

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL ISSUES SCOPING

Carrington Farm

Land north of West Street, Tollesbury

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



DOCUMENT DETAILS

Document type: LVIS
Reference: NC15.170-lvis01
Publish date: 19/04/2016
Client: Mr Philip Scott
Project name: Carrington Farm
Project location: Land north of West Street, Tollesbury
Development proposal: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Document version record:

version	notes	written by	date	checked by	date
DRAFT		NC	19/04/2016	OM	21/04/2016
FINAL	No changes	NC	21/04/2016		

This document has been produced by Nigel Cowlin Ltd

Nigel Cowlin Ltd is a Landscape Institute Registered Practice with Chartered Landscape Architects specialising in landscape assessment and landscape design issues relating to planning and development. The company's landscape and visual impact assessment experience includes residential schemes ranging from single house developments to large urban extensions, commercial developments, as well as wind and solar energy projects in a variety of contexts. These landscape and visual impact assessment services have been provided in relation to standard planning application cases as well as technical chapters for Environmental Statements and as part of expert witness services for planning inquiries.

The layout and content of this document is copyright protected.
© Nigel Cowlin Ltd 2016

CONTENTS

		page
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Landscape context	1
3.	Visual context	2
4.	Site suitability and potential design responses	2
5.	Alternative site south of West Street	3
6.	Conclusions	4

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Optional sites to accommodate residential development are being considered for the settlement of Tollesbury. Two sites on the western edge of Tollesbury are emerging as front runners. One is land north of West Street and the other is land south of West Street. Nigel Cowlin Ltd have been commissioned to prepare an outline schematic zoning masterplan drawing to investigate and illustrate the opportunities presented by the land north of West Street, known as Carrington Farm.
- 1.2 This report appraises the landscape and visual context of the Carrington Farm site and looks at how a development here might fit within and respond to the particular landscape and settlement edge setting. It sets out how these matters should be addressed in the masterplanning of this site and how the northern site compares with the southern site in respect to landscape and visual issues.

2. Landscape context

- 2.1 The Carrington Farm proposed development land is the eastern end of a large field on the western edge of Tollesbury. It lies between two road routes giving access into the western side of the settlement and nestles into the existing developed edge of Tollesbury. Ribbon development along West Street (B1023) forms the southern edge of the land. This road travels into the village in a west to east direction, from Tolleshunt D'Arcy. Back Road approaches from the north and becomes North Road on entering the settlement. Back Road adjoins the north-eastern edge of the site and the rear gardens of properties on North Road form the eastern edge. A field boundary marks the approximate location of the northern extent of the site area, but the western extent of the site is unmarked as the open field extends further west away from the settlement towards Garland's Farm.
- 2.2 Tollesbury sits at the end of a finger of higher ground on the northern edge of the Blackwater Estuary. This higher ground forms a subtle ridge of land linking between Tolleshunt D'Arcy and Tollesbury. To the south it slopes steadily down to the edge of the Blackwater Estuary and to the north-east it slopes and drains towards the bowl valley around Old Hall Marshes. The Carrington Farm site sits on the top of this ridge, but to the side facing north towards Old Hall Marshes and Abberton Reservoir in the distance (around 6km away). The ribbon development along West Street forms the spine of the ridge at this point.
- 2.3 The pattern of the landscape in this area is of large rectilinear based fields divided by hedges with occasional trees and quite frequent small groves or woody copses. The hedges are in variable management condition and often include remnant sections of Elm tree growth and occasional mature Elm specimens. Farm tracks are a frequent occurrence across the landscape. Drainage ditches and small reservoirs are also frequent. There is generally a finer grain of small land parcels and denser vegetation cover around the edges of Tollesbury, and the landscape also changes towards the coast where it gives way to low lying reclaimed marshes and/or unenclosed coastal marshland. The historic rectilinear field pattern is strongly reflected in the form of the village streets on the western side of Tollesbury.
- 2.4 In the Maldon District Landscape Character Assessment the area is recorded as the Tollesbury Coastal Farmland landscape character area E1.

