

BRIMSCOMBE LANE, STROUD

LANDSCAPE STUDY

ROGER GRANSMORE ARCHITECTS

RGA1168ls



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Landscape Study	
Project:	Brimscombe Lane, Stroud
Status:	Final
Date:	December 2020
Author:	[REDACTED]
File Reference	RGA1168ls
Revision	-

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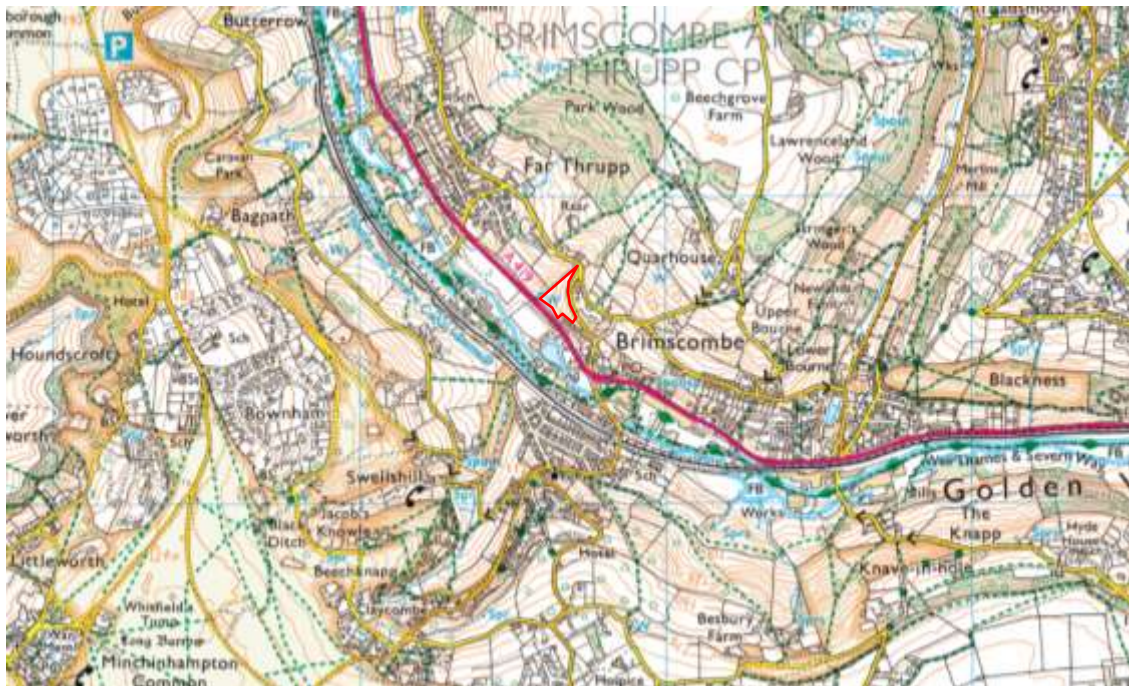
Contents

1.0 Introduction	2
2.0 Site Context.....	3
3.0 Landscape and Visual Note.....	5
4.0 Summary and Conclusions.....	11

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1.1 LVIA Ltd was appointed by Roger Gransmore Architects in November 2020 to undertake a landscape study of the site at Brimscombe Lane, Stroud. This work follows an initial walkover of the site and its surroundings in 2020 by a chartered landscape architect, to understand potential landscape and visual issues.
- 1.1.2 The site is currently being considered for a residential type scheme with associated development works.
- 1.1.3 The purpose of this landscape study is to provide an initial and broad overview of the key landscape and visual considerations for the site; and to advise on the potential suitability of the site to accommodate the proposed development in landscape and visual terms.
- 1.1.4 The site falls within no areas of landscape designation and sits to the south of the boundary of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The boundary of the AONB also follows the disused Thames and Severn Canal approximately 0.23km to the south west.

