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## INTRODUCTION

- 7.1 This section of the ES assesses the potential landscape and visual implications arising through the development of the proposed ERF. Section 3 above provides a description of the proposed ERF, which forms the basis against which landscape and visual impacts have been determined.
- 7.2 This section is divided into seven main sub-sections:
- General introduction;
  - Summary of the methodology;
  - Policy Considerations;
  - Baseline Conditions;
  - Assessment of Impacts;
  - Residual Impacts; and
  - Conclusions.
- 7.3 Policy considerations include all relevant landscape planning history, policy, guidance and designations. A general overview of planning policies relevant to the EIA have also been set out in Section 4 above, and discussed in Section 4 of the Planning and Sustainability Statement (Volume 1).
- 7.4 The baseline study considers both landscape and visual conditions as follows:
- the landscape baseline study includes a review of all existing landscape character assessments as well as a more detailed assessment of the landscape character of the application site and its context; and
  - the visual baseline study includes an assessment of the visibility of the existing site and the selection of representative viewpoints.
- 7.5 The assessment of impacts includes a study of the development proposals, potential landscape and visual characteristics and impact generators, effects and mitigation and will be considered in terms of spatial element (local, district, regional, national), timescales (short/medium/long term) and permanency (reversible or permanent).
- 7.6 The assessment of residual impacts considers the sensitivity of the receptors to the proposed development, the magnitude of change and the overall significance of effects.

## METHODOLOGY

- 7.7 The format of this assessment is based on the principles within the Countryside Agency's Landscape Character Assessment Guidance (2002), and the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's "*Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*" (2002), hereafter referred to as the GLVIA.

- 7.8 A study area of up to 10km surrounding the application site (measured from its centre) has been adopted for this assessment.
- 7.9 Initially a desktop study was undertaken to review the relevant publications, maps and plans. This was followed by fieldwork to various parts of the application site and surrounding study area in October 2008 prior to leaf fall, to provide photographs to represent summer views. The initial 10 representative viewpoints were then revisited in March and April 2009, prior to new leaves emerging, to provide photographs to represent winter views. Following consultation with the Local Planning Authority a further 3 viewpoints were visited in July 2009 and a further 2 viewpoints in October 2009, and revisited in November 2009. During all site visits, the weather conditions were clear and suitable for assessing all views.
- 7.10 Use has been made of 3D computer models to identify potential viewpoints and create perspective views.
- 7.11 Photographs illustrating views from a selected series of viewpoints were taken using a Nikon D70 digital camera. The camera was set to a focal length which is the equivalent of a 50mm lens for a 35mm format camera. The nature of the views was of relatively wide panoramas and it was therefore considered beneficial to present the photographs in this way. The panoramic views consist of three or four photographic frames merged together using 'Photovista' software.
- 7.12 The potential significance of landscape and visual impacts is determined by combining the magnitude of the potential impact and the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors to change, as shown in Table 7-1 below. Moderate/Substantial Impacts, and Substantial Impacts, (in bold on Table 7-1) are regarded as significant.
- 7.13 This process is not a quantitative process; there is not an absolute scoring system. Instead, the correlation of the two factors, although reflecting recognised features and methods of working outlined in this section, is in the end a matter of professional judgement of the qualified landscape architect.
- 7.14 Table 7-2, below, provides a brief definition of the full range of significance criteria. Both landscape and visual impacts can be adverse, beneficial or neutral in nature.

**Table 7-1  
Principles of Assessing Significance of Landscape and Visual Impact**

<b>Sensitivity / Magnitude</b>	<b>Negligible</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Negligible</b>	Negligible Impact	Negligible/ Slight Impact	Slight Impact	Slight/Moderate Impact
<b>Low</b>	Negligible/ Slight Impact	Slight Impact	Slight/ Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact
<b>Medium</b>	Slight Impact	Slight/ Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact	<b>Moderate/ Substantial Impact</b>
<b>High</b>	Slight/ Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact	<b>Moderate/ Substantial Impact</b>	<b>Substantial Impact</b>

**Table 7-2  
Description of Significance Criteria for Landscape and Visual Impact**

<b>Level of Significance</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>No Impact</b>	The proposed scheme has no effect on landscape or visual receptors.
<b>Negligible</b>	The proposed scheme is largely appropriate in its context. It would be very difficult to differentiate from its surroundings and would affect very few or no receptors.
<b>Negligible/Slight</b>	The proposed scheme would result in minimal change to the landscape which would be difficult to differentiate from its surroundings and would affect few receptors.
<b>Slight</b>	The proposed scheme would cause a barely perceptible impact, and would affect few receptors.
<b>Slight/Moderate</b>	The proposed scheme would cause few changes to the landscape, which would not be clearly noticeable, and would affect few receptors
<b>Moderate</b>	The proposed scheme would cause a noticeable difference to the landscape, and would affect several receptors. However, this change would not alter the essential character of the local landscape or that of the view.
<b>Moderate/Substantial</b>	The proposed scheme would cause a very noticeable difference to the landscape, and would affect several or many receptors. This change would therefore alter the character of the landscape in this locality, or the character of a view.
<b>Substantial</b>	The proposed scheme would change the character and/or appearance of the landscape for a long period of time or permanently. It would affect many receptors. This change would therefore alter the character of the landscape in this locality, or the character of a view.

*Consultations*

7.15 Informal consultation in respect of the scope of the landscape and visual impact assessment has been carried out with Leicestershire County

Council's Landscape Officer, Lesley Eddleston. This included a review of the proposed development, Zone of Theoretical Visibility maps and the initial set of 10 representative viewpoints.

- 7.16 As a response to this consultation 3 additional locations were requested to increase the coverage of viewpoints to the north-east, around Loughborough and outlying villages. These were subsequently visited in July 2009 and November 2009 and included in the assessment.
- 7.17 It was also requested that visual effects upon the M1 are considered as part of general visibility and extrapolation of viewpoints 6 and 9; it was accepted that it was impractical to have a viewpoint on the motorway itself.
- 7.18 The proposed photomontages for viewpoints 6 and 8 were accepted and it was recognised that a Virtual Reality (VR) model would be available to test potential visibility from the other viewpoints. Although not required at the time, the Local Planning Authority reserved the right to request further photomontages post-submission.

### *Technical Difficulties*

- 7.19 No technical difficulties were encountered in assessing the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development.

## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.20 As noted above, full details of the planning context of the application site are described in Section 4 of this ES. However planning permissions, aspects of relevant landscape policies and designations which are of particular relevance to this landscape and visual assessment are examined below.

### **Planning Permissions**

- 7.21 The application site includes parts of a disused quarry complex and adjacent offices with permission for a non-hazardous landfill, together with a number of steel portal framed buildings comprising material recycling facility, waste transfer station and in-vessel composting, together with ancillary facilities and buildings.

### **Landscape Planning Policies**

- 7.22 The following planning documents are relevant to the landscape of the application site and surrounding areas:
- RSS8, East Midlands Regional Plan (Published March 2009);
  - Leicestershire and Leicester Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD; and
  - Charnwood Borough Council Local Plan 2004.

- 7.23 The potential effects of the proposed development in relation to these plans and policies are set out below.

### *East Midlands Regional Plan*

- 7.24 The East Midlands Regional Plan (RSS8) was published in March 2009 and provides a broad development strategy for the East Midlands up to 2026. It also represents the spatial element of the East Midlands Integrated Regional Strategy.

- 7.25 Policy 1 of RSS8 has the following Regional Core Objectives relevant to this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA):

*c) To protect and enhance the environmental quality of urban and rural settlements to make them ... attractive places to live, work and invest in, through promoting:... high quality design which reflects local distinctiveness;*  
*g) To protect and enhance the environment through the: protection, enhancement, sensitive use and management of the Region's natural cultural and historic assets, giving particular attention to designated sites of international importance; avoidance of significant harm and securing adequate mitigation or compensation for any unavoidable damage;*  
*k) To minimise adverse environmental impacts of new development and promote optimum social and economic benefits through the promotion of sustainable design and construction techniques.*

- 7.26 RSS8 identifies the proposed site as being situated within the Three Cities Sub-Area which comprises “Derby, Leicester and Nottingham and surrounding areas and containing almost half the Region’s population, with the cities acting as major administrative, economic and cultural centres.” In describing priorities it is recognised that “the Sub-area contains many important environmental assets, including most of the National Forest, Charnwood Forest, the rivers Soar and Wreake and the Trent Valley, some of which have been degraded by past development.”

- 7.27 In RSS8 under Policy 26, Protecting and Enhancing the Region’s Natural and Cultural Heritage (which defines historic assets as including listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, scheduled monuments and other archaeological sites of international, regional or local importance, together with other locally designated sites and historic landscapes), includes the following relevant statements:

- *the Region’s internationally and nationally designated natural and historic assets should receive the highest level of protection;*
- *damage to natural and historic assets or their settings should be avoided wherever and as far as possible, recognising that such assets are usually irreplaceable;*
- *unavoidable damage must be minimised and clearly justified by a need for development in that location which outweighs the damage that would result;*

- *unavoidable damage which cannot be mitigated should be compensated for, preferably in a relevant local context, and where possible in ways which also contribute to social and economic objectives;*
- *there should be a net increase in the quality and active management of natural and historic assets across the Region in ways that promote adaptation to climate change, and an increase in the quantity of environmental assets generally.*

7.28 In RSS8 under Policy 31, Priorities for the Management and Enhancement of the Region's Landscape, the Region's natural and heritage landscapes are identified as needing protection and enhancement by the following policies, relevant to this LVIA:

- *the promotion of the highest level of protection for the nationally designated landscapes of the Peak District National Park and the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;*
- *the promotion of initiatives to protect and enhance the particular character of the Sherwood, Charnwood and Rockingham Forests;*
- *the establishment of criteria-based policies in Local Development Frameworks to ensure that development proposals respect intrinsic landscape character in rural and urban fringe areas, including, where appropriate, recognition of the value of tranquillity and dark skies;*
- *and the identification in Local Development Frameworks of landscape and biodiversity protection and enhancement objectives through the integration of Landscape Character Assessments with historic and ecological assessments.*

7.29 Within the Three Cities Sub-Regional Strategy it is also recognised that “*the relationship between Derby, Leicester and Nottingham Principal Urban Areas is complex and in some respects interdependent. Three of the fifteen largest cities in England are located within 30 miles of each other, and substantial numbers of people travel between them for work, shopping, education, health care and leisure. Together they represent half the economy of the entire region, and are home to just under half of the Region's 4.3 million population. To varying degrees, their economies, labour markets, shopping catchments, travel patterns and housing market areas all overlap and interact.*” It also acknowledges that “*at the same time, some parts of the Sub-area have a rural character*”.

7.30 In terms of Sub-Regional Priorities it is also acknowledged that “*There are a wide range of natural and cultural assets in the Sub-area, including the National Forest (which extends into the West Midlands)...and a proposed Charnwood Forest Regional Park.*”

### Waste Core Strategy

7.31 Policy WCS10 provides an overarching policy aimed at protecting a number of facets of the environment, including the character and quality of the landscape.

- 7.32 Policy WSC12 sets the strategy for waste development within, or adjacent to the Charnwood Forest. This mirrors the RSS Policy 31, in that proposals should include measures to protect and enhance the character of the Forest, whilst the siting, scale design and materials of the development reflect and compliment the character of the surrounding landscape.

