



DCO Submission

Environmental Statement

Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Appendix 7.2: Landscape Effects Table

Document 6.7B

On behalf of
Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited

Prepared by FPCR Ltd.
March 2026

Notes: The location and extent of the defined landscape character areas/ types are shown on Figures 7.4 and 7.5. 'Likely significant' effects are those assessed to be Major or Moderate Major (Adverse or Beneficial) and are shown **emboldened** in the table below.

APPENDIX 7.2: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible ?				
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse Beneficial	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse Beneficial	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse Beneficial
National Landscape Character (NCA)									
Natural England, National Character Area (NCA) No.107 'Cotswolds'	Varies; Overall, Medium or Medium/ High	Varies; Overall, Medium or Medium/ High	Varies; Overall, Medium or Medium/ High	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 15: Neg/ Low	No	Extensive landscape tract (from Bath in the south west to Brackley and Bicester in the north east). Majority of the NCA lies within the National Landscape (NL) yet this does not include the Application Site or its context. Nearest part of NL approx. 11km+ to the south west. Defined by its underlying geology - open and expansive scarp and high wold dipping gently to the southeast. Mixed farming (See ES Chapter and/ or Natural England NCA ref 107). The Application Site lies in the north eastern extent of the NCA, in a more varied and urbanised part and relatively less sensitive of the NCA. The landscape character and features within this north easterly extent of the NCA are less representative of the wider Cotswolds NCA that encompasses the NL designation. The Proposed Development will introduce a form and type of development that is not characteristic of the NCA as a whole yet that is similarly the case for the nearby M40 motorway, ERF and Heyford Park/ Airfield redevelopment. The Proposed Development will have an adverse landscape effect, upon this north eastern extent of the NCA, albeit moderated by the presence of other existing (and emerging) urbanising elements and activities; the relatively lower value and sensitivity of this part of the NCA; and the peripheral location of the Application Site, relative to the NL and NCA as a whole.	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse

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Landscape Character: County Scale Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) (2004)									

<p>'Wooded Estatelands' Landscape Type</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Construction: Medium Completion: Low/ Medium Year 15: Low</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>This Landscape Type (LT) stretches across wide landscape areas generally to the north east – south west. The southern and eastern part(s) of the Application Site (See Figure 7.4) lie within the <i>Middleton Stoney (CW/59)</i> part of this LT. The description for this area includes the following; <i>'The area is dominated by large arable fields and localised improved grassland...Woodland is a strong landscape element, and large woodland blocks are associated with the parklands and estates... Throughout the landscape, there are belts of young mixed and coniferous plantations next to roadside hedges and they often function as field boundaries'</i>.</p> <p>The Landscape Strategy for this LT includes the following reference; <i>'Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses such as quarries, landfill sites, airfields and large-scale development, such as new barns and industrial units, with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.'</i></p> <p>The assessed (Medium) susceptibility/ value/ sensitivity of the landscape reflects its mix of uses and features; notable presence of woodland in places; typically, larger arable fields; and influence of other large scale developments and infrastructure.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will introduce a form and type of development that is not characteristic of the LT. However, this LT and in particular this part of the LT does include other large scale developments and infrastructure (M40 motorway and ERF) and stretches up to Bicester and includes some of its urban/ development area.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will occupy a small part of the LT. It will also respond positively to some of the relevant landscape points stated in the study; including the proposal for new woodlands and tree belts (<i>'strong landscape elements'</i> in the existing landscape) to assist in screening and integrating the proposals.</p>	<p>Moderate Adverse</p>	<p>Minor/ Moderate Adverse</p>	<p>Minor Adverse</p>
<p>'Farmland Plateau' Landscape Type</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Construction: Medium Completion: Low/ Medium Year 15: Low</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>This LT stretches across the western and north western part of the Application Site and more broadly across the Airfield and to the north and north east of Ardley(See Figure 7.4). The north western part of the Application Site lies within the <i>'Fritwell'</i> (CW/57) part of this LT. The description for this area includes the following; <i>'This area is characterised by large, regularly-shaped arable fields and medium-sized mixed plantations....'</i> The study also advises for this part of the LT that agricultural buildings and other large structures are particularly prominent and that the structures associated with Upper Heyford airfield are very visible across the Cherwell Valley.</p> <p>The Landscape Strategy for this LT includes the following references; <i>'Conserve the open, spacious character of the landscape by limiting woodland planting on the more exposed ridge tops. Locate new planting in the dips and</i></p>	<p>Moderate Adverse</p>	<p>Minor/ Moderate Adverse</p>	<p>Minor Adverse</p>

