
2nd April 2026

Rugby Road, Clifton on
Dunsmore

Landscape

Evidence of Mr.

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(Hons), DipLA, CMLI,
AIEMA, M.Arbor.A

Appeal between Richborough and Rugby
Borough Council

Volume 3: Summary

Council Ref: R25/0565

Planning Inspectorate Ref: 6003106

Appeal Date: 28th April 2026

Report Number: 18741_R01_JB



**Tyler
Grange**

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Summary

- S.1. The appeal relates to an outline proposal for up to 160 dwellings on approximately 9.21 hectares of land east of Rugby Road, adjacent to the settlement edge of Clifton upon Dunsmore, with access fixed and other matters reserved. The scheme envisages around 4.6ha (c.50%) for housing, with around 4.38ha (c.47.5%) as public open space, drainage basins and habitat, alongside landscaped corridors and boundary enhancement. Building heights are proposed to be largely two storeys with limited 2.5 storey elements, and the illustrative layout keeps built development away from higher ground adjacent to Clifton Recreation Ground and away from lower ground reserved for drainage. A key component of the offer is a northern area of open space and car parking intended to support the recreation ground, with wider green infrastructure (GI) measures running along the western/southern edges and a linking corridor along the eastern boundary.
- S.2. It is agreed that the site is undesignated and is not a “valued landscape”, and that it is not subject to the NPPF footnote 7 constraints. The local landscape context is a typical settlement-edge, arable-dominated landscape within the Dunsmore Plateau Fringe Landscape Type / Dunsmore LCA, with low woodland cover, large rectilinear fields, and an existing influence from settlement and transport infrastructure, including the urban edge of Rugby. The Council’s own Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (prepared to support the emerging local plan) identifies a broader parcel including the site as of medium sensitivity, with arable land of low susceptibility and man-made influences (the village edge, Houlton Way, Hillmorton Lane, and nearby Rugby-related development) already present.
- S.3. The scheme will result in the creation of new publicly accessible open spaces, including a substantial northern open area and associated parking intended to improve the functionality of Clifton recreation ground for both existing and future residents. The Landscape Strategy seeks to retain and strengthen existing boundary hedgerows and trees, reinstate degraded sections, and introduce new hedgerow and tree planting (including orchard species), resulting in improvements to existing native features. These changes will result in a potential biodiversity net gain of 17.09% in habitat units and 22.75% in hedgerow units. In the Council’s own Statement of Case, these environmental enhancements (public open space, BNG and SuDS) are expressly identified as benefits holding moderate weight.
- S.4. While the nearest designated heritage asset is Clifton upon Dunsmore Conservation Area (approximately 160m north), the Council’s own Statement of Case and Conservation Officer conclude that the Appeal Scheme will have a neutral impact on its setting and significance.



Similarly, the Canal and River Trust did not raise concerns about effects on the experience of the Oxford Canal.

S.5. The main harms alleged by the Council are summarised as:

- v. unacceptable harm to landscape character and visual amenity through urbanisation of the site;
- vi. truncation of “important” views, particularly from Clifton Recreation Ground (the emerging neighbourhood plan “Important View 9”);
- vii. an asserted lack of fit with local topography, built form and settlement pattern;
- viii. insufficient landscape mitigation, including questions of buffer depth and the extent/type of planting; and
- ix. adverse effects on the physical, visual and perceptual separation between Rugby and Clifton upon Dunsmore, contributing to coalescence and undermining settlement identity.

S.6. The Council has not undertaken its own assessment and the only available assessment are those within the LVA and my own evidence, both of which broadly agree with the extent and level of harm.

S.7. The Appeal Scheme will inevitably result in changes from an arable field to a mix of housing and open space. However, the scale and extent of wider landscape and visual effects are limited and, crucially, they will diminish over time as planting establishes. The visual baseline work demonstrates that changes to views will be relatively localised, primarily from the west, south and south-east. Available views are generally within less than 1km of the site and mostly within 500m. The most sensitive public receptor as users of Clifton Recreation Ground looking south/southwest (Important View 9), where the boundary tree line is not continuous and lacks understorey, allowing views into the northern part of the site. Other public receptors with potential views include users of sections of the Oxford Canal corridor and limited PRow routes south of the village, while many residential receptors are separated by distance, long garden lengths and boundary vegetation.

S.8. This is an outline application and that detailed landscape design is capable of being secured and refined through conditions and reserved matters. There is no policy requirement that planting must fully screen development, and the appropriate objective at a settlement edge is to create a softened transition that retains and reinforces existing landscape features and integrates built form into the receiving landscape over time. The Appeal Scheme keeps development away from the highest and most visually sensitive ground, creating an extension to the existing recreation ground which will connect into a wider network of green corridors and buffers.



- S.9. Any greenfield development will likely result in adverse landscape and visual effects. In this case, the Appeal Scheme will result in a local change to an ordinary, medium-sensitivity arable field at the settlement edge, with the most notable visual effects concentrated on the recreation ground and localised nearby receptor groups. It will result in the creation of large new areas of publicly accessible open space, including improvements and extension to the recreation ground; landscape and ecological enhancement through retention and bolstering of boundary features; delivery of SuDS as part of a green-blue infrastructure framework; and biodiversity net gain. Effects will be localised and in the context of an ordinary landscape already impacted upon by residential development.
- S.10. For the reasons set out in my evidence, I respectfully submit that there are no grounds for refusing this Appeal with reference to landscape and visual matters.





**Tyler
Grange**

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