### *Borough of Charnwood Local Plan*

- 7.33 The application site lies within the local planning authority of Charnwood Borough Council. The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 2004, states that *“Charnwood has a richly diverse built and natural environment, much valued by the local population. It incorporates extensive tracts of attractive countryside, most notably the Charnwood Forest area. Many of its villages remain largely unspoilt despite the fact that over the last 30 years the area has accommodated a significant amount of growth in the form of new houses, industry and roads.”*
- 7.34 The Charnwood Local Plan 2004 also reports that *“The issue of sustainability therefore provides the foundation for the local plan and its practical application is evident in the aims of the strategy”.*
- 7.35 Local Plan Policy EV/5: The Setting of Listed Buildings and Local Plan Policy EV/10: Development in Conservation Areas set out the authority’s policies in relation to Archaeology and Cultural Heritage and Local Plan Policy EV/9: Historic Parks and Gardens confirms that to date three parks and gardens within Charnwood have been identified by English Heritage as areas with significant historic or landscape interest: Bradgate Park; Prestwold Hall; and Garendon Park and states that *“Planning permission will not be granted for development which would have an adverse effect on the character or setting of the parks and gardens of historic or landscape significance as shown on the Proposals Map.”* The potential effects upon Cultural Heritage are discussed in more detail under Section 12 of this Environmental Statement.
- 7.36 Local Plan Policy CT/7: Local Landscape Designations states that *“Within the designated Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside planning permission will be granted for uses where the proposal would not detract from the essentially undeveloped rural character of the landscape, damage natural features and landform or diminish the visual amenities afforded by important viewpoints by reason of:*
- i) the introduction of prominent, visually obtrusive or incongruous elements by reason of poor siting, design construction and landscaping; or*
  - ii) the use of materials or designs incompatible with the traditional vernacular or otherwise unsuitable due to their colour or reflective qualities;*
  - iii) the removal of traditional buildings and structures, or particular elements of them, or other landscape features which contribute to the special character and appearance of the locality.*
- Where development is acceptable in principle it will be expected to maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the landscape.”*

7.37 Local Plan Policy CT/20 relates to development proposals and related planting within the National Forest area defined on the Proposals Map, which will be granted where:

*i) the overall scheme does not conflict with restraint policies to safeguard the attractive rural character of the landscape;*

*ii) the development is of a high quality with design, layout and materials reflecting traditional local architecture and the setting of the site in the National Forest;*

*iii) an accompanying woodland planting scheme or other habitat measures provide a landscaped Forest setting appropriate to the scale and type of development and compatible with land uses and the ecological and landscape character of the Forest within the plan area; and*

*iv) public access links are provided compatible with the scale and type of development and integrated with existing access routes in the Forest area.*

*Other habitat measures may be considered favourably where:*

*a) they would be more appropriate in landscape and ecological terms; and*

*b) the woodland planting is not required to screen the proposed development or for other specified reasons.*

*Proposals for development other than housing and employment will be permitted provided that there is a clear and direct relationship between the development proposed and the establishment and maintenance of the Forest.*

## Designations

7.38 Drawing NH 7/1 presents the relevant landscape designations within the study area. As illustrated, the application site does not form part of any national landscape designations such as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) .

7.39 As noted above, the application site is located on the northern edge of an “Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside” known as “Charnwood”, designated by Charnwood Borough Council, which is described as follows:

*“The Charnwood Forest area has an intimate character due to frequent and irregular changes in topography. It is an area largely free from dereliction with a rich ecological diversity, hard rock outcrops, extensive tracts of woodland, water features and dispersed farmsteads in the vernacular style. The widespread use of local building materials including Swithland slate and stone in many of the buildings in the small dispersed villages give the area a common theme and unique quality. Much of the designated area falls within the National Forest area where policies will be applied to enhance and diversify the landscape, enrich natural habitats, improve recreation and public access, and foster the aims of rural diversification in a manner compatible with the special landscape characteristics of this area.”*

## Registered Parks and Gardens

7.40 There are a number of Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG) within the study area. The nearest is Garendon Park (Grade II RPG) which lies less than

0.5km to the north-east of the application site and to the north and west of the edge of Loughborough, at elevations of 60-80m AOD. The Park which has limited public access is now partly bounded to the west by the M1, which when constructed c 1960 cut off the south-west corner of the C18 and earlier park. To the south the park touches on the A512, otherwise the boundary follows the line of a dismantled railway. Viewpoints 5, 6 and 13 are included within this assessment to provide representative views from the edges of the Park.

- 7.41 Prestwold Hall (Grade II RPG), which contains Prestwold Hall and church, lies approximately 5km east of Loughborough at elevations of 65m AOD on the western extremity of the Leicestershire Wolds. The wolds are low in this location, as to be almost imperceptible, and from the Hall the only views are south, across the gently rising parkland. The privately owned hall hosts various events, including weddings and the adjacent track offers motorised activities. There is variable tree cover in the direction of the proposed development, situated 9km away to the south-west, which would limit potential availability of views. Viewpoint 2 is included within this assessment to provide representative views close to the southern edge of the Park.
- 7.42 Stanford Hall (Grade II RPG) is located approximately 1.5km west of Rempstone at elevations of 80m AOD. To the south-west, in the direction of the development the valley sides decline, giving views out over farmland at a lower level and the town of Loughborough. The privately owned hall hosts various events, including weddings. The proposed development would be situated 8km away, which would limit potential availability of views.
- 7.43 Whatton House (Grade II RPG) stands in its park, 5km north-west of Loughborough. It occupies high ground at elevations of around 55m AOD, on a bluff looking east across the valley of the River Soar and south across the valley of one of its tributaries, the Long Whatton Brook. To the east the park is bounded by the A6 from Loughborough to Derby (being dual carriageway in this vicinity). The privately owned gardens are open to the public from March to October and hosts various events, including weddings. The views are generally open in the direction of the proposed development, situated circa 6km away to the south, which would limit the potential availability of views.
- 7.44 Bradgate Park (Grade II RPG) is situated over 8km to the south-east and is outwith the zone of theoretical visibility.
- 7.45 Coleorton Hall (Grade II\* RPG) stands 1km west of the scattered settlement of Coleorton, separated from it by the B5324 Rempstone Road. The Hall stands on high ground (above 144m AOD) with extensive views east to Charnwood Forest. Until recently the site was owned by the National Coal Board and had been developed as its regional headquarters and has recently been redeveloped for housing. There is variable tree cover around the hall in the direction of the proposed development, situated over 9km away, which would limit potential availability of views and the majority of the Park would be outwith the zone of theoretical visibility for the main building mass, although the upper parts of the stacks would cover the area around the Hall.

### *National Forest*

- 7.46 The application site, and much of the local area, is situated within the National Forest where policies are being applied to enhance and diversify the landscape, enrich natural habitats, improve recreation and public access, and foster the aims of rural diversification in a manner compatible with the special landscape characteristics of this area.
- 7.47 The A512 forms the northern boundary to this area which continues south, within the borough, as far as the villages of St Helens and Anstey, almost 11km away. The western portion of Charnwood Borough forms part of the eastern edge of the National Forest.

### *Newhurst Quarry SSSI*

- 7.48 The northern portion of Newhurst Quarry (mainly the quarry faces) is designated as a geological SSSI for its exposure of geological features: *“Newhurst Quarry is the only British site where pre-existing hypogene mineralization, originating from ascending mineral-rich fluids in pre-Triassic times, has been notified by weathering and re-sedimentation during Triassic times, some 25 million years ago.”*

### *Charnwood Forest Regional Park*

- 7.49 The application site lies close to the northern edge of the proposed Charnwood Forest Regional Park. The vision for the Charnwood Forest Regional Park (endorsed by Leicestershire County Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, and North West Leicestershire District Council) is as follows:

*“The unique natural and cultural heritage features of Charnwood Forest will be managed and promoted through the Charnwood Forest Regional Park. The Regional Park will be recognised as an essential part of the growing communities in the Derby, Leicester and Nottingham area, now and in the future.”*

## **BASELINE CONDITIONS**

- 7.50 Baseline conditions for the application site and surrounding study area have been assessed in terms of landscape and visual conditions, as discussed in greater detail below.

### **Landscape Baseline**

- 7.51 Landscape assessment, as opposed to visual assessment, deals with the fabric, character and quality of the countryside. The landscape fabric consists of the elements that make up the landscape, such as landform, land use and cultural factors. The way these elements fit together in terms of proportion, pattern, scale, etc., gives rise to a particular landscape character.

Changes to the fabric and character of a particular landscape may affect the perceived value of that landscape, giving rise to changes in its quality.

- 7.52 Potential landscape receptors can therefore include elements of the physical landscape that may be directly affected by the development such as: topographic, geological and drainage features; woodland, tree and hedgerow cover; land use; field boundaries and artefacts<sup>1</sup>.
- 7.53 This part of the assessment aims to assess the character and quality of the landscape in and around the application site by carrying out a subjective assessment, and by also examining particular factors objectively, in accordance with the guidelines defined by The Countryside Agency (2002), *op.cit.*
- 7.54 The Countryside Agency's guidelines make a clear distinction between the characterisation process (in which the attributes of the landscape are described) and the judgement making process. This sub-section of the assessment deals with the characterisation process, and later sub-sections make judgements about the potential effects of the proposed development based upon the characterisation.

### *Existing Landscape Appraisals*

- 7.55 The Countryside Agency guidelines describe how Landscape Character Assessment can be applied at different scales, from the national or European level to the parish level. Assessments are ideally prepared at different scales that should fit together as a nested series or a hierarchy of landscape character types and/or areas, such that each level of assessment adds more detail to the one above. The three main levels identified by The Countryside Agency are: national and regional scale; local authority scale; and local scale. This assessment uses and presents a summary of the relevant published assessments at national and regional scale (The Countryside Agency) and local authority scales. These wider character assessments are then used to provide the context for the local scale landscape assessment for the application site.

### **National Character Areas**

- 7.56 At the National/Regional level landscape character assessment has been assessed by the Countryside Agency (Countryside Agency, 1999). The Countryside Agency identifies the area of the application site as falling within 'Area 73 – 'Charnwood'. Drawing NH 7/2 illustrates the National Character Areas for the site and surrounding parts of the study area. Area 73, 'Charnwood' has the following key characteristics:
- *Unique landscape with upland qualities, rising out of lowland farmland;*
  - *Outcrops of ancient Precambrian volcanic and plutonic rocks within bracken and heathland;*

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition), paragraph 6.13  
Newhurst Quarry – Volume 3

- *Mudstone vales of pasture fields;*
- *Dry stone walls and hedges;*
- *Frequent woodlands;*
- *Large settlements mainly at the edge, with a few attractive villages and scattered farmsteads at the centre;*
- *Strongly rectilinear patterns of parliamentary enclosure fields and roads;*
- *Attractive historic parks and mansions;*
- *Farmsteads and village buildings dominated by dark local stone; and*
- *Attractively-sited reservoirs and pools.*

## Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy

7.57 At a more local level, the landscape character has been assessed by The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy (Leicestershire County Council, 2001) which sits within a broader framework of environmental policies at several levels. It seeks to give guidance on issues which are outside the planning control process but which affect the appearance and character of the landscape. Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy identifies eighteen distinctive character areas within the two counties, including the City of Leicester.

7.58 The Strategy provides guidelines for conserving and enhancing these distinctive landscapes. The application site is identified as falling within the “Charnwood Forest” character area. This is defined as having the following distinctive features:

- *upland landscape with rocky outcrops and fast-flowing streams;*
- *high proportion of woodland cover;*
- *distinctive mixture of woodland, farmland, heathland and parkland;*
- *part of the National Forest;*
- *buildings and walls in local stone; and*
- *many sites of ecological value.*

7.59 The Charnwood Forest character area also has the following issues:

- *lack of woodland, hedgerow and hedgerow tree management;*
- *poor state of repair and/or part removal of drystone walls;*
- *insensitive or inadequately mitigated built development;*
- *pressure to extend existing quarries; and*
- *visitor pressures in popular areas.*

## Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessment

7.60 The landscape character for Charnwood Forest has also been assessed in 2008 by TEP. This identifies the application site as situated within “Bradgate and Beacon” proposed Landscape Character Area boundary, which has the following key characteristics:

- *Large tracts of informal open space with distinctive rolling hills. The highest are prominent rising above the surrounding countryside;*

- *Localised knolls and wooded rocky outcrops often within open space;*
- *Frequent blocks of both coniferous and broadleaved woodland on slopes which contrasts with open parkland and heathland;*
- *Cropston Reservoir surrounded by coniferous woodland;*
- *Distinctive ancient trees within Bradgate Country Park and mature oak and beech trees line the roads;*
- *Prominent landmark of Old John Tower at high vantage points;*
- *Small linear settlements on lower slopes characterised by granite stone and high proportion of thatch;*
- *Detached properties set within mature woodland gardens; and*
- *Drystone walls are a feature of property boundaries and open spaces; hedgerows used as field boundaries on lower slopes.*

### *Landscape Attributes of the Existing Site*

- 7.61 The Countryside Agency guidance on landscape appraisal recommends that landscapes are initially characterised, and that judgements about the nature and sensitivity of these landscapes are then based on this characterisation process. The Agency's guidance recommends that the characterisation process should be based on an assessment of natural factors, cultural social factors and aesthetic and perceptual factors.
- 7.62 These factors have been examined primarily for the application site, but also more generally for the surrounding landscape. Each of these factors is assessed below.

