Volume 4: Appendix 7.2 – Landscape Assessment





Emmock and Tealing 400 kV Overhead Line Tie-Ins

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Volume 4 | Appendix 7.2

Landscape Assessment

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TRANSMISSION

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AOD: Above Ordnance Datum

LCT: Landscape Character Type

LLA: Local Landscape Area

LVIA: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

OC: Operational Corridor

OHL: Overhead Line

ZTV: Zone of Theoretical Visibility



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This appendix presents the detailed assessment of effects on landscape character types (LCTs) and landscape designations within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) study area, as a result of the construction and operation of the Emmock and Tealing Section 37 Tie-Ins ('the Proposed Development'). It should be read in conjunction with Volume 2, Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Volume 2, Chapter 3: Project Description of the EIAR for full details of the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.2 This appendix is supported by the following figures (**Volume 3** of this EIAR):
 - Figure 7.1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Study Area
 - Figure 7.3a: Landscape Character Types
 - Figure 7.3b: Landscape Character Types with Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)
 - Figure 7.4a: Designated Landscapes
 - Figure 7.4b: Designated Landscapes with Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)



2. LCT TABLES

- 2.1.1 LCTs are mapped on Volume 3, Figure 7.3a: Landscape Character Types and shown with a ZTV overlain in Volume 3, Figure 7.3b: Landscape Character Types with Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).
- 2.1.2 The 5km LVIA study area includes two separate LCTs (as well as an area classed as 'Urban', which is not assessed further). For each LCT, a table is presented which sets out:
 - Baseline description including location, extent of the Proposed Development, key characteristics and existing infrastructure;
 - Sensitivity of the LCT unit, taking account of its susceptibility and value as described in Volume 4, Appendix 7.1: LVIA and Visualisation Methodology;
 - Magnitude of change arising from both construction and operational phases, taking account of the scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the impact, as described in Volume 4, Appendix 7.1: LVIA and Visualisation Methodology; and
 - Significance of the residual effect on the LCT unit, at both construction and operation, derived from the sensitivity of the LCT unit and the predicted magnitude of change, and taking account of mitigation (as set out in Section 7.5 Mitigation and Monitoring of Volume 2, Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment).
- 2.1.3 The Tables in this Section present the assessment of effects on the following LCT units:
 - Table 7.2.1: Dipslope Farmland
 - Table 7.2.2: Lowland Hill Ranges



Table 7.2.1: Dipslope Farmland

LCT 387: Dipslope Farmland

Baseline description

Within the study area, this LCT is found as one unit which covers the eastern, southern and western extents of the study area. The LCT extends to the northernmost extents of the Proposed Development, where it transitions to the neighbouring LCT 382 – Lowland Hill Ranges. The majority of the Proposed Development is located within this LCT.

Key characteristics of the LCT include:

- "Extensive area of lowland farmland running parallel to the coastline, generally sloping from Sidlaws and Forfar Hills in northwest to near sea level in the southeast;
- Dominated by productive agricultural land, it has an open, medium-scale character which is predominantly productive arable land use with simple geometric field patterns;
- Low woodland cover, except on large estates which have pine shelter belts and hedgerows, and along river corridors. Where located on the slopes it reinforces the change in gradient;
- Variety of historic sites from different eras ranging from prehistoric, Roman to Medieval, including castles, a number of historic estates and designed gardens which create a rich diverse character and strong local cultural identity;
- Dispersed settlement pattern, including some suburban development which extends outwith the historic settlement confines;
- Infrequent single and small clusters of a range of domestic and medium scale commercial turbines along the elevated slopes, prominent due to their elevation and the lack of significant woodland cover; and
- Variety of views from within the landscape, but typically, given the broad fall of slope to the east, there is a strong visual relationship with views along the coast and wide panoramas out to open sea. Intervisibility across the Tay firth to the Fife coast is pronounced around Dundee and reduces in clarity with distance and prominence further north."

