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Tel: 01793 778333 Fax: 01793 778345 LAND AT PENNOXSTONE COURT, KINGS CAPLE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL FOR PROPOSED 1 August 2006

Client: N COCKBURN.

Report No. 1154/rpt/LV01A

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DLA - 1154/00	Land Ownership & Area Key Plan
DLA - 1154/01A	Site Location
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DLA - 1154/07/area 1	Landscape Proposals Area 1
DLA - 1154/07/area 2	Landscape Proposals Area 2 & 3
DLA - 1154/08	Planting Detail Sheet 1
DLA - 1154/09	Planting Detail Sheet 2

Photo/viewpoint location Plan

Viewpoints 1-27

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 This Landscape and Visual Report has been prepared to support a Planning Application for erection of polytunnels on farmland at Pennoxstone Court, Kings Caple, Herefordshire. For full details of this 'whole farm' application please refer to supporting statement by Antony Aspbury Associates, issued under separate cover.
- The Pennoxstone Farm landholding is spread over three areas around Kings Caple. These are illustrated on DLA 1154/00 Land ownership/Key Sheet, which incorporates a diagram for polytunnel coverage within the landholding and agricultural landuse. Due to the physically separate nature of the three sites landscape and visual analysis studies have been undertaken for each parcel (Areas 1, 2 & 3). The area tested assumed a 'worst case' scenario, i.e. polytunnels on all the land available under rotation. (See 2.1.6 below) Clearly this is not the case. These studies are presented separately within this document. A certain amount of baseline descriptive material is common to all Areas and not repeated where appropriate.
- These Landscape and Visual Assessments have been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment produced by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 1988 & 2002, and prepared by Davies Light Associates Ltd, a firm of landscape architects and environmental planners who have broad experience in carrying out landscape and visual assessments and preparing Environmental Statements.
- 1.04 Davies Light have been appointed by Mr N. J. Cockburn the owner and manager of Pennoxstone Court and the farming enterprise.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2.1 Physical Characteristics of The Project

2.1.1 Application Site (See DLA 1154/00 - Landownership & Area Key Sheet & Fig DLA1154/01A- Location Plan).

The sites are situated to the west (Areas 1 & 2), and east (Area 3) of Kings Caple village. The farm and offices are located centrally within Area 1, at Pennoxstone Court, 400m west of Kings Caple and 800m southeast of Hoarwithy (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SO552287). Ross on Wye is located 6km to the southeast, and Hereford 10km to the northwest.

- 2.1.2 AREA 1 The fields are situated 80mwest of Pennoxstone Court itself. The access track running northwest from Pennoxstone Court to the Ruxton/Kings Caple Road forms the northeast boundary of the field.
- 2.1.3 AREA 2 The fields are sandwiched between Kings Caple and Ruxton, laying on an elevated plateau above Ruxton and the steeply rising spur valley sides to the north of the Lane running between Ruxton and Kings Caple.
- 2.1.4 The site is currently being used for the seasonal cultivation of soft fruit under polytunnels, orchards and on the lowest valley levels, pasture.
- 2.1.5 AREA 3 The smallest of the areas abuts Paulstone Court and lies at the extreme eastern end of Kings Caple on southeast facing slopes overlooking the River Wye to Baysham and Strangford on the opposite bank.
- 2.1.6 The Landownership & Area Key Plan (DLA 1154/00) describes land within Mr N Cockburns ownership or control and parcels of land remaining clear of polytunnels, parcels currently and historically under polytunnels and areas that will be used in rotation for polytunnels.
- 2.2 Site Context (See Key Sheet, Areas 1,2 & 3, & Fig DLA 1154/02A Site Context)
- 2.2.1 AREA 1 The site is located on the western slopes of a spur that projects into the Wye valley from the east down to the river Wye in the west.

To the North

- 2.2.2 A gappy mature native hedgerow with several mature trees borders the northern boundary of the site. The adjacent field contains a mature orchard.
- 2.2.3 The nearest property is Mayfields, which is located on the opposite side of the orchard 110m from the boundary.

- 2.2.4 Ruxton, a small hamlet consisting of two farms and a few cottages is located 400m to the north, the two fields between are both used for agriculture and are surrounded by maintained native hedgerows. The 'Ruxton to Kings Caple lane', which is also lined with hedgerows and occasional mature trees, runs between these fields.
- 2.2.5 Further north the valley follows the River Wye with small homesteads, farms and villages located along it. The largest village Fownhope is located 6km to the north.

To the South

- 2.2.6 Off-site, the land to the south between the site and the River Wye is predominately agricultural. The two fields to the south of Pennoxstone Court are also used for soft fruit production and at the time of the assessment were covered with polytunnels. The nearest properties to the south are on the opposite side of the river and consist of a single dwelling with equestrian facilities at the junction with the road south of Red Rail, several houses in Kynaston 800m, and Caradoc Farm 1.1km slightly to the east. All other properties and development are located on the southern side of the ridgeline that rises up from the River Wye.
- 2.2.7 To the south east of the site, following the valley and River Wye as it turns east, there is a small bridge which links Sellack Boat and a couple of cottages 1.2km to the south of King's Caple, to Sellack, a small village on the southern side of the River Wye (1.5km).

To the East

- 2.2.8 King's Caple village lies to the east, 800m on the eastern side of the spur.
- 2.2.9 There are no large developments or villages within 10km to the east; the land beyond King's Caple is predominately agricultural with occasional dwellings.

To the West

- 2.2.10 The land to the west of the site, up to the River Wye is used as pasture and lies within the floodplain.
- 2.2.11 On the opposite, west side of the River, the road between Selleck and Hoarwithy runs north along the river before sharply rising up out of the valley towards Altbough. Red Rail, a single, linear row of houses, is built into the valley side, starting at Red Rail Farm, 2km to the north of Selleck, and finishing at Hoarwithy. The land behind the housing continues to rise steeply and is used for grazing.

- 2.2.12 The hamlet of Hoarwithy is situated 800m to the northwest, on the western side of the River. The road then continues north up and over the valley side to Little Dewchurch which is located over a second ridge. Although, a small collection of houses and farm abut the northern boundary of Hoarwithy as the land rises back up to the characteristic steep slope.
- 2.2.13 The River Wye is lined with mature willows and associated scrub planting along the west bank from Hoarwithy to Red Rail, to the south of Red Rail the planting is limited to several mature willows as is the eastern side.

2.2.14 AREA 2

To the North The well-hedged lane running between Pen-Alt and Hoarwithy Bridge abuts the northern boundary, as it rises towards Pen-Alt.

To the South

2.2.15 The land drops over the edge of an undulating plateau onto the upper slopes of the wet spur valley containing the lane between Kings Caple Tump and Hoarwithy Bridge. This lane is also the route for the Hereford Trail (A National Long Distance Footpath). Contours and boundary vegetation restrict views into the parcel from within the lane, but, closer to Kings Caple, the Church and cemetery sits in an elevated position looking through its well treed boundaries across the spur valley over and towards the centre of Area 2.