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						<p><i>folds of the landscape and establish tree belts around airfields, quarries and other large structures to reduce their visual impact using locally characteristic native tree and shrub species such as ash, oak and beech.....The exposed character of the plateau is particularly sensitive to visually intrusive development, large buildings and communication masts."</i></p> <p>The north western part of the Application Site lies on the relatively lower south eastern edge of this LT, below the level of the airfield to the west and Fritwell to the north. It does not occupy a ridge top or an exposed position within this LT.</p> <p>The assessed (Medium) susceptibility/ value/ sensitivity of the landscape reflects its mix of uses and features; position on the relatively lower/ peripheral part of the LT (away from the Cherwell Valley); typically, larger arable fields; and separation/ influence provided by the airfield/ Heyford Park. The historic landscape value of the airfield is also considered as part of this assessment.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will introduce a form and type of development that is not characteristic of the LT. However, it will not occupy an exposed position and will sit to the east and below the airfield and Heyford Park to the west. Notable parts of the Application Site within the north west (north of the airfield) will comprise principally new green infrastructure including the conversion of arable to pasture, as sought by the Landscape Strategy for this LT.</p> <p>The proposed mitigation mounding and associated woodland planting to the boundary with the airfield will assist in limiting the effects of the Proposed Development on the wider LT.</p>			

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Landscape Character: District Scale Landscape Character Assessment Cherwell District (2024)									

<p>'Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands' Landscape Character Area</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Construction: Medium Completion: Low/ Medium Year 15: Low</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>This Landscape Character Area (LCA) stretches across a wide landscape area, generally to the north east – south of the Application Site and encompassing the majority of the Site (excluding an area in the north west of the Main Site and North west of Junction 10 (M40) (See Figure 7.5). Key characteristics in the study include references to a gently undulating landform; a well wooded landscape, with large areas of arable cultivation; and long views across open fields where there are substantial breaks in woodland cover. The landscape also includes a significant number of small, mixed plantations.</p> <p>The study also refers to this landscape being '<i>structured on a large scale by woodland belts</i>' and being '<i>well traversed by footpaths and bridleways</i>'. The study also advises that '<i>This is a well enclosed landscape owing to the substantial areas of woodland which contribute significantly to the rural character and high levels of tranquillity</i>' and that the well wooded landscape create '<i>a strong sense of enclosure, particularly at lower elevations and near watercourses</i>'.</p> <p>The Landscape Strategy for this LCA refers to preserving the tranquillity and strong rural character of locations remote from transport infrastructure and urban edges and having woodland cover to provide a strong sense of enclosure. It also refers to using woodland and trees to integrate development (including industrial) into the landscape.</p> <p>The Application Site lies within a part of this LCA that is subject to relatively more urbanising influences and nearby activities. The assessed (Medium) susceptibility/ value/ sensitivity of the landscape reflects its mix of uses and features; notable presence of woodland in places; typically, larger arable fields; and influence of some nearby large scale developments and infrastructure.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will introduce a form and type of development that is not characteristic of the LCA. However, this LCA and in particular this part of the LCA does include other large scale developments and infrastructure (M40 motorway and ERF) and stretches up to Bicester. The Main Site also lies east of the Heyford Park development (including some undeveloped areas) that is defined in this study as an 'Urban Area'.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will occupy a small part of the LCA. It will also respond positively to relevant landscape points stated in the study; including using trees and woodland to integrate industrial development; and using opportunities to introduce additional public rights of way connectivity. The Application Site is also not considered to be in a location '<i>currently remote from urbanising influences</i>' and where development should be avoided.</p>	<p>Moderate Adverse</p>	<p>Moderate Adverse</p>	<p>Minor/ Moderate Adverse</p>
<p>'Upper Heyford Plateau' Landscape Character Area</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Construction: Medium Completion: Low/ Medium</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>A relatively small part of the Application Site in the north west of the Main Site and north west of Junction 10, falls within this LCA (See Figure 7.5). Key characteristics in the study refer to an '<i>open, exposed limestone plateau</i>'; '<i>widespread intensive arable farmland</i>'; and '<i>rural</i></p>	<p>Moderate Adverse</p>	<p>Minor/ Moderate Adverse</p>	<p>Minor Adverse</p>

