces.'*

- 2.48 In respect of urban form, the brief states that the pattern of development and road layout *'...should reflect where possible the rectilinear form of the surrounding streets, within a general perimeter block structure'* and the majority of the public open space should be concentrated centrally, within the higher density areas. It is noted that the principal route through the Site should link Brunswick Park Road to Oakleigh Road South, and access from Ashbourne Avenue should be provided for pedestrians and cyclists.

## 3.0 Assessment method and significance criteria

3.1 The section explains the method that has been used to carry out the townscape and visual impact assessment. It is based broadly on the principles set out in the third (2013) edition of 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA), produced by the Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (Ref. 14).

3.2 The assessment method is described in detail below. In general terms it is carried out as follows:

- Buildings, open spaces, townscape and views that have the potential to be affected by the proposed development, particularly those that have been previously identified as significant by designation or in other ways, are identified.
- The impacts on these buildings, open spaces, townscape and views are studied as part of the process of developing the design. This process includes computer-based modelling, so that the visual impact can be tested.
- The impacts of the proposed development, in the form in which it is submitted for planning permission, on the identified elements and views, are assessed by the townscape assessors. This assessment is informed by computer generated images showing 'as existing' and 'as proposed' views from selected viewpoints.

The process as described is an iterative one that informs the design of the proposed development, so that any potential for adverse impacts can be considered as an integral aspect of the development of the design.

### Townscape character areas – assessment method

3.3 An assessment has been made of the Site and its surroundings in their existing state. This analyses the physical characteristics and the character of the townscape and considers the current status of the Site.

3.4 This was carried out following a study of the historic development of the area which was made with reference to the following publications:

- *The Buildings of England, London 4: North*, Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, Yale University Press, 2002 (Ref. 15).
- *The London Encyclopaedia*, Ben Weinreb, Christopher Hibbert, Julia Keay, John Keay, Macmillan, 2010 (Ref. 16).

3.5 The present-day condition of the area was studied by site visits (most recently in June 2021), supported by a study of maps and aerial photographs (available on the internet as an integrated set of data at [www.maps.google.co.uk](http://www.maps.google.co.uk)), and the Pevsner volume referred to above. Site visits allow the accuracy of record data to be verified in what is a rapidly changing landscape. Record photographs were taken on site visits.

3.6 Townscape is characterised by dividing the study area into geographical areas which have readily identifiable characteristics in common (townscape character areas, 'TCAs'). These characteristics may include topography; other natural characteristics such as waterways; patterns of land use; urban grain; and building form. Where there are major elements of infrastructure such as roads and railways, these often serve to divide one area from another. The division of an urban area into townscape character areas is carried out by a combination of professional judgement and common sense based on site investigation on the ground, and the study of documents, as described above.

3.7 A study has been undertaken to identify any designated heritage assets within 1km of the centre of the Site, using information derived from the National Heritage List for England website and the Local Planning Authority website, and these have informed the identification and assessment of townscape character areas and views where relevant. Designated heritage assets comprise World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, and Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Buildings on London Borough of Barnet's Schedule of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest in the streets immediately around the Site, if any, have also been identified and are considered to form non-designated heritage assets. Any identified heritage assets are noted under the TCAs or views to which they are relevant.

3.8 The study revealed that there are no World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas or Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest within 1km of the centre of the Site.

3.9 There is one listed building within 1km of the Site, the grade II listed Memorial to German First World War Internees, New Southgate Cemetery. This is seen in View 7 from New Southgate Cemetery, and falls within a TCA identified as TCA D – parks and green spaces.

3.10 A number of listed buildings were identified just beyond 1km of the centre of the Site, and are as follows:

- Statue in Friary Park – Grade II
- Parish Church of St. James – Grade II
- St. James’s Primary School – Grade II
- Lawrence Campe Almshouses – Grade II
- All Saints Church of England – Grade II
- Parish Church of St. Mary – Grade II\*
- Water Tower – Grade II
- Clarke Family Monument – Grade II
- Group of 6 tombstones – Grade II
- Church Farm School – Grade II
- 2a & 3 Church Farm School – Grade II

3.11 Informed by site visits and map study, it is considered that the distance of these buildings from the Site and the nature of their locations is such that they would not form a significant aspect of views and townscape that have the potential to experience a significant effect as a result of the proposed development. These buildings beyond the original 1km study area have not, therefore, informed the scope of this assessment.

3.12 A number of locally listed buildings have been identified close to the Site – these fall within TCA D and are considered as part of that section.

## Views and visual impact – method of assessment

3.13 A study was undertaken to establish a set of potential viewpoint locations from which ‘before and after’ views are provided. The study area is centred on the Site and is limited to locations from which the Site can be seen, or from which new buildings on it will be seen at the height proposed. The study area for local and medium range views extends to approximately 750m, the approximate distance to the viewpoint from New Southgate Recreation Ground. The study area for long range views extends to approximately 4km, the approximate distance to the King George Playing Fields viewpoint. Informed by consideration of the visual effects of existing buildings of a comparable height within other suburban locations in London, seen at comparable distances, it is considered that at a distance greater than this, development of the scale envisaged would not be a significant visual presence.

3.14 Within this study area, four types of viewing location are identified:

- Views that have been identified as significant, by the planning authority or others, e.g. in planning policy and guidance documents and conservation area appraisals;
- Other locations or views of particular sensitivity, including those viewpoints in which the proposed development may significantly affect the settings of World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas;
- Representative townscape locations from which the proposed development will be visible; and
- Locations where there is extensive open space between the viewer and the proposed development so that it will be prominent rather than obscured by foreground buildings. This includes areas of open space that are important in a local context, e.g. for leisure purposes.

3.15 The set of viewpoints is chosen so that it covers:

- The range of points of the compass from which the proposed development will be visible;
- A range of distances from the site; and
- Different types of townscape area.

3.16 Possible locations in these categories within the study area are identified based on an examination of maps and aerial photographs; the documents referred to above; maps of Conservation Areas; and maps and lists of listed buildings. The study area and the possible locations are then visited to establish candidate viewpoints, if required. The viewpoint locations replicate those provided for the original planning application on the Site, which were determined after consultation with the London Borough of Barnet (‘LBB’).

3.17 There is relatively low visibility of the Site within its surroundings. The viewpoints in this assessment have been specifically chosen to illustrate those points from which the proposed development is likely to be most visible; as such, they are not necessarily typical of the general experience of views from the surrounding area towards the Site.

## Sensitivity of receptors

3.18 The sensitivity of the receptor (townscape character area or view) as existing is assessed as **high, medium** or **low**.

3.19 The sensitivity of a receptor is dependent on:

- the importance/ value of the townscape or view;

- the susceptibility to change of the receptor (this includes, for views, the nature and expectation of the viewer).