To the East

2.2.16 Generally, there is a small buffer of agricultural land behind the rear gardens of properties fronting the lane between The Closters (0.5km to the north) and the centre of Kings Caple. This land contains a Public Footpath linking the Church to 'Pen-Alt Lane', and forming the eastern boundary of Area 2.

To the West

2.2.17 The land drops more gently to within approx. 300m from the hamlet and farmsteads of Ruxton. Here the contours sharpen to the valley floor.

2.2.18 AREA 3 -

To the North

The hedged lane to Pen-Alt forms the northern boundary along with the curtilage of Hill Cottage before the lane turns sharply left and opens up at its junction with Ingsbury Cottage and the farm track running down to the River Wye.

To the South

2.2.19 The valley floor and change in level defines the boundary. With contours in the north being approx 60m AOD, dropping to approx. 40mAOD at the valley floor.

To the East

2.2.20 The sunken farm track forms a strongly vegetated boundary, which consists of mature trees and hedgerow running down to the valley floor.

To the West

2.2.21 The disused quarry with agricultural barn and garden boundary on the eastern side of Poulstones Court runs down a large section of the length of the western boundary.

2.3 Access and Transport Arrangements

- 2.3.1 Area 1 is accessed from a private access track that runs from Pennoxstone Farm through to the Ruxton/King's Caple Lane.
- 2.3.2 There are no Public Rights of Way or other Permissible routes within Area 1.
- 2.3.3 Area 2 is accessed at two points. A track between the residential properties to the east and field gates off of 'Pen-Alt Lane'.
- 2.3.4 Area 3 is accessed directly off of the lane to Pen-Alt, on the right angle bend adjacent to Ingsbury Cottage. A Public Bridleway terminates here from How Caple further east. A sunken farm track with well-vegetated sides forms the eastern boundary.

3.0 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Physical influences

- 3.1 Topography (Fig DLA1154/03A Topography Plan)
- 3.1.1 King's Caple is located on a dominant spur on the eastern side of the Wye Valley and River Wye as it travels south, causing the river to loop around to the west and double back. The land on the north, south and western side of the spur rises gently from the river at approx 35m AOD up to the centre of the village at 82m AOD. It then falls away to 70m AOD on the eastern side of the village before rising upto 90m AOD forming the ridgeline of the spur that continues to Fawley Cross 2km to the northeast.
- 3.1.2 On the Western side of the valley the land rises sharply, in some places directly from the riverbank, at 37M AOD to 60M AOD (1:1 gradient) as at Red Rail. To the north at Hoarwithy, opposite Red Rail Farm and to the south towards Selleck, there are level plateaus before the land rises up. Beyond the initial ridge the land continues to rises up to a ridgeline that runs from the west to the south of the site. The ridge starts north of Red Rail at approx 37mAOD and rises steadily to 90M AOD at Llanfother Farm(800m to the west of the sites boundary), rising very gently to 100m AOD to the west of Kynaston before continuing south.
- 3.1.3 At the northern point of this ridge two valleys have been formed by streams, creating two more spurs. The first spur, to the south of Hoarwithy, is set back and rises west from 43m AOD (750m northwest of the site boundary) to 106mAOD, (2.3km.), The road towards the A49 runs up and along this ridge.
- 3.1.4 The second spur to the north of Hoarwithy heading north forms the northwest section of the Wye Valley and rises from 43m AOD150m AOD to 118m AOD at Altborough before dropping away slightly then rising to 150mAOD, 1.8km north of Hoarwithy. As with the west and southwest section of the valley the eastern side of the slope rise sharply from the River bank plateau level before the slope becomes more gradual at 80m AOD.
- 3.1.5 The site is located at the base of the western slope of this spur. The land between the River and the southwest boundary of the field rises at a gentle gradient (approx 1:80). The southwest boundary follows the 40m contour rising up to 57m (approx 1:20) along the northeast boundary.

3.2 Geology

3.2.1 The Lower Wye Gorge landscape was formed by the river acting on a series of layers of rock that dip towards the Forest of Dean. The different properties of these rocks and the erosion of the river acting on them has produced a vast variation from steep cliffs in the limestones, to the gentler scarp slopes and plateaux further away from the river itself.

The Herefordshire lowlands are largely made up of sandstone, brownstones and red mudstones formed from the underlining Lower Old Red Sandstone. These rocks are softer than the limestones and have allowed the river to cut the characteristic valley and floodplains that can be seen along this section of the River Wye. Combined with the fluvio-glacial deposits within the floodplain, this has produced the characteristic high agricultural quality red and brown soils, (which is in many cases Grade 1 or 2 - Agricultural Land Classification) that run through out the Lower Wye Valley.

3.3 Human Influences

- 3.3.1 There is evidence of settlement within the Wye Valley from as far back as the Upper Palaeolithic Times, with continued evidence of settlement continuing through the ages. Although natural features dominate the area, the landscape, which is visible today, has been mainly created by the clearance of the woodlands for settlement, agriculture and mineral extraction during the Bronze age. This continued into the Celtic, Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods when the smaller settlements, developing along the river, became more permanent with the building of churches and mottes, a landscape pattern that has remained constant through out the following centuries.
- 3.3.2 During the 18th/19th Centuries several large manor houses/farms and parklands were established which altered the farmed landscape such as at Fawley Court and Hill Court, providing a mix of woodlands, copses and open formal parklands.
- 3.3.3 The agricultural slump at the end of the Century saw the decline in maintenance of the hedgerows and orchards, many of which have now disappeared. This has continued and since the war has resulted in a dramatic reduction in the visual boundaries around fields. Hedgerow trees are either managed at a low level, left to become over-mature tree line or not replace once they have died, so whilst the hedgerows themselves have not be physically removed their appearance within the landscape, and lack of small copses/woodlands has led to a far more open landscape.
- 3.3.4 The change and diversification in the use of land has changed dramatically over the last 10-2-years. This is beginning to show new patterns of development within the existing framework.
- 3.4 Historic Landscape and Site Designations (Fig DLA1154/04A Statutory Designations)
- 3.4.1 The site is located within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding natural Beauty (AONB).
- 3.4.2 The River Wye is classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as well as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) due to its linier ecosystem and wildlife corridor, which

support many species of flora and fauna. This is the only area of such classification within a 3km radius of the site.

- 3.4.3 There is one Scheduled Monument within this radius situated on a low ridge just south of the main road through the village of King's Caple, and opposite St John's Church, 700m from the eastern boundary of the site. The monument includes the earthwork and buried remains of a motte castle.
- 3.4.4 There five Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation within the study area, these have been taken from the Herefordshire Council Unitary Development Plan 2004. The nearest is 900m to the west and incorporates Gandoo's Coppice, to the north of this a 600m strip follows the valley base as it runs northwest from Hoarwithy. 1km to the south, a 900m, site runs along the quarried escarpment following the southern side of the River Wye, below Caradoc Farm. Approx 1.5km to the north of the site boundary there are two large area covering woodland, Altborough Wood on the northern side of the river and Aramstone Wood on the south.
- 3.4.5 Aramstone Wood is also listed as ancient semi-natural and replanted woodland. There are also other parcels of ancient woodland within the study radius. Weaven Wood, 2.1km to the northwest, to the east lies Gwatkin's Grove (850m) and Gandoo's Coppice (1.1km), and behind them Lower Horse Rough (1.4km) and Elvastone wood (1.5km). Riggs wood lies 900m to the south.

