

LAND NORTH OF CAMBRIDGE NORTH STATION

**Rebuttal Proof of Evidence by Jeremy Smith BSc
(Hons),**

**Dip LA, CMLI on Landscape and Visual Matters
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the Chesterton Partnership)**

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of this Rebuttal

1. This rebuttal has been prepared in response to the proof and appendices of Nigel Wakefield.
2. Firstly, I consider the additional viewpoints assessed by Mr Wakefield (hereinafter referred to as Node Viewpoints). For those Node Viewpoints which do not have a corresponding location in the Bidwells LVIA (and therefore also in my own proof of evidence), I have provided new model views of the development generated in Vu City, along with my own assessment of visual effects.
3. Secondly, I have provided photographs from the two viewpoints mentioned at Appendix 7 of Mr Wakefield's Appendices (see "*Views to Landmark Buildings*", page 28 of Mr Wakefield's Appendices), and analyse these viewpoint and views in further detail.
4. Thirdly, I have provided a summary of the landscape and visual judgements made within the original Bidwells LVIA, my own landscape and visual review, and the judgements made by Mr Wakefield in his proof.

1.2 Methodology for Assessing the Visual Effects of the Proposals upon the Additional Node Viewpoints

5. The methodology that I have used for assessing the visual effects at the additional Node Viewpoints is the same as that used in my proof, and is set out at Appendix 12.1 of the ES. As for the Bidwells LVIA and my proof, this assessment is against the baseline of the existing site condition, and in accordance with best practice (as well as Landscape Statement of Common Ground paragraph 23) assesses increased visibility of built form in a semi-rural or rural context as causing adverse/negative landscape and visual effects.
6. The photographs displayed in **drawings CN-056 to CN-073**, attached, are reproduced from Mr Wakefield's Appendices. They are presented next to a Vu City model view of the proposed development from approximately the same viewpoint. The details of existing built form in the

Vu City model make it possible to reference-in the model view into the photograph, and the form of the proposed development within the view has then been defined with a blue outline.

7. Whilst these are not verifiable, Type 4 views, they do provide a clear indication of the potential visual effects of the development in the Node Views, since they are based upon an accurate and detailed three dimensional model of the development and its wider context. **In this context it is notable that Mr Wakefield has not prepared any visualisations or model views to support his own assessment of visual effects.**

2.0 Consideration of Additional Node Viewpoints

2.1 Principles for Selecting Representative Viewpoints in GLVIA3

8. GLVIA3 (**CD12.07**) sets out a range of factors to help with the selection of viewpoints at paragraph 6.20 (page 109). The first of these factors is “**accessibility to the public**”, since viewpoints which are freely accessible to all members of the public, at any time of day, are more representative of local views than those seen from private areas.
9. Paragraph 6.21 of GLVIA3 states that the selection of viewpoints used needs “*to cover as wide a range of situations as is possible, reasonable and necessary to cover the likely significant effects*”. This paragraph goes on to state that “*the emphasis must always be on proportionality ... and on agreement with the competent authority and consultation bodies*”.

2.2 Additional Node Viewpoints

10. It is common ground between the parties (Landscape Statement of Common Ground, LSoCG, paragraph 28) that the viewpoints used in the Bidwells LVIA (section 12 of the Environmental Statement) were agreed with South Cambridgeshire District Council’s Landscape Officer and were suitable for assessing the visual effects of the development at the time of the ES was produced.
11. However, the Council has also stated in the LSoCG, (Matters of Disagreement, paragraph 32), that it now believes additional viewpoints are required to assess these visual effects.
12. Mr Wakefield therefore includes a new range of Node Viewpoints, the location of which is illustrated on **figure 2.1, page 12 of his Appendices**.
13. Whilst most of the Node Viewpoints outside of the appeal site are similar to locations used in the Bidwells LVIA, (a fact acknowledged in Mr Wakefield’s proof, for example in his comparison of viewpoint assessments shown at pages 59 to 67), **there are a number of Node Viewpoints which have no close comparative location in either the Bidwells LVIA or the assessment of visual effects within my proof**. These viewpoints are as follows:

