

Tim Partridge MRTPI

For STQG Rule 6 Main Party

Comments on Viewpoint 8 Photomontage Year 25 from public bridleway 625(B)

These are my comments on the additional montage requested by Inspector Woolcock at the site visit on Monday 11 November, halfway through the public inquiry. These montages were not previously provided by the appellant to assist the Inquiry. The montages were produced the following day.

In my view, having 30 years of assessing the impact of development on landscaping and the acceptability thereof, the montages show a significantly altered landform, which is harmful both visually and historically and to the openness of the Green Belt.

The montage shows a relatively straight ridgeline which is in contrast to the characteristic rolling landscape evident from the Malvern Hill AONB in the background, the existing landform and that which will be undisturbed, as well as tree lines. The new landform is in jarring contrast to the existing natural landforms.

This ridgeline slopes down noticeably in contrast to the current and remaining landform. This can be seen in cross section D-D (CD1.04, pdf page 90) a fall of 10m across 25m. This would be very noticeable at the foot of the slope. The montage follows a general view along cross section D-moguls. Again, this is in sharp contrast to the existing and remaining landform.

The new planting proposed to the left of the montage also reduces the openness of the site by blocking long distance views.

The Knight family were one of the richest families in the Country in the late 1700's, they owned large areas of Wolverley and surrounding countryside. Their wealth locally was based on the iron forges along this stretch of the Stour. In choosing to build a family house to demonstrate his wealth and power Edward Knight chose to build a castle, in the neo gothic style. He would also have chosen where to build this monument to his wealth and power. The Castle was built on a sandstone outcrop, it would have been situated and laid out to make the most beneficial use of the existing landscape. The intrinsic features of the Estate Parkland still remain; the grand avenue from Wolverley Road, which today is clearly

apparent, the gatehouses and landform. Edward or John Knight would be in no doubt they were home if dropped into the site today. The historic landscape has not changed since 1762, changing that undisturbed landscape can not make it reflect the historic landscape more closely (Mr Fuber refers in his PoE paragraph 2.7).

Mr Fuber said in Chief that *"no documents say the landform is important"*.

The Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment (CD12.04) characterises the landscape as Sandstone Estateland.

"These are open, rolling landscapes characterised by an ordered pattern of large, arable fields, straight roads and estate plantations. Fields are typically defined by straight thorn hedges, reflecting the late enclosure of much of this landscape from woodland and waste. This historic land use pattern is also reflected in the occurrence of isolated brick farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings, interspersed with occasional small villages. Despite the fact that this is a functional landscape, the consistent geometric pattern can convey a strong sense of visual unity."

"Parkland features and associated ornamental planting, together with estate villages, can all contribute to the diversity of these landscapes."

Policy MLP 33: Landscape. Contributing to: Objectives MO2, MO3.

"Planning permission will be granted where it is demonstrated that the proposed mineral development will conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape.

A level of technical assessment appropriate to the proposed development and its potential impact on the landscape will be required to demonstrate that, throughout its lifetime, and taking into account the cumulative effects of multiple impacts from the site and/or a number of sites in the locality, the proposed development will:

- a) optimise opportunities to enhance inherent landscape character, integrating other green infrastructure components where appropriate;*
- b) not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the inherent landscape character. The benefits of the proposal will be balanced against the significance of any impacts where the proposed development is likely to:
 - i. result in significant change to the key characteristics of the landscape identified in the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment and Worcestershire Historic Landscape Characterisation; or*
 - ii. introduce landscape features that conflict with, or dilute, the inherent landscape character of the area;"**

The Adopted Minerals Local Plan clearly establishes that landform is important.

The additional montages clearly show the impact on this important landform and historic landscape which is contrary to MLP Policy 33.