There is a strong presence of contemporary human influence within the LCT. The existing Tealing Substation is located within the LCT, to the southeast of the Proposed Development. A number of operational high voltage OHLs extend across this LCT to connect to the substation including, but not limited to, the Kintore to Tealing 275 kV, Tealing to Westfield 275 kV, Tealing to Arbroath North 132 kV, and Tealing to Lunanhead East 132 kV OHLs. The unit also contains a number of farm scale wind turbines, a section of the A90 transport corridor, and several settlements such as Tealing, Bridgefoot and Strathmartine.

Sensitivity

The simple pattern of landcover with limited woodland, and the medium-scale and openness of the landscape indicate a lower susceptibility to the type of development proposed. The existing prominence of electricity infrastructure including overhead lines and substations further indicates a lower susceptibility. The susceptibility is therefore judged to be **Low**.

The northern fringes of the LCT are included within the Sidlaw Local Landscape Area (LLA) (refer to **Volume 3, Figure 7.4a: Designated Landscapes**). The value of the LCT is judged to be **Medium**.

Taking into account the judgments of susceptibility and value, the sensitivity of the LCT is judged to be Medium.

Magnitude of Change During Construction	Magnitude of Change During Operation
The majority of the Proposed Development would be located within the LCT, and as such the LCT would experience physical landscape change arising from the construction of the	The majority of the Proposed Development would be located within the LCT, and as such the LCT would experience physical landscape change arising from the operation of the Proposed

¹ NatureScot (2019) SNH National Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape Character Type 387: Dipslope Farmland. [Online] Available at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20387%20-%20Dipslope%20Farmland%20-%20final%20pdf.pdf



TRANSMISSION

LCT 387: Dipslope Farmland

Proposed Development. Physical impacts arising during construction would include the construction of the steel lattice towers which would result in the removal and disturbance of some landscape features including the arable fields between Linn of Balluderon and the area around the proposed Emmock Substation to the southwest of Balkemback. Physical impacts would also include the introduction of temporary and permanent access tracks and construction activity including the movement of construction vehicles and plant. The main OHL components constructed during this phase would remain present throughout the operational phase of the Proposed Development.

Construction activities would also result in perceptual landscape effects on the LCT, primarily resulting from views towards partially constructed steel lattice towers. Despite the open nature of the Tealing LCT unit, the effect of construction activity on landscape character is unlikely to be perceptible beyond 1 km from the Proposed Development. As the distance from the construction activity increases, the perceptibility of it would decrease.

The scale of change is judged to be **Large**, resulting from physical changes relating to construction activity across a small geographical extent, broadly defined as the area between Balkello in the northwest, Kirkton of Tealing in the east and Myreton of Claverhouse in the south. The scale of change would decrease with distance due to a reduction in perceptibility of construction activity at greater distances. Physical and perceptual changes to the landscape during construction would be temporary.

The magnitude of change during construction would be **Medium** for the LCT, reducing to **Low** for parts of the LCT beyond 1 km.

Development. Physical changes arising during operation would include the presence of new steel lattice towers and OHL connection, and the introduction of permanent stone access tracks. The creation of steel lattice pylon platforms and permanent access tracks would result in the permanent removal of small areas of arable land.

Perceptual effects would also occur during operation, primarily resulting from views towards towers, which could locally alter the "open, medium-scale character" of the LCT. The ZTV (refer to Volume 3, Figure 7.3b Landscape Character Types with Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)) indicates that there is extensive theoretical visibility from this LCT within the study area.

The Proposed Development would occupy an area that is in close proximity to existing contemporary human development, including the existing Tealing Substation and Seagreen substation, and a number of high voltage OHLs which already characterise the baseline of the LCT. The LCT also contains two farm scale wind turbines, which are noted to be "prominent due to their elevation and the lack of significant woodland cover". Therefore, perceptual effects would be more limited in this context, and would reduce with distance due to localised screening and variance in topography.

The Proposed Development would also include the permanent removal of steel towers and OHL from this LCT. The influence of OHL will therefore reduce in certain areas and increase in other areas.