3.5 Landscape Features on or Adjacent to the site

- 3.5.1 AREA 1 A mature unmanaged semi-natural hedgerow forms the northern boundary of the site, and reaches approx 5-6m in height and 2-3 metres in width. There are several ornamental evergreen species within this hedgerow. To the rear of the hedgerow runs the access track which is bordered by a dense planting belt of mixed native/ornamental plants which screen are several static caravans that provide accommodation for the farm workers.
- 3.5.2 The entrance to the field is from this track into the southeast corner and exiting into the adjacent fields in the north.
- 3.5.3 The hedgerow along the southern boundary consists of a single row hedgerow consisting of semi-mature Leylandii and poplars with the Leylandii reaching 7-8metres in height. The poplars reach approximately 10metres above that. The adjacent field is also used for soft fruit production and contains polytunnels.

- 3.5.4 A gappy unmanaged native hedgerow with several mature elms forms the southern boundary. The hedgerow reaches approx 4-5metres in height. The field to the south is used for pasture. The adjacent field is an orchard.
- 3.5.5 Within and abutting Area 1 are three ponds. These are described in detail in the Ecological Phase 1 Report, under separate cover. (See Appendix 1 for pond location plan). Following the survey these ponds were the only features of potential ecological interest.
- 3.5.6 **AREA 2** There is little in the way of landscape features on this area other than the undulating plateau forms a shelf (at approx. 60mAOD) before stepping up to Pen-Alt (approx. 80m AOD).
- 3.5.7 **AREA 3** There are no features within the site, the most important feature is the mature vegetation associated with the sunken track abutting the eastern boundary.
- 3.6 Landscape Character (Fig DLA1154/05A Landscape Character Types)
- 3.6.1 The site is covered by two character assessments The Countryside Commission "The Character of England" assessment, a broad countrywide-based character assessment and a further in-depth assessment commissioned by The Countryside Commission and Countryside Council for Wales in 1996 for the Wye Valley Landscape An Assessment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Landscape assessment also provides strategies and recommendations to enhance and preserve the character and vernacular whilst incorporating the need for the sustainable evolution of the landscape. These have been incorporated in to the Landscape Strategy
- 3.6.2 The Countryside Commission Character Assessment includes the site within Character Type 104 South Herefordshire and Over Severn which has been split into three further categories, of which Area 1 & 3 fall partly into the 'The Low Wye';

The key characteristics of this type are:

- Fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable farming.
- Substantial red sandstone farmsteads.
- Large to medium fields with variable, commonly low hedges.
- Ageing hedgerow trees.
- Numerous churches and manor houses in small hamlets.
- Clusters of parkland trees.
- Narrow, meandering floodplain with low hedges,
- Ditches, scattered mature trees and pollarded willows.
- Contrasting steep wooded slopes and gentle riverside slip-off slopes.

- 'An Assessment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty', (AONB), has further analysed this region as Herefordshire Lowlands. The Herefordshire Lowlands are characterised by an undulating landscape of good agricultural quality, which is utilised by a whole range of agricultural practices. The development within this area is predominately large farmsteads with the main nucleus of settlement being located in small hamlets around manor houses and churches, larger centres such as villages are not common. Woodland vegetation is limited to the steep upper slopes and vegetation on the lower slopes is primarily hedgerow planting, many of which have been either been cut very low or left unmanaged and have now become mature/over mature tree lines. The Lowlands have been further assessed into localised categories, 'Herefordshire Farmlands', 'Ross on Wye', and 'The Wye Floodplain', Area 1 falls into the latter. The main characteristic features are:
 - Narrow floodplain
 - Isolated landmarks within irregularly spaced hedgerow trees and sparse hedgerows
 - Occasional pollarded willows
 - · Hamlets and farms on rising ground
 - Steep often wooded outer slopes with gentle slip off slopes
- 3.6.4 Areas 2 & 3 are located within the northern section of 'The Herefordshire Farmlands'.

 The main characteristic features are:
 - More gently undulating than further south along the valley
 - Orchards with protective poplar screens
 - Small patches of common land
 - Narrow lanes dropping down small valleys into small settlements which are located close to the waters edge
 - High inter-locking spurs of land forming valleys that run into the floodplain
 - Parkland planting around churches, rectories and manors
 - Long attractive views along the river
- 3.6.5 The area around sites 2 and 3 are strongly characteristic of the Herefordshire Lowlands and Farmlands. The views along the valley are limited in the small section to the west of the sites due to a tight loop in the river and high spur that rises through it. However although Site 1 is located within the Wye Flood Plain the area, which is affected by development, is more characteristic of the Herefordshire Farmlands.
- 3.6.6 The immediate landscape in which the sites are taken in context, does not appear to have any elements of parkland although there are several large farmsteads, including Pennoxstone Court & Poulstone Court, that contain elements of specimen planting and

mature non-native trees. These however disappear into the surrounding landscape of over mature hedgerows/tree lines.

3.7 Site Survey

3.7.1 An initial site visit was carried out in April 2006 to assess and photograph the landscape and character, as well as identify viewpoints both within the site parameters and the surrounding area. The site was revisited in October 2006 to reassess viewpoints and extend the survey area to include the whole farm.

3.8 Public Rights of Way (Fig DLA 1154/02A - Site Context)

- 3.8.1 For the purposes of this assessment only footpaths that may have possible views towards or over the proposed development site have been included. Hereford Council has supplied the footpath numbers.
- 3.8.2 There are no Public Rights of Way or permissive access routes through the Area 1.
- 3.8.3 To the north of Area 1, on the eastern side of the river, Public Footpath KC17 runs from the dogleg in the Ruxton/King's Caple Road, 400m to the northwest of the site boundary, northwards and along the river. Public footpath KC16 runs from 200m to the north of the site on the other side of the road, parallel to the road, through Ruxton and then west to join KC17.
- 3.8.4 The Wye Valley Walk runs along the river from Monmouthshire to the slopes of Plynlimon in Powys. The section to the south of the site, Public Footpath SK12, runs from Sellack, along the western side of the river for 1.5km before joining the road to Red Rail.
- 3.8.5 Public Footpath HN11 runs from the southwest from behind Hentland House down into the valley emerging onto the Red Rail Road from Red Rail Farm, 1.2km from the site. 80m along the road, heading north, Footpath HN10 rises up behind the single row of houses in Red Rail and follows behind them for 400m and then drops back down onto the road.
- 3.8.6 To the northwest of Area 1 (550m) Public Footpath HN2 comes of the road, at the northern end of the houses at Red Rail, and heads towards the river following it northward. HN3a and HN3 both come from Hoarwithy and join the Footpath HN2, HN3a from the south of the hamlet and HN3 from the north.
- 3.8.7 To the north of Hoarwithy, 1.5km from the site, Public Bridleway HN1 runs from the road at Altbough west towards Middle Mill.