- **Ditton Meadows: Node Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3 on the Harcamlow Way:** these views have become more open due to recent arboricultural works, as noted at paragraph 258 of my Proof.
- **Fareham Road and Bourne Road: Node Viewpoints 8 and 9.**
- **Node Viewpoint 17** is located at the north-western edge of the Fen Road mixed-use area.
- **Fen Rivers Way (western bank of the Cam): Node Viewpoints 19 and 21.** Again these views have become more open due to recent arboricultural works.
- **The Plough Inn beer garden: Node viewpoints 22 and 23.**

2.3 Review of the Suitability of Additional Node Viewpoints for Visual Assessment

14. The selection of The Plough Inn as a viewpoint fails the first requirement for selecting viewpoints as set out in GLVIA3; **The Plough Inn beer garden is private land, and is not accessible via a public right of way.** The beer garden is enclosed with only one point of access, which is via the vehicle access to the pub from Green End. The garden is used by the public for drinking and dining, as well as for private events, but it is not publicly accessible by all people at all times.
15. It is for this reason that **it was agreed with the Council that viewpoint 6, on Green End, should be selected as a more representative view from this area,** since it is publicly accessible at all times.
16. The Node viewpoints also duplicate very similar viewpoints. Node Viewpoints 22 and 23 are both from the beer garden of The Plough, and consequently the assessment of major adverse visual effects from these two viewpoints - **and they are considered as separate viewpoints at paragraph 7.62 of Mr Wakefield's proof – is effectively double counting the same effects on the same receptors.**
17. Similarly, Node Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3 are all assessed as experiencing moderate/major adverse visual effects as a result of the proposed development, and paragraph 7.64 of Mr Wakefield's proof counts these as three separate visual effects: and yet **these three viewpoints represent**

the same receptors (walkers), on the same, approximately 250m long stretch, of the Harcamlow Way, with the same angle of view, and the same visual context.

18. In the same way, Node Viewpoints 8 and 9 represent the same receptors in the same residential area to the south of the appeal site. Receptors at these viewpoints are both assessed in Mr Wakefield's proof as experiencing moderate adverse effects at year 15, and yet the viewpoints are approximately 90 metres apart, with the same direction of view and the same residential context.
19. In addition, it is important to note that some of the Node Viewpoints have only recently been able to obtain clearer views of the proposed development as a result of recent arboricultural works on trees and shrubs to the west of the River Cam: this includes Node viewpoints 1, 2 and 3, as well as Node viewpoints 21, 22 and 23. As **plates XI and XII**, below, illustrate, the trees and shrubs in these gaps have been pruned hard in the recent past, but are already starting to grow back.



Plate XI: Willows and shrubs along the Fen Rivers Way, in the vicinity of Node viewpoint 21, are already re-growing (photographed 16th May 2023)



Plate XII: Regrowth of trees and shrubs in the vicinity of Viewpoint 21.

20. It is therefore essential that the assessment of visual effects at year 15 takes into account the re-growth of these trees and shrubs, many of which are fast growing willows that could easily form an effective visual screen at least 5 metres high within 15 years.
21. In summary, in relation to the additional Node Viewpoints the following should be noted:
 - **Node viewpoints 22 and 23 at the beer garden of The Plough Inn should not be used as these are on private land and therefore do not represent views which are freely available to the public.**
 - **Node Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3 should be considered as one representative viewpoint, not three, as these represent the views of the same receptors in the same location.**
 - **Node Viewpoints 8 and 9 are again representing the same receptors in broadly the same location, and should be considered as one representative viewpoint.**

- **Assessments of visual effects for Node Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 21, 22 and 23 should take into account the re-growth of trees and shrubs to the west of the River Cam when assessing visual effects at year 15.**

2.4 Assessment of Visual Effects at the Additional Node Viewpoints

22. In the following paragraphs I have provided a concise assessment of the potential visual effects of the proposed development upon each of the additional Node Viewpoints, applying the methodology included at Appendix 12.1 of the ES and with reference to the attached model views.
23. **I have focused on the potential year 15 effects, since it is these effects that will be experienced for the longest period of time.** As GLVIA3 explains, duration is one of three considerations when assessing the magnitude of visual effects (see paragraph 6.41, page 115), and the assessment of the long term effects of year 15 views has potential to result in a higher magnitude of effect, rather than short term construction effects.