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				Year 15: Low		<p><i>character away from residential and commercial development at Heyford Park'.</i></p> <p>For this LCA, the study refers to Heyford Park as 'a significant and ongoing residential and commercial development'; 'a large scale residential development' and 'a significant detractor from tranquillity'</p> <p>The assessed (Medium) susceptibility/ value/ sensitivity of the landscape reflects its mix of uses and features; position on the relatively lower/ peripheral part of this LCA (alongside/ close to Heyford Park); typically, intensive arable farmland; and proximity to the M40 and airfield/ Heyford Park. The historic landscape value of the airfield is also considered as part of this assessment.</p> <p>Proposed Development within this LCA will be relatively limited and confined to a small area in the north west of the Main Site and including part of the Rail Terminal and sidings. It will also include part of the Junction 10 improvement works. The wider Proposed Development will also however also influence localised parts of the LCA.</p> <p>The extent of the influence and effect of the Proposed Development will be relatively limited to parts of the western edge of the LCA alongside the existing airfield/ Heyford park and the existing Junction 10 and M40 corridor.</p> <p>The proposed mitigation mounding and associated woodland planting to the boundary with the airfield will assist in limiting the effects of the Proposed Development on the wider LCA and the conversion of arable fields in the north west of the Main Site to a mix of pasture/ grassland and other new woodland and scrub planting will represent a positive albeit localised change.</p>			

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Landscape Character: Site and Immediate Context Scale									

<p>Site and Immediate Context: Main Site (including HPLR; MSRR and Biodiversity and landscaping enhancement areas)</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Construction: High Completion: High Year 15: Medium/High</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>The Main Site comprises predominantly arable farmland; including a farmhouse; associated buildings and cottages. A covered reservoir; waste processing facility; minor road and a number of wooded areas/ copses, hedgerows and hedgerow trees and small watercourse(s). The immediate context includes the ongoing Heyford Park development and airfield to the west, rail line to the north, Viridor ERF and landfill site to the east and further rolling farmland and mixed woodland to the south.</p> <p>The assessed (Medium) susceptibility/ value/ sensitivity of the landscape reflects its mix of uses, features and influences; including mature woodland; arable fields; and the influence of some surrounding and nearby developments and infrastructure.</p> <p>Proposed development on the Main Site will have a direct impact upon many of the landscape areas and features and in particular the arable farmland, gently rolling landform and wooded areas and hedgerows. Existing woodland, trees and hedgerows will be substantially conserved alongside the small watercourse falling north-south through the Main Site and largely to the perimeter of the site.</p> <p>The landscape character of the Main Site will change from a gently rolling/ falling area of arable farmland, relatively enclosed by woodland and other features to a SRFI development; including new roads and an extensive landscape setting and robust perimeter of mitigation mounding and woodland planting. It will inevitably result in a high degree of change to this local landscape. The nature of the change will be largely adverse across much of the Main Site yet will also include some benefits deriving from the landscape and habitat proposals. The latter benefits albeit relatively localised will increase over time with the management and maturing of all the Green Infrastructure (GI) areas.</p> <p>Although the residual (year 15) landscape effect upon the Site and its immediate context has been assessed as Moderate/ Major Adverse and thus 'significant' in terms of the EIA, it is important to recognise that this does not indicate that the proposed development would be unacceptable. This is an overall planning balance matter.