3. Visual context

- 3.1 Although occupying a high ground location offering the chance of panoramic views to the north, this site actually has quite a low prominence in the local area. There is a glimpse into the site whilst travelling into Tollesbury on West Street and passing Garland's Farm. However, it is then quickly obscured by the tall roadside hedging and ribbon development along West Street. There is also a brief look into the site on turning the corner of Back Road into North Road. Once within Tollesbury there is very little, if any, appreciation of the site from public vantage points. Development along North Road and West Street forms a continuous barrier, although there is a footpath to the rear of the North Road properties which traces the eastern edge of the proposed development site. There is a further footpath which circles around the west and north edges of the larger field area beyond the site. These footpaths provide the main opportunity for public observation of the site area. Most of the time the view is looking back towards the development in front of the existing developed edge of Tollesbury. As such the development would bring built form closer to the footpath vantage points, but the general composition of the outlook from these footpaths would not be greatly altered.
- 3.2 Further afield there is little visibility of the site area until some distance away in locations around Salcott cum Virley, in the valley bottom (approx.. 3km away), and beyond this on the rising land around Great Wigborough (5km away) and towards Abberton Reservoir (6km away). From these distances the settlement form of Tollesbury can be discerned, but the detail of individual areas of development is hard to decipher. The ribbon development along West Street is visible on the skyline and this does mark the western extent of the settlement in these views. However, further development as proposed in front of this would make very little difference to scene as it too would be restricted to the skyline and the outline of the developed area would hardly change.
- 3.3 The existing ribbon development along West Street would prevent any real appreciation of the Carrington Farm development from any countryside locations to the south, and as such any views back from around the Blackwater Estuary would be unaffected.

4. Site suitability and potential design responses

- 4.1 Although this site is seemingly an open edge to the Tollesbury settlement, it is not actually a very exposed site in the local context and in any longer distance views the effects would be of a very minor nature. As a result there is scope for development here to be quite recessive in the local scene and it could successfully nestle into the existing edge of the village. In order to maximise the fit of the development into the local landscape and pattern of the village, the following proposal responses are recommended:
- Maximise the set back of the development from the northern and western extents of the site area such that outward landscape treatments and spaces can be incorporated on these new edges of the settlement. This should incorporate some additional small tree belt / copse plantings around the development fringe to help assimilate it into the landscape and soften in outwardly.
 - Utilise the existing field boundary to the north as natural edge to development with a band of open parkland set behind this

and in front of the development. This will give natural containment to the development and will help to tie in with the historic grain of the landscape and settlement pattern.

- Take advantage of the long distance panoramic views to the north, with the development positively addressing this edge. This should include an appropriate open space set back from the outlying footpath so that this circular walking route can be respected and given an attractive settlement fringe parkland setting.
- Continue the rectilinear village pattern within the street form of the development so as to give continuity with the adjacent grain of streets and to present the development outwardly with a strong rectilinear pattern relating to the historic field structure.
- Create a pocket park space alongside the footpath on the eastern edge of the site, so as to maintain the amenity value of this footpath and avoid it becoming just an unwelcoming hemmed-in corridor.

5. Alternative site south of West Street

- 5.1 The other potential development land south of West Street has many similarities to the land described above as the Carrington Farm development proposal land. In many ways it is a mirror match of the Carrington Farm site. It mirrors the relationship to the ribbon development along West Street and on the east of the land it has development at Elysian Gardens replacing what would be the houses along North Road. It is also encircled by public footpaths in a similar way, but the connection back to West Street is formed by Prentice Hall Lane. There is a little more sub-division by field boundaries and the Tollesbury Cemetery projects into the area, but the principle difference is that it slopes to the south towards the Blackwater Estuary rather than north to Old Hall Marshes.
- 5.2 Assuming that development proposals here would also mirror those proposed for Carrington Farm, in that they would be nestled back into the existing developed edges of Tollesbury, there would be little to choose between the two proposals. However, the presence of the Cemetery may present something of an issue as this may restrict access directly from West Street into the portions of this area nestling into the existing settlement edge. If access were needed from the western end of the West Street ribbon of development this would need to navigate around the cemetery and would be somewhat more intrusive as a result. Alternatively, if the development were to extend further west, this would also result in an entirely different development scenario and there would be far wider landscape and visual effects with greater implications for the character of the settlement and the local area. This would lead to more landscape and visual effect across the landscape to the south and over the Blackwater Estuary and the extent of development on the western edge of Tollesbury would continue further along the skyline-forming ridge in this location.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Although there are similarities between both development site options, for the reasons outlined above, the Carrington Farm site proposal is considered preferable in landscape and visual terms to an equivalent proposal south of West Street.
- 6.2 The Carrington Farm proposal is considered a good fit with the existing settlement pattern and with good planning it could be a successful development with limited potential for harmful landscape and visual effects. It is also considered to represent a good opportunity to create a new residential area for Tollesbury that would have good environmental qualities and would be a positive addition to the structure of the village.