2.4.1 Ditton Meadows: Node Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3

24. **Drawings CN-056 to CN-061 of this Rebuttal** illustrate the model views of the proposed development seen in the context of Mr Wakefield's photographs.
25. In accordance with my assessment of the sensitivity of receptors at **Viewpoint 5**, which is also on a footpath on Ditton Meadows, the sensitivity at these three viewpoints would be high/medium.
26. At **Node Viewpoint 1** the proposed S6 and S7 buildings would be visible on the skyline, but they would be seen in the context of the Novotel and One Cambridge Square, as well as existing development along Fen Road (which extends towards the viewpoint and is therefore enlarged by perspective). Whilst the proposed new buildings would be seen on the skyline they would be partly screened by intervening vegetation, would not appear to be significantly higher than the existing buildings on Fen Road, and would occupy only a small proportion of the total view. The magnitude of effect on this viewpoint would therefore be low, and this would reduce further if the willows and other trees and shrubs to the west of the Cam are allowed to re-grow.

27. **The visual effects of the proposals on Node Viewpoint 1 would therefore be moderate/minor and adverse, and less than significant.**
28. As the model views illustrate, the appeal proposals would occupy an even smaller proportion of the view when seen from Node Viewpoints 2 and 3. In these views the proposed buildings are already largely screened by intervening vegetation, and the glimpses of the proposed buildings are seen in the context of existing buildings on the skyline. The magnitude of effects for these viewpoints is therefore negligible.
29. **The visual effects of the proposals on Node Viewpoints 2 and 3 would therefore be minor and adverse, and less than significant.**

2.4.2 Chesterton Residential Area South of the Appeal Site: Node Viewpoints 8 and 9

30. **Drawings CN-062 to CN-065 of this Rebuttal** illustrate the model views of the proposed development seen in the context of Mr Wakefield's photographs.
31. In accordance with my assessment of the sensitivity of receptors at Viewpoint E5, which also represents residential receptors at Discovery Way, the sensitivity at these two viewpoints would be medium.
32. In both views whilst the proposed development is visible on the skyline it does not occupy a large proportion of the view, with the proposals being partly screened by a combination of existing buildings and vegetation. The remaining, visible parts of the building would be seen in the context of the existing One Cambridge Square, as well as the built form in the fore and middle ground of this view. The magnitude of effect in both views would therefore be low.
33. **The visual effects of the proposals on Node Viewpoints 8 and 9 would therefore be moderate/minor and adverse, and less than significant.**

2.4.3 Fen Road Residential: Node Viewpoint 17

34. **Drawings CN-066 to CN-067 of this Rebuttal** illustrate the model views of the proposed development seen in the context of Mr Wakefield's photographs.

35. In accordance with my assessment of the sensitivity of receptors at Viewpoint E6, which also represents residential receptors at Fen Road, the sensitivity at this viewpoint would be medium.
36. As the model view illustrates, proposed buildings S6 and S7 would be visible on the skyline of this view, although much of the proposed buildings would be screened by intervening buildings and vegetation. As a result the buildings would occupy a moderate proportion of the view, and would be seen in the context of existing buildings in the fore, mid and background. The magnitude of effect would therefore be medium.
37. **The visual effect of the proposals on Node Viewpoint 17 would therefore be moderate and adverse, and less than significant.**