### **Natural Characteristics**

- 7.63 The application site is situated on the northern edge of an area of high ground, known as Charnwood Forest, that overlooks the Trent and Soar Valleys to the north and east.
- 7.64 The site entrance lies at around 92m AOD at the north of the application site. The footprint of the proposed building and intended roads are located on existing bare ground and old quarry stockpiles, measuring approximately 400m by 180m, with gradients typically of 1:10 to 1:30. Ground levels here remain fairly consistent to the east of the quarry between 92-98m AOD from north to south.
- 7.65 To the west of the proposed building footprint, the landforms become more irregular associated with stockpiles at elevations of 112m AOD, and near flat benches to the steep rock faces of the disused Newhurst Quarry, which has a quarry rim at around 105m-110m AOD and reaches a maximum depth of 14m AOD. The quarry measures in the region of 450m by 340m.
- 7.66 Topography in the local area of Charnwood Forest is typically rolling and the land continues to rise and fall associated with localised high points such as:
- Buck Hill (at 225+m AOD), approximately 2.5km away and Beacon Hill (at 230m AOD) approximately 3.8km from site to the south east; and

- Ives Head (at 201m AOD) lies approximately 1.4km away and Timberwood Hill (at 240m AOD) lies approximately 3.8km from the site to the south west.
- 7.67 Topography in the local area of the Langley Lowlands and Soar Valley begins to drop away with low points such as:
- Grace Dieu Brook and Black Brook (at 55-60m AOD), approximately 3km away from the site to the north where they pass beneath the M1; and
  - River Soar (at 35-38m AOD) lies approximately 5km away at Zouch to the north and 8km away from the site between Quorn and Barrow upon Soar to the east.
- 7.68 Further north the land rises again around East Midlands Airport at elevations above 80m AOD at over 7km away, and around the edge of the Wolds at Rempstone and Prestwold, at elevations above 60m AOD, at over 9km away.
- 7.69 A dense mature belt of mostly deciduous (including Sycamore, Birch and Poplars trees) with some evergreen (including pines) tree planting is located around the eastern and northern edges of the application site. At approximately 20m wide and standing in the region of 10-15m in height the tree belt runs much of the length of the 180m long site, breaking briefly to the south of the application site near the operational batching plant.
- 7.70 Vegetation cover in the surrounding Charnwood Forest areas to the south are relatively well wooded with a mixture of grassland, heathland, copses and shelter belts. There is a local nature reserve designation off Morley Lane to the west and within 1km of the application site.
- 7.71 The lower-lying lands to the north and east are almost wholly agricultural and predominantly pasture. Tree cover within the valleys are variable with almost no woodland and strips of hedgerows and trees providing the main cover.

## Cultural and Social Factors

- 7.72 As discussed above, the application site has been previously stripped of soils and consists of bare ground and old quarry stockpiles associated with the disused quarry to the east. The visual character, therefore, is generally of an abandoned state due to the variable, engineered topography and areas of bare ground. That said, there is an existing operational batching plant to the south of the application site and Hanson's single storey offices to the immediate west.
- 7.73 The surrounding areas also have a number of industrial mineral extraction workings, for example Longcliffe Quarry to the south of the M1 and the clay pit to the west of the application site. Quarrying is common within a 10km radius of the application site to the east and south east, with many working and redundant quarries located around Markfield, Swithland, Mountsorrel and Bardon. Further afield, up to 12km from the application site to the west (including Coalville, Whitwick and Ashby-De-La-Zouch) past and present effects of coal mining and clay extraction are visible in the landscape. As a

result the local road system has noticeable HGVs movements, in particular along the A512 which connects directly to the M1 and A42.

- 7.74 Shepshed town is situated to the north of the application site and includes a number of large industrial buildings: immediately to the north of the application site are GLW Feeds Ltd's Lindum Mill and BOAL UK Limited aluminium extrusion press. Further to the west (and fronting the A512) are other industrial buildings (such as Meggit Polymers and Charnwood Brick Limited). Other industrial uses include the lorry park to the edge of the town along the A512.
- 7.75 The local area has a relatively dense settlement pattern of former mining towns and villages, the largest being Loughborough; a former industrial town that is now better known for its university. Today the population of Loughborough is around 55,000 and the western edge of the town is located approximately 1.5km east of the application site.
- 7.76 The area identified as Charnwood Forest (Swithland, Woodhouse, Newtown Linford etc) to the south has numerous large isolated residential properties, many standing in sizeable estates. Farming is the common land use in and around Charnwood with a mixture of livestock grazing and arable. Equestrian sports are commonplace with several stud farms and equestrian schools located in the area.
- 7.77 There are no public rights of way crossing through or immediately adjacent to the application site. Most notable public rights of way lie to the east crossing farmland from Snells Nook Lane, to the south; a bridleway off Ingleberry Road crossing farmland to Lubcloud Farm and to the south-west, from Ingleberry House Farm along a bridleway toward Oaks Nurseries on Iveshead Road.
- 7.78 There are a number of local, regional and national cycle routes that directly pass the application site along the A512. Many of the local and regional routes provide links between residential and employment areas of Loughborough and Shepshed. The national routes connect the larger towns and villages in the south of the county to the wider countryside to the north, west and beyond.
- 7.79 Other recreational features include Home Farm, an organic farm shop located off Nanpantan Lane and Longcliffe Golf Course, located off Snells Nook Lane, both within 1km to the east of the application site.

## Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects

- 7.80 The aesthetic qualities of the application site and local area are summarised in Table 7-3, being divided into the main categories identified within the guidance<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Landscape Character Assessment – Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) – Paragraph 5.12

**Table 7-3  
Aesthetic Attributes of Site and Study Area**

<b>Generic Aesthetic Attributes</b>	<b>Description of Attributes for Site and Study Area</b>
<b>Scale</b>	The main parts of the site, where the proposed building would be located is small to medium scale, becoming medium scale associated with the quarry excavation. This is similar to the surrounding areas which are typically small to medium scale, although blocks of deciduous and coniferous plantations provide larger scale features.
<b>Enclosure</b>	The site is almost completely enclosed by mature woodland/scrub vegetation, some of which is atop engineered bunding, a result of previous mineral workings mitigation. On a broader scale, the undulating topography of the surrounding area accompanied by blocks of mature woodlands, part of the Charnwood Forest, form visual enclosure. The M1 motorway immediately adjacent to the east of site is enclosed in a cutting.
<b>Diversity</b>	The site is relatively diverse at a local scale due to the engineered topography and vegetation pattern/bareground. At a broader scale the surrounding landscape contains a number of contrasting sub-characters including enclosed farmland, open parkland, settlements, residential properties, farmsteads and areas of considerable industrial disturbance.
<b>Texture</b>	The site is generally rough due to the predominance of woodland and scrub vegetation. This is typically also the case for the surrounding areas, although the Charnwood Forest heathland, pastures and forestry plantations are smooth to textured.
<b>Form and Line</b>	The site ranges from steeply graded mineral stockpiles to horizontal floor. At a broader scale the undulating topography of the landscape forms a typically curved and rolling to horizontal and flat skyline. However, this trend is interrupted in places by the vertical form and straight lines of woodland plantations, roads, pylons and other incidental developments such as farmsteads, residential properties and occasional commercial /industrial buildings.
<b>Colour</b>	Predominantly greys, blues and russets of the natural stone with muted rural colours including greens and browns of the mature vegetation.
<b>Balance</b>	The disturbed/despoiled nature of the site and built up surrounding areas (including the road network) are generally discordant and contrast with the more balanced woodland and farmland.
<b>Movement</b>	There is a contrast between the generally still woodland and farmland areas and the busy roads and working industrial areas, such as the M1 and A512 offices to the west of the applications site and the batching plant to the south.
<b>Pattern</b>	The site and surrounding mineral workings are typically random and contrast with the more regular to organised, rectilinear pattern of farmland, woodland plantations, roads and field boundaries. Areas of parkland are more irregular at a local scale.

*Landscape Dynamics*

7.81 In the absence of the proposed development it is assumed that that the planning permission for the development of Newhurst Quarry as an integrated waste management facility would be carried out. This would include a waste transfer station (WTS), materials recycling facility (MRF); in-vessel composting facility (IVC) within the footprint of the ERF site, and the landfill of the quarry void with residual waste streams.

- 7.82 The permitted integrated waste management facility, as described in the RPS ES (2007) would comprise of the following:
- A Fully Enclosed Waste Reception Building/Waste Transfer Station incorporating a Materials Recovery Facility housed within linked industrial style buildings located on land to the east of the main landfill void. The proposed Materials Recovery Building has a roof level of approximately 109.9m AOD. The Waste Transfer Building has a roof level of approximately 108.5m AOD;
  - An IVC plant to process compostable waste will be located to the east of the main landfill area adjacent to (and south of) the WTS/MRF building with a final product storage building and an area for maturation of the final product located further to the south. The Compost Waste Reception Building has a roof level of approximately 108.4m AOD; and
  - A Compost Storage Building And Compost Maturation Yard for the storage and maturation of the compost product produced by the In-Vessel Composting process comprising an area of approximately 0.5ha of hardstanding and a compost storage building for end product storage will be located to the south west of the in-vessel facility. The compost product produced by the in-vessel system will be stored in this area in rows up to 4m high. The compost storage building (dimensions: 24m (w) x 42m (l) x 10.88m (h)) will be open fronted.
- 7.83 The main buildings would be linked together, with varying roof levels (approximately 12m-15.5m high) and offset facades. The buildings would occupy approximately 1.1ha of land. The layout of the buildings has been designed to utilise the relatively flat areas of land within the site, close to the site entrance in an area that is well screened. The roof would be a 90% 'goose-wing grey' corrugated sheets and 10% clear panels. The building walls would be of 'merlin grey' colour.
- 7.84 The anticipated life of the landfill operation is approximately 20 years upon which time the landfilled area will be restored to a mixed land-use with public access provided. In view of the statutory recycling/recovery targets, together with fiscal measures (such as landfill tax) it is anticipated that the life of the landfill would be in excess of 20 years. The landfill area (plan area) is approximately 12ha and lies to the west of the front end treatment facilities. The quarry void would be engineered to form a landfill site for non-hazardous and inert waste. The development would involve re-profiling of the existing rock faces, construction of basal and side lining system, erection of overhead netting, deposition of waste, and capping of the landfill upon completion. The highest point of the pre-settlement landform would be approximately 119m AOD including cap and soils. The highest point of the post settlement landform would be approximately 114m AOD.
- 7.85 The Restoration Scheme for the landfill would provide a number of habitats relating to different parts of the landform and has been driven by the landscape character, natural area profile and strategy documents relating to the area, especially the National Forest Strategy.

- 7.86 There would also be associated ancillary infrastructure and services for the landfill development, including: environmental control compound, overhead netting for bird and litter control, scrubber and biofilters, wheelwash, weighbridge, operations building, visitor centre and offices, vehicle circulation areas and car parks, a covered vehicle maintenance area and landfill mess room, a 2.4m high security fencing around the perimeter of facility, exterior lighting designed to minimise upward dispersion of light, rock and clay storage and crushing within Longcliffe Quarry, demolition of existing outbuildings. Improvements to the existing site access are also agreed as part of the existing planning permission.

### *Classification and Evaluation*

- 7.87 The application site is mainly associated with a relatively recently disused mineral working, operational batching plant and site offices on the edge of the busy M1. The site has permission for non-hazardous landfill and associated waste management buildings and operations.
- 7.88 Although there is some natural regeneration and mature trees/woodland plantation, the character is of a largely abandoned/derelict state. Overall the character of the site would therefore be industrial.
- 7.89 Implementation of the planning permission for the WTS, MRF, IVC and the landfill of the quarry void with residual waste streams would perpetuate this industrial character until such time as the landfill is restored, after a period of at least 20 years.
- 7.90 In this respect the site is not consistent with the key characteristics of Charnwood Forest defined by the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Landscape & Woodland Strategy.

### *Potential for Landscape Enhancement*

- 7.91 The relevant key objectives set out in the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Landscape & Woodland Strategy for Charnwood Forest that could be incorporated into the scheme include the conservation and enhancement of the well wooded upland character of the area. Further still, the key guidelines, include:
- *Conserve the existing woodland resource through improved woodland management of the perimeter plantations;*
  - *Increase woodland cover; and*
  - *Conserve existing heathland and heath-grassland areas and seek to increase their total area.*

### *Conclusions on the Landscape Appraisal of the Existing Site*

- 7.92 The site is essentially “*industrial*” in character, being associated with a relatively recently disused mineral working, operational batching plant and site offices on the edge of the busy M1 and with permission for landfill and associated waste management buildings.

- 7.93 However, the site is situated within a local landscape designation of “Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside” (APAC) and the National Forest. Part of Newhurst Quarry is also designated as geological SSSI for its exposure of geological features.

## Visual Baseline

- 7.94 Visual Impact Assessment relates to “changes that arise in the composition of the available views as a result of changes to the landscape, peoples’ responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity”<sup>3</sup>.
- 7.95 Potential visual receptors can include the public or community at large, residents, visitors and other groups of viewers as well as the visual amenity of people affected<sup>4</sup>.
- 7.96 Initially, it is necessary to define the extent of visibility both within and outside the application site. Viewpoints are then selected to represent views from the most commonly used locations in and around the site, and the existing views from each of these points are briefly described with the aid of photographs.