Image 1: Site Location



2.0 Site Context

- 2.1.1 The site currently comprises a field of apparently self-seeded trees of varying quality set within scrubby grassland. The site topography falls from the north east to the south west.
- 2.1.2 The site sits adjacent to existing residential development that is accessed from Mill Close, Thrupp Lane and Bourne Lane. Bourne Lane and the existing residential dwellings that are accessed from it sit higher in the landform than the site. The land then continues to the north laid out as field in agricultural use that are defined by hedgerows with trees and pockets of woodland and the landform continues to rise to the north towards Park Wood.
- 2.1.3 To the south west of the site sits a group of trees that bound the busy A419 and vehicular noise and movement are very noticeable in the local area. The Brimscombe and Thrupp Football ground sits to the south of the A419 which is floodlit by lighting pylons. The A419 is also lit by lighting columns. Other light industrial buildings and uses can be found alongside the A419 in the area.
- 2.1.4 To the north west, the boundary sits alongside an area of sparse woodland on steeply sloping scrubby grassland.
- 2.1.5 The site is not accessible to the public and offers no recreational value.

Openness/Enclosure

- 2.1.6 Within the site the trees that are set within the scrubby grassland create little sense of enclosure although the local topography prevents some views into the site. Existing trees that sit alongside the site form enclosure to the A419.
- 2.1.7 Some views into the site from the local landscape are available but are limited. Some longer range views into the site from the south are available, but these are limited by the topography and mature vegetation in the area.

Perceptual Qualities

- 2.1.8 The site sits adjacent to existing residential built form, which can be partly seen from within the site in views to the north and east. The A419 is busy and creates noise and vehicular movement in close proximity to the site. These qualities mean that the site has the perception of the existing suburban fringe context.

Settlement - Study Area Context

- 2.1.9 The site sits adjacent to existing built form and roads. The local area includes:
- Residential development set within curtilages generally defined by mature vegetation, along with more recent built form at Mill Close that has small front gardens comprised mainly of parking area.
 - The A419 is busy and vehicular noise and movement is noticeable in the local area.
 - Mature trees and vegetation which enclose the southern site boundary from local views.
 - Small woodlands and field boundary hedgerows and trees that define local fields to the north.

- Light industrial development alongside Brimscombe and Thrupp Football ground.

Landform

2.1.10 The sites topography slopes broadly from the north east to the south west where it meets the A419.

Study Area Context

2.1.11 The surrounding area comprises the built form of the suburban fringe of this part of Brimscombe, with agricultural, residential, recreational and light industrial uses in close proximity to the site.

Public Rights of Way

2.1.12 The Weir Thames and Severn Way follow the route of the Thames and Severn Canal to the south beyond the A419.

2.1.13 The local landscape has a relatively good network of publicly accessible route that provide access to the wider countryside to the north.

3.0 Landscape and Visual Note

Landscape Character

3.1.1 Natural England identifies the site as being within National Character Area 107: Cotswolds. The identified key characteristics of the national character area include:

- Defined by its underlying geology: a dramatic limestone scarp rising above adjacent lowlands with steep combs, and outliers illustrating the slow erosion of escarpments. The limestone geology has formed the scarp and dip slope of the landscape, which in turn has influenced drainage, soils, vegetation, land use and settlement.
- Open and expansive scarp and high wold dipping gently to the southeast, dissected by river valleys.
- Arable farming dominates the high wold and dip slope while permanent pasture prevails on the steep slopes of the scarp and river valleys with pockets of internationally important limestone grassland.
- Drystone walls define the pattern of fields of the high wold and dip slope. On the deeper soils and river valleys, hedgerows form the main field boundaries.
- Ancient beech hangers line stretches of the upper slopes of the scarp, while oak/ash woodlands are characteristic of the river valleys. Regular blocks of coniferous and mixed plantations are scattered across the open high wold and dip slope.
- Large areas of common land, important for unimproved calcareous grassland, are characteristic of the scarp and high wold around the Stroud valleys and along the crest of the scarp to Cleeve Hill.
- The majority of the principal rivers flow south-eastwards forming the headwaters of the Thames with the exception of rivers in the west which flow into the River Avon and then the Severn Estuary.
- Rich history from Neolithic barrows, iron-age hill forts and Roman roads and villas to deserted medieval villages, grand country houses, cloth mills and Second World War airfields. The field patterns largely reflect both the medieval open field system, with fossilised areas of ridge and furrow, and later planned enclosures.
- Locally quarried limestone brings a harmony to the built environment of scattered villages and drystone walls, giving the area a strong sense of unity for which the Cotswolds are renowned. Bath stone is also famous and has been used for building since Roman times, both locally in the principal buildings and streets of Bath and more widely, for example for Buckingham Palace in London. Parkland, gardens and historic designed landscapes are features particularly of the dip slope and broad lowland, such as Lawrence Johnston's garden at Hidcote, and Heather Muir's garden at Kiftsgate, parkland at Stanway, Chastleton and Blenheim Palace.
- Prominent natural and built features in the landscape include the City of Bath WHS, Brailes Hill, Broadway Tower, Cleeve Hill, the Tyndale monument, Freezing Hill, Kelston Round Hill and Blenheim Palace WHS.