- 3.20 The importance of a view or townscape character area is determined by any recognition that it may have, the importance of elements within it, and by its amenity value. In terms of views, recognition includes viewpoints identified by the local authority in planning documents, and viewpoints visited by large numbers of people. In terms of townscape receptors, recognition includes heritage designation e.g. of a Conservation Area.
- 3.21 The value of a view or TCA is likely to be higher if it overlooks/ includes important heritage assets (see below). In respect of townscape, the overall character and coherence of the townscape is relevant to an assessment of its value and quality. In respect of views, the value and quality of the view is a reflection of its visual interest, its character and coherence, and any attractive or notable pictorial or compositional qualities.
- 3.22 With regard to amenity value, locations such as parks and riverside walkways which are used for leisure purposes are considered to be more sensitive in visual and townscape terms than everyday streetscapes with no heritage designation.
- 3.23 The value and quality of the receptor is a reflection of its visual interest, its character and coherence and any attractive or notable pictorial or compositional qualities. The value of a view or townscape character area is likely to be higher if it overlooks a designated area such as a conservation area.
- 3.24 The nature and expectation of the viewer reflects the occupation or activity of the people who will gain the view. The GLVIA uses the term 'receptor' to mean both elements of the physical landscape and townscape, and people who will see the development and its setting. In the case of townscape assessment, the latter are taken to be the general public affected by development, taking into account the differing interests and expectations likely to be found in residents, visitors and those who work in a place. For example, people who walk in a park in their leisure time are likely to have a higher sensitivity than people at their place of work.
- 3.25 The assessment of sensitivity takes into account the following heritage assets and their settings, in decreasing order of importance (but this is only a general guide – see comment below on moderation):
- World Heritage Sites, Grade I Listed Buildings;

- Grade II\* or Grade II Listed Buildings, conservation areas and registered parks and gardens;
- Locally listed buildings

- 3.26 The assessment of the sensitivity of the receptor under consideration may be moderated to take into account a judgement about its quality in the round. For example: a World Heritage Site or a listed building may have a good or a poor setting, and a good quality setting is more sensitive to change than a poor quality setting; a listed building or a part of a conservation area may be a prominent aspect of a view, or it may be present in the view but only incidentally; conservation areas include within them areas of greater and lesser quality; and so on. Thus there is not necessarily a direct mapping between the heritage categories listed above and the assessment of sensitivity as high, medium or low.

### Effect of the proposed development on receptors – method of assessment and significance criteria

- 3.27 The assessment of the significance of the effects of any proposed development on existing receptors is a matter of judgement. The assessments in this document are made on the basis of professional judgement which takes into account relevant planning policies and guidance. The assessment is based on the following method.
- 3.28 An assessment is made of the likely **significance** of the impact that the proposed development will have on the receptor under consideration. This is a function of the **sensitivity** of the receptor as existing (as explained in the previous section), together with the **magnitude** of the change resulting from the proposed development.
- 3.29 The **magnitude** of the change resulting from the proposed development is assessed as **major, moderate, minor** or **negligible** using the following criteria:
- **Major:** considerable change to the receptor;
  - **Moderate:** an obvious change to the receptor that would be readily noticeable;
  - **Minor:** a slight change to the receptor that would not be easily noticed;
  - **Negligible:** there would be minimal change to the receptor.
- 3.30 In cases where the proposed development does not appear and results in no change to the receptor, an assessment of '**no effect**' is given.

3.31 These two measures – sensitivity and magnitude - are combined to provide a measure of the significance - **major, moderate, minor** or **negligible** - of the effect on receptors which will result from the proposed development, the most significant effects being effects of major magnitude on settings of high sensitivity. Likely significant effects, for the purposes of Environmental Impact Assessment, are those which fall in the shaded area of the table below (i.e. of 'moderate' significance and above). The terms in the boxes in the table indicate the **significance** which results from the relevant combination of **magnitude of change** and **sensitivity**.

		Sensitivity		
		<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>
Magnitude of change	<i>Major</i>	Major	Moderate to major	Moderate
	<i>Moderate</i>	Moderate to major	Moderate	Minor to moderate
	<i>Minor</i>	Moderate	Minor to moderate	Minor
	<i>Negligible</i>	Minor/negligible	Minor/negligible	Negligible

Table 1 - Significance of impacts

3.32 However, it should be noted that the magnitude of change and / or the sensitivity may be assessed as being at an intermediate point between the criteria set out above e.g. a change of 'moderate to major' magnitude. Where this is the case and the magnitude and / or sensitivity criteria are intermediate, all possible significance criteria that fall under the combinations of the magnitude and sensitivity criteria are considered and the most appropriate significance assessment, based on professional judgement, is chosen.

3.33 Effects are also assessed qualitatively as **beneficial, adverse** or **neutral** in respect of their impact on the receptor under consideration.

3.34 The degree to which effects are beneficial or adverse is not necessarily related directly to the degree of sensitivity or to the magnitude, or, consequently, to the significance, since with regard to a given view or area of townscape that is being assessed, there may be both positive and negative impacts as a result of the development. The question of whether an effect is beneficial or adverse relies on a judgement in the round and is a 'net equation'. An effect that is significant (because of the combination of magnitude and sensitivity) may be

neutral in respect of the effect on the quality of the receptor under consideration.

## Existing and proposed view images

3.35 For each of the identified views in the assessment which follows, there are images of the view 'as existing', showing baseline conditions, and 'as proposed' images, showing the proposed development in the image in outline 'shaded volume' form, as a photorealistic 'rendered' image, or a combination of both (explained below).

3.36 The planning application is a hybrid application, with full details submitted for part of the proposed development (Phases 0 and 1) and an outline application submitted for the other parts of the proposed development (Phases 2 to 5). The plots within the outline component of the proposed development are therefore not yet designed in detail. Parameter Plans submitted as part of the planning application set out the minimum and maximum footprints and minimum and maximum height of each plot (or part of a plot).

3.37 The scenario assessed in this Volume of the ES is that in which every plot across that part of the Site subject to an outline planning application would be built out to the maximum height and footprint possible for each plot or part of a plot, and this is referred to as the 'maximum parameters' scenario. This is considered to be the scenario in which the proposed development would have the maximum, i.e. most significant, effect.

3.38 A Design Principles Document forms one of the 'Control Documents' submitted for approval as part of the planning application. The Design Principles document states that detailed development of the outline parts of the Proposed proposed development is to be governed by this document, and it is considered appropriate for account to also be taken of the Design Principles in respect of potential effects, where relevant.

3.39 'As proposed' images are provided as 'Accurate Visual Representations' ('AVRs'). AVRs are produced by accurately combining images of the proposed development (typically created from a three-dimensional computer model) with a photograph of its context as existing. The method by which AVRs are produced is described in Appendix A.

3.40 AVRs of the outline component of the proposed development are provided as 'shaded volumes', diagrammatic representations showing the massing of the proposed development at maximum parameters. With respect to the detailed

part of the proposed development, in some images the detailed buildings are represented by a shaded volume showing their massing, and in some views they are shown as rendered (photorealistic) images, which also show the detailed form of the buildings and the proposed use of materials within them. A red dotted outline shows the location of the proposed development where it is obscured from sight.