## General Visibility of the Application Site

- 7.97 The visibility of the application site was initially assessed by a desktop study of Ordnance Survey maps in order to identify potential viewpoints. This was followed by 3D computer modelling and calculation of two comparative zones of theoretical visibility (ZTV): firstly of the stacks and building mass; and secondly the main building mass only. These were prepared using LSS (McCarthy Taylor) in accordance with the method statements provided in Appendix 7/1. This ZTV assessment is limited to subtended vertical angles above 0.25°. Anything below this angle is considered to be insignificant.
- 7.98 The resulting ZTVs, which are shown on Drawings NH 7/3 and NH 7/4, are based on a bare terrain; that is, the computer model does not include structural vegetation or the built environment. As a result, the extent of visibility, which is illustrated, is very much a worst case scenario, and would be greatly reduced if structural vegetation/buildings were included in the model.
- 7.99 The visibility of the application site is restricted to varying degrees, by two factors: firstly the undulating topography characteristic of the area and in particular the rising ground and ridges to the south which prevent visibility, and secondly the surrounding vegetation and buildings. Views from locations to the south are generally obscured by a combination of the intervening topography, woodlands and hedgerows. It is possible, however, to just see

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<sup>3</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment”, Second Edition, *op.cit*

<sup>4</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition), paragraph 6.3

the mature roadside trees within the north and north-eastern part of the application site from a small number of locations.

*Choice of Viewpoints*

7.100 Potential visual receptors in the local area within approximately 10 km of the application site include the following:

- Designated landscape, such as APAC, National Forest or Registered Parks and Gardens;
- Settlements, as well as smaller groups of residential properties, such as Shepshed, Loughborough and Nanpantan;
- Roads, such as A512, Snells Nook Lane and the M1 motorway;
- Public rights of way from Snells Nook Lane and those between Ingleberry Road and Iveshead Road;
- Marked/popular viewpoints, picnic areas and beauty spots and outdoor passive recreational locations, such as Beacon Hill Country Park or Junction 24 Donnington Park Motorway Services.

7.101 Potential viewpoints and areas were investigated based on the following criteria:

- areas identified as potential receptors in the baseline;
- proximity to the application site;
- high concentrations of viewers, such as settlements, local recreational facilities etc;
- views from designated areas, private properties, footpaths and other receptors;
- views illustrating the visual character of the surrounding area; and
- areas identified as having a high potential for visual impact from the ZTV.

7.102 Photograph and fieldwork analysis of views of the site were then carried out from the surrounding landscape. The object was to determine which locations offer the clearest views of the application site and/or are most accessible to the public.

*Viewpoints*

7.103 Table 7-4 summarises the selected viewpoints, their locations and drawing numbers to illustrate existing views. Viewpoint locations are shown on the ZTV, Drawings NH 7/3 and NH 7/4.

**Table 7-4  
List of Viewpoints**

<b>Viewpoint</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Drawing</b>
1	M1 Junction 24 Donnington Park Motorway Service Area, public picnic area.	NH 7/5
2	Nottingham Road	NH 7/6
3	Beacon Hill Country Park	NH 7/7
4	Public Right of Way at Snells Nook Lane	NH 7/8

Viewpoint	Description	Drawing
5	Junction of A512 with Snells Nook Lane	NH 7/9
6	M1 Jct 23 bridge	NH 7/10
7	Lubcloud Farm bridleway	NH 7/11
8	Entrance of application site off A512	NH 7/12
9	Pedestrian/ cycle bridge across M1	NH 7/13
10	Public Right of Way off B5324	NH 7/14
11	Public Right of Way off Shepshed Road	NH 7/15
12	Railway Bridge on Stanford Road	NH 7/16
13	National Cycle Route 6 and Public Right of Way on north western edge of Garendon Park	NH 7/17
14	Shepshed	NH/18
15	White Horse on A512	NH/19

*Potential for Visual Enhancement*

7.104 Opportunities for visual enhancement are closely related to the opportunities for landscape enhancement, although the application site is currently well screened by mature perimeter vegetation.

*Conclusions of the Visual Assessment of the Existing Site*

7.105 This sub-section has assessed the visibility of the site, which is restricted by landform, vegetation and buildings. Representative viewpoints have been selected from locations in the surrounding area and include public rights of way, recreational areas, roads and residential properties.

**ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS**

7.106 The assessment of impacts includes a study of the development proposals, potential landscape and visual characteristics and impact generators, effects and mitigation and is considered in terms of spatial element (local, district, regional, national), timescales (short/medium/long term) and permanency (reversible or permanent).

**Nature and Extent of the Proposed Development**

7.107 The extent and nature of the proposals is described in Section 3 above, and the following items have been examined in detail due to their specific landscape and visual implications:

- The construction of an Energy Recovery Facility (ERF), including new buildings to house the plant and facilities to recover energy from 300,000 tpa of municipal and/or commercial/industrial wastes, together with the processing and storage of bottom ash; and
- Access, landscape treatments and associated works.

### *Potential Landscape and Visual Elements of the Proposed Development*

7.108 The planning application site covers approximately 15.5ha. Drawing No NH 3/12 provides a landscape masterplan for the application site. This shows the following approximate proportions of land cover:

- Heathland, grassland, woodland mosaic (including attenuation lagoon and parts of the flooded quarry void/lake) to be 11.5ha or 70%;
- Hardstanding, access road, pathways, car parking, etc to be 2ha or 15%; and
- ERF and IBA Buildings to be 2ha or 15%.

7.109 The main elements of the ERF proposals are set out below and would be housed within a single building envelope of 2ha as follows:

- Waste reception hall with storage bunker, shredder and a waste feed system.;
- Boiler hall with grate, combustion chamber and a heat recovery boiler;
- Turbine hall with steam turbine for generating electricity;
- Flue gas treatment hall with equipment to clean combustion gases;
- Facility for discharging and loading APC residue silos and other ancillary equipment;
- Two flue stacks to discharge the treated flue gases into the atmosphere; and
- Air cooled condenser (ACC) for cooling the recycling steam from the generating process.

7.110 The overall size of the ERF is 240m long, varying from 70m to 23m wide. The ERF building varies in height from 14m to 36m in height to the apex of the lower roof, and up to 46.5m to the apex of the upper roof ("*lantern*"). The base levels are set at 97m AOD for the tipping hall and 93m AOD for the boiler hall. The stacks are 96.5m above base level of 93m AOD.

7.111 The covered bottom ash facility is 130m long and a maximum of 110m wide. The total area available within the encompassing wall is 0.76ha.

7.112 The following features are included in the above volumes and components:

- Visitors centre to enable community participation and to encourage recycling and waste reduction in the county;
- Offices and ancillary accommodation for staff welfare such as changing, showers etc;
- A staff and visitors car park with space for a coach and minibus standing. Cycle spaces to encourage a reduction in car use;
- Weighbridges and gatehouse, that allows adequate queuing length off the public highway. These facilities would be staffed when necessary;
- Storage for the collection, recycling and rainwater runoff attenuation measures;

- Site access roads with lighting, footpaths and vehicle manoeuvring areas. The approved road junction improvements agreed as part of the landfill and integrated waste management facility would be retained;
  - Site excavation, filling and profiling;
  - Landscape and security fencing; and
  - Additional ecological habitats.
- 7.113 The facility has been designed to minimise the amount of cut and fill. As such, the base of the building would be set at around 93m AOD, with the bunker requiring excavation down to an elevation of 83m AOD. Any surplus material arising from the site formation works would be used within the restoration of the adjacent quarry void.
- 7.114 In addition to the built structures and engineering outlined above, there is potential for a plume to be generated. Visibility of the plume, which would consist of water vapour, would depend on the atmospheric conditions (mainly temperature and humidity). Although detailed modelling of this application has not been carried out, typically plumes of this type would be visible for 10-15% of the time, with length varying from 20-500m, manifesting as free-standing clouds, rather than being visibly joined to the stacks, or at ground level. This is set out in Section 6 'Air Quality' of the ES.
- 7.115 Thus, there is potential local landscape effects on the site itself and then potential visual effects upon the site itself and other offsite receptors within the surroundings area. The spatial extent is mainly local, but up to district due to the height of the stacks and plume and location of the site adjacent to the M1 and size and scale of the building, as a potential landmark.

### *Timescales and Permanency of Potential Impacts*

- 7.116 The construction period for the ERF is likely to take up to three years. It is anticipated that all parking and functions associated with this phase would be accommodated on the Newhurst site.
- 7.117 This would be followed by the operational phase. The facility has a design life of at least 25 years. The proposed development is not time limited and is therefore considered to be permanent for the purposes of this assessment.
- 7.118 The ERF would operate on a continuous basis, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the year. Notwithstanding this, the process lines would be periodically shut down for maintenance works.
- 7.119 The delivery of waste to the facility would occur during the period 0600 hours to 2200 hours during the week (Monday to Friday) and 0730 hours to 1600 hours on Saturdays; these are the same hours as approved for the Integrated Waste Management Facility.

### *Potential Indirect Impacts*

- 7.120 The main indirect impact would be from traffic generated from the development, as this would have a potential visual impact for other users of the local communication network, and a general impact on the visual amenity of local views.
- 7.121 However, impacts of this nature would also take place as result of the permitted landfill operations and integrated waste management facility at the site. Therefore, it is not envisaged that the proposals represent a significant additional indirect visual impact in this respect.

### *Lighting*

- 7.122 As set out in Section 3 of this ES, external lighting within the site would be required to ensure the safety of manoeuvring vehicles and pedestrians around the site. Lighting would also enhance the security of the site. The main areas where lighting would be necessary are as follows:
- Adjacent to roadways, footpaths and vehicle manoeuvring areas. This would include all site roads and hardstandings within the site, including the weighbridge area.
  - Above doorways
  - On the façade of the building.
- 7.123 There are no proposals for floodlighting the ERF, or for high level lighting.
- 7.124 Lighting of roadways and footpaths would be designed to ensure that there was no 'glare' or light trespass. In this respect, regard would be given to guidance provided by the Institution of Lighting Engineers<sup>5</sup> and the Good Planning Guide (GPG) 10 "*Lighting in the Countryside*".
- 7.125 Lighting would be fluorescent down lighters, affixed to poles, or the building façade, and positioned horizontally with no upward tilt. Lighting units would be fitted with a time clock or photo cell to allow for automatic and manual operation.
- 7.126 'Bulkhead' style lighting units would be affixed to the façade of the building above all pedestrian exits. Again these units would be directed downwards and baffles/shields used to limit light glare.

### **Proposed Mitigation Measures**

- 7.127 The GLVIA, paragraph 5.8 advises that "*The ideal strategy for each identifiable negative effect is one of avoidance. If this is not possible,*

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<sup>5</sup> Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light (GN01) (2005).  
[http://www.ile.org.uk/uploads/File/02\\_lightreduction.pdf](http://www.ile.org.uk/uploads/File/02_lightreduction.pdf)  
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*alternative strategies of reduction, remediation and compensation may be explored.”*

- 7.128 Of relevance to this proposed development, Under Box 5.1 it also goes on to state that *“Appropriate form, materials and design of built structures: many buildings and structures cannot be screened; nor is it always desirable or practicable to do so in these circumstances the design of the structures themselves, their colour treatment and textural finishes can be designed to fit comfortably with their surroundings.”*

### *Building Design*

- 7.129 A Design and Access Statement has been prepared (Volume 2) which sets out the architectural vision for the project as follows: *“Given the size of the proposals, the aim is not to camouflage the structures, but to integrate them with the surrounding landscape setting, whilst at the same time be open about the ERF’s function. The architecture is therefore light, bright, accessible and sustainable, and rooted in the landscape and landform. The building is designed to reflect the contextual undulating land form and rolling topography with its belts of mature woodland”.*
- 7.130 In 2008, CABE and DEFRA published a document entitled ‘*Designing Waste Facilities: a guide to modern design in waste*’. The design principles set out in this guidance document have been carefully considered and have contributed to the development of a high quality, best practice design solution.
- 7.131 The upper surface of the main building is formed by a sweeping curve that splits into a higher and lower roof that wraps around the central ‘lantern’ on the east and west sides.
- 7.132 A review of the 3D model identified that the building and roof would vary between being backgrounded or skylined, depending on viewpoint location and orientation. Thus in visual terms, whilst a lighter colour would be preferable where the roof would be skylined, a darker colour would be preferable where it would be backgrounded, but there was no overall consistent situation. An Aluplus Patina finished aluminium material was subsequently identified as the preferred option for the roof. This material is similar to a “*mill finish*” aluminium, but is ‘pre-weathered’ in the factory to achieve a consistent matt grey finish from the start, with no shine or possibility of causing glare. This product combines the durability of aluminium roof sheet, with a glare free, light grey finish.
- 7.133 Translucent polycarbonate cladding to the perimeter walls and high level side cladding to the lantern would provide daylight and to give a finely graded appearance. The base or ‘plinth’ of the facility would be clad in Europanel metal composite flat cladding panels or similar. Metallic finishes are proposed for the opaque façade cladding materials as these behave in a semi reflective way, so that they begin to suggest the tones of their surroundings within their base hue. This property would help the building integrate with its context through the changing seasons.