3.1.2 The adjacent suburban fringe development and local A419 have an effect on their surroundings in the form of noise and related movement.

3.1.3 The Stroud District Council Landscape Assessment (November 2000) has been produced to provide detailed information about character at the sub-regional level.

3.1.4 The site falls within landscape character type (LCT) Secluded Valleys. The key characteristics of LCT Secluded Valleys are defined as:

- Enclosed, secluded character.
- Steep sides, concave narrow valley form; steeper upper slopes forming abrupt break of slope with Wold Tops landscape.
- Complex interlocking valley/ridge forms in some areas.
- Extensive bands of deciduous ancient woodland along valley rims.
- Tall hedges forming enclosure within the valleys with many hedgerow trees.
- Predominantly pastureland.
- Field size varies relative to degree of slope; more open character where valleys join and broaden out.
- Scrub and unimproved grassland on steep and broken slopes.
- Fast flowing streams draining to River Severn and tributaries.
- Dry stone walls on higher land.
- Settlement: larger settlements at valley mouth and junctions on flatter land; smaller settlements, e.g. cottages and mills along valley bottoms and along upper valley rims.

3.1.5 The existing built elements that sit in the local context to the east and south are noticeable from within the site and these elements give the site a suburban fringe feel, with noise and movement felt within the site, particularly road noise from the A419.

3.1.6 The landscape to the north of the site, beyond the residential dwellings along Bourne Lane, is clearly more agricultural in nature, with fields laid out in agricultural use with mature hedgerow and trees forming field boundaries. Telegraph poles cross the landscape.

Site Features

Image 2: Aerial Photograph



3.1.7 In summary, the sites landscape context includes:

- Undulating landform;
- Mature trees that form the site boundary along the A419 and sit within close proximity to the site creating a sense of enclosure to views;
- To the north of the site there is limited manmade influence beyond the residential dwellings situated along Bourne Lane;
- Surrounding built elements, including residential development situated at Mill Close, Thrupp Lane and Bourne Lane and the A419 Road along with the large scale light industrial built form and football ground to the south are noticeable and provide noticeable manmade influences within the local area.

Visual Analysis

3.1.8 Most local viewers of the site are likely to be:

- Users of small sections of Thrupp Lane or Bourne Lane;
- Locations to the south west beyond the Thames and Severn Canal where the landform rises and allows views where visual barrier do not prevent them.

Local Views

3.1.9 Due to the nature of the vegetation that sits close to the site boundary and the proximity of built form, views of the whole site are limited in the local area.

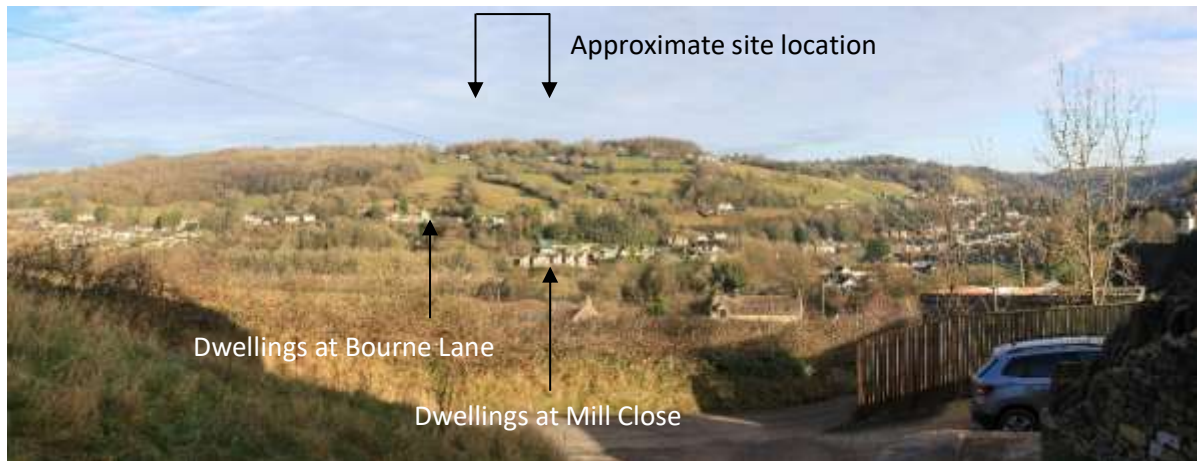
3.1.10 The residents at Mill Close and Bourne Lane will likely have some limited visual interconnectivity from second floor rear windows where intervening vegetation allows. It's worth noting that residential dwellings do not have a right to a view and that the viewpoints are not publicly accessible so fewer people are likely to be affected.