- 3.41 In some cases, in particular those views where the outline elements would be seen at relatively close quarters, the visual impact of the proposed development would be dependent to some extent on the quality of the appearance of the outline part of the proposed development, which as noted previously is not fixed at this stage. The assessment in this Volume of the ES is based on the reasonable assumption that the detailed appearance of the outline parts of the proposed development would nonetheless be of a high standard as set out in the Design Principles accompanying the planning application and national, London-wide (regional) and local design policies and guidance.
- 3.42 For each of the identified verified views, a description and assessment are given:
- A description of the view as existing, identifying its visual quality, its sensitivity to change and, where necessary, the reason for that sensitivity;
  - A description of the view as proposed, with an assessment, based on the method set out above, of the significance of the impact that the proposed development will have on the view, and a qualitative assessment.
- 3.43 The baseline photography for the views was carried out in March 2021 when trees were without their leaves, and the assessment is therefore of the maximum visibility of the proposed development. Some of the views illustrated would appear different in summer, and this is likely to result in the visibility of the proposed development being reduced to some extent in some cases.
- 3.44 A number of proposals for proposed or consented developments in the wider area around the Site have been identified for 'cumulative' assessment, in consultation with LBB. An assessment of the effect of the proposed development in the context of these schemes has been provided in Section 9. It is clear by inspection that, due to the location of these schemes and their height and scale, there would be not be any significant visibility of them in the views provided within this assessment, and so 'cumulative' AVRs have not been provided.

3.45 The assessment of individual views, and the concluding section concerning impact on townscape, which is informed by the view assessments, consider the impact on the townscape and views as they will be experienced by viewers in reality. Photographic images of townscape are no more than an approximation to this, for a number of reasons:

- Viewers have peripheral vision; their view is not restricted by borders as a photograph is, and they can move their eyes and heads to take in a wide field of view when standing in one place.
- Viewpoints themselves are not generally fixed. Townscape is experienced for the most part as a progression of views or vistas by people who are moving through streets or spaces rather than standing still.
- Photographs do not reflect the perception of depth of field as experienced by the human viewer due to parallax.
- Before and after views illustrate the view in conditions that are particular in respect of time of day and time of year, daylight and sunlight, and weather, and the view will appear differently to varying degrees when any or all of these things vary.
- Townscape is experienced not by the eye alone but by the interpretation by the mind of what the eye sees, considered in the light of experience, knowledge and memory.

The 'as proposed' images are provided as a guide to the effect on views as they would be experienced on site; to act as an aide-memoire; and to assist site visits. The assessment provided in this TVIA represents a professional judgement of the likely effect of the proposed development on the view or the townscape, informed by site visits as well as the photographic images provided, rather than an assessment of the photographic images.

3.46 The general conclusions about the effect of the proposed development on the townscape considered in the round should also be taken into account when considering individual views.

## 4.0 Baseline conditions

### The Site and its immediate surroundings

- 4.1 The Site is located in the London Borough of Barnet, in East Barnet. It is bounded to the west by railway lines, to the east by Brunswick Park Road, to the south by Oakleigh Road South/ Brunswick Crescent, and to the north by Howard Close and Weirdale Avenue/ Ashbourne Avenue.
- 4.2 The Site is large and broadly 'L' shaped, with its 'long leg' set against the railway line to the west of the Site, its 'short leg' extending east to Brunswick Park Road, and a spur extending from the south-western 'heel' towards an access point from Oakleigh Road South. The Site accommodates a number of buildings, most of which are between two and four storeys tall and are occupied by office or educational uses. The buildings are set within large areas of open green and landscaped space in an informal 'campus' style arrangement. A man-made lake is located on the eastern part of the Site.
- 4.3 The Site faces the backs of houses to its north and south, and railway lines to the west. The Site's only meaningful stretch of street frontage is to the east, along Brunswick Park Road, and this part of the Site is occupied by a landscaped area of land which includes a number of trees. None of the buildings on the Site directly address adjacent streets and the Site has a self-contained character overall.
- 4.4 There is a noticeable change in levels across the Site; the topography is varied but, generally speaking, from the centre of the Site the land rises to the north (and to a lesser extent to the south), as well as to the west. There is an approximately 24m difference in height between the lowest part of the Site, adjacent to Brunswick Park Road, and the highest part of the Site, adjacent to Weirdale Avenue/Ashbourne Avenue.
- 4.5 The immediate surroundings of the Site are largely characterised by suburban housing. There are streets of two storey housing directly north of the Site's boundaries, post-war in the case of Howard Close (north of the Site's shorter eastern 'leg') and inter-war in the case of Weirdale Avenue and Ashbourne Avenue (north of the Site's longer western 'leg').
- 4.6 Two storey housing built in relatively recent decades lies directly east of the Site, set-back from Brunswick Park Road. New Southgate Cemetery lies immediately south-east of the Site. Two storey late Victorian terraced housing lies directly south of the Site, along Brunswick Crescent.

- 4.7 The railway lines to the west of the Site are edged on both sides by vegetated areas which include a considerable number of trees. Beyond this to the west are streets of semi-detached housing and modern apartment blocks along Denham Close.
- 4.8 In terms of the wider context of the Site, it is located approximately 1.2km north of New Southgate station and 1.3km south of Oakleigh Park, both of which are stops on the Moorgate - Welwyn Garden City railway line. While there are retail uses along major roads nearby, including along Russell Lane and Oakleigh Road South, there is little that could be considered a local centre of activity near the Site.
- 4.9 The topography is a notable aspect of the character of the wider area, much as it is to a smaller degree across the Site. While varied, in general the land rises noticeably to the east and to a lesser extent to the west of a valley located to the east of the Site which contains a minor tributary of the River Lea, Pymme's Brook.

### Historical development of the area

- 4.10 The area around the Site largely comprised open fields for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A map of 1878-79 shows the Great Northern Railway lines in place to the west of the Site and a station, marked as 'Cemetery Station', at the southern end of the Site (approximately in the location of the current car park). A tree lined boulevard is shown leading from the station to the 'Great Northern Cemetery', shown to the east of the Site, which was established in the 1850s as a private cemetery and is now known as New Southgate Cemetery. There is little other development apparent, other than scattered housing along Station Road (now Oakleigh Road South).
- 4.11 By the time of a map of 1896, some of the terraced housing to the south of the Site, along Brunswick Crescent and Brunswick Grove, had been built out. By the time of a map of 1914, these streets are shown as completed, and further housing is evident to the west of Oakleigh Road South and further south.
- 4.12 The Site was developed as the location for the 'New Southgate Works', owned by Standard Telephone and Cable, in the 1920s. Maps from the 1930s show large footprint buildings on the south-west part of the Site. Other parts of the Site remained open at this time, to the north and east of these buildings, and



are marked as sports grounds. The local and wider area around the Site was subject to its most significant phase of development in the inter-war years, as is evident from the dramatic expansion in the number of streets of housing shown on maps from this time.

- 4.13 A similar situation is evident on the Site in maps from the 1950s to the 1980s. By 1950, the housing around Linden Close to the east of the Site had been built out, and by 1981 housing is shown along Howard Close, immediately north of the eastern part of the Site.
- 4.14 The Site was acquired by Northern Telecom (Nortel) in 1989. Building 3 was completed in 2001 and is a three storey building clad in white aluminium panels and with extensive glazing, arranged around a central internal garden area. In the wider area, there has been relatively piecemeal residential development in recent decades but the broad pattern of development remains much as it was in the late 1930s.
- 4.15 The resulting townscape and urban grain in the wider area today can be divided into Townscape Character Areas ('TCAs') that have broad characteristics in common, as set out below (see Figure 1 for a map of townscape character areas). The Site is self-contained and does not easily fit within any of the TCAs around it; it is therefore not included in the TCAs below and the effect of the proposed development on the character of the Site, as assessed above and in more detail in Section 5, will be considered separately.