The scale of change is judged to be locally **Large**, resulting from physical and perceptual changes relating to the proposed steel lattice towers and OHL. The geographic extent is considered **Small**, due to the small portion of the LCT which would be affected, broadly defined as the area between Balkello Woodland in the west, Wynton and Myreton of Claverhouse in the south, and Balnuith and Balkemback in the east. The scale of change would decrease with distance due to a reduction in perceptibility of the Proposed Development, particularly for the north-east of the LCT at its furthest from the study area. Physical and perceptual changes to the landscape during operation would be permanent.

The magnitude of change during operation would be **Medium** for the LCT within the area noted above, reducing to **Low** elsewhere.

Significance of Effect during Construction

Taking account of the **Medium** sensitivity, and the **Medium** magnitude of change within 1 km, the landscape effects for this LCT are judged to be **Moderate** (**Significant**) locally within the LCT (within no more than 1 km of the Proposed Development) and **Minor** (**Not Significant**) for remaining parts of the LCT within the study area.

Significance of Effect during Operation

Taking account of the **Medium** sensitivity, and the locally **Medium** magnitude of change, the landscape effects for this LCT are judged to be **Moderate (Significant)** locally within the LCT (within the immediate context of the Proposed Development noted above) and **Minor (Not Significant)** beyond this area. There will be very localised beneficial effects for a section of the LCT around Balnuith and Prieston, due to the removal of OHL.



Table 7.2.2: Lowland Hill Ranges

LCT 382: Lowland Hill Ranges

Baseline description

Within the study area, this LCT is found as one unit which covers an area of low hills to the north. It covers the Sidlaw Hills which extend from Perth to Forfar, reaching a maximum elevation of 455 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at the summit of Craigowl Hill in the north of the study area. The LCT is flanked by LCT 387: Dipslope Farmland to the south, and contains the most northwestern extents of the Proposed Development (three tie-in towers).

Key characteristics of the LCT include:

- "The Sidlaw and Ochil Hills comprise hard volcanic rocks which appear as relatively uniform ridgelines orientated southwest to northeast, contributing to the much wider strategic grain of landscape character defined by the Highland Boundary Fault geology;
- Recognisable shapes, peaks and slopes, and ridge profiles, the presence of which is emphasised by their location set within low lying agricultural landscape to the north and south;
- Short burns and rivers flowing from dramatic, short steep glens;
- Several large glens through the hills;
- Often distinctive and conspicuous scarp and dipslopes;
- Generally open medium scale landscapes of almost conical summits dominated by grass moorland and upland pasture;
- Sweeping patchwork of regular but not geometric patterns on the dipslopes;
- Some areas of extensive forestry;
- Occasional vertical features such as navigational and telecom masts, follies, and wind turbines which appear prominent in these elevated locations;
- Popular use for informal recreation by nearby large centres of population;
- A sense of relative tranquillity;
- Importance as a backdrop to many settlements in the surrounding low-lying agricultural landscapes; and
- Views within, across and up to this character type."²

There is some evidence of contemporary human influence within the LCT, including occasional scattered properties and the presence of telecommunication masts at the summits of several hills, including at the top of Craigowl Hill (455 m AOD). A number of operational high voltage OHLs extend across this LCT including the Kintore to Tealing 275 kV, the Tealing to Lunanhead East 132 kV and Alyth to Tealing 275 kV OHLs. A section of the A90 transport corridor and the A928 public road passes through this LCT within the study area.

The northwestern extents of this LCT are covered by the Sidlaws LLA. The designation incorporates a number of distinctive hills that are popular for recreation with strong cultural heritage associations, and within the study area includes the summit of Balkello Hill.³

Sensitivity

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² NatureScot (2019) SNH National Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape Character Type 382: Lowland Hill Ranges. [Online] Available at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20382%20-%20Lowland%20Hill%20Ranges%20-%20final%20pdf.pdf

³ Angus Council (2024) Local Landscape Areas in Angus, Final Report. [Online] Available at: https://www.angus.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/Report%20109_24%20Local%20Landscape%20Areas%20in%20Angus_App%202.pdf.