- 7.134 The base of the building would generally be viewed against landform or vegetation, and therefore a mid tone will help the building blend with the background. It is proposed that the base of the building is clad in an earthy russet hue that refers to the deep rich colour ranges found in the quarry stone on the site.

### *Landscape Treatments*

- 7.135 The margins of the application site would be restored to “*Charnwood Forest heath*”, a combination of rocky heathland/acid grassland and woodland/scrub edge. The internal vehicle access routes would cut through the vegetation mosaic with the main aim of the landscape treatments being to compliment and extend the adjoining existing habitats of the local area and follow the principles of the permitted landfill restoration scheme.
- 7.136 The existing tree belts to the north and east and the geological SSSI within the quarry would also be retained. The quarry would be restored in accordance with the permitted scheme approved under the Review of Old Mineral Permission (ROMP), which is essentially based on natural recharge of the void to levels of approximately 80m AOD to form a lake, with opportunities for informal recreation.

## RESIDUAL IMPACTS

- 7.137 The assessment of residual impacts below, considers the sensitivity of the receptors to the proposed development, the magnitude of change and the overall significance of effects.

### Residual Landscape Impacts

#### *Landscape Sensitivity*

- 7.138 The sensitivity of the existing landscape resource is based on the following factors:
- The value placed on the landscape;
  - Compatibility of the proposed development with the existing land-uses and landscape character;
  - Condition of the landscape;
  - Contribution of the landscape within the site to the overall landscape character;
  - The scope for mitigation of the proposed development; and
  - Degree to which landscape elements and characteristics can be replaced or substituted.
- 7.139 The sensitivity of a landscape is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible.
- 7.140 Table 7-5 illustrates how these criteria have been appraised to gain an understanding of the overall landscape sensitivity of the application site.

Overall, the application site is considered to have a low sensitivity to the proposed development due to its location within a local landscape designation, the local landscape character, the existing use of the site, the compatibility of the development with the existing use for the site, scope for mitigation, replication and/or substitution.

**Table 7-5  
Sensitivity of Existing Landscape Resource to Proposed Development**

<b>Landscape Element</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sensitivity</b>
The value placed on the landscape	The application site is not covered by any national landscape designations but is within the National Forest and is situated in a locally designated 'Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside' (APAC). The site area is not covered by any ecological designations; it is however adjacent to a geological SSSI.	Medium
Compatibility of the proposed development with the existing land-uses and landscape character	The proposed development area is located upon an area of land which has been used for mineral extraction and is located within an operational quarry site which has planning permission for a waste management facility. Therefore the primary function of this site is industrial and the built form and physical landscape have an industrialised character. Industrial complexes occur to the north and west of the proposals and therefore the land use would be unchanged through the development.	Low
Condition of the landscape	The existing landscape has been altered over time by mineral extraction and its ancillary operations. There is some natural regeneration in small areas but the majority of the site remains in an abandoned state with bare ground. There is planning permission for a waste management facility on the site and therefore the condition is industrial. At a broader scale the condition of the local "Bradgate and Beacon" Character Area is defined in the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessment as of good condition.	Low
Contribution of the landscape within the site to the overall landscape character	Although the majority of the site is industrialised by the quarry workings there are elements that are remnant of the Charnwood Forest landscape character. These elements include woodland screens to the north and east, rocky outcrops and some minor patches of heathland that have colonised the quarry excavations and infrastructure. Nevertheless the contribution of the landscape within the site to the overall character is limited.	Low
The scope for mitigation of the proposed development	There is scope to provide mitigation of the proposed development by establishing suitable landscape treatments around the edges of the main buildings and internal circulation/roads.	Low
Degree to which landscape elements and characteristics can be replaced or substituted	As discussed above there is scope to introduce new landscape elements in keeping with the character of the Charnwood Forest landscape, although the majority of the proposals relate to replacing industrial elements with new industrial elements.	Low

Landscape Element	Description	Sensitivity
Overall Sensitivity		Low

### *Magnitude of Landscape Impacts*

- 7.141 The magnitude of landscape impacts which is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible, depends upon the following factors<sup>6</sup>:
- The scale or degree of change to the existing landscape resource;
  - The nature of the change caused by the proposed development (for example, beneficial or adverse); and
  - The timescale, or phasing of the proposed development

### Changes in Natural Characteristics

- 7.142 There would be localised changes to the topography to accommodate the new buildings and roads, and also to dispose of material within the eastern edge of the worked out quarry void to form a new access track to the lake.
- 7.143 Compared with the buildings associated with the permitted integrated waste management facility, the proposed ERF would increase the footprint area by 36% (0.4ha), and increase the main building height by 180% (28m), not including the flue stacks, which would be some 96m high.
- 7.144 The ‘*Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan*’ (BAP) sets out targets for habitat and species conservation for the coming decade. The proposals can assist the objectives of the BAP, although the exact proportions of each habitat would be determined as part of aftercare and natural regeneration:
- Contribute towards a further 100ha of heath-grassland targeting Charnwood Forest and areas adjacent to existing heath by 2010.
  - Assist in the creation of 100 ha of new native broadleaved woodland outside of the National Forest, avoiding other habitats of high conservation value by 2010.
- 7.145 The proposals would now result in the flooding of the quarry void and create a 9ha lake, rather than completing the landfill, which would otherwise have been restored as heathland grassland mosaic.

### Changes in Cultural and Social Factors

- 7.146 No cultural or social features would be lost as a result of the proposed development, nor would any designated historic sites or designed landscapes be directly adversely affected.

<sup>6</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) Paragraphs 7.18 and 7.23

- 7.147 Vehicle access to the site will be from the A512 to the north via an existing and improved junction. This access road would be provided with a new gatehouse and weighbridge that would control all access to and from the ERF, with the exception of staff and visitors going to the offices and visitors centre.
- 7.148 The site has been developed to minimise the occurrences where it is necessary for articulated vehicle paths to cross. This has led to the circulation being arranged in a clockwise ring around the ERF, with the weighbridge positioned to accommodate inbound queuing for operational vehicles, but providing a bypass route for third party vehicles. For reasons of economy and space, it is proposed that ERF traffic and third party traffic share the same circulation system, as the vehicles do on the public highway. The batching plant to the south of the site would remain operational.
- 7.149 Access to the entrance of the main facility, the Visitor Centre and the ERF offices is via a gently ramping footpath beside the access road. The footpath is designed to wheelchair standards of gradient with non-slip surfaces. It has contrasting coloured bands and textures to aid perception for people who have visual impairments.
- 7.150 There would be additional managed informal public access, as part of visitor programmes to the site and facility and also to the flooded quarry via a purpose built walkway.

### Changes in Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects

- 7.151 The changes to aesthetic and perceptual aspects would be limited given the industrial nature of the existing site and also should the planning permission for the waste management buildings and landfill be implemented. For example diversity, movement would remain the same and the differences between texture and balance would be similar.
- 7.152 However the building proposed is of a larger scale and of a slightly different pattern, colour, form and line and would increase the degree of enclosure.

### Changes in Classification and Evaluation

- 7.153 The proposed development would not alter the “industrial” local landscape character of the application site, as the proposed buildings and operations are similar to those that would otherwise occur as part of the current planning permission for the integrated waste management facility.

### *Overall Magnitude of Landscape Impacts*

- 7.154 The overall magnitude of landscape impacts would be low and adverse mainly due to the introduction of a larger scale industrial structure within an industrial setting.

**Residual Visual Impacts**

*Sensitivity of Viewpoints*

7.155 The list of identified viewpoints set out in Table 7-6 below also includes a brief assessment of their sensitivity, categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. Sensitivity depends on the following factors<sup>7</sup>:

- the location and context of the viewpoint. For example, viewpoints within an industrial setting are generally less sensitive;
- the expectations and occupation of the receptor. For example, ramblers are more likely to be observing the landscape more closely. By contrast, views from outdoor sport facilities, transport routes or places of work are less sensitive in this regard;
- the importance of the view, which may be defined by the number of viewers who commonly use the viewpoint, the cultural significance of the viewpoint, or the facilities provided for its enjoyment.

**Table 7-6  
Sensitivity of Viewpoints**

<b>Viewpoint</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sensitivity</b>
1	M1 Junction 24 Donnington Park Motorway Service Area. The picnic area is adjacent to large windows within the service area with panoramic views to the south. Represents users of transport route.	Medium
2	Nottingham Road. Represents recreational users of public right of way and vehicular traffic along transport route. Viewpoint is near to the southern edge of Prestwold Hall Registered Park and Garden.	Medium
3	Beacon Hill Country Park. Represents recreational visitors to marked viewpoint and Scheduled Ancient Monument. Also within APAC local landscape designation and National Forest.	High
4	Public Right of Way at Snells Nook Lane. Represents recreational users of the public right of way on the edge of a settlement. Also represents vehicular users of Snells Nook Lane. Edge of APAC local landscape designation and National Forest.	Medium
5	Junction of A512 with Snells Nook Lane. Represents busy commuter corridor between Loughborough, Shepshed and the M1 for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Close to the edge of Loughborough. Edge of APAC local landscape designation and National Forest. Located close to the edge of Garendon Park Registered Park and Garden.	Medium
6	M1 Jct 23 bridge. Represents busy vehicular interchange in close proximity to site. Important gateway to Loughborough from M1. Edge of APAC local landscape designation and National Forest. Near	Medium

<sup>7</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) Paragraphs 7.31 and 7.35  
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Viewpoint	Description	Sensitivity
7	to the south-western edge of Garendon Park Registered Park and Garden and cycleway/footpath on opposite side of roundabout. Lubcloud Farm bridleway. Represents recreational pedestrian users of the public right of way. Within the APAC local landscape designation and National Forest.	Medium
8	Entrance of application site off A512. . Represents busy commuter corridor between Loughborough, Shepshed and the M1 for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians and also residential properties within Shepshed itself further west. Edge of National Forest.	Medium
9	Pedestrian/ cycle bridge across M1. Represents recreational pedestrian users of the National Cycle Route No. 6 and users of M1 corridor.	High
10	Public Right of Way off B5324. Represents recreational users of the PROW, isolated farm such as Highfield Manor and a minor road.	Medium
11	Public Right of Way off Shepshed Road. Represents recreational users of the PROW, and users of the adjacent minor road.	Medium
12	Users of Stanford Road; a minor road, and potential pedestrian users linking the two Public Rights of Way either side of the bridge.	Medium
13	Users of National Cycle Route 6, Public Right of Way and edge of Loughborough and Garendon Park Registered Park and Garden.	High
14	Residential properties/settlement	Medium to High
15	Road users, edge of settlement, Edge of APAC, overlooking settlement	Medium

7.156 The potential visual effects of the proposed development on the surrounding landscape and in particular the views from identified viewpoints, have been assessed with the aid of plans and site assessment, and are described in detail on the following pages.

*Magnitude of Visual Impacts*

7.157 For each of the viewpoints the potential magnitude of the residual visual impacts, taking into account the proposed mitigation, has been assessed. The magnitude of visual impacts is mainly dependent upon the following factors<sup>8</sup>:

- The scale of change, what proportion of the existing view would change as a result of the development proposals?
- The degree of contrast or integration of any new features, how many features or elements within the view would be changed?
- how appropriate are the proposals in the context of the existing views?
- how many viewers would be affected by the changes in the view?
- what is the timescale of the proposals? Also, is it continuous or intermittent?

<sup>8</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) Paragraph 7.36 Newhurst Quarry – Volume 3

- what is the angle of the view in relation to the main activity of the receptor? and
  - what is the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development.
- 7.158 The magnitude of change for all of the viewpoints was assessed with the aid of photographs, plans and 3D computer models.
- 7.159 A detailed virtual reality (VR) model of the proposed building and associated landscape treatments was prepared at an early stage to identify the main constraints and likely visual effects. This model has formed a valuable discussion and resource tool for the proposed development and the basis for detailed visual assessment, mitigation and public liaison.
- 7.160 Photomontages have also be prepared for Viewpoints 6 and 8, to assist in the description of visual effects, in accordance with the method statement provided in Appendix 7/2. These are provided in Drawing NH7/20.