- 3.8.8 There are other footpaths (without numbers) that are shown on the Ordnance Survey but have not been declared on the Designated Statutory Rights of Way Map. These have been plotted for thoroughness.
- 3.8.9 There are no other permissive routes within the Cockburn landholding.

4.0 VISUAL AND SENSORY QUALITIES

4.1 Sensory Qualities

- 4.1.1 The landscape around the site is a complex mixture of use and scale, which is contained by undulating topography limiting the sensory experiences to an approximate 1km strip running from Selleck to Hoarwithy.
- 4.1.2 The main development and infrastructure runs along the western side of the river whilst the east side is an open mixture of pasture and fruit farming. The steep western slopes of the valley are accentuated by the linear development along the road, (set in mature vegetation). The mature willow and scrub along the riverside, running adjacent to the road create a sense of enclosure when travelling through Red Rail, however when reaching Hoarwithy to the north and Sellack/Baysham/Strangford to the south the land plateaus out and the river pulls away from the bottom of the slope creating the feeling of open space.
- 4.1.3 There is little background noise within this area due to minimal vehicular movement, which is restricted to the Red Rail Road and through Hoarwithy over the toll bridge towards King's Caple, and low-density development.
- 4.1.4 The main sense of movement is provided by the river and is limited to the north, west and south. Due to the level plateau along the east, the river is not experienced, as it is a lot lower than the adjacent pasture and is not a public access point. The eastern side of the river has a different sense of place to the west due to the gentler topography and lack of built development. There is also a marked difference in the amount of vegetation with the riverbank being clear and hedgerows set back towards the upper levels. This creates an open feel through this side of the valley as the view is framed along the valley.
- 4.1.5 All Areas are located within a framework of small/medium square fields, which are surrounded by overgrown hedgerows and tree lines. To the west of the site, running along the plateau on the floodplain, is open with an occasional low hedgerow, and the field boundaries are not as well defined.
- 4.1.6 Generally, the Areas 1 & 3 are not accessible to the public, although Area 2 is bounded by a footpath on its eastern side. Once within the site the experience is that of open space looking over the western hedgerow towards the upper, sparsely populated slopes of the opposite valley. These slopes are predominately agricultural. The houses on the upper slopes of Hoarwithy are visible to the northwest whilst the development along the river (to the south) is not due to intervening vegetation. The views to the north and south of the field are limited due to the mature hedgerows and the fact that the topography sweeps down to the river on either side. The river is not visible from within Area 1.

4.1.7 Generally the Areas are not experienced from the north due to topography and vegetation.

4.2 Visual Qualities (Photo/Viewpoint Sheets 1 -27)

- 4.2.1 Views/viewpoints (VP's) have been selected during the desk studies and field surveys, which are typical or representative of a given area within and around the site and generally from public places such as footpaths. Views from private dwellings or gardens more often than not, do not have public access and are assessed by professional judgement from looking towards the potential viewpoint from other areas. This section identifies existing views towards the Areas and what might be seen without mitigation in place. Section 3 identifies the mitigation and compensation measure/s required to:
 - Remedy, reduce or remove predicted negative effects on landscape character and visual amenity;
 - Enhance the visual appearance of the site and its landscape character
- 4.2.2 While not wholly exclusive, the principal factors, which affect visual impact are:
 - Landform
 - Backdrop
 - Landscape Scale
 - Vegetation Cover
 - Building Design scale, mass, form, colour and texture
 - Seasonality
 - Lighting
 - Height of eye

4.2.3 Landform

The existing landform is a dominant feature within the local landscape. The site is positioned on a gentle slope rising up from a level plateau. It is not is proposed to alter the landform as this would detract from the existing constant rise of the spur however, this also means that the polytunnels are visible and the land rises above the height of the boundary planting giving truncated views from the opposite side of the river with limited opportunity for elevated views towards more distant horizons.

The erection of polytunnels does not have any effect on the existing landform

4.2.4 Backdrop

Visual impact will be strongly influenced by the backdrop against which it is viewed. A building or structure will be at its most prominent when viewed against an open skyline

and at its least intrusive when a darkened object is viewed against a landscape background i.e. embankments, fields, woodlands, mature hedgerows and other development features. Features such as polytunnels may contrast against darkened backdrops and draw the eye towards them.

4.2.5 Landscape Scale

Impacts can increase as a result of developments being out of scale with their surrounding landscape. The Areas are consistent with the shape and size of surrounding field patterns. The polytunnels are low in height but large in mass once the plastic has been stretched over the frames.

4.2.6 Vegetation Cover

The magnitude and eventual significance of impact can be reduced by utilising existing groups of trees and hedgerows and strategic new planting to screen views towards development from sensitive locations.

4.2.7 The site benefits from remnants of tall mature hedges and trees, which help to filter and screen views into the site from short distance views of the lower end of the site and views from a lower elevation. Some hedgerows have large gaps missing allowing higher magnitude views. The landscape strategy provides for infilling and substantial replanting works in mitigation against significant visual impacts.

4.2.8 Building Design

Building design, mass, colour and texture will all individually influence visual impact. There is limited opportunity to significantly change the design of the polytunnels. Poly tunnels have not been cited as typical features in the character area, but they are becoming increasingly common as temporary features in the agricultural landscape across Hereford, Worcester, Gloucester and the south of England, because of the benefits to crop quality and quantity and the rising demand for home grown fruit and vegetables.

4.2.9 Seasonality

Winter views are often more exaggerated than in summer due to lack of leaf cover, but there is generally little reduced effect where there are dense hedges and woodlands screening views. The poly tunnels coverings would be removed before leaf fall and winter views are considered important in this case.

4.2.10 Lighting

Lighting is not necessary within the operation of the polytunnels and not considered important in this case.

4.2.11 Height of eye

The magnitude of impact is normally increased the higher the viewpoint, which affords views over low-lying features such as hedgerows. Some elevated views are available towards the Area 1 from upper floor windows of some of the houses near to the site, but these are generally not considered as important as views from gardens, public footpaths or living rooms.

4.3 Visual Analysis (Ref to VPs & DLA1154/06A,B & C Visual Analysis – Areas 1, 2 & 3) These have been divided into individual site assessments.

4.3.1 SITE 1

General findings

4.3.2 Long Views (+ 1km).

Long distance views are restricted to elevated positions in the south, west and north. There are no long distance views from the north, east or the eastern side of the river.

4.3.3 Middle Distance Views (500m-1km)

As with the long distance views these are restricted to the south and west.

4.3.4 Close views (0-500m)

The close views are restricted to the opposite side of the River Wye, following Baysham, Red Rail through to Hoarwithy.