## Townscape character areas

### The Site

- 4.16 The Site is as previously described. An assessment of the Site and the existing buildings on it is provided in Section 5. This concludes that the existing buildings are of no special architectural quality. Although the prevalence of open and landscaped areas is pleasant enough, and the trees on the Site contribute to an agreeably leafy overall character, the distribution of buildings and landscape across the Site is rather ad hoc. The Site feels cut off from its surroundings, and presents no significant definition to its only significant street frontage, to Brunswick Park Road.
- 4.17 This is a TCA of **low to medium** sensitivity.

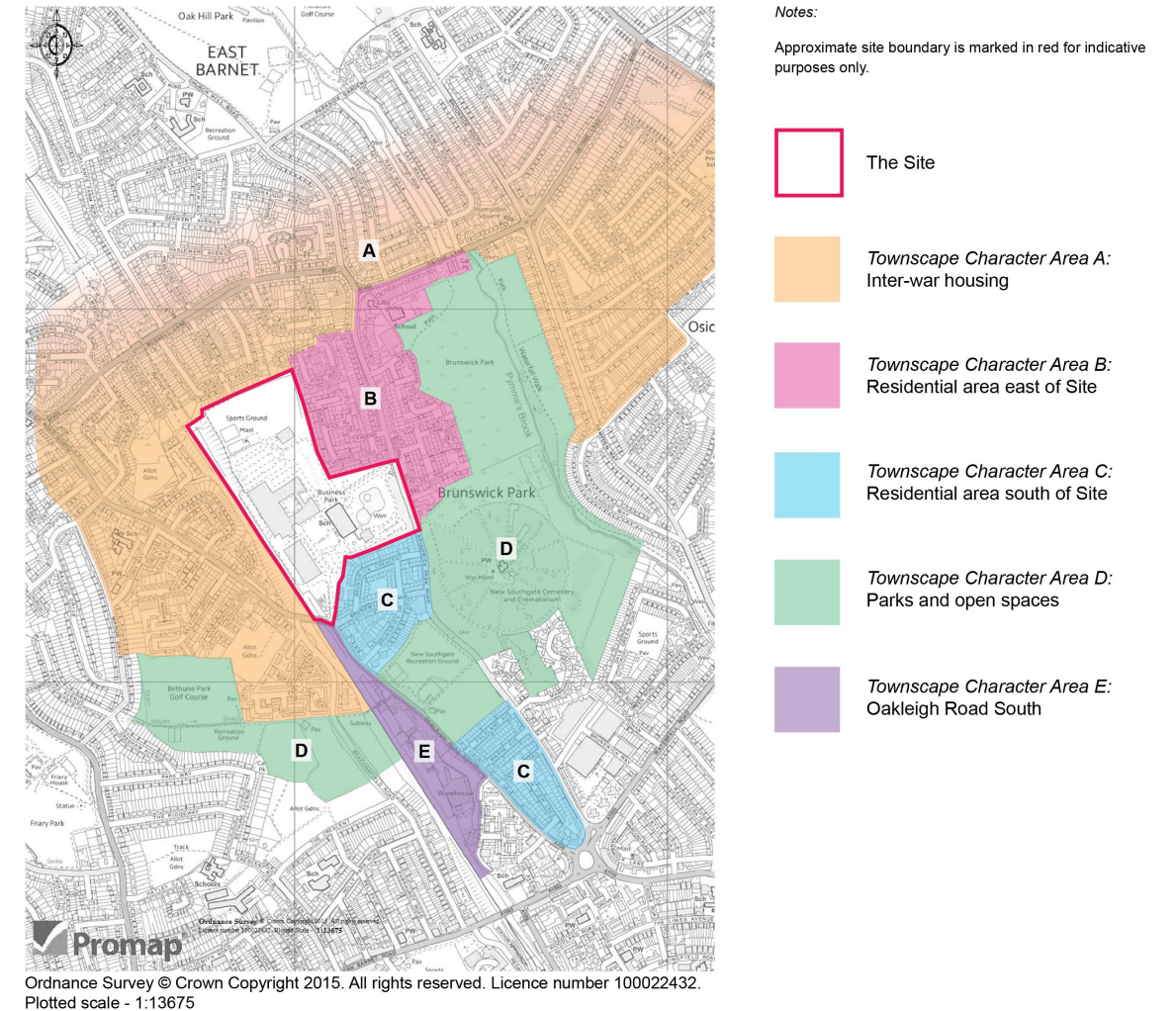


Figure 1: map of townscape character areas

### TCA A – inter-war housing

- 4.18 This TCA stretches north, north-east and west of the Site and is dominated by inter-war two storey housing, generally semi-detached and set behind front gardens. There are pockets of older and later housing within the TCA, including stretches of late Victorian houses located along Oakleigh Road North, post-war housing near Bethune Park, and some modern development such as the apartment blocks along Denham Road. Commercial uses are found at ground floor level along larger roads, such as Russell Lane.
- 4.19 The topography within the TCA is varied, but in general terms there is a particularly noticeable rise in the level of the land towards the east, such that long range views are possible from the parts of the TCA around Osidge Lane, and to the west, such that Oakleigh Road North is set at a higher level than the land between it and the railway lines.

4.20 The architectural quality of the housing in this area is generally unremarkable and typical of the time of its building. The overall townscape character is relatively coherent, however, due to the broad similarity in the style, scale and layout of the housing. There are street trees set within pavements throughout the TCA and in some places, particularly main roads such as Russell Lane, there are generous grassed strips containing trees which contribute to a leafy, suburban character.

4.21 This is an area of **medium** sensitivity.

#### **TCA B – residential area east of the Site**

4.22 This TCA is bounded by the Site and Brunswick Park Road to the west, the western edges of New Southgate Cemetery and Brunswick Park to the east, Linden Road/Prevost Road and Osidge Lane to the north, and the northern edge of New Southgate Cemetery to the south.

4.23 This TCA is characterised by post-war and more modern residential development, with some pockets of inter-war housing. The area between the Site and Brunswick Park Road is occupied by bungalows, two storey houses, and two storey apartment blocks built in the post-war period. These are often set back from the road behind front gardens or areas of open space, and arranged in short terraces with gaps between them, such that these streets have a relatively open but also fragmented character. The land rises slightly towards the west within this part of the TCA.

4.24 The housing to the east of Brunswick Park Road was built in more recent decades. It is largely in buff brick, mostly two storeys high and arranged in closely grouped short terraces, with occasional three or four storey apartment blocks.

4.25 There are street trees set within pavements in many places, and more substantial areas of trees and vegetation along streets which contribute to a leafy, suburban character within the TCA. Along the main road of Brunswick Park Road, there are generous landscape strips including trees, some of them serving to separate 'outer' pavements adjacent to the road from 'inner' pavements, adjacent to houses.

4.26 The housing in this area is of solid appearance but of no particular architectural quality, and the layout of the housing tends towards producing a fragmented character overall. This is a TCA of **low to medium** sensitivity.