LCT 382: Lowland Hill Ranges

The distinctive landform of medium-scale hills form a distinctive skyline and backdrop to the surrounding lower-lying areas, indicating a higher susceptibility to the type of development proposed. Furthermore, the general lack of human influence in the LCT also increases the susceptibility of the landscape to the Proposed Development. Overall, the susceptibility is therefore judged to be **High.**

Part of the LCT is located within the Sidlaw LLA. The Sidlaw Hills also offer recreational amenity, such as at Balkello Wood and the popular hill summit of Balkello Hill with its promoted viewpoint. The overall value of the LCT is judged to be **Medium**.

Taking into account the judgments of susceptibility and value, the sensitivity of the LCT is judged to be **Medium**.

Magnitude of Change During Construction

Part of the northern-most extents of the Proposed Development, between tower AT1 and YT681, would be located within the Lowland Hill Ranges LCT. However, only YT681 would be relocated as a result of the Proposed Development. As such this would experience physical landscape change arising from the construction of the Proposed Development, notably in relation to the movement of tower YT681. Physical impacts arising during construction would include the removal of field boundaries and disturbance to agricultural fields to the north of North Balluderon. Physical impacts would also include the introduction of temporary and permanent access tracks, and the movement of construction vehicles and plant. The main OHL components constructed during this phase would remain present throughout the operational phase.

Construction activities would also result in perceptual landscape impacts on the LCT, primarily resulting from views towards partially constructed steel lattice towers. Given the Proposed Development would be located to the south of the Sidlaw Hills, views towards construction activity would be largely backclothed by the rising landform of the Sidlaws. Some closer elements, including views of part built towers may appear to sit against the skyline. As the distance from the construction activity increases, the perceptibility of it would decrease.

The scale of change is judged to be **Medium**, resulting from localised physical changes near tower YT681, and more extensive views of construction activity across medium geographical extent, focussed within distances of 1 km from the Proposed Development over an area across the southern slopes of the Sidlaw Hills. The scale of change would decrease with distance due to a reduction in perceptibility of construction activity at greater distances. Physical and perceptual changes to the landscape during construction would be temporary.

The magnitude of change during construction would be **Medium** for the LCT locally, reducing to **Low** for parts of the LCT beyond 1 km within the study area.

Magnitude of Change During Operation

The northern-most extents of the Proposed Development, between tower AT1 and YT681, would be located within the Lowland Hill Ranges LCT. However, only YT681 would be relocated as a result of the Proposed Development. As such the LCT would experience very limited physical landscape change arising from the operation of the Proposed Development.

Perceptual effects would also occur during operation, primarily resulting from views towards towers. The ZTV (refer to **Volume 3, Figure 7.3b Landscape Character Types with Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)**) indicates widespread theoretical visibility from this LCT within approximately 1 km north of the Proposed Development, and 3 km north-east. Beyond these distances, visibility is indicated to be negligible, due to the landform of the Sidlaw Hills. At distances of 3 km, the Proposed Development would likely form a small feature in the view and minimal change in character, with visibility within 1 km resulting in more noticeable changes.

The introduction of the Proposed Development has the potential to reduce the "sense of relative tranquillity" associated with the landscape and detract from the long-ranging views afforded from the hill summits in the Sidlaws, by introducing large electricity infrastructure into views. The introduction of the Proposed Development would also restrict views of the "distinctive profile of smooth rounded hills" from the neighbouring low-lying LCT to the south (LCT 387: Dipslope Farmland), noting that the hills are important as "backdrop to many settlements in the surrounding low lying agricultural landscapes".

However, it is recognised that the LCT already experiences visibility of existing electricity transmission developments located within the neighbouring LCT to the south (LCT 387). The Proposed Development would be introduced nearby the existing Tealing and Seagreen Substations, and seen alongside several 132kV and 275kV OHLs from this LCT. The Proposed Development would also include the permanent removal of steel towers and OHL

⁴ NatureScot (2019) National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 382 Lowland Hill Ranges. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20382%20-%20Lowland%20Hill%20Ranges%20-%20final%20pdf.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid



TRANSMISSION

LCT 382: Lowland Hill Ranges			
	from this LCT. The influence of OHL will therefore reduce in certain areas and increase in other areas.		
	The scale of change in character is judged to be Medium , across a Small geographical extent, focused within distances of 1 km from the Proposed Development over an area across the southern slopes of the Sidlaw Hills. The scale of change would decrease beyond this distance. Physical and perceptual changes to the landscape during operation would be permanent.		
	The magnitude of change during construction would be Medium for the LCT locally, reducing to Low for other parts of the LCT within the study area.		
Significance of Effect during Construction	Significance of Effect during Operation		
Taking account of the Medium sensitivity, and the Medium magnitude of change within 1 km, the landscape effects for this LCT are judged to be Moderate (Significant) locally within the LCT (within approximately 1 km of the Proposed Development) and Minor (Not Significant) for remaining parts of the LCT.	Taking account of the Medium sensitivity, and the Medium magnitude of change within 1 km, the landscape effects for this LCT are judged to be Moderate (Significant) locally within the LCT (extending north to Balkello Hill and Craigowl Hill) and Minor (Not Significant) for remaining parts of the LCT.		



3. LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

- 3.1.1 Local landscape designations are mapped on Volume 3, Figure 7.4a: Designated Landscapes and mapped with a ZTV overlain in Volume 3, Figure 7.4b: Designated Landscapes with Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).
- 3.1.2 The 5km LVIA study area includes parts of one LLA in Angus, the Sidlaw LLA. For the designation, Table 7.2.3: Sidlaw LLA is presented which sets out:
 - Baseline description including location, extent within the study area, special qualities and forces for change;
 - An assessment of the potential for the Proposed Development to affect the special qualities of the designation, considering the assessed effects on LCTs and visual receptors (see **Volume 4, Appendix 7.3 Visual Assessment**) within the designated area; and
 - Conclusions on the **magnitude of change** and **significance of the effect** on special qualities, and consideration of whether the integrity of the designation would be affected.



Table 7.2.3: Sidlaw LLA

Sidlaw LLA

Baseline description

The Proposed Development is located 0.5 km east of the Sidlaw LLA. The designation extends from Balkello Hill westwards beyond the study area to Lundie, incorporating a number of distinctive hills that are popular for recreation with strong cultural heritage associations, including Balkello Hill, Kinpurney Hill (345 m AOD) and Auchterhouse Hill (426 m AOD). The special qualities for the Sidlaw LLA are set out in the Local Landscape Areas in Angus report⁷. Those of relevance to the Proposed Development include:

- "Distinctive profile of smooth rounded hills with panoramic views;
- Often pasture with a strong pattern of enclosure by dykes which creates scenic landscape topology;
- Often arable and improved pasture on lower slopes but with semi-natural pasture and extensive areas of heath on higher ground; and
- A popular recreational area... Auchterhouse Hill being a popular hilltop destination and often the focal point of path networks. Balkello Community Woodland... is also an important recreational area."8.

With relation to forces for change and landscape guidance, the report notes that "As well as issues of creating a developed character and reducing wildness, tall structures can adversely affect the perception of scale, particularly when placed on top of hills or in a position where visual comparison is possible".

An existing high voltage OHL (Alyth – Tealing 275kV) passes through the eastern part of the LLA from Balluderon, skirting the base of Balkello Hill, and running northwest out the study area (this OHL will be altered as part of the Proposed Development).

Representative viewpoints within this LLA:

VP3: Cairns, Balkello Hill (refer to Volume 3, Figure 7.7 VP3: Cairns, Balkello Hill).

Potential for the Proposed Development to affect the special qualities of the LLA

Construction activity associated with the Proposed Development, including the movement of machinery, creation of temporary and permanent access tracks, and construction of steel lattice towers, will be visible in close distance views from east to south, from the southeast of the LLA, around Balkello. Construction activity would appear backclothed by landform. Construction activity would be visible across a medium angle of the view, due to activity associated with the removal of an existing OHL to the east.