Detailed Analysis of views towards the site

4.3.5 Views from the North

The majority of views available from the north are from the western side of the River Wye; most of the views eastern side is screened by the rear of the spur on which the site is located. The only public view of the poly-tunnels from the eastern side is a heavily filtered seasonal close view from Public Footpath KC17. These are minimised also by the viewer being at a lower level than the polytunnels. (VP14)

- 4.3.6 There are no public views from the beyond Altbough due to the topography and intervening vegetation. The here is only one Public Bridleway in this area, HN1, which runs off from the road past Altbough, west back down into a small valley. Hedgerows and distance heavily filter views from the footpath. (VP11).
- 4.3.7 Views from Although are restricted to the properties located at the southern end of the road. These views are long distance and heavily filtered by intervening vegetation and the boundary hedgerows, with a wooded belt to the rear. The caravans, which provide

accommodation, are just visible during the winter, although they are heavily filtered views against a wooded backdrop.

- 4.3.8 The views along the road from Altbough travelling down into Hoarwithy are restricted due to the high hedge banks either side of the road. There are however, occasional glimpsed transient views towards the top of the hill of the lower end of the site. (VP12). There are possible views open long distance views from a couple of houses that are situated along this road, on the hillside rising up from the River Wye. (VP13).
- 4.3.9 There are heavily filtered middle distance views (700m) from Footpaths HN2/HN3/3A across the river towards the northwest boundary of the site. These views are completely screened throughout the summer months through the orchard and boundary planting due to the viewer being lower than the site. (VP8)

4.3.10 Views from the South

The furthest long distance view (1.2km) from the site is from Caradoc Hill. The views are restricted to glimpses transient views whilst travelling down the hill, there are possible open views from the upper windows of the two properties at the top of the hill. Intervening vegetation and its position on the opposite side of the visible spur partially screen the site, this screen becoming dense during the growing season. The polytunnels to the south are larger in mass and a dominant feature. (VP1).

- 4.3.11 There are no views of the site from Sellack due to topography.
- 4.3.12 There are glimpsed long distance views of the poly tunnels from Keynaston 1.4km to the southwest. The views from the residential properties are predominately screened through boundary planting although there may be some upper storey views, whilst views from the road are restricted to gaps between the houses and their boundary planting. (VP2). There are no views beyond Keynaston.
- 4.3.13 Public views in the southwest are restricted to Public Footpath HN11, however these are only available once it turns north after Hentland House due to tall dense hedgerows and sunken tracks. There is only one views from the track, through a field entrance, and is heavily filtered by a mature woodland belt. The footpath runs around this woodland and begins to decent down to Red Rail farm through an open field. This allows open views across the valley to the site; these views become filtered through intervening vegetation and farm buildings as the path reaches the lower slope. (VP3).
- 4.3.14 As the footpath exists onto the Road in front of Red Rail Farm there are open middle distance view through gaps in the mature riverside vegetation, the boundary vegetation

will become denser during the growing season and break up the mass. The view may be less filtered from the house due to its elevated position. The caravans, used as temporary accommodation for the workers, are just visible through the background vegetation. (VP5).

4.3.15 There are filtered middle distance views from a limited section of the Wye Valley Walk, SK12, as it runs from Selleck towards Red Rail, the views are only available for the last 330m before joining the road. The views are of the tops of the polytunnels due to the footpath being at a slightly lower elevation. (VP4).

4.3.16 Views from the East

There are no views from the east.

4.3.17 Views from the West

The close views are limited to the linier line of properties and road along Red Rail and are predominately filtered through mature vegetation along the western side of the river. The view is restricted to the upper sections of the polytunnels over the boundary hedgerow due to the viewer being at the same level, the middle and back sections of the site are not visible. The houses are slightly elevated from the road and may have possible longer open views over the vegetation from the upper stories. (VP6 & 7).

- 4.3.18 There are no available views from Public Footpath HN10 as it runs behind the properties but as it begins to climb back down to the road, behind Yew Cottage, there are filtered elevated views through gaps in mature vegetation. These are only available for approx 10m. (VP7).
- 4.3.19 There is an open long distance view from the private access track to Llanfrother Farm, 1km to the east, on the top of the ridge. The farmhouse is clearly visible from within the site and it is probable that the residents will have open views across the valley into the site. (VP9.

4.3.20 SITE 2

General findings

4.3.21 Long Views (+ 1km).

Long distance views are restricted to elevated positions in the south and west. There are no long distance views from the north, east or the eastern side of the river.

4.3.22 Middle Distance Views (500m-1km).

As with the long distance views these are restricted to the south and west.

4.3.23 Close views (0-500m).

The close views are restricted to the public footpath and glimpsed transient views from abutting local lanes to the north and south.

Detailed Analysis of views towards the site

4.3.24 Views from the North

The majority of views available from the north are extremely limited to field gateways immediately abutting the site. (VP19 & 20).

4.3.25 Views from the South

The views along the road from Kings Caple travelling down into Ruxton are restricted due to the high hedge banks and copses either side of the road. (VP26 is an exception which is viewed through a large gap within the hedgerow under-storey).

4.3.26 There are however, occasional glimpsed transient views into the site particularly from the rear of the cemetery at Kings Caple church. (VP25).

4.3.27 Views from the East

There are close open views into the site from a footpath that running the length of the eastern boundary. (VP22).

4.3.28 Views from Kings Caple are restricted to the properties located at the eastern boundary of the site. Intervening garden vegetation and the boundary hedgerows heavily filters these views.

4.3.29 Views from the West

Views from Hoarwithy and the bridge are screened by intervening development and vegetation (V24).

4.3.30 SITE 3

General findings

4.3.31 Long Views (+ 1km).

Long distance views are restricted to elevated positions in the south and west. There are no long distance views from the north or east.

4.3.32 Middle Distance Views (500m-1km).

As with the long distance views these are restricted to the south and west and the eastern side of the river.

4.3.33 Close views (0-500m).

The close views are restricted to adjoining properties and access gate on the northern boundary.

Detailed Analysis of views towards the site

4.3.34 Views from the north

The main public view is limited to a glimpsed transient view through a single field gateway leading into the site. (VP15).

4.3.35 Hill Cottage immediately abutting the northern boundary may have possible close views into the site.

4.3.36 Views from the south

The main views into the south are from the agricultural land within the floodplain are not available to the public.

4.3.37 There is a possible open view from Baysham Court to the south. (VP15). Topography and vegetation screen views from development to the south of this.

4.3.38 Views from the East

There are no views into the site from the east due to intervening vegetation, topography and distance.

4.3.39 Views from the West

These are limited to close views from Poulstone Court a residential property abutting the site, (VP18) and the lane to its immediate east, adjacent to Willow Cottage, topography and vegetation screen further views.

5.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS - Areas 1,2 & 3.

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section assesses the effects of the development upon the landscape character and visual appearance within and adjacent to the Areas in order to:
 - predict any significant effects of the proposals on the landscape and its character,
 which may directly or indirectly arise from the development of the site;
 - determine the sensitivity of the landscape to change and its ability to accommodate this type of development;
 - develop a landscape strategy that will prevent, remove or reduce any adverse effects of the proposals without adversely affecting the landscape character of the area and its local distinctiveness;
 - determine appropriate enhancement measures in compensation for any effects that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.