#### **TCA C – residential area south of the Site**

4.27 This small TCA comprises the area between the Site and New Southgate Recreation Ground, and to the south of the Recreation Ground. It is characterised by older housing than in much of the rest of the area around the Site, with late 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage-style terraces set within a tight urban grain along streets such as Brunswick Crescent. To the south of New Southgate Recreation Ground, 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses set on a grid dominate the townscape. There are street trees set within pavements in places throughout this TCA.

4.28 The consistent form and scale of the housing within this TCA is such that relatively coherent streetscapes are formed. This is a TCA of **medium** sensitivity overall.

#### **TCA D – parks and green spaces**

4.29 There are four major green spaces in the area around the Site. While not necessarily contiguous and directly accessible from each other, they are all located close to each other such that they can be considered together, albeit recognising the different characteristics of each one.

4.30 New Southgate Cemetery was established in the 1850s. The plan of the cemetery is focused on an inner circle containing an impressive chapel, crematorium and adjacent war memorial, with a series of radial routes leading from it to an outer circle. Mature trees screen views in and out of the cemetery to a considerable degree, and it has a secluded character other than at its edges, particularly its northern edge, where there are fewer trees.

4.31 Brunswick Park is more open in character than the cemetery. It has extensive open grassed areas, with the trees largely arranged in a line through the middle of the park and around its edges. As noted previously, Pymme's Brook runs through the park.

4.32 New Southgate Recreation Ground is largely characterised by open grassed areas, much of it given over to use as playing fields. Trees surround the edges of the park, such that views out of it are screened to a considerable extent.

4.33 Bethune Park comprises two main areas with different characters. The northern part of the park is landscaped with routes and trees within it and along its edges. The southern part is somewhat sparser, with open grassed areas dominating and fewer trees. Medium rise post-war and modern apartment blocks are prominent on the northern edge of Bethune Park.

4.34 This is a TCA of **medium** sensitivity.

4.35 This TCA contains the following designated heritage assets within 1km of the Site, and locally listed buildings within the immediate area around the Site:

#### **Listed buildings**

- **Memorial to German First World War Internees, New Southgate Cemetery – grade II.** This memorial comprises a low stone screen wall with a shallow pediment to the top on a two-stepped base. A black metal plaque contains the names of 51 German First World War Internees who died in internment. The list description notes that it is listed for historic interest.

In visual terms, it is a relatively small scale structure, best appreciated in relatively short range views little affected by development around it, and within the well-defined context of the cemetery.

#### **Locally listed buildings**

- New Southgate Cemetery gatepiers
- Grave of Shoghi Effendi, New Southgate Cemetery
- New Southgate Cemetery chapel and crematorium
- Air raid shelter, New Southgate Recreation Ground

These are small scale structures, best appreciated in visual terms in relatively short range views little affected by development around them. The locally listed buildings within the cemetery are experienced in a well-defined context formed by the cemetery.

#### **TCA E – Oakleigh Road South**

4.36 This TCA is a broadly triangular area of land set between Oakleigh Road South and railway lines, to the east and west respectively, and Coppies Grove to the south.

4.37 This TCA is occupied by light industrial and commercial uses. The buildings within the area largely take the form of warehouses and sheds in brick and sheet metal. Large areas are given over to hard-standing used for parking and storage. The buildings within this TCA are utilitarian in appearance and many of the uses are visually unattractive. The trees along Oakleigh Road South provide some screening of them.

4.38 This is a TCA of **low** sensitivity.

#### **Existing townscape: conclusions**

4.39 The Site is large and relatively self-contained in character, surrounded by railway lines to the west and back gardens to the north and south. The only meaningful street frontage addresses Brunswick Park Road, to the east.

4.40 The Site has been consistently developed in a manner different to that of the areas surrounding it to the north, south, east and west; while these areas were largely developed for suburban housing, the Site was occupied by uses linked to the North London Cemetery in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, then developed with large footprint factory buildings and sports grounds in the 1920s, and office buildings in more recent decades.

4.41 The buildings on the Site today are mostly large in footprint and accommodate office or educational uses, set within landscaped and open grassed areas. These buildings do not directly address any of the streets which border the Site. The rise in land levels across the Site, particularly towards the north and west, is a notable aspect of its character.

4.42 The wider area around the Site is overwhelmingly suburban and residential in character. Two storey housing, most of it from the inter-war period, is the predominant form of development but there are examples of other building forms, including apartment blocks dating from the post-war and more recent decades. In some places, trees and other vegetation contribute to a character which is pleasantly leafy overall. The other defining characteristic of the wider townscape study area as a whole is its topography, which is varied, but the dominant aspect of which is a rise in the level of the land to the east and west of the Pymme's Brook valley.

4.43 The manner in which the Site is cut off from its surroundings is such that views of it from close range are limited, and there is generally little awareness of the buildings on it in the area immediately around the Site, despite their relatively large scale. There are opportunities for longer range views towards the Site, particularly from the east, due to the aforementioned topography.

4.44 There are a number of green spaces within the area surrounding the Site which are important as local amenity spaces and which provide opportunities for medium to long range views in the direction of the Site. The New Southgate Cemetery, laid out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is the closest of these.

4.45 Other than the New Southgate Cemetery, which has no heritage designation of its own, the area around the Site is of low heritage sensitivity. There are no Conservation Areas or Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest within 1km of the centre of the Site, and one Listed Building within that radius (located in the New Southgate Cemetery). A small number of Locally Listed Buildings lie in open spaces near the Site, including the cemetery.

## 5.0 Assessment of effects of proposed development

### Demolition and construction effects

- 5.1 Construction methodology is covered in Chapter 5 'Construction Methodology and Programme' of the ES. This section considers the visual impact of the construction process.
- 5.2 There are no special visual impacts that are generated as a result of the construction process outside of those that are inherent in constructing buildings of the type proposed.
- 5.3 The most significant medium and long range visual impact associated with the construction process would be the presence of tower cranes. Their presence is inevitable in connection with construction of the type and scale envisaged.
- 5.4 The top of a tower crane is likely to be higher than the top of the building, so it would be more visible than the finished building. This temporary state of affairs is common as a consequence of building activity in London and there is no practical way of avoiding it. In terms of mitigation, during construction the perimeter of the Site would be surrounded by hoarding in the conventional manner.
- 5.5 While any assessment of the visual effect of construction activities in aesthetic terms would tend to find the effect adverse rather than beneficial, few people think of construction activities in this way, considering their effects rather as a fact of life which while not fleeting, is clearly understood to be temporary.
- 5.6 In terms of townscape and visual effects, two main stages of the demolition and construction programme have been considered. The first stage is demolition and construction relating to Phases 0 and 1, while the remainder of the Site remains as existing; the second stage assesses demolition and construction across the other phases of the proposed development, with Phases 0 and 1 completed.

#### *Stage 1*

- 5.7 The significance of effect in relation to views 7, 9, 10, and 11 would be 'moderate', and no more than 'minor to moderate' in all other views. The effect would be adverse and temporary in all cases (other than views in which there is no effect or the significance is less than minor, in which cases the effect is neutral and temporary).

