

**7.12** The new buildings have been designed in a simple manner, without ostentation, and are intended to resemble normal, modern agricultural buildings in a close group, such as might be found on any large farm. They will use traditional facing materials, natural timber and rustic brickwork, and the roofs will be coloured green so as to blend with their green setting. Otherwise, the site occupied by the building group has no special designations for landscape or wildlife value, nor any known archaeological significance (the nearest recorded archaeological sites being as described in Section 4 above).

**7.13 Policy PR.1** goes on to say that supplementary planning guidance adopted by the District Council would be given “thorough consideration” in assessing all planning applications for development. The main documents cited are the 1993 ‘**Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines**’ (the ‘**Arden**’ volume applies here), the 1998 ‘**Countryside Design Summary**’ (a single large sheet) and the 2000 ‘**District Design Guide**’, which runs to 98 pages. Cross references are also made to policies STR.4, EF.10, 13 & 14, DEV.1 & 2, COM.1 and SUA.1 & 2. However, STR.4 concerns the development of ‘brown field’ land in built-up settlements, EF.10 relates principally to Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas, EF.13-14 relates only to conservation areas and listed buildings (XXXX Hill has neither) and SUA.1-2 are geographically irrelevant. The remaining policies are discussed below. The District Design Guide has also been consulted, although this relates largely to houses, buildings of traditional construction and others situated within settlements. The only specific references to agricultural building design relate to the conversion of traditional farm buildings. Similarly, the Countryside Design Statement is mainly geared towards development in rural settlements (villages and small towns), although some reference is made to dispersed hamlets and farmsteads. Nevertheless, relevant material from both of these documents, together with the Arden Landscape Guidelines, is considered separately in Section 8 below.

**7.14 Policy EF.10** requires that “the landscape, amenity and nature conservation value of trees, woodlands and hedgerows will be preserved and enhanced”. The present scheme avoids the destruction of mature trees and aims to cut through hedgerows at points where there are existing formal openings or where gaps have developed through the lack of maintenance in the past. The fields through which the gallop would run in the southern and eastern parts of the site, which are identified in the 2009 XXXXXX Environmental Habitat Survey as F4, F3 and F2, possess no boundary hedge trees with bat roosting potential near the route of the track (hedges H9, H5 and H17 – see further under section 7.10 above). The final stretch of the gallop, leading to the finish, dissects a residual hedgerow with a number of mature trees and could potentially affect one or more of the trees numbered 35 to 37 that are marked as having bat potential. Trees 35 and 36 are “very mature” oaks with cracks in their bark, which are identified as borderline category 1 or 2 trees (1 = low, 2 = low to medium potential), but tree 37 is an ash with holes, splits and cracks in its bark, putting it into category 3 (medium potential). This is the tree most likely to be affected by the proposed route; should this prove to be the case, the route could either be slightly realigned to avoid it, or a suitable new tree or trees of the same species could be planted to compensate for its loss.

**7.15** The land at XXXX Hill falls within the designated Green Belt on the District Plan’s Proposals Map and so **Policy PR.2** applies. This is the Council’s main Green Belt policy and refers to a “general presumption against inappropriate development”. It goes on to list eight forms of development that may be permitted “in appropriate circumstances”. These include development necessary for the continuing operation of agricultural holdings, re-use and adaptation of existing buildings in line with policies CTY.2-2a (for which see paragraph 7.39 below), essential buildings associated with outdoor sport, recreation and leisure, as long as they preserve ‘openness’ and do not conflict with the Green Belt’s purposes (as defined in PPG2), or