5.2 Methodology

- The approach has been to use recognised evaluation techniques in accordance with "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment" (1st and 2nd Editions 1995 & 2002) Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and Landscape Institute. This methodology determines the significance of impacts through a combination its magnitude and sensitivity of the receptor. Impacts can be both positive and negative. Most adverse impacts associated with development arise during the construction period with fewer adverse and sometimes positive effects arising during the operation period.
- 5.2.2 Impacts are assessed during the project life from construction through to management identifying in a systematic manner, the direct, indirect or residual effects and their duration. An important part of the process is the recommendations to remedy, remove, reduce or avoid adverse effects through mitigation. Where this is not always possible, appropriate compensation should be proposed. The effectiveness of mitigation measures have been calculated at 5, 10 and 20 years of age, based on normal growth rates on normal soils.
- 5.2.3 The following thresholds have been used in evaluating the significance of landscape effects.

Neutral Magnitude: Imperceptible change. No part of the proposal, or activity associated with it, causes any noticeable effect.

Sensitivity: No part of the proposals affects any landscape features.

Low

Magnitude: Virtually imperceptible change. Minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/ characteristics of the landscape.

Sensitivity: An unimportant landscape feature tolerant of substantial change.

Moderate

Magnitude: Moderate changes. Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/ characteristics of the landscape.

Sensitivity: Moderately valued elements or characteristics tolerant of some change.

High

Magnitude: Noticeable change in landscape elements or characteristics over a wide area. Total loss of or major alteration to one or more key elements/features/ characteristics of the landscape in a more limited area.

Sensitivity: Important components, protected or designated, susceptible to change.

5.2.4 Visual Effects have been based using the following thresholds in evaluating the significance of effects. It should also be noted that the evaluation has assessed the potential placing of development in all plots.

Neutral

Magnitude: No part of the proposal, or activity associated with it, causes any noticeable effect to any observers.

Sensitivity: No part of the proposals affects any observers.

Low

Magnitude: Minor changes in the view, few people affected. **Sensitivity**: Such as, people at places of work from roads or moving in cars.

Moderate

Magnitude: Moderate changes in the view. Many observers affected.

Sensitivity: Such as, persons observing from homes at middle distances or during passive recreational activities that would be distracted.

High

Magnitude: Major changes in views. Large majority of high numbers of observers affected.

Sensitivity: such as, frequently used public rights of way close to or within the site. Residential properties with close open views from frequently used rooms or gardens.

5.2.5 The significance of the effects and mitigation has been assessed using the following table:

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	Sensitivity of Receptors								
Impact Magnitude	High	Moderate	Low	Neutral					
High	High Impact	High Impact	Moderate Impact	Low Impact					
Moderate	High Impact	Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact	Low Impact					
Low	Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact	Low Impact	Low Impact					
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral					

5.2.6 The effect of the mitigation is then further assessed to test its impact using the following values:

Negative			Positive
- H	High Negative Effects	+H	High Positive Effects
-M	Moderate Negative Effects	+M	Moderate Positive Effects
-L	Low Negative Effects	+L	Low Positive Effects

- 5.2.7 The mitigation and enhancement measures are combined in a landscape strategy, which will:
 - Minimise, remove or reduce the negative effects of the proposals.
 - Enhance the visual appearance of the site within the landscape.
 - Provide compensatory measures where adverse impacts are permanent of cannot be removed.
- 5.2.8 These conclusions are further summarised in Section 7.

5.3 Landscape Impact Mitigation Tables

Receptor	Description of		T		Mitigation/			
	Impact Type	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance	Compensation	Sig. after Syears	Sig. efter 10years	Sig. after 20years
Direct Effects -			•	•	•			
Existing planting								
Northeast boundary	No adverse effects predicted	Neu	Neu	Neu	Enhance the existing planting on both sides of the track with native species including occasional advanced nursery stock trees	+ L	+ M	+ H
East boundary	No adverse effects Predicted	Neu	Neu	Neu	Enhance existing hedgerow along the boundary with native whips and suitable advanced nursery stock trees	+ L	+ M	+ H
South Boundary	No adverse effects predicted	Neu	Neu	Neu	Enhance existing hedgerow along the boundary with native whips and suitable advanced nursery stock trees – to the south of the hedgerow introduce a new copse	+ M	+ H	+ H
West Boundary	No adverse effects predicted	Neu	Neu	Neu	Enhance existing hedgerow along the boundary with native whips and suitable advanced nursery stock trees	+ L	+ M	+ M
Indirect Effects -								
River Wye banks	No adverse effects predicted	Neu	Neu	Neu	Re-introduce small groups of native alder and willow along the river bank	+ L	+ M	+ H
Hedgerows to the south of the	No adverse effects predicted	Neu	Neu	Neu	Enhance existing hedgerow along the boundary with native whips and suitable advanced nursery stock trees	+ L	+ M	+ H
Character	High Impact on character of AONB	Mod	High	High	Management, enhancement and reintroduction of characteristic features to provide screening and improved habitat	- M	- L	L

AREA 2

Receptor	Description of				Mitigation/			
	Impact Type	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance	Compensation	Sig. after 5years	Sig. efter 10years	Sig. affer 20years
Direct Effects -		L						L
Existing planting								
Northeast boundary	No adverse effects predicted	Neu	Neu	Neu	None required	N	N	N
East boundary	No adverse effects Predicted	Neu	Neu	Neu	Enhancement of the existing footpath/boundary with a 5m native planting strip	+ L	+ M	+ H
South Boundary	No adverse effects predicted	Neu	Neu	Neu	None required	N	N	N
West Boundary	No adverse effects predicted	Neu	Neu	Neu	None required	N	N	N
Indirect Effects -		1		· 	1	•	<u>,</u>	J
Character	High Impact on character of AONB	Low	High	Mod	Management, enhancement and reintroduction of characteristic features to provide screening and improved habitat	- L	N	N

Receptor	Description Impact Type	of	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance	Mitigation/ Compensation	Sig. after Syears	Sig. efter 10years	Sig. after 20years
Direct Effects -				- !!				<u> </u>	<u></u>
Existing planting						Ţ· <u>UZ·III</u>			
Northern boundary	No adverse predicted	effects	Neu	Neu	Neu	None required	N	N	N
East boundary	No adverse Predicted	effects	Neu	Neu	Neu	None required	N	N	N
South Boundary	No adverse predicted	effects	Neu	Neu	Neu	Enhancement of the existing boundary with a 5m native planting strip	t L	+ M	+ H
West Boundary	No adverse predicted	effects	Neu	Neu	Neu	Enhancement of the existing boundary with a 5m native planting strip	+ L	+ M	+ H
Indirect Effects -				<u>, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , </u>	•	<u></u>	•		

Character	High Impact on character	Low	High	Mod	Management,	-		
	of AONB			į į	enhancement and	L	N	N
					reintroduction of			
					characteristic features			
					to provide screening			
		<u> </u>			and improved habitat			