- 5.8 In terms of townscape character areas, the effect would be 'moderate' for the Site and no more than 'minor to moderate' for other TCAs. The effect would be adverse and temporary in all cases.

#### *Stage 2*

- 5.9 In terms of views, the significance of effect in relation to views 16 and 19 would be 'moderate', and no more than 'minor to moderate' in other views. The effect would be adverse and temporary in all cases (other than views in which there is no effect or the significance is less than minor, in which cases the effect is neutral and temporary).
- 5.10 In terms of townscape character areas, the effect would be 'moderate' for the Site and no more than 'minor to moderate' for other TCAs. The effect would be adverse and temporary in all cases.

### *Effects of completed proposed development*

- 5.11 In order to undertake a thorough assessment of the townscape and visual impact of the proposed development, an assessment of the quality of the existing buildings on the Site and of the design of the proposed development has been undertaken.

#### **The existing buildings**

- 5.12 As noted previously, the Site is occupied by a series of buildings, most of them large in footprint, set within open or landscaped areas in a relatively informal 'campus' style arrangement. There are two principal entry points to the Site, from the south on Oakleigh Road South, and from the east on Brunswick Park Road, and a network of roads connects the main buildings within the Site. There is no access from the northern end of the Site.
- 5.13 The largest buildings on the Site lie on the western part of it, and these comprise a multi-storey car park and a series of linked three storey office buildings. The largest of these buildings is located against the western Site boundary, adjacent to the railway lines, and is rectangular in form. It is clad in white panels with rows of windows that provide its elevations with a strong horizontal emphasis. The linked building to its west was built more recently, in

2001, and consists of two extensively glazed wings arranged around an internal courtyard.

- 5.14 The northern part of the Site, north of these office buildings, is occupied by an open air car park, sports grounds (including a disused pavilion) and open grassed areas, and a one storey banqueting hall.
- 5.15 The eastern part of the Site is occupied by a man-made lake (which serves as an attenuating pond) and landscaped areas around it, which extend to the Site's frontage to Brunswick Park Road. Two buildings of one to two storeys in height are located to the west of the lake. These buildings are currently in use for the Saint Andrew the Apostle Greek Orthodox school but formerly accommodated office uses.
- 5.16 There are a number of small buildings elsewhere on the Site, including adjacent to the entrances to it. Much of the Site, including adjacent to the Site entrances and between the office and school buildings, comprises open grassed or landscaped areas.
- 5.17 As noted previously, the land levels change significantly across the Site, rising to the north and west in particular, such that there is an approximately 24m difference in height between the lowest and highest parts of the Site (adjacent to Brunswick Park Road and Ashbourne Avenue respectively).
- 5.18 The buildings on the Site could not be said to be of any particular architectural or townscape interest. The similarity in the scale of the main office buildings on the western part, and the horizontal emphasis of their elevations, is such that they have a somewhat homogeneous and monotonous appearance. The landscaped areas and the lake provide the Site with a pleasant character overall, although the distribution of buildings and landscape lacks any formal structure.
- 5.19 There is a significant sense of the Site's separation from surrounding areas. The lack of buildings along the Brunswick Park Road frontage, the Site's only significant street frontage, weakens definition and animation of this road.

### **The proposed development**

- 5.20 The proposed development is for the demolition of the existing buildings on the Site and its comprehensive redevelopment for residential and education accommodation. There are five Phases of the proposed development; Phase 0 and Phase 1 are subject to a detailed planning application, and Phases 2 – 5

are subject to an outline planning application. The combined phases are subject to an overall masterplan for the Site.

- 5.21 The heights of buildings and plots stated below are expressed as storey heights above a ground floor level – i.e., '12 storeys in height' or '12 storeys tall' would equate to a total of 13 floors including the ground floor – unless otherwise stated (e.g. 'three storeys tall in total').
- 5.22 Phase 0 and Phase 1 would occupy the eastern part of the Site. Phase 0 would provide a school building and sports hall fronting Brunswick Park Road, with sports pitch to the south-west. The existing attenuating pond would be reconfigured. The maximum height of these buildings would be three storeys in total.
- 5.23 Phases 1B-1F would provide residential accommodation, located west of the pond and extending north. Phase 1B, adjacent to the southern Site boundary, comprises a row of houses with back gardens set against those of the neighbouring houses on Brunswick Park Crescent, and would be a maximum three storeys tall in total. The other elements within Phase 1 would largely comprise apartment blocks, arranged in perimeter or U-shaped blocks, with internal courtyards. These buildings would reach a maximum nine storeys in height.
- 5.24 The elevations of the main school building would be largely composed of light buff brick cladding with punched windows arranged in a regular manner. Darker buff brick piers and banding at the top of the elevations would 'frame' these areas. The Sports Block would have a similar expression, albeit with panels of painted fibre cement weatherboard.
- 5.25 The apartment blocks would vary to some extent in appearance but would all be largely in brick with inset windows, and areas of render and solid panels in some cases. Many of the blocks would have recessed or projecting balconies.
- 5.26 Phase 2 would occupy the northern part of the Site and would be residential in use. Phase 2D would be a linear plot located against the eastern Site boundary and would be a maximum three storeys tall in total. Phases 2E and 2F would be linear plots located adjacent to the northern Site boundary and would be a maximum three storeys tall in total. Phases 2A, B and C would be located further towards the centre of the Site and would be up to five storeys in height in the case of Phase 2A, and up to four storeys tall in total in the case of Phases 2B and 2C.

- 5.27 Phase 3 would include two linked L-shaped blocks up to 11 storeys in height (Phase 3B) close to the western edge of the Site, a block up to 12 storeys in height, close to the centre of the Site (Phase 3A), and a block up to five storeys in height adjacent to Phase 2 (Phase 3C). These would be residential in use, other than the Phase 3A block, which would also incorporate childcare, retail, office and community uses.
- 5.28 Phase 4 would be located at the southern end of the Site. Blocks 4A and 4C would take the form of perimeter blocks; Phase 4B would be a linear block in two parts, arranged along the western side of the entrance road to the Site. Phase 4B would be up to nine storeys in height, and the other blocks would be up to 11 or 12 storeys in height. They would be residential in use, other than a retail ground floor use within Block 4B and office use in Block 4A.
- 5.29 Phase 5 would take the form of a perimeter block up to 12 storeys in height (Phase 5A) and a linear block up to 12 storeys in height (Phase 5B). They would be residential in use, other than an incubator office use in Block 5A and retail use in Block 5B.
- 5.30 The Design Principles document is intended to govern the detailed design of Phases 2-5. Among the principles governing the appearance of the buildings are that *'Elevations are to respect the established façade of base, middle and top'* (Paragraph 6.3.1); *'the depth of window reveals should achieve a minimum of 1.5 bricks in dimension to ensure the overall elevation has shadow articulation and depth'* (paragraph 6.4.4); and *'...materials established in Phase 1 are defacto permitted for use in later design Phases'* (paragraph 6.9.1), with brick noted as the predominant material, and *'A limited material and colour palette should be used for all buildings as they face public spaces within the masterplan. Each building should have a primary material and – other than materials used for windows and balconies – no more than 2 other secondary materials.'* Design Principle 6.8.3 notes that while the parameter plans set the vertical limits of each building *'...a dimension of +1.5m is permitted over the stated maximum vertical dimension to accommodate building parapets, lift overruns and safety railings.'*
- 5.31 The principal entrance routes into the Site would remain those from Brunswick Park Road and Oakleigh Road South, which would lead to a new network of internal routes. An additional entry point would be opened up between Phases 2E and 2F, providing access from Weirdale Avenue/ Ashbourne Avenue.
- 5.32 The proposed development would provide three main areas of public open space – New Brunswick Park (divided into a southern and northern part), in the centre of the Site; Brunswick Lakeside Park, located around the pond on the

eastern part of the Site; and Oakleigh Avenue Gardens, adjacent to the southern entrance to the Site off Oakleigh Road South. New Brunswick Park (South) would be located within Phase 5, surrounded by buildings within Phases 1, 3, 4 and 5, and located at the end of the entrance road from Brunswick Park Avenue. New Brunswick Park (North) would be surrounded by the buildings of Phases 2 and 3, and located on the axis of the route from Weirdale Avenue/Ashbourne Avenue. The Phase 3A building would be located between the two parts of New Brunswick Park.