2.4.4 Fen Rivers Way: Node Viewpoints 19 and 21

38. **Drawings CN-068 to CN-071** of this Rebuttal illustrate the model views of the proposed development at these two viewpoints, seen in the context of Mr Wakefield's photographs.
39. As for Node Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3 walkers and cyclists on this right of way are of high/medium sensitivity.
40. As the model view for Node Viewpoint 19 illustrates, the proposed buildings would be largely screened by intervening vegetation, with the remaining, visible proportion occupying a small proportion of the total view and also being seen in the context of the Novotel and One Cambridge Square. The magnitude of effect on this viewpoint would therefore be negligible.
41. The model view for viewpoint 21 illustrates that the appeal proposals would be clearly visible on the skyline from this perspective, although they would be viewed in the context of the existing Novotel and buildings at Fen Road. The magnitude of effect for receptors at this viewpoint would therefore be medium, although this magnitude is likely to reduce if the existing trees and shrubs alongside the Cam are allowed to re-grow.
42. **The visual effect of the proposals on Node Viewpoint 19 would therefore be minor and adverse, and less than significant. Effects on Node viewpoint 21 would be major/moderate**

and adverse, and significant. However, views at Node Viewpoint 21 could reduce quickly if existing trees and shrubs to the west of the Cam River are allowed to re-grow.

2.4.5 The Plough Inn, Fen Ditton: Node Viewpoints 22 and 23

43. Drawings CN-072 and CN-073 of this Rebuttal illustrate the model views of the proposed development at viewpoint 22, seen in the context of Mr Wakefield's photographs.
44. As has been noted, whilst this is a popular pub the garden is not publicly accessible. The value of the viewpoint therefore reduces, and its sensitivity is assessed as being medium.
45. As the model view for Node Viewpoint 22 illustrates, the proposed development would be clearly visible on the skyline, although the proposed new buildings would be viewed in the context of the Novotel and One Cambridge Square, as well as existing buildings on Fen Road. The magnitude of effect would therefore be medium.
46. **The effects of the proposals on these viewpoints would therefore be moderate and adverse. However, these effects could reduce quickly if existing trees and shrubs to the west of the Cam River are allowed to re-grow**

2.4.6 Summary of Visual Assessment of Node Views, and Comparison with Node Assessments

47. **Table JSR1**, below, summarises my visual assessments for the additional Node Viewpoints, and compares these assessments with those within Mr Wakefield's proof.

TABLE JSR1: Summary of Visual Assessment of Additional Node Viewpoints (Year 15)

SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ARE SHOWN IN BOLD

Additional Viewpoints	Node	N Wakefield Assessment	J Smith Assessment	Further Notes
Node Viewpoint 1, Ditton Meadows	1	Moderate/Major Adverse	Moderate/Minor Adverse	Potential to reduce further if trees west of Cam re-grow
Node Viewpoints 2 and 3, Ditton Meadows	2 and 3	Moderate/Major Adverse	Minor Adverse	Potential to reduce further if trees west of Cam re-grow
Node Viewpoints 8 and 9, Chesterton Residential Area	8 and 9	Moderate Adverse	Moderate/Minor Adverse	
Node Viewpoint 17, Fen Road	17	Moderate/Major Adverse	Moderate Adverse	
Node Viewpoint 19, Fen Rivers Way	19	Major Adverse	Minor Adverse	
Node Viewpoint 21, Fen Rivers Way	21	Major Adverse	Major/Moderate Adverse	Potential to reduce further if trees west of Cam re-grow
Node Viewpoints 22 and 23, The Plough	22 and 23	Major Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Potential to reduce further if trees west of Cam re-grow. Not freely accessible to the public.

48. In summary, Mr Wakefield concluded that viewers at nearly all of these additional Node Viewpoints would experience significant visual effects as a result of the proposed development.
49. In contrast I have concluded, with the aid of a detailed Vu City model of the proposals, that the visual effects of the appeal proposals upon all but one of these additional viewpoints would be less than significant. Furthermore, I have noted that these assessed visual effects could reduce further if the existing trees and shrubs along the western edge of the River Cam are allowed to re-grow.
50. It is notable in this context that where Mr Wakefield defines “*the approximate extent of the site*” on his photographs, with red dashed lines, this always extends far beyond the actual extent of visible development, as defined on our model views (defined with blue lines and

labelled with black arrows) – see drawings CN-056 to CN-073. It is possible that Mr Wakefield is overstating the potential magnitude of visual effects due to a lack of detailed analysis of the visibility of the proposals in each view.