</p> <p>SRFI developments will inevitably result in substantial landscape changes at a site wide (or localised) level of effect. In this instance, these substantial changes will also encompass notable benefits deriving from the extensive GI areas, which also form part of the robust and effective 'embedded' mitigation for the Proposed Development. Whilst the adverse landscape changes will still outweigh the benefits of the landscape and GI proposals, in the longer term, it is nevertheless important to consider these relative changes when appraising the overall landscape effect.</p>	<p>Major Adverse</p>	<p>Moderate/ Major Adverse</p>	<p>Moderate/ Major Adverse</p>
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<p>Site and Immediate Context: J10 Highway Improvements and Ardley Bypass</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Construction: High Completion: Medium Year 15: Low/ Medium</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>The landscape associated with this part of the Proposed Development is varied, interrupted and principally dominated by the existing junction 10 and adjoining stretches of the M40 motorway and A43/ N430. Mature woodland and tree belts provide some enclosure and beyond the existing roads and associated infrastructure lies gently rolling farmland further woodland and motorway service area (MSA) and settlement edge of Ardley.</p> <p>The assessed (Medium) susceptibility/ value/ sensitivity of the landscape reflects the current mix of uses, features and influences; including the major roads/ junction, mature woodland; arable fields; and MSA and settlement edge.</p> <p>The Proposed Development within this part of the Application Site will comprise changes to the major roads and junction at and around Jct 10. This will involve the construction of new sections of road and a road bridge together with other notable changes to the alignment/ arrangement of the roads and junction. It will also involve the removal of areas of existing trees and tree belts and earthworks.</p> <p>South of Jct 10, the proposed Ardley Bypass will cross existing arable fields and Ardley Road. This will split/ sub divide a number of the fields and remove a number of trees and hedgerows.</p> <p>New woodland and tree belts and other proposed hedgerows and habitats will be established around the Jct 10 and further woodland/ tree belts, hedgerows and grassland areas will be implemented along the bypass corridor. This will include mitigation mounding on the western side of the bypass to mitigate the effects upon Ardley to the west.</p> <p>The proposals will result in some notable changes to this localised landscape, to the east and north east of Ardley yet these will be set in a varied landscape context already including major transport infrastructure and influences.</p>	<p>Moderate/ Major Adverse</p>	<p>Moderate Adverse</p>	<p>Minor/ Moderate Adverse</p>
<p>Site and Immediate Context: J9 Highway Improvements</p>	<p>Low/ Medium</p>	<p>Low/ Medium</p>	<p>Low/ Medium</p>	<p>Construction: Low/ Medium Completion: Neg/ Low Year 15: Neg/ Low</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>These proposals occupy a small landscape area associated with the existing Jct 9, M40 motorway. At this scale, the landscape is dominated by the existing major road junction, although further from the junction its influence is reduced.</p> <p>The assessed (Low/ Medium) susceptibility/ value/ sensitivity of this relatively small landscape area principally reflects the presence and dominance of the existing motorway and junction on its immediate landscape surrounds.</p> <p>The proposed road improvements to this junction will result in the removal of limited roadside planting/ habitats and establishment of new planting and habitats where space permits. The level of landscape change and effects will be relatively limited and localised given the nature of the proposed works and the existing landscape.</p>	<p>Minor/ Moderate Adverse</p>	<p>Minor Adverse/ Negligible</p>	<p>Minor Adverse/ Negligible</p>