### ZTV Analysis

- 7.161 As discussed above, a ZTV was calculated for the proposed development and using LSS according to the method statement described in Appendix 7/1.
- 7.162 The ZTV output file from LSS calculates, for every receptor point, not just whether the development can be seen, but also what vertical angle of the development can be seen. This provides a useful initial guide as to the size and scale of the proposed development and therefore the likely potential magnitude of visual change at any point around the site. In general terms, for the type of development proposed, less than 0.25° of visible vertical angle would have the potential to be not visible or insignificant, between 0.25° and 1° would have the potential to be low, between 1° and 3° would have the potential to be medium and over 3° would have the potential to be high. For comparison, a two storey house, at an average height of 8m, would subtend a vertical angle of 4.58° at 100m, 2.29° at 200m, 0.92° at 500m and 0.46° at 1km.
- 7.163 As an initial exercise, the computer generated ZTV allows for analysis of the potential visibility of the proposed development from specific visual receptors/viewpoints. However, the ZTV analysis must always be used in conjunction with an analysis of the other factors described above, such as appropriateness of the change and the overall proportion of the existing view that would change.
- 7.164 The ZTV is calculated on landform only, without any consideration of vegetation or buildings and therefore it presents a worse case scenario; vegetation can significantly reduce the actual visibility of a feature and the ZTV should always be used in conjunction with more detailed site assessment and analysis of photographs/actual views.

## Viewpoint 1 - M1 Junction 24 Donnington Park Motorway Service Area.

- 7.165 This viewpoint is found at the picnic area on the southern side of the M1 service centre, which lies approximately 7.5km from the application site and occupies an elevated location with views in the foreground across grassland with individual specimen trees. The southern edge of the service centre is bounded by a belt of woodland and scrub vegetation beyond which the land falls away towards the A42 and rises again across the middle ground of the view to the south. The M1 is visible in the middle ground to the east, surrounded by agricultural pastures bounded by hedgerows and woodland belts with isolated properties visible between the large woodland blocks at the edge of the M1, including Pipers Wood to the west and Oakley Wood to the east. The gantries of the A42 are visible in the middle ground of the view above intervening vegetation. The northern edge of the settlement of Shepshed is visible to the west of the M1 towards the background of the view which along with the M1 and A42 and associated gantries and vehicles imparts a settled character on this landscape. The M1 and A42 are however less discernible in the summer months when the trees and scrub vegetation are in leaf. The woodland of Charnwood Forest, including Whittle Hill and Beacon Hill Country Park, are visible on the horizon in the background of the view with the occasional electricity transmission pylon breaking the skyline.
- 7.166 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would be up to  $0.35^\circ$ , whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be  $0.66^\circ$ . However, as discussed, this does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.167 The 3D model and ZTVs for the proposed development indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible in this distant view. The main building mass would sit on lower lying land to the east of Shepshed but would only just be discernible at this distance and would not appear out of place in terms of colour with the associated colours of the settlement of Shepshed. The site would lie in a similar location to the M1 motorway thus adding to a busy industrialised and settled space. The building would be backgrounded by the higher ground to the south, Whittle Hill and Beacon Hill Country Park providing a green backdrop. The building would also be partially screened by intervening vegetation in the middle ground. There is a low ridge to the north of the development, covered by Piper Wood mature broadleaf woodland. This intervening vegetation would provide a visual screen which the ZTV has not identified. The development would be screened to some extent by this and the intervening settled landscape.
- 7.168 The flue stacks would partially break the skyline, the remainder backgrounded against Whittle and Beacon Hills, but at this distance would be barely discernible, and would not appear out of place with the electricity pylons which also cross the skyline in the background of the view. The plume from the flue stacks would be barely discernible from this distance, depending on conditions and being occasionally more visible against clear blue skies.

- 7.169 The winter view becomes open and wide with the lack of leaf coverage, whilst the summertime views are more enclosed and focused on vegetation and footpath routes in the foreground. The planting here is relatively new and will likely gain further height as it develops, providing additional enclosure of the view.
- 7.170 Taking all the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operation of the proposed development would be negligible to low and adverse. This viewpoint is judged to have a medium sensitivity. The significance of this visual impact would therefore be slight adverse.

### Viewpoint 2 - Nottingham Road

- 7.171 This viewpoint is located on the edge of Nottingham Road, where a public right of way crosses the road and to the south of Prestwold Registered Park and Garden, and lies approximately 9.3km north-east of the application site. The viewpoint occupies a semi-elevated location looking west across a dense hedgerow in the foreground and arable land beyond, bounded by gappy hedgerows and the occasional hedgerow tree. In the middle ground of the view dense woodland belts bound the valley of the River Soar and the Grand Union Canal, beyond which the land rises once again towards the eastern edge of Loughborough. This provides built form above and between the intervening vegetation and imparts something of an industrial character along with electricity pylons which are also visible across the landscape. The latter are all backgrounded by the higher wooded ground of Charnwood Forest to the west of Loughborough.
- 7.172 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would be up to  $0.26^\circ$ , whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be  $0.53^\circ$ . However, as discussed, this does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.173 The 3D model and ZTVs for the proposed development indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be barely discernible, if visible at all at this distance. As well as the distance to the development, the muted colours of the building mass and flue stacks mean that it sits more comfortably with the aesthetics of the surrounding landscape and industrial edge of Loughborough. The proposed building would also sit on lower lying land, so that the development would be largely backgrounded against the rising land to the west. Intermittent vegetation in the form of woodland belts in the middle ground would also provide visual screening of the proposed development. The density of vegetation in the middle ground means that the extent of visibility is little different between the seasons/ with or without leaf coverage. The planting is also well established/mature.
- 7.174 The top of the flue stacks would break the skyline, but at this distance would be barely discernible and would not appear out of place with the electricity pylons which also cross the view. The plume from the flue stacks would be barely discernible from this distance and depend on conditions, being more visible against clear blue skies. The remainder of the flue stacks would be backgrounded by the higher ground to the west.

- 7.175 Taking all the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operation of the proposed development would be negligible to low and adverse. This viewpoint is judged to be of medium sensitivity. The significance of this visual impact would therefore be slight and adverse.

### Viewpoint 3 - Beacon Hill Country Park

- 7.176 This viewpoint is situated within Beacon Hill Country Park, which lies approximately 3.75km south east of the application site, with panoramic views looking north as the settlements of Shepshed and Loughborough spread out across the lower lying land. In the foreground a dense belt of deciduous woodland frames views across the park, whilst a patchwork of woodland and pastures around Whittle Hill, with hedgerow and hedgerow tree boundaries, occupy the middle ground of the view. Large residential properties appear isolated amongst the woodland blocks. The level horizon and relatively flat landscape of North Leicestershire beyond to the north means that views are far reaching from this viewpoint with the cooling towers and stack of the Ratcliffe power station visible in the distance at the centre of the view at over 13km away.
- 7.177 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would up to  $0.57^\circ$ , whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be  $1.15^\circ$ . However, as discussed, this does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.178 The 3D model and ZTVs for the proposed development indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be sited to the north, in the middle distance beyond Whittle Hill, with the flatter settled landscape of north Leicestershire beyond. The distance of the view and the nature of the horizon means that the building mass and flue stacks would be backgrounded by the land to the north, particularly the woodland blocks/belts which would also provide additional screening. There is much intervening vegetation, both in the foreground and middle distance. In particular, mature woodland copses would significantly screen the main building mass from this viewpoint. Nevertheless the tip of the flue stacks and plume may be visible, depending on conditions, such as on a clear day.
- 7.179 The view would remain relatively unchanged between winter and summer, but growth of the trees in the foreground may break the view and screen the development. The development would be a small part of the wide (>180 degree) view. The backdrop of the flatter Leicestershire landscape is settled with spreading urban centres, there are also large industrial complexes of the airport and Ratcliffe Power Station within the view.
- 7.180 Taking all the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be low and adverse. This viewpoint is judged to be of high sensitivity. The significance of this visual impact would be moderate adverse.

### Viewpoint 4 - Public Right of Way at Snells Nook Lane

- 7.181 This viewpoint is situated on the public footpath which joins Snells Nook Lane on the northern side of Nanpantan, 1.5km south east from the application site. The existing view looks north west with a dense hedgerow with tree species in the foreground, which borders the lane and further frames views along the public footpath to the west. In the middle ground a large arable field bounded by a clipped hedgerow gives way to a mature woodland belt/block with glimpsed views of pastures on higher ground beyond. In the background of the view the wooded ridgeline associated with the higher ground at the edge of the M1 defines the skyline, with the top of the GLW Feeds Limited mill breaking the skyline at the centre of the view. Several masts/pylons also mark the skyline.
- 7.182 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would up to 1.58°, whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be 3.29°. However, as discussed, this does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.183 The 3D model and ZTVs for the proposed development indicate that the proposed building mass and flue stacks would be visible in this view. The roof of the ERF complex would be visible above the woodland in the middle ground, to the south of the view, at the edge of the footpath, whilst the flue stacks would be visible in its entirety as it breaks the skyline. The plume from the flue stacks would also be visible, although more visible against clear blue skies.
- 7.184 The development would be noticeable alongside an already industrialised skyline. The GLW Feeds mill emerges over the skyline and would be seen to the right of the proposed ERF building. Although the proposed development would be visible from this viewpoint off Snell Nooks Lane, along the remainder of the public footpath as it heads west, thick boundary vegetation frames views along the path creating a tunnelling effect. The actual visibility of the development from this footpath would therefore be reduced.
- 7.185 The maturity of intervening vegetation means that the view would be little changed between the seasons, although a more open aspect is enjoyed from the footpath during the winter months when the trees are not in leaf and so the hedgeline becomes more transparent.
- 7.186 Taking all the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be medium and adverse. This viewpoint is judged to be of medium sensitivity. The significance of this visual impact would be moderate adverse.

### Viewpoint 5 - Junction of A512 with Snells Nook Lane

- 7.187 This viewpoint is situated on the junction of the A512 New Ashby Road with Snells Nook Lane, 1.3km to the north east of the application site. In the foreground the view looks across the busy road junction with its associated infrastructure, including traffic light and street lamp columns, bollards and

signage. In the middle ground to the south west of the view the roads are bounded by a post and rail fence and dense hedgerow, beyond which lies open farmland fringed by a mature mixed woodland belt. In the winter months when the trees are not in leaf rising ground towards the edge of the M1 is visible between the canopies and trunks of the mature trees.

- 7.188 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would up to  $7.20^\circ$  whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be  $10.42^\circ$ . However, as discussed, this does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.189 The 3D models and ZTV indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible in this landscape. However, owing to the dense woodland belt in the middle ground of the view it is likely that during the summer months little of the proposed building would be visible with parts of the roof just discernible between gaps in the belt. In the winter months, when the trees have lost their leaves, the views would be more open with more of the top of the building mass discernible beyond the mature tree belt. The trees provide a significant vertical influence which break up the view and provide screening of the development in the background although the development would be partially visible owing to its proximity.
- 7.190 The top of the flue stacks and plume would therefore be visible above the tree belt, depending on conditions.
- 7.191 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be low adverse. This viewpoint is judged to be of medium sensitivity. The significance of this visual impact would be slight adverse.

### Viewpoint 6 - M1 Jct 23 bridge

- 7.192 This viewpoint is situated on the bridge as the A512 crosses the M1 at Junction 23. The view looks south west towards the application site, which lies approximately 0.4km in this direction. In the foreground of the view lies the A512 and associated roadside infrastructure, including traffic light and street light columns, signage and safety barriers. Looking across the safety barrier, to the south of the view, the M1 continues south with the central reservation, gantries and lighting columns accentuating the vertical rhythm and the movement of vehicles up and down this busy transport corridor. To the west of the motorway a vegetated embankment, with the occasional tree provides the setting for the motorway slip road which ascends up to the A512 with further lamp columns and roadside signage. Beyond, in the background of the view a mature woodland belt frames the edge of the motorway, and as can be seen on the eastern side of the motorway, the trees sit on higher ground creating a tunnel like effects through which the M1 passes. To the right of the view (out of picture) to the north, the GLW Feeds mill is obscured by mainly deciduous trees and shrubs along the interchange foreground.
- 7.193 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would up to  $0.96^\circ$ , whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be  $2.48^\circ$ . However, as discussed, this does

not take into account the intervening vegetation. Although the extent of visibility would be largely unchanged through the seasons, as the deciduous tree belt loses its leaves over the winter.