The ZTV (refer to **Volume 4, Figure 7.4b: Designated Landscapes with Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)**) indicates relatively widespread visibility of the Proposed Development in the eastern part of the LLA within the study area, focused in the areas around Balkello Hill and Auchterhouse Hill. West of Auchterhouse Hill, visibility is limited to higher ground. Areas of woodland and forestry on the lower slopes of Balkello Hill and Auchterhouse Hill would reduce actual visibility in Balkello Community Woodland.

The LCT assessment in **Section 2** of this appendix identified significant effects on the landscape character of LCT 387 – Dipslope Farmland and LCT 382 - Lowland Hill Ranges (refer to **Table 7.2.2: Lowland Hill Ranges**), locally within the immediate context of the Proposed Development, during both construction and operation. The areas affected within both these LCTs also covers the southeastern part of the LLA, including Balkello Hill. Therefore, the Proposed Development will have significant effects on the landscape character of the LLA, extending across a small geographical extent.

The introduction of the Proposed Development has the potential to affect some of the special qualities of the LLA, including the "panoramic views" available from hill summits within the LLA and its special quality as a "popular recreational area". From the eastern extents of the LLA including at the summits of Balkello Hill and Auchterhouse Hill, the Proposed Development would

⁷ Angus Council, 2024. Local Landscape Areas in Angus. Final Report. (Online) Available at: https://www.angus.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/Report%20109 24%20Local%20Landscape%20Areas%20in%20Angus App%202.pdf.

⁸ Angus Council, 2024. Local Landscape Areas in Angus. Final Report. (Online) Available at: https://www.angus.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/Report%20109 24%20Local%20Landscape%20Areas%20in%20Angus App%202.pdf (pages 14-16).



Sidlaw LLA

be seen in middle distance views, at distances ranging between approximately 1-2.3 km. In these views, the Proposed Development would be generally backclothed by landform, due to the elevated landform of the Sidlaw Hills, reducing the prominence of the infrastructure, as illustrated by VP3: Balkello Hill (refer to Volume 3, Figure 7.7: VP3: Cairns, Balkello Hill). Operational effects on receptors at Balkello Hill are judged to be minor and not significant (see Table 7.3.5:VRA 5: Ark Hill, Balkello, Craigowl and Gallow Hills in Volume 4, Appendix 7.3 Visual Assessment). From other recreational areas within the eastern extent of the LLA, including from some of the lower slopes of Balkello Hill, the Proposed Development would be seen in slightly closer views but often obscured by mixed woodland. From the popular Balkello Community Woodland at the southern edge of the LLA, views of the Proposed Development would be largely screened by the mixed woodland in this area.

The Proposed Development would be seen in the context of existing high voltage OHLs, including the Alyth - Tealing 2 275 kV OHL which passes through the LLA. These OHLs already affect "panoramic views", and are seen at closer distances than the Proposed Development would be. Additionally, as part of the Proposed Development, an existing section of this line would be removed, to the east and southeast of the LLA, therefore reducing the presence of electrical infrastructure in the middle distance view.

The introduction of the Proposed Development also has the potential to affect the role the LLA plays in providing a setting to the surrounding lowland landscapes outside the LLA, particularly the perception of the "distinctive profile of smooth rounded hills". From the lower lying areas immediately east and south of the Proposed Development to the south of the Sidlaw Hills, the Proposed Development would form a prominent and large-scale feature in some views towards Balkello Hill, with some towers breaking the skyline formed by the LLA beyond. The influence of the Proposed Development on views towards the LLA would locally affect the perception of the LLA's "distinctive profile", as viewed from a small area east of Balluderon.

Magnitude, Significance of Effect, and Integrity of the Designated Area

The Proposed Development would be located within the setting of the LLA to the southeast, and would have a **Small** scale of effect on the "popular recreational area" special quality, due to its presence in panoramic views, and a **Small** scale of effect on the "Distinctive profile of smooth rounded hills" special quality, in views towards the Sidlaw LLA. The magnitude of change to these special qualities would be **Low**, and the magnitude of change to other special qualities would be **Barely Perceptible**, during both the construction and operational stages. Effects on special qualities would be **Minor** (Not significant) during both the construction and operational stages, and the Proposed Development would not affect the integrity of this local landscape designation.