3.0 Analysis of Mr Wakefield's Appendix 7 Views (Views to Landmark Buildings)

3.1 Introduction

51. At paragraph 7.26 Mr Wakefield describes "*two important view lines*", one from Node viewpoint 11 to St Mary's Church Fen Ditton, the other from Node Viewpoint 20 to St George's Church, Chesterton. The view lines are identified in his appendix 7.
52. Mr Wakefield indicates at 7.26 that "*the layout could potentially be altered to accommodate these views across the site*". He also states at 9.21 of his proof that the effects of the appeal proposals on the landscape receptor of the Cambridge skyline are greater than the moderate effects assessed in the Bidwells LVIA because the proposed buildings would screen these views.

3.2 Analysis of Mr Wakefield's Appendix 7 Views

53. I have visited these viewpoints and have tried to find the clearest views of the two buildings: Viewpoint 1, on **drawing CN-074**, is the clearest view I could find of St Mary's in the locality of Node Viewpoint 11. Only the tip of the small spire on top of the tower is visible, in amongst the lighting columns and vegetation. This is certainly not a clear, attractive view of this listed building, and once the trees along the railway track have grown another two metres (in a few years) this view will disappear altogether. This is certainly not a robust, landmark viewing corridor around which to design the massing of new buildings, and similarly the introduction of buildings in this view would not lose an important focal point.
54. Viewpoint 2, on **drawing CN-075**, is in the locality of Node Viewpoint 20, and I have again tried to find the clearest view of St George's (in Mr Wakefield's viewpoint 20 it is partly obscured by intervening vegetation). Whilst St George's is visible, it is frequently screened by vegetation as one walks along this path, and at a distance of just over 2km from this viewpoint it is a very small feature on the skyline. Furthermore, the trees and shrubs to the west of the River Cam would only have to grow another two metres and the tower of St George's would be screened altogether. As with the view from Node viewpoint 11, this element is certainly not a clear landmark viewing corridor around which to base the massing of a development proposal, and

again the introduction of buildings on the appeal site would not lose an important focal point in this view.

55. In conclusion I do not agree that these are “*important view lines*” to landmarks. They are incidental, glimpsed and long distance views to elements that will probably be completely screened in another few years.

4.0 Summary of Landscape and Visual Judgements

56. The following tables provide a summary of the landscape and visual judgements made within the Bidwells LVIA, my proof of evidence, and the proof of Nigel Wakefield. I have also included the judgements for some of the Node Viewpoints made by Mr Wakefield, with my own judgements as set out in this rebuttal.

Table JSR2: Comparison in Assessment of Landscape Effects at Year 15 (Significant effects are in **bold**)

Receptors Used in the Bidwells LVIA	J Smith Assessment	Bidwells LVIA	N Wakefield Assessment
NCA 88: Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands		Medium/Low Sensitivity Low magnitude Minor Adverse effects	Medium Sensitivity Low/Medium Magnitude Moderate/Minor Adverse effects
LCA 9A Cam River Valley	High/medium sensitivity Low magnitude Moderate/Minor adverse effects	High/Medium sensitivity Low magnitude Moderate/Minor adverse effects	High Sensitivity Medium/High Magnitude Major/Moderate Adverse effects
The Railway Corridor (Parcel 10)	Low sensitivity High magnitude Moderate beneficial effects	Low sensitivity High magnitude Moderate beneficial effects	Low Sensitivity High Magnitude Moderate Beneficial effects
(Remaining Sections of the) Railway Corridor	Low Sensitivity Medium becoming low at N edge Moderate/Minor beneficial effects	Low Sensitivity High magnitude Moderate beneficial effects	Low Sensitivity High Magnitude Moderate Beneficial effects
Residential Area: (Chesterton)	Medium/Low sensitivity Medium on the northern edge, becoming low further south. Moderate/Minor and negative to the north, becoming minor and neutral to the south	Medium/Low sensitivity, High magnitude Moderate neutral effects	Medium Sensitivity High Magnitude Moderate/Major Adverse effects
Residential Area: (21st Century Mixed-Use at Fen Road)	Medium sensitivity Medium magnitude Moderate negative effects		