- 5.33 A large number of the existing trees on the Site would be retained. While some existing trees are to be removed, a large number of new trees would be introduced, within main public spaces, private courtyards and along streets. The main street running through the centre of the Site, The Parkway, would be lined with trees set within landscaped strips located between 'inner' and 'outer' pavements, set at different levels.

#### **Assessment**

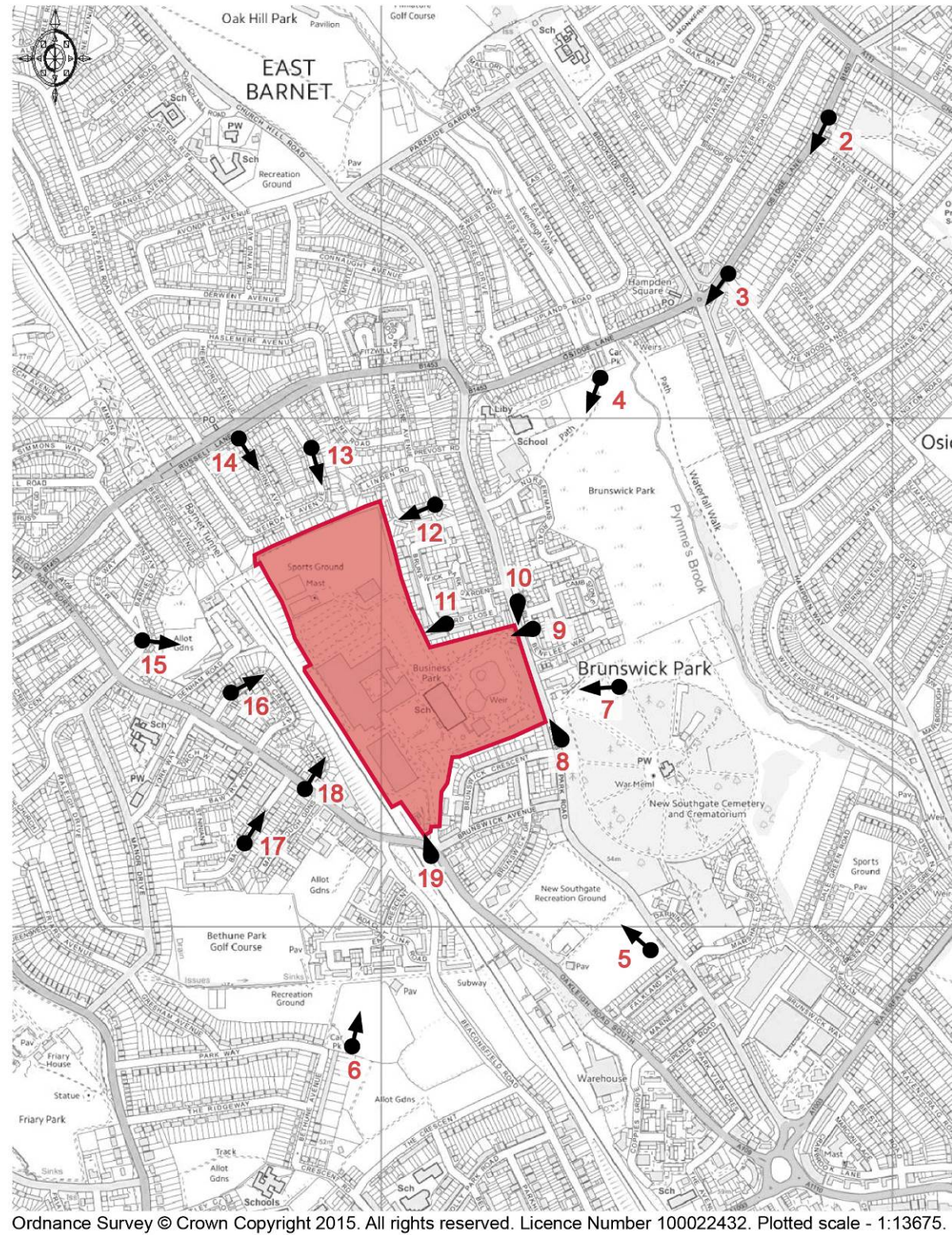
- 5.34 The proposed development would be coherent and well ordered, with significant urban design, landscape design and public realm benefits.
- 5.35 The manner in which the height and massing would be distributed across the Site would show an appropriate response to the Site's context and character. The buildings close to the Site's boundaries – within Phases 1B, 2D, 2E and 2F - are the lowest on the Site, at three storeys in height in total, appropriately reflecting their location close to existing low scale housing near the edges of the Site.
- 5.36 Heights would then increase away from these boundaries, with buildings up to 12 storeys in height located in the centre of the Site, at its western edge, and near the southern entrance. The buildings up to 12 storeys located in the centre of the Site would have limited visual impact in the surrounding area and would be of a scale appropriate to provide enclosure to the routes and public spaces within the Site's interior. The buildings of up to 12 storeys provided against the western edge of the Site would be appropriately located against the open space created by the adjacent railway lines. The nine to 12 storey buildings near the southern entrance would be of a sufficient height to mark a principal entrance to the Site, while being well set back from smaller scale housing beyond the green space of Oakleigh Avenue Gardens.
- 5.37 The manner in which aspects of the proposed development would work with the levels across Site - for example, in the distribution of the massing and the

landscape design of the streets - would help to contribute to a distinctive character for the overall proposed development.