- 7.194 The photomontage, 3D models and ZTV indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible within this view. The curved roof and upper part of the building mass would be clearly visible above the mature tree belt in the background of the view. The flue stacks and plume would also be clearly visible.
- 7.195 The highways infrastructure (including lighting columns and vehicle movements) and the tree belt provide a combination of medium-scale, built elements in the foreground which reduce the overall contrast of the character and scale of the new industrial building.
- 7.196 The new building mass and flue stacks would be skylined, providing a noticeable industrial addition to the wooded skyline, although this would be seen within the wider panorama, which includes partially obscured views of the GLW Feeds Mill during the winter months.
- 7.197 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be medium to high and adverse. The sensitivity of this viewpoint is judged to be medium. The significance of this visual impact would be moderate/substantial and adverse.

### Viewpoint 7 - Lubcloud Farm bridleway

- 7.198 This viewpoint is situated on the public bridleway running north east from Lubcloud Farm, and is located 1.6km south west of the application site. The viewpoint is situated on high ground looking down across an open pastoral field in the foreground, bounded by a dense hedgerow with mature hedgerow trees to the north east. Beyond lies a local electricity transmission line tower/pylon and further rolling pastures bounded by hedgerows and mature woodland blocks. Isolated properties, such as Bodkins Farm, sit nestled within the localised valley floor. Beyond, in the background of the view, the land levels out and the settlement of Shepshed is evident above and between the trees to the north. The flatter land and low horizon means that views are far reaching. Beyond Shepshed the land begins to rise once more and a patchwork of agricultural fields and woodland blocks dominate the horizon and provide a backdrop for the settlement of Shepshed. To the south west of the view, in the background (at 11km distance), the chimneys of the power station are visible as they break the skyline.
- 7.199 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would up to 1.64°, whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be 3.42°. However, as discussed, this does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.200 The 3D models and ZTV indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible within the middle ground of this view. The development would sit at the centre of the view. The building mass would be visible against the greens and browns of the woodland blocks in the middle ground,

although these would also provide partial screening of the lower parts of the building. In winter and summer a similar portion of the building would be visible, but some of the trees on the northern edge of the field in the foreground may break the view of the building to a greater degree in the summer months, when the tree canopies are in leaf.

- 7.201 The flue stacks would also be visible and like the main building mass, would be mainly backgrounded against the far reaching areas of north Leicestershire/south Nottinghamshire to the north east, although a short section of the upper parts would just break the distant skyline. The plume from the flue stacks would be visible, depending on conditions. The development would not entirely dominate the view as other isolated developments are also found across this wider view, and the development would be viewed against the backdrop of the settlement of Shepshed.
- 7.202 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be medium adverse. This viewpoint is judged to be of medium sensitivity. The significance of this visual impact would be moderate adverse.

### Viewpoint 8 - Entrance of application site off A512

- 7.203 This viewpoint is situated on the edge of the A512 at the entrance to the application site, looking south east. In the foreground the A512 crosses the view bounded by a stone wall and a mature tree belt, as well as road signage. In the middle ground of the view vegetation is lower and shrub like in form to accommodate the visibility splays into and out of the existing site. A rendered brick building, the old Quarry Managers office, is visible at the entrance off centre of the view, beyond which are site huts/offices, lorries, signage and local telegraph poles and transmission lines.
- 7.204 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would up to 7.78°, whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be 8.75°. However, as discussed, this does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.205 The photomontage, 3D models and ZTV indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible within this view. The curved roof and vertical support struts would be visible to the east of the rendered brick building at the entrance to the site, although would be partially screened by intervening existing and proposed vegetation. The flue stacks would also be visible from this view, although from this angle of view just the top of the flue stacks is visible at it appears behind the chimney of the rendered brick building at the entrance to the site. At this close range the plume from the flue stacks would be visible, depending on conditions. The extent of visibility of the building mass would be greater during the winter months when the proposed new trees and existing trees at the entrance to the site are not in leaf. The addition of an industrial building would not be wholly different to the existing and permitted buildings, although it would be larger in scale.
- 7.206 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be medium adverse. This viewpoint is

judged to be of medium sensitivity. The significance of this visual impact would be moderate adverse.

### Viewpoint 9 - Pedestrian/ cycle bridge across M1

- 7.207 This viewpoint is situated on the bridge crossing the M1 where National Cycle Route 6 and a public footpath cross between Loughborough to the east and Shepshed to the west. This viewpoint is 2.1km north of the application site. In the foreground of the view lighting columns and barriers give way to the M1 as it heads south, with further lighting columns within the central reservation accentuating the vertical rhythm of movement down this road. To the east of the motorway a grass verge, mature hedgerow and tree belt frame views down the road and bound the arable fields further east. To the west of the motorway, scrub and woodland vegetation provides a dense block of vegetation, further framing views down the road and concealing views to the west; the tree canopies breaking the skyline. The occasional roof top of properties on the eastern edge of Shepshed are visible above the trees, as well as part of the sports/recreation ground surrounding the community college at the eastern edge of Shepshed. The silhouette of the GLW feeds mill is also barely discernible beyond the tree belt in the winter months. The degree of visibility of the aforementioned features is greatest during the winter months when the trees have shed their leaves. In the background of the view the wooded ridges of Charnwood Forest break the skyline.
- 7.208 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would be up to  $0^{\circ}$ , whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be  $0.71^{\circ}$ . However, as discussed, this does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.209 The 3D models and ZTV indicate that the top of the roof of the building mass and flue stacks would be visible above the landform to the south of the view, however intervening vegetation would largely screen the building mass and flue stacks, with just the very tip of the latter and its plume potentially visible on the skyline on a clear day. The degree of visibility would depend on the time of year, with more of the building mass and flue stacks likely to be visible beyond the intervening vegetation during the winter months owing to the greater level of transparency created by the loss of foliage. When the trees along the western side of the M1 are in leaf the development would be almost entirely screened.
- 7.210 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be negligible to low and adverse. This viewpoint is judged to be of high sensitivity. The significance of this visual impact would be slight/moderate adverse.

### Viewpoint 10 - Public Right of Way off B5324

- 7.211 This viewpoint is located on the start of the public footpath heading north off the B5324, looking south east towards the application site, which would lie approximately 4.2km away in this direction. The existing view looks across

the B5324 and grass verge at its southern edge and across arable fields beyond. In the middle ground of the view Woodlands Farm and its ancillary buildings can be seen, with the chimneys of the farmhouse building breaking the skyline. To the east and west of the farm hedgerows with occasional mature hedgerow trees pass across the landscape in the middle ground. To the west of the farm hedgerow trees form a dense belt along the edge of the lane leading past the farm off the B5324, helping to partially screen views of the settlement of Shepshed beyond. To the west of the farm Pipers Wood is visible in the middle ground, stretching south from the 'B' road. Between the middle ground and background of the view the russet browns of undulating arable fields are visible with the roofs of properties at the edge of the settlement of Shepshed glimpsed between the background vegetation including the wooded ridges of Charnwood Forest and the Beacon Hill Area, which define the skyline.

- 7.212 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would up to  $0.63^\circ$ , whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be  $1.12^\circ$ . However, as discussed, this does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.213 The 3D models and ZTV indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible in the distance to the south east of this view. However taking into account the nature of intervening vegetation and settlement, the building mass and flue stacks would be barely discernible, if not visible at all, at this distance. The main building mass and lower parts of the flue stacks would be backgrounded against the rising wooded ground of Charnwood Forest to the south east. The upper parts of the flue stacks however, would break the skyline, with the plume visible depending on conditions.
- 7.214 The proposed development would form a very small proportion of the overall view. There would also not be any dramatic change between the extent of visibility of this development in the winter and summer seasons at this distance, although there may be a slight change in the degree of transparency of hedgerow trees in the middle and foreground in the winter.
- 7.215 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be negligible to low and adverse. This viewpoint is judged to be of medium sensitivity. Therefore, the significance of this visual impact would be slight adverse.

### Viewpoint 11 – Public Right of Way off Shepshed Road

- 7.216 This viewpoint is located on the start of the Public Right of Way heading east towards the village of Hathern. It is located off Shepshed Road and lies approximately 3.8km to the north east of the application site. In the foreground of the view a gap in the dense hedgerow, which bounds the edge of the arable fields to the south, permits views across the middle ground, which comprises of gentle rolling arable fields and pastures which spread across the landscape bounded by further hedgerows and the occasional hedgerow tree. Beyond, in the middle ground of the view, the M1 and vehicles along it are discernible above and between the woodland blocks and belts, as are properties within, and in the vicinity of, the settlement of

Shepshed. The GLW Feeds mill is also visible amongst the woodland in the middle ground of the view. An overhead power line passes across the view north to south, with towers visible crossing the landscape in the foreground, middle ground and background, the tips of which break the skyline. In the background of the view the higher wooded ground of the hills to the east of Whitwick define the skyline, with the pylons visible in their entirety across the high ground.

- 7.217 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would be up to  $0.61^\circ$ , whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be  $1.24^\circ$ . However, as discussed, this does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.218 The 3D models and ZTV indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible in the middle ground of the view. The top of the roof and flue stacks would be visible above the mature woodland surrounding the application site, although like the GLW feeds mill building, which is already visible in the view (to the right of the location of the proposed development), the building mass would be partially backgrounded by the rising wooded ground to the south west, and so would only partially break the skyline. The flue stacks would break the skyline and plume visible depending on conditions. Existing features, including buildings, the M1 and transmission lines and towers within the landscape means that the development would not appear entirely misplaced within the landscape although, it would be fairly central to the view.
- 7.219 The distance of view and density of woodland blocks means that there would be no/little change in the visibility of the development between seasons.
- 7.220 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be medium adverse. This viewpoint is judged to be of medium sensitivity. Therefore, the significance of this visual impact would be moderate adverse.

### Viewpoint 12 – Railway Bridge on Stanford Road

- 7.221 This viewpoint is located on the railway bridge on Stanford Road, south west of Bowley's Farm, approximately 6km north east of the application site. The view looks down Stanford Road in the foreground, bounded by the red brick railway bridge abutting railings to the south of the view, and like the north of the view, dense hedgerows which follow the course of the road. In the foreground of the view wooden pole supporting electricity lines cross the landscape, but their bases are screened and partially backgrounded by the dense hedgerow vegetation crossing the landscape. In the middle ground of the view transmission lines and towers are visible crossing the landscape, partially backgrounded by woodland blocks, but with towers also visible partially skylined at the background of the view. The land in the middle ground comprises of arable fields and pastures, bounded by hedgerows, and broken up by mature woodland blocks around the northern edge of Loughborough and Shepshed beyond. The occasional roof top of properties on the northern and north western edges of Loughborough are visible above the woodland vegetation. In the middle ground, to the east of the view, the

large industrial buildings and associated chimneys of the industrial estate on the northern edge of Loughborough break the skyline. The remainder of the skyline, with the exception of where it is broken by pylons, remains wooded across the view, as the hills to the south east of the view beyond the M1 form the backdrop to the view.

- 7.222 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would up to  $0.60^\circ$ , whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be  $0.84^\circ$ . This however, as discussed does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.223 The 3D models and ZTV indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible towards the background of this view. However, neither the model nor ZTV have taken into account the intervening vegetation and built form. As a consequence of the latter the proposed development would be partially screened with only the roof of the building mass and flue stacks potentially visible. The plume may also be visible depending on conditions.
- 7.224 In the winter months when the trees have lost their leaves the development may be more discernible. However, the distance of view and density of woodland blocks means that there would otherwise be no/little change in the visibility of the development between seasons. However, the nature of background topography means that the building mass would be entirely backgrounded and the flue stacks partially, by the hills to the east of Whitwick, part of Charnwood Forest.
- 7.225 Existing features, including industrial and residential buildings, the M1 and transmission lines and towers within the landscape means that the development would not appear in isolation.
- 7.226 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be low adverse. This viewpoint is judged to be of high sensitivity. Therefore, the significance of this visual impact would be slight/moderate adverse.

### Viewpoint 13 – National Cycle Route 6 and Public Right of Way on north western edge of Garendon Park Registered Park and Garden

- 7.227 This viewpoint is located on National Cycle Route No. 6 on the northern edge of Garendon Park Registered Park and Garden and the south western edge of Thorpe Acre, within the settlement of Loughborough. It lies approximately 2.7km north east of the application site. The view looks down the cycle route/footpath to the south west, bounded by wide grass verges on either side of the path. To the east of the view a tall stone wall marks the boundary of Garendon Park, with the roofs of red brick and corrugated buildings visible above the wall and backgrounded by the canopies of the mature trees forming a woodland belt at the western edge of the Park. To the west of the view the path is framed by a tall mature hedgerow with hedgerow trees at the foot of the field ditch, with the occasional gap in the hedgerow permitting views across the arable fields backgrounded by woodland to the west. The wooded nature of this landscape means that long distance views are limited.