The Skyline of Cambridge	High/Medium sensitivity Medium/Low magnitude Moderate adverse effects	High/medium sensitivity, Medium magnitude Moderate neutral effects	High/Medium Sensitivity Medium/High Magnitude Moderate/Major Adverse Effects
The Landscape Setting of Fen Ditton Conservation Area	Medium/Low sensitivity Low magnitude Moderate/Minor adverse effects	High/medium sensitivity Medium magnitude Moderate adverse effects	High/Medium Sensitivity Medium/High Magnitude Moderate/Major Adverse Effects
The Townscape Setting of Riverside and Stourbridge Common Conservation Area	Medium/Low sensitivity Negligible magnitude Minor neutral effects	Medium sensitivity Negligible magnitude Minor neutral effects	Medium Sensitivity Negligible Magnitude Minor Neutral effects

Table JSR3: Comparison in Assessment of Visual Effects at Year 15 (Significant effects are in **bold**)
NB location of Node and Bidwells viewpoints do not directly correspond, but judgements have been grouped together as set out in the proof of Nigel Wakefield. Where no judgement has been provided, the box is left empty. Separate judgements for some of the Node Viewpoints are also included at the end of the table

Viewpoint Reference	J Smith Effects	Bidwells Effects	N Wakefield Effects
Bramblefields LNR and Fairham/Bourne Roads: Bidwell Viewpoint 2 in the LNR, Node Viewpoints 8 and 9 in the residential area	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate Adverse
Milton Road/Cowley park: Bidwells Viewpoint 4, Node Viewpoint 13	Moderate/Minor neutral	Moderate neutral	Negligible
Ditton Meadows: Bidwell viewpoint 5; Node viewpoints 1, 2 and 3	Minor neutral	No effect	Moderate/Major Adverse
Harcamlow Way, north of Fen Ditton: Bidwell Viewpoint 8, Node Viewpoint 20	Major/Moderate adverse	Major adverse	Major Adverse
Horningsea Road/Field Lane: Bidwell Viewpoint 9, Node Viewpoints 24 and 25	Major/Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Minor Adverse
10	No effect	No effect	No effect
Milton Road: Bidwell Viewpoint 14, Node Viewpoint 12	Moderate/Minor (pedestrians)	Minor neutral	Negligible

	Minor (vehicle users), neutral		
15	Moderate/Minor adverse	Moderate/Minor neutral	
Stourbridge Common: Bidwell viewpoint 16, Node viewpoints 5 and 6	Minor neutral	Minor neutral	Minor Adverse
A14 Bridge over the River Cam: Bidwell Viewpoint 20, Node Viewpoint 18	Minor neutral	Moderate/Minor neutral	Minor/Moderate Adverse
Chisholm Trail bridge over River Cam: Bidwell viewpoint E1, Node viewpoint 7	Moderate/Minor neutral	Negligible neutral	Negligible
E2	Minor neutral	Negligible neutral	
Guided Busway and Discovery Way: Bidwell Viewpoint E5, (on Discovery Way), Node viewpoint 11 (on the guided busway)	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate Adverse
Fen Road: Bidwell viewpoint E6, Node viewpoints 16 and 17	Moderate/Minor neutral Moderate/Minor neutral Minor neutral	Moderate/Minor neutral	Moderate/Major Adverse
P1	No effect	No effect	No effect
P4	No effect	No effect	No effect
P5	No effect	No effect	No effect

P6	No effect	No effect	No effect
Node Viewpoint 1	Moderate/Minor Adverse		Moderate/Major Adverse
Node Viewpoints 2 and 3	Minor Adverse		Moderate/Major Adverse
Node Viewpoints 7 and 8	Moderate/Minor Adverse		Moderate Adverse
Node Viewpoint 17	Moderate Adverse		Moderate/Major Adverse
Node Viewpoint 19	Minor Adverse		Major Adverse
Node Viewpoint 21	Major/Moderate Adverse		Major Adverse
Plough Inn, Fen Ditton: Node Viewpoints 22 and 23	Moderate Adverse		Major Adverse

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