3.1.11 Views into the site from the local landscape are very limited due to the mature vegetation that sits in the local area and the gently undulating landform acting as visual barriers.

Mid-Range Views

3.1.12 Due to the nature of the suburban fringe settlement form, local undulating topography and presence of mature vegetation in the local landscape, views from the mid-range are very limited, but where the site is visible, no change to the nature of the view will occur even if the site is noticeable.

Viewpoint 1– Illustrating potential views from the southwest



3.1.13 The view was taken from nearby a residential dwelling between Swellshill and Bownham and illustrates a view of the site where the viewer can see over the hedgerow that bounds the road.

3.1.14 Between the viewpoint and the site can be seen the valley along which the A419 runs. Existing built elements are clearly visible in the form of residential dwellings located at Bourne Lane, Thrupp Lane and in the wider area. The site will sit to the left of the dwellings at Mill Close and below the dwellings at Bourne Lane as identified in Viewpoint 1. Lighting pylons associated with the football ground can be seen along with large scale light industrial development.

3.1.15 The hill continues to rise above the site where Park Wood can be seen along side other areas of woodland.

3.1.16 The opportunity for views of the site across the valley are rare as the local area has many visual barriers created mainly by mature vegetation that prevents potential views.

3.1.17 The site would be seen in the context of the existing pattern of built form, would not extend further up the slope than the current visual baseline and would not stand out or change the nature of the view, even though it is visible.

Long-Range Views

3.1.18 Due to the nature of the suburban fringe settlement form, local undulating topography and presence of mature vegetation in the local landscape, views from the long-range are very limited.

Potential for Development

3.1.19 The site exhibits no strong landscape or visual elements that would preclude it from being developed in a comparable fashion to that of the surrounding settlement.

Recommended Landscape/Green Infrastructure Principles for Enhancement and Mitigation

3.1.20 From the above landscape and visual analysis, the following landscape/green infrastructure principles are recommended to successfully accommodate residential development within the site:

- Situate built form close to the existing suburban fringe of Brimscombe;
- Development to be kept to a maximum of 2-3 storey, with regard given to the local ridge heights and landform to ensure development does not top that of the existing residential dwellings situated at Bourne Lane;
- Provide tree and hedgerow planting to the sites northern boundary;
- Manage and enhance existing vegetation on site where possible;
- New planting within site to include suitable ornamental and native species that are in keeping with the character of the area and will enhance biodiversity;
- Tree planting throughout the site which will mature to further soften the appearance of development and link to the existing local green infrastructure landscape elements.

4.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 4.1.1 The site landscape context is not sensitive in urban design terms, being situated adjacent to the existing built form of the settlement of Brimscombe; with residential dwellings to the north and east, agricultural to the north and the A419, football ground and light industrial buildings to the south. However, the sites context can be considered sensitive due to its proximity to the boundary of the AONB.
- 4.1.2 Landscape and green infrastructure principles have been recommended to minimise or ameliorate any potential adverse visual effects of development of the site, which would contribute to the enhancement of the current landscape character.
- 4.1.3 The schemes layout and building envelopes should be sensitively designed to blend visually with its surrounding landscape with timber and local stone.
- 4.1.4 A sensitively designed residential scheme, which incorporates the recommended landscape/green infrastructure principles as an integral design approach, could be successfully accommodated at the site without causing undue harm to landscape features, landscape character or the visual baseline.
- 4.1.5 The site exhibits no strong landscape or visual elements that would preclude it from being developed in a comparable fashion to that of the surrounding suburban fringe settlement.



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