- 7.228 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would be up to 0.41°, whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be 1.43°. However, as discussed this does not take into account the intervening vegetation.
- 7.229 The 3D models and ZTV indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible towards the south west of this view. However, neither the model nor ZTV have taken into account the intervening vegetation and built form associated with Garendon Park. As a consequence of the latter the proposed building mass and flue stacks would not be discernible from this viewpoint, with the exception of some possible visibility during the winter months when the parkland trees are not in leaf. However, the distance of view and density of woodland belts means that there would otherwise be no/little change in the visibility of the development between seasons. The plume, however would break the wooded skyline, depending on conditions.
- 7.230 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be negligible to low adverse. This viewpoint is judged to be of high sensitivity. Therefore the significance of this visual impact would be slight/moderate adverse.

### Viewpoint 14 – Shepshed

- 7.231 This viewpoint is located at the edge of the settlement of Shepshed, adjacent to a line of residential properties looking approximately towards the proposed development at less than 0.6km away. The view overlooks a car park and commercial/industrial buildings (including GLW Feeds' Mill) and there is an overhead powerline which crosses the view. The extent of mature coniferous and deciduous trees and buildings in the middle distance means that long distance views are limited.
- 7.232 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would be up to 2.9°, whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be 5.1°. The 3D models and ZTV indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible towards the south east of this view, with the main building ridge being of a similar height to the GLW Feeds Mill.
- 7.233 However, neither the model nor ZTV have taken into account the intervening vegetation and built form. As a consequence of this, the proposed building mass would not be discernible from this viewpoint, with the exception of some possible visibility of the upper parts during the winter months when the deciduous trees are not in leaf. The flue stacks and plume, however would break the wooded skyline and be visible depending on conditions. The flue stacks would appear to the right of the pylon and be of a similar height.
- 7.234 The proposed development would be seen as a small part of an already developed skyline and view.
- 7.235 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be low adverse. This viewpoint is judged to

be of a medium to high sensitivity. Therefore the significance of this visual impact would be moderate adverse.

### Viewpoint 15 – The White Horse, A512

- 7.236 This viewpoint is located on the A512 by the entrance to the White Horse public house (pub) on the western edge of Shepshed at 2km away from the proposed development. The view focuses on the road which heads towards the town and has a range of deciduous and coniferous vegetation screening the urban edge and roadside. Nevertheless, commercial/industrial buildings are noticeable, and the GLW Feeds Mill, two chimney stacks and a telecoms mast are visible above the distant and partially wooded skyline. The pub car park itself is enclosed by vegetation. The roadside is punctuated by lighting columns.
- 7.237 The initial ZTV calculations indicate that the visible vertical subtended angle of the proposed main building mass only would up to  $0.98^\circ$ , whilst for the flue stacks and building mass would be  $2.1^\circ$ . The 3D models and ZTV indicate that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible towards the east of this view, with the main building ridge being of a similar height to the GLW Feeds Mill.
- 7.238 However, neither the model nor ZTV have taken into account the intervening vegetation and built form. As a consequence of the latter the majority of the building would be screened and due to the distance of view and density of vegetation there would be little or no change in the visibility of the development between seasons. The plume, would be visible to varying degrees, depending on conditions.
- 7.239 The proposed development would be seen as a small part of an already developed skyline and view.
- 7.240 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be low adverse. This viewpoint is judged to be of a medium sensitivity. Therefore the significance of this visual impact would be slight/moderate adverse.

### *Summary of Residual Visual Impacts*

- 7.241 The magnitude of visual impact has been assessed by direct changes to thirteen specific viewpoints.
- 7.242 The magnitude of change would be greatest at the viewpoint in close proximity to the north-east of the application site, with viewpoint 6 receiving a medium to high magnitude of change. However this degree of visual change would be limited to a relatively small area, and would reduce as follows:
- Viewpoint 5 at 1km to the east the degree of change reduces to low;
  - Viewpoint 9 at 2.1km to the north the degree of change reduces to negligible;

- Viewpoint 14 at 0.6km to the north-west the visual change reduces to low;
- Viewpoint 4 at 1.5km to the south-east the degree of change reduces to low; and
- Viewpoint 7 at 1.6km to the south-west the degree of change reduces to medium.

**Potential Significance of Landscape Impacts of the Proposals**

7.243 Overall the application site would have a low sensitivity to the development proposals given that the application site is already industrial in character. During operation the magnitude of landscape change would be low and adverse mainly due to the introduction of a larger scale industrial structure within an industrial setting. The significance of landscape impacts during operation would therefore be slight and adverse.

7.244 Overall these changes would cause a barely perceptible impact and affect a few receptors. Therefore there would be no significant landscape impacts.

**Potential Significance of Visual Impacts of the Proposals**

7.245 The significance levels are summarised in Table 7-7 for all viewpoints.

**Table 7-7  
Significance of Effect for each Viewpoint**

<b>Viewpoint</b>	<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Magnitude</b>	<b>Significance</b>
1	Medium	Negligible to Low Adverse	Slight Adverse
2	Medium	Negligible to Low Adverse	Slight Adverse
3	High	Low Adverse	Moderate Adverse
4	Medium	Medium Adverse	Moderate Adverse
5	Medium	Low Adverse	Slight Adverse
6	Medium	Medium to High Adverse	Moderate/Substantial Adverse
7	Medium	Medium Adverse	Moderate Adverse
8	Medium	Medium Adverse	Moderate Adverse
9	High	Negligible to Low Adverse	Slight/Moderate Adverse
10	Medium	Negligible to Low Adverse	Slight Adverse
11	Medium	Medium Adverse	Moderate Adverse
12	Medium	Low Adverse	Slight/Moderate Adverse
13	High	Negligible to Low Adverse	Slight/Moderate Adverse
14	Medium to High	Low and adverse	Moderate Adverse
15	Medium	Low and adverse	Slight/Moderate Adverse

7.246 Whilst the approach to mitigation has focused on the building being of excellent design standard in terms of the concept and layout, it is also recognised that the upper parts of the proposed facility would be visible

above the existing tree planting on the eastern side of the development site and break the wooded skyline to the south-west.

- 7.247 This viewpoint (6) is the closest to the site and located on an interchange between two busy road corridors, M1 and A512 (which is also used as footpaths and cycleways) and is close to the edge of Shepshed, Garendon Park (Registered Park and Garden) and the edge of APAC (local landscape designation) and National Forest.
- 7.248 This has resulted in significant visual impacts (moderate/substantial adverse impacts) being predicted for a very localised area around viewpoint 6 (junction 23 of the M1).
- 7.249 Visual change of this degree would be limited in extent and would reduce very quickly within relatively close proximity, as follows:
- Viewpoint 5 at 1km to the east the visual change reduces to slight;
  - Viewpoint 9 at 2.1km to the north the visual change reduces to slight/moderate;
  - Viewpoint 14 at 0.6km to the north-west the visual change reduces to moderate;
  - Viewpoint 4 at 1.5km to the south-east the visual change reduces to moderate; and
  - Viewpoint 7 at 1.6km to the south-west the visual change reduces to moderate.
- 7.250 The significance of visual impacts for all remaining viewpoints, including the majority of rights of way, National Cycle Route 6, recreational and residential receptors, would be less than significant: for viewpoints 1, 2 and 10 would be slight adverse; the significance of visual impacts would be Slight/Moderate adverse for viewpoints 9, 12, 13 and 15; and Moderate for viewpoints 3, 4, 7, 8, 11 and 14.

### *Potential Effects in Relation to Landscape Planning Policies*

- 7.251 As discussed above, local landscape planning policies have been identified as relevant to the proposed development. This sub-section considers the potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development in relation to each policy.
- 7.252 In terms of RSS8, Policy 31 and its individual bullet points:
- the nationally designated landscapes of the Peak District National Park and the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty would not be affected by the proposals, as there would be no visibility; and
  - the particular character of the Sherwood and Rockingham Forests would be unaffected by the proposals.
- 7.253 In terms of the effects upon Charnwood, this can be defined in terms of effects upon the Character Area, the local landscape designation and/or the proposed Regional Park.

- 7.254 Charnwood Borough Council, in relation to the “Charnwood Forest” Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside (CT/7) describes how:

*“The Charnwood Forest area has an intimate character due to frequent and irregular changes in topography. It is an area largely free from dereliction with a rich ecological diversity, hard rock outcrops, extensive tracts of woodland, water features and dispersed farmsteads in the vernacular style”.*

- 7.255 The proposed development consists of modern, industrial built development and could be considered to adversely affect the vernacular style.

- 7.256 However, whilst significant visual effects would occur on the northern edge of Charnwood Landscape Character Area, Charnwood local landscape designation and the proposed Charnwood Regional Park at Viewpoint 6 which is adjacent to the site, the extent of effects of this degree would be limited. For example the effects would reduce to less than significant at Viewpoint 5 at 1km to the east, Viewpoint 4 at 1.5km to the south-east and Viewpoint 7 at 1.6km to the south-west and Viewpoint 15 at 2km to the west.

- 7.257 The effects are similar in relation to National Forest. Whilst significant visual effects would occur on the northern edge of the National Forest at Viewpoint 6 which is adjacent to the site, the extent of effects of this degree would be limited. For example the effects would reduce to less than significant at Viewpoint 5 at 1km to the east, Viewpoint 4 at 1.5km to the south-east and Viewpoint 7 at 1.6km to the south-west.

### *Potential Effects in Relation to Registered Parks and Gardens*

- 7.258 The potential effects upon Cultural Heritage are discussed in more detail under Section 12 of this ES. In particular Local Plan Policy EV/9: Historic Parks and Gardens.

- 7.259 There is a high degree of variability of visual effects upon Garendon Park, Registered Park and Garden. Although there are predicted to be potentially significant adverse effects at viewpoint 6, this viewpoint is located beyond the south-western boundary of the designated area. Whilst this effect could include parts of the park itself, the Temple of Venus which is situated at an elevation of 81m AOD and thus 2m lower than the Viewpoint elevation, is also over a 1km away, which would reduce the size and scale of the building within the view. Furthermore at viewpoint 5, which is located along the southern boundary at 1km east of the site and viewpoint 13 located along the northern boundary at 2.7km north-east of the site the effects would be less than significant.

- 7.260 There are no other significant effects predicted upon any other Registered Parks and Gardens.

## CONCLUSIONS

- 7.261 This section of the ES has assessed the potential landscape and visual implications of the proposed development of an ERF, as has been described in Section 3. This included a baseline study of the existing site and its surroundings, a study of the landscape and visual characteristics of the development and an assessment of the residual landscape and visual impacts likely to be generated after mitigation has been considered and their significance.
- 7.262 The application site includes parts of a disused quarry and adjacent offices with an existing planning permission for non-hazardous landfill and associated waste management buildings and infrastructure, including a material recycling facility, in-vessel composting and waste transfer station. In the absence of the proposed ERF development it is assumed that the planning permission for the development of Newhurst Quarry as an integrated waste management facility would be carried out.
- 7.263 Although there is some natural regeneration and mature trees/woodland plantation, the character of the application site is of a largely abandoned/derelict state. This is irrespective of the Charnwood local landscape designation (“Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside”), proposed Charnwood Forest Regional Park and National Forest designation which covers most of the application site.
- 7.264 The proposed development would not alter the “*industrial*” local landscape character of the application site, as the proposed buildings and operations are similar to those that would otherwise occur.
- 7.265 The overall significance of landscape impacts would be slight and adverse mainly due to the introduction of a larger scale industrial structure within an industrial setting. Therefore there would be no significant landscape impacts.
- 7.266 The visibility of the application site is restricted to varying degrees by two factors: firstly the undulating topography which is characteristic of the area, and in particular, the rising ground and ridges to the south which prevent visibility. Secondly, the surrounding vegetation and buildings.
- 7.267 Notwithstanding this, the proposed development is large in scale and height and the main building mass, flue stacks and plume all have the potential to be visible, depending on conditions. The main approach to mitigation has therefore focused on the building being of a high design standard in terms of the concept and layout.
- 7.268 The assessment has concluded that the proposed development would not result in significant visual effects for the majority of viewpoints within the study area, with the exception of a very localised area around viewpoint 6 at Junction 23 of the M1, east of Shepshed. At this location the upper parts of the proposed facility would be visible above the existing tree planting on the eastern side of the application site and break the skyline.

- 7.269 These visual effects would be limited in extent and would reduce very quickly within relatively close proximity of approximately 1-2km surrounding the ERF including the majority of rights of way, National Cycle Route 6, recreational and residential receptors.