5.4 Visual Impact Mitigation Tables

Receptor	Description of				Mitigation/			
	Impact Type	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance	Compensation	Sig. after Syears	Sig. after 10years	Sig. after 20years
Views from the nort	h							
Views from Altbough (VP10, 11, 12, 13)	Long distance filtered views of the upper section of the poly tunnels against a wooded backdrop — these views are limited to the properties along the upper ridge.	Low	Mod	Mod	Enhance existing northwest boundary hedgerow with native whips and suitable advanced nursery stock trees. Strips of native planting to be	+ L	+ M	+ H
Views from Hoarwithy (VP8)	Restricted to Footpaths HN2/HN3/3A. Heavily filtered views limited to winter	Low	Low	Low	introduced within site to break up the mass	+ M	+ H	+ H
Public Footpath KC17 (VP14)	Heavily filtered occasional middle distance views	Low	Low	Low		+ H	+ H	+ H
Views from the sou	th							
View from the Wye Valley Path SK12 (VP4)	Open views across the river to the upper sections of the poly tunnels	Mod	High	High	Introduce a new native copse to the south of the site. Strips of native planting to be introduced within site to break up the mass. Willow and Alder planting in groups along the river bank will further filter views	+ L	+ M	+ M
Caradoc Hill/Farm (VP1)	Long distance views – restricted to transient glimpses by road users. Possible open views from the two residential properties	Mod	Mod	Mod	Enhance existing hedgerow along the boundary with native whips and suitable advanced nursery stock trees – to the south of the hedgerow introduce a new copse. Strips of native planting to be introduced within site to break up the mass	L	+ M	+ M

Views from	Glimpsed long distance	Low	Low	Low	As for Caradoc Farm	+	+	+
Keynaston (VP2)	filtered views. May be possible long distance views from the upper stories of a couple of the residential properties.					L	M	"
Public Footpath HN11 (VP3)	Long distance open views across the valley into the site from a section of the path	Low	Mod	Mod	Enhance the native species hedgerow along the boundaries with occasional advanced nursery stock trees. Introduce wide strips of planting within the site to break up the mass. Willow and Alder planting in groups along the river bank will further filter views	+ L	+ M	+ M
Views from the East								
Views from Sellack (VP17)	Glimpsed long distance filtered views. May be possible long distance views from the upper stories of a couple of the residential properties.	Low	Low	Low	Enhance the native species hedgerow along the boundaries with occasional advanced nursery stock trees. Introduce wide strips of planting within the site to break up the mass.	N	+ L	+ L
Views from the Wes	t							
Views from Red Rail (VP's 5, 6, 7)	Close filtered views from houses. Possible longer open views from upper windows	Mod	High	High	Enhance existing hedgerow along the boundary with native whips and suitable	t L	+ M	+ M
Public footpath HN10	Filtered views through mature vegetation – limited to 10m section.	Low	Mod	Mod	advanced nursery stock trees. Strips of native planting to be introduced within site	+ L	+ L	+ M
Llanfrother Farm (VP9)	Long distance open views across the valley to the site.	Low	Mod	Mod	to break up the mass. Willow and Alder planting in groups along the riverbank will further filter views.	t L	t L	+ M

Receptor	Description of Impact Type	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance	Mitigation/ Compensation	Sig. effer Syeers	Sig. effer 10years	Sig. after 20years
Views from the nort	h							
Through gaps in hedgerows from lane (VP19,20)	Close distance glimpsed views into the site through gateways along hedge banked lanes	Low	Low	Low	None required	N	N	N

Views from the sout	th							
Through gaps in hedgerows from lane (VP26)	Close distance glimpsed views into the site through gateways along hedge banked lanes from Kings Caple to Ruxton	Low	Low	Low	None required	N	N	N
Kings Caple Cemetery	Close filtered/open views	Mod	Mod	Mod	Introduce wide strips of planting within the site to break up the mass.	N	N	t L
Views from the East								
Views from pathway along field boundary	Close open views of the polytunnels	Mod	Mod	Mod	Introduce wide strips of planting between the footpath and field.	N	+ L	+ M
Views from properties in Kings Caple	Limited upper storey views to properties through garden and boundary vegetation	Low	Low	Low	Introduce wide strips of planting between the footpath and field.	+ L	+ M	+ M
Views from the Wes	t	·		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	. <u> </u>	1		
Possible filtered view from property abutting site at Ruxton	Close filtered views from houses. Possible longer open views from upper windows	Mod	High	High	None required	N	N	N

Receptor	Description of Impact Type	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance	Mitigation/ Compensation	Sig. efter Synais	Sig. after 10years	Sig. after 20years
Views from the non	th							
Site entrance (VP15)	Close distance transient glimpsed views into the site through the field gateway	Low	Low	Low	None required	N	N	N
View from Hill Cottage	Possible open close view from garden and upper storey	Low	Low	Low	None required	N	N	N
Views from the sou	th			•				
Baysham Court	Middle distance open view across valley	Low	Low	Low	Introduce wide strips of planting along southern boundary	N	N	t L

Views from the East								
None Predicted								
Views from the Wes	t							
Possible filtered view from property abutting the site	Close open views from Poulstone Court	Mod	High	High	Introduce wide strips of native planting along south/west boundary	t L	+ M	+ H
Possible filtered views from lane	Limited Close distance transient glimpsed views into the site along hedge banked lanes until Willow Cottage	Low	Low	Low	Introduce wide strips of native planting along south/west boundary	N	+ L	+ M

6.0 LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS (See DLA 1154/07, 08&09)

- 6.01 The principles for the landscape design derive from detailed examination of the physical characteristics of each Area and its surroundings. The landscape proposals masterplan has been developed to take account of the findings in this statement and the recommendation given in The Wye Valley Landscape An Assessment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The key aims of the proposals are:
 - Addressing the problem of erosion of arable land within the floodplain by introducing clumps of willow and alder.
 - Identify opportunities for carefully sited areas of semi-natural and natural woodlands.
 - Improve the diversity and management of the existing field boundaries,
 concentrating on field boundary trees rather than hedges.
 - Minimise the adverse visual effects of modern farming practices.

6.1 Landscape Strategy and Proposals.

- 6.1.1 The aim is to provide a setting for the development that will not only mitigate any sensory/visual effects but also enhance the overall ecological benefits of existing landscape elements within the area, creating an infrastructure for the future that will protect and enhance the existing character.
- 6.1.2 These aims will be achieved by providing a range of structural landscape elements. The principal landscape elements outlined in the illustrative landscape (See DLA 1118/08 & 9 Planting Detail Sheets 1 & 2) Proposals broadly are:

1 & 2 Native screening and structure planting

3 & 4 Hedgerow Treatments

5 Treatment of the Riverside

6.1.3 In addition, the existing 'best practice' for plant establishment of using black polythene as a weed suppressing mulch will be extended to these proposals for hedgerow establishment. The species and mix proposed have been considered following studies of species and densities within the locality.

1 & 2 Native Woodland Screening. - (See DLA 1154/08&09)

Continuation and enhancement of the existing woodland planting to the south, and small copses running through the site.

Objectives:

Filter views from significant viewpoints from receptors along the Wye Valley Walk, riverside and Red Rail.

- Break up the mass of polytunnels.
- Provide new wooded copse typical of the landscape type that will continue the species and densities set out to the south.
- Extend the habitat interest and provide further links to hedgerows by extending existing wooded corridors.
- Oaks to be planted as advanced nursery stock.