- 5.38 The proposed development would have a number of urban design benefits. The location of the main school building on the eastern part of the Site would help provide Brunswick Park Road with definition. The school building, and the buildings of Phase 4 at the Oakleigh Road South entrance, would help to enhance the sense of arrival at the Site. The access route from Ashbourne Avenue would improve permeability within the local area, allowing people living north of the Site quicker pedestrian access to Oakleigh Road South, and from there to Friern Barnet, and public transport at New Southgate Station. Overall, the effect would be to open up the Site to a considerably greater degree than is currently the case, and integrate it more closely with its surroundings.
- 5.39 The manner in which the taller elements of the proposed development (particularly Phase 5 and Phase 3) are visible, to a limited extent and from a limited number of locations, would help to signal the location of the Site within the local area, while not being overly dominant. The Phase 3A building would indicate the location of the central open space, New Brunswick Park, and of the principal non-residential uses within the proposed development which it accommodates.
- 5.40 The architecture of the Phase 1 blocks would be of a high quality. The appearance of the main school building would have a regular, ordered quality. The architectural approach, combined with the use of a small number of materials, would result in a building with a calm and measured appearance overall.
- 5.41 The elevations of the residential blocks would be similarly calm and measured in appearance, and the use of brick as the dominant material would relate well to the existing buildings in the surrounding area.
- 5.42 The new public spaces within the proposed development would be of a high quality and generous in size. The retention of a large number of existing trees, and the provision of new trees, would ensure the existing pleasantly leafy and suburban character of the Site would be enhanced. The manner in which the streets would be lined with trees, and The Parkway would have a central landscaped strip separating 'inner' and 'outer' pavements, would reflect the character of the local area.



## 6.0 Views



6.1 As noted in Section 3, for each of the identified views in the assessment which follows, there are images of the view as existing and as proposed, with the proposed development shown either as a rendered image or as a shaded volume (or a mixture of both) in the 'as proposed' image. Where the proposed development is hidden by existing buildings and/or vegetation, a dotted red wireline is shown to indicate its position.

### Plan of viewpoint locations (Figure 3)

- 1 King George Playing Fields, Hadley Green (off map)
- 2 Osidge Lane north
- 3 Osidge Lane south
- 4 Brunswick Park
- 5 New Southgate Recreation Ground
- 6 Bethune Park
- 7 New Southgate Cemetery, looking towards entrance gateway
- 8 Brunswick Park Road south
- 9 Brunswick Park Road, looking along line of site entrance
- 10 Brunswick Park Road north
- 11 Howard Close
- 12 Pine Road
- 13 Weirdale Avenue
- 14 Ashbourne Avenue
- 15 Barfield Avenue
- 16 Fernwood Crescent
- 17 Balfour Grove
- 18 Oakleigh Road north, looking along Oakleigh Crescent
- 19 Oakleigh Road south



## View 1: King George's Playing Fields, Hadley Green

### Existing

- 6.2 This viewpoint is located in King George's Playing Fields, Hadley Green, approximately 4km north of the Site, and views from this park are identified as locally important in LBB's Core Strategy. It is within the Monken Hadley Conservation Area. It is likely that most people in this location would be here in their leisure time, some with the specific expectation of enjoying the view.
- 6.3 The foreground of the view is occupied by an open grassed area. Dense tree coverage lies in the middle ground of the view and development, largely of a residential nature, can be seen beyond the park, in the background of the view. The towers of Canary Wharf are visible in the distance, although not clearly seen in this photograph; this is an aspect of the views from the park which is noted as important in local policy.
- 6.4 This is a view of medium sensitivity.



View 1: King George's Playing Fields, Hadley Green

**Proposed**

- 6.5 The proposed development would not be visible and would have **no effect** in this view.



## View 2: Osidge Lane north

### Existing

- 6.6 This viewpoint is located towards the northern end of Osidge Lane. It is likely that many people in this location would be local residents.
- 6.7 Osidge Lane is a wide street, predominantly lined by two storey semi-detached houses with front gardens/forecourts. This spacious character to the street, together with the slope downwards in the land towards the west, allows for relatively long range views along it in the direction of the Site.
- 6.8 The existing buildings on the Site are visible in the distance. They have a rather homogeneous, monotonous appearance, all appearing at a similar height and with similar, horizontally emphasised elevations. Taller buildings in North Finchley are also visible in the background of the view.
- 6.9 This is a view of low to medium sensitivity.



## View 2: Osidge Lane north

### Proposed

- 6.10 The proposed development would appear in the distance and would clearly belong to a background layer of townscape in the view, distinct from the housing in the foreground and middle ground of the view.
- 6.11 More of the Site would be occupied by buildings than is currently the case, and the proposed development would be more visible overall. There would be variation between the different buildings in terms of their height and scale, providing visual interest across the Site. The result would be an overall improvement to the appearance of the Site within the view.
- 6.12 The taller elements would appear in a similar manner to existing taller buildings in the view, albeit together they would form a more noticeable area of development. A coherent approach to the distribution of height would be evident, with the taller elements within the outline part of the proposed development seen beyond lower buildings within the detailed part.
- 6.13 This would be a change of minor to moderate magnitude to a view of low to medium sensitivity. The significance would be minor to moderate. The effect would be beneficial.



### View 3: Osidge Lane south

#### Existing

- 6.14 This viewpoint is located towards the southern end of Osidge Lane. It is likely that many people in this location would be local residents and people using local businesses.
- 6.15 Three storey buildings, with ground floor retail and residential accommodation above, frame either side of the view in the foreground. The roundabout creates a more open aspect in the middle ground of the view, enclosed to some extent by buildings on the western side of the roundabout. The land falls and then rises again towards the west, such that buildings can be seen through the trees in the background of the view.
- 6.16 This is a view of low to medium sensitivity.



### View 3: Osidge Lane south

#### Proposed

- 6.17 Part of the proposed development would appear in the distance. Slightly less would be visible in summer, although the magnitude of change would not alter as a result.
- 6.18 The proposed development would clearly form part of the background of the view. There would be variation between the different buildings in terms of their height and scale, providing visual interest across the Site.
- 6.19 This would be a minor to moderate change to a view of low to medium sensitivity. The significance would be minor to moderate. The effect would be neutral.



## View 4: Brunswick Park

### Existing

- 6.20 This viewpoint is located near the northern entrance to Brunswick Park. It is likely that most people in this location would be here in their leisure time.
- 6.21 The foreground of the view is dominated by open grassed areas and paths across them. Dense tree coverage provides strong enclosure of the view in the middle distance, even though the trees are not in leaf in this view. A two storey school building can be seen on the western side of the park, on the right side of this view.
- 6.22 This is a view of low to medium sensitivity.





## View 4: Brunswick Park

### Proposed

- 6.23 A very small part of the proposed development would be visible in this view. It would be obscured by trees and would be barely noticeable.
- 6.24 This would be a change of negligible magnitude to a view of low to medium sensitivity. The significance would be negligible. The effect would be neutral.



## View 5: New Southgate Recreation Ground

### Existing

- 6.25 This viewpoint is located near the south-eastern entrance to the recreation ground. It is likely that most people in this location would be here in their leisure time.
- 6.26 The foreground of the view is occupied by a grassed area and has an open character. A line of trees appears in the middle distance, with another line further in the distance at the northern end of the park, beyond another open grassed area. Housing is visible beyond the northern edge of the park, and light industrial buildings on the western side of Oakleigh Road South can be seen to the west (left side of this view).
- 6.27 This is a view of low to medium sensitivity.



## View 5: New Southgate Recreation Ground

### Proposed

- 6.28 The proposed development would be partially visible in the middle distance, behind housing along the northern edge of the park. It would appear in the background of the view, significantly screened from view by trees (even in this view in which the trees are without their leaves) and would have a limited visual impact.
- 6.29 This would be a minor change to a view of low to medium sensitivity. The significance would be minor. The effect would be neutral.