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Landscape Features: Site Landscape									
Land cover	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction: High Completion: High Year 15: Medium/ High	No	Existing land cover across the Application Site comprises predominantly arable farmland yet also includes to varying extents, woodland, trees and hedgerows, motorway junctions and connecting major roads (for the Jct 9 and 10 works) and some other features (farmhouse and related outbuildings; covered reservoir, waste facility and landfill site). The assessed (Medium) susceptibility/ value/ sensitivity of the land cover across the Application Site, principally reflects the largely arable farmland cover, with other more limited woodland/ planting areas and highway/ developed areas of cover. The existing land cover will be substantially replaced by a combination of built development in the form of the SRFI and related infrastructure and roads and new landscape areas and habitats. Inevitably there will be a substantial, albeit localised, loss of arable farmland. This will be largely replaced by the proposed built development and associated roads/ infrastructure and by the new landscape and habitat areas. The latter will generally represent positive landscape change when set against the existing arable land cover.	Major Adverse	Moderate/ Major Adverse	Moderate Adverse

<p>Local Landform</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medum</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Construction: High Completion: High Year 15: High</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The existing landform across the Application Site (and principally Main Site) is gently rolling, relatively simple and not dramatic or particularly distinctive (wider Topography depicted on Figure 7.7). The Main Site Main comprises a small shallow valley landform with a minor watercourse situated relatively centrally to the Main Site and falling in a north to south direction.</p> <p>The assessed (Medium) susceptibility/ value/ sensitivity of the land cover across the Application Site, principally reflects that it is not particularly dramatic or distinctive and occupies a relatively enclosed position below the plateau and airfield to the west of the Main Site.</p> <p>Proposed Development on the Main Site will necessitate substantial changes to the existing landform within the site boundary. This is necessary given the nature and technical/ operational requirements of the SRFI development. The proposals will involve earthworks operations across the majority of the area, with areas both lowered and raised relative to existing ground levels. It will also include the formation of mitigation mounding (or 'bunding) to much of the perimeter of the built development zones.</p> <p>In general, the existing relatively more elevated ground levels (of the Main Site) within the built development zones and Rail Terminal, to the north, west and eastern parts of the Main Site will be lowered relative to existing ground levels and areas more towards the centre (excluding the conserved watercourse and planting corridor, which will remain largely as existing ground levels) will be raised relative to existing ground levels. The southern part of the Main Site, including the HPLR will include a mix of raising and lowering of ground levels and inclusion of mitigation mounding.</p> <p>In terms of the local landform changes and effects it is relevant to note that the existing and proposed land levels (including the mitigation mounding) will sit below the higher plateau within the airfield and Heyford Park to the west. The proposed mitigation mounding will also include varying slope profiles and gradients, albeit these will generally and inevitably be steeper than the underlying rolling landform. They will not however be out of context with nearby earthworks/ landform variations associated with surrounding developments and features including the airfield, rail corridor, ERF and nearby major roads/ junctions.</p> <p>The changes to the local landform will not be significant in wider topographic/ landform terms and the appearance/ influence of the outer mitigation mounding will soften with the maturing of the woodland and scrub planting across these features, over time. The stated effects relate to the landform changes primarily within the Main Site and not to the appearance of the landform changes (which are assessed as part of the visual effects) nor to any changes to the wider topography.</p>	<p>Major Adverse</p>	<p>Major Adverse</p>	<p>Major Adverse</p>
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Woodland, trees, hedgerow and other planting	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction: High Completion: Low Adverse Year 15: Low/ Medium Beneficial	No	<p>The Application Site includes a variety of woodland, trees, hedgerows and other planting as detailed with the Arboricultural Assessment (Appendix 6.8) and Ecology Chapter 6. There are also notable areas of existing mature broadleaved and mixed woodland in the immediate surrounds to the site.</p> <p>The assessed (Medium) landscape susceptibility/ value/ sensitivity of the existing planting across the Application Site, principally reflects its extent, quality and role in contributing to the landscape. This existing planting is not extensive across the Main Site, with the main concentration associated with the small watercourse (Ashgrove Brook). In general, a greater proportion of woodland and trees lie within the landscape surrounding the Application Site.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will necessitate the removal of existing woodland, trees, hedgerows and other planting as quantified and assessed in arboricultural and ecological terms. Some existing woodland, trees, hedgerows and other planting will however be conserved, largely alongside the watercourse corridor and to the periphery of the Main Site).</p> <p>In addition to the conserved existing planting, the proposals will include extensive new areas of mixed and native woodland, together with other scrub and structural planting, hedgerows and other new habitats. There will be a notable overall increase in the areas of woodland/ scrub/ structural planting and number of trees and lengths of hedgerows. This additional planting will comprise native and locally occurring species and will reflect guidelines and strategies included within relevant landscape studies.</p> <p>Initial and early site wide adverse landscape effects will be replaced by a longer term residual landscape benefit across the Application Site in terms of woodland, trees, hedgerow and other planting.</p>	Major Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor/ Moderate Beneficial

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Water features; including watercourses and ponds	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction: Medium Completion: Negligible Year 15: Low Beneficial	No	<p>These landscape features are not notable or extensive across the Application Site yet do comprise some stretches of small watercourse/ wet ditches and a limited number of ponds (including some associated with the Jct 10 drainage).</p> <p>The assessed (Medium) susceptibility/ value/ sensitivity of these features generally reflects their presence and contribution in landscape terms across the Application Site.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will directly impact upon the pond(s) associated with Jct 10 drainage and upon short sections of the small watercourses (Ashgrove Brook and Gagle Brook) and with existing planting associated with these parts of these corridors. However, these direct impacts will be relatively limited and localised in landscape terms.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will include a notable number of new water features and ponds, including large features associated with the sustainable drainage strategy for the Proposed Development and others included as part of ecological measures and designed principally for wildlife purposes. In addition to the drainage and wildlife objectives of these features, all will also be positive in the longer term, in localised landscape terms.</p>	Moderate Adverse	Negligible	Minor Beneficial