Woodland block canopy species to include:

35%	Oak (Quercus robur)
10%	Lime (Tilia cordata)
10%	Ash (Fraxinus excelsior)
8%	Alder (Alnus glutinosa)
7%	Rowan (Sorbus aucuparia)
7%	Wild cherry (Prunus avium)
7%	Birch (Betula pubescens)
6%	Aspen (Populus tremula)
6%	Hornbeam (Carpinus betulus)
4%	Crack Willow (Salix fragilis)

3 & 4. Native Hedgerows with Trees (See DLA 1154/09)

Enhancement and gapping up of existing hedgerows to include advanced nursery stock trees.

Objectives:

- Reverse the decline in hedgerows.
- To contain and absorb the proposed development in the composite landscape.
- Reinforce the landscape type and character of the area.
- Create further habitat interest and provide links to green corridors and off-site habitats.
- Replace the surrounding boundary trees which are predominately maturing elms.

60%	Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna)
20%	Field Maple (Acer campestre)
10%	Hazel (Corylus avellana)
5%	Guelder Rose (Viburnum opulus)
5%	Holly (llex sp.)

Trees to be planted as advanced Nursery Stock where required – to be planted at minimum 2m spacings.

30%	Oak (Quercus rubra)
25%	Ash (Fraxinus excelsior)
20%	Lime (Tilia cordata)
15%	Walnut (Juglans regia)
10%	Wild Cherry (Prunus avium)

5. Planting of small groups of willow and alder (See DLA 1154/09)

Enhancement of existing planting along the field/riverbank.

Objectives:

- Help to stabilise the banks along the river.
- To contain and absorb the proposed development in the composite landscape.
- Reinforce the landscape type and character of the area.
- To replace trees that have been lost through agricultural practices.
- Enrich the existing habitat along the river.
- 6.1.4 If required a comprehensive 10-year Management Plan will be drawn up, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, and 'conditioned' as part of any approvals, to ensure the successful establishment and maintenance of the landscape proposals.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Landscape Effects Conclusion

- 7.1.1 The development has a high impact on the character of the AONB. Whilst the landscape character of the Herefordshire Farmlands is dictated by agricultural practices these are predominately traditional and visually accepted. The sensitivity of the tunnels is classified as high due to their location within the ANOB, whilst the magnitude is moderate due to the limited impact on the surrounding areas due to location and topography. No polytunnels are placed in the 'Landscape least resilient to change' Policy La2 in the UDP Plan Revised May 2004.
- 7.1.2 There will be no landscape impacts either directly or indirectly upon any SSSI, SAC's or SINC's within the area.
- 7.1.3 There are no predicted direct, indirect or residual adverse landscape effects associated with the use of polytunnels in any of the Areas.
- 7.1.4 Taken as a whole the compensatory enhancement measures offer a significant positive benefit in replacing lost landscape features, which importantly contribute towards the local distinctiveness and character of the area.
- 7.1.5 The polytunnels reduce the need for pesticides by 40% compared to crops grown solely outdoors. Increased productivity and quality over a longer period reduces the need for imports from foreign markets ('food miles' issues). There are no harmful chemical residues associated with the poly tunnel operation either directly or indirectly. Polytunnels can be recycled.
- 7.1.6 The Drainage Appraisal prepared by specialists JDIH, under separate cover, demonstrates that there are no detrimental impacts on drainage when compared to alternative land use, which would be "row" crops.
- 7.1.7 The proposals have been developed to incorporate management and enhancement of the existing character of the Hereford Farmlands. The strengthening of the infrastructure will provide positive benefit to the ecology of the area by increasing and improving existing habitats and the network of green corridors around the sites. The landscape proposals also include increasing bank stabilisation and enhancement of riverside ecology along the banks of the floodplain pasture.
- 7.1.8 The strategic landscape proposals will further screen the development from present receptors, mitigating any possible impact on local character.

7.2 Visual Effects Conclusion

- 7.2.1 The views towards the polytunnels are limited to a small visual envelope, which is contained to less than 5sq. kilometres. The spur, local topography and vegetation screen any further views.
- 7.2.2 The majority of the residential receptors are within the Hoarwithy, Red Rail & Baysham arc, often at slight elevation.
- 7.2.3 The open long distance views are restricted to a couple of elevated open properties, Llanfother Farm to the west and the property at Caradoc Farm to the south.
- 7.2.4 The views along the Wye Valley Walkway are middle distance and filtered. The mitigation will greatly decrease the impact whilst improving the character as experienced from the footpaths.
- 7.2.5 It is not perceived that users of the river itself will experience the polytunnels.
- 7.2.6 There are no long views north or south along the river valley.
- 7.2.7 The impact of the polytunnels within the wider landscape is less visually intrusive when viewed from the north as they are viewed across a horizontal strip across the spur and are perceived as a single detraction within a wider landscape. From the west and the south, these become wide views of the elevation of the site as it rises up the front of the spur. The impact of these increases greatly from elevated views further to the south when viewed as the backdrop to the fields of polytunnels to the southeast.
- 7.2.8 The landscape proposals will screen views from the lower receptors and break up the mass viewed from elevated positions. After ten years it is predicted that the wooded belts and enhanced hedgerows will have a positive factor within the overall surrounding context and reiterate the character types set out within the 'Landscape Guidelines'.

7.3 Summary Conclusions

7.3.1 The Landscape & Visual Assessment concludes that the impact of polytunnels sited on the Pennoxstone Court Farm on the AONB is high, although very localised. The 'Zone of Visual Influence' is greatly reduced by the local topography and by the presence of extensive areas, both on and off-site, of mature vegetation, including, woodlands, orchards and hedgerows. The vegetation is a particularly significant contributor to screening and mitigation in this case because the tunnels are only covered with plastic sheeting during the seasons when the indigenous deciduous vegetation is 'in leaf'.

- 7.3.2 The Landscape & Visual Assessment recognises that the introduction of Spanish polytunnels is part of the evolving character of the agricultural landscape; that their visual impact tends to be localised (and can be further mitigated with the proposed structural landscape both within and to the margins of the fields); is felt most strongly only during that part of the year when they are covered with plastic; and, that such impact is not in any event permanent, as they are continually being removed and re-erected according to cropping cycles.
- 7.3.3 The application offers the opportunity of providing substantial mitigation measures, to reduce the localised visual impact of the polytunnels, including the approval and implementation of a scheme of indigenous landscaping to augment and reinforce existing natural features and a 10-year Management Plan for the whole farm and providing for the long term stewardship of the countryside, including the AONB.
- 7.3.4 Further, there are considerable wildlife benefits compared with conventional arable farming and the contribution they make to biodiversity and sustainable landscapes.
- 7.3.5 As well as mitigating the local impact of the development, these measures will have a significant incidental positive benefit by replacing lost landscape features and sustaining existing ones, which importantly contribute towards the local distinctiveness and character of the area.
- 7.3.6 No polytunnels are placed in the area of 'Landscape least resilient to change ' Policy La2 in the UDP, Plan Revised May 2004. There will be no landscape impacts, either directly or indirectly, upon any SSSI, SAC's or SINC's within the area.