



# The Planning Inspectorate

## **The Planning Act 2008**

### **Application for Development Consent for London Luton Airport Expansion project**

**Case Ref: TR020001**

### **The Examining Authority's Note of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection**

#### **Background**

The Examining Authority ('the ExA') undertook an unaccompanied site inspection to support the examination of an application for development consent for the proposed London Luton Airport Expansion project ('the application') on **Tuesday 8 August 2023**.

The ExA carried out its unaccompanied site inspection from publicly accessible land (roads, footpaths and bridleways). No inspections were undertaken on private land, and advance permission to enter land was not required so these inspections could be undertaken on an unaccompanied basis.

The site inspection was undertaken to visit, observe and gain an understanding of cultural heritage assets but also to look at other matters such as landscape and visual impacts and observe noise audible from aircraft at the locations visited.

#### **Particulars of the Site Inspection**

The inspection was undertaken by: Andrew Robinson.

The inspection was undertaken by car and on foot. Weather conditions were overcast with a temperature of around 16 degrees centigrade during the morning inspections with the afternoon inspections consisting of rain with temperatures around 17 degrees centigrade. The ability to appreciate longer range views was variable due to the inclement conditions. The airport was operating in westerly mode. During the Site Inspection, the Flightradar24 App was used to identify which planes were passing overhead at the various locations visited, where internet connectivity allowed.

The inspections commenced at approximately 11:30 and finished at approximately 17:45. An overview of the locations visited is attached at Annex A and a map of the inspection route is attached at Annex B.



## **Annex A: List of locations visited on the Unaccompanied Site Inspection on Tuesday 8 August 2023**

The site inspection commenced by car in the car park at Roaring Meg Retail Park in Stevenage where the ExA drove north to **Six Hills Roman Barrows** situated on the western side of London Road, located adjacent to the roundabout with the A602 and A1070 (Six Hills Way) Roads. The ExA observed the character and appearance of the Scheduled Monument and its surroundings, including current background noise. It was noted that the Scheduled Monument is situated under the flightpath for arrivals to London Luton Airport from the east and a number of flights were seen approaching the airport where the ExA observed the noise audible from aircraft over background levels.

At 12:30, the ExA then proceeded along the A602 and Six Hills Way to the area of **Bedwell** and observed flight arrivals over Bedwell Crescent and Bedwell Rise which were at an altitude of approximately 2,300 feet (ft). Visibility of planes was not possible due to low cloud cover but noise from aircraft was audible.

The ExA then travelled by car to **Hitchin** via the A602, arriving at 13:45, to observe the proximity of listed buildings to the proposed highway works to the two roundabouts located on the A602 (Work No. 6e(m) and Work No. 6e(k)) and the roundabout located on the A505 (Work No. 6e(l)). The ExA firstly visited the roundabout situated between the Hitchin Hill Path Conservation Area and Hitchin Conservation Area where Work No. 6e(m) is proposed to observe the character and appearance of the listed buildings located on Butchers Lane and the Three Moorhens public House (all Grade II listed) and their proximity to the roundabout. The ExA then proceeded to Tilehouse Street located in the town centre, arriving at 14:00, to observe the listed buildings located on the street and their proximity to the roundabout where Work No. 6e(k) is proposed. The location of trees planted between Tilehouse Street and the roundabout was noted. The ExA then drove back along Park Street and Park Way (A602) to the roundabout with the A505 and A602 to observe the listed buildings of Numbers 41 to 43 Upper Tilehouse Street and their proximity to the roundabout and Work No. 6e(k).

The ExA then proceeded to **St Paul's Walden Bury** via the A602, B656 and B651 and sat in the car park to the front of the main house, arriving at 14:30. As the gardens were not open to the public at the time of the inspection, the ExA drove to **St Paul's Walden** and parked on the road opposite the Strathmore Arms public house to listen to aircraft



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approaching London Luton Airport, which were at an altitude of approximately 1,500 ft. Noise from aircraft departing from Stansted and other aircraft located at higher altitude was also audible.

The ExA then proceeded to **Bendish**, via the B651, the High Street in Whitwell and Bendish Lane, arriving at 15:00 and walked around to understand and observe the character and appearance of the conservation area, existing background noise, flight arrivals from planes overhead and also to observe views towards the airport from Assessment Viewpoint 3 in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment [AS-088], which is taken on the public footpath St Paul's Walden 024. Visibility towards the airport from the location of Viewpoint 3 was limited due to inclement conditions although lights from the runway were visible. Noise from aircraft landing and taking off was audible from this location.

The ExA then proceeded to **Breachwood Green**, arriving at 15:40, and observed noise from flights arriving over the Breachwood Green Baptist Church (Grade II listed) and The Old Hampstead (Grade II\* listed) from the public road. The ExA then walked to the location of Representative Viewpoint 34 [AS-040] to observe planes landing.

The ExA then drove to **King's Walden**, arriving at 16:10 and parked outside the village hall. The inspection involved a short walk into the field along footpath KW019 to listen to aircraft approaching London Luton Airport. The ExA then proceeded to the grounds of the Grade I Listed **Church of St. Mary** in King's Walden to observe the character and appearance of the church, including grounds, existing background noise and noise from flights approaching London Luton Airport. Noise from aircraft located at higher altitude approaching or coming from other airports was audible in this location. The ExA departed the church yard and drove to Ley Green.

At 16:40, the ExA arrived at **Ley Green** and visited the location of Assessment Viewpoint 2 [AS-088] to observe the character and appearance of the landscape and views towards the airport. Conditions were cloudy with light rain although longer range visibility towards the airport was possible.

The ExA then drove to **Tea Green**, arriving at 16:50 to observe Assessment Viewpoint 60 [AS-095] and the existing hedgerow located on the south western side of the village green where additional mitigation measures are proposed (Work No. 5e). Noise from aircraft arriving to and taking off from the airport was also audible from the village green.



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The ExA then proceeded to **Wandon End House**, arriving at 17:00, to observe the character and appearance of the Grade II listed building and its surroundings from the public road. It was noted that the building has a southeast facing outlook from its frontage. The location of the adjoining agricultural business was also noted. After visiting Wandon End House, the ExA drove to **Wandon End Farm** parking on Darley Road. Due to the building not being visible from the public road, it was not possible to observe the character and appearance of the Grade II listed building. However, the ExA was able to observe that the site comprises a number of buildings as well as tree and hedge planting to the front and surrounding the site.

The ExA then proceeded to **Winch Hill Road** and observed Numbers 1 and 2 Old Winch Hill Cottages from the public road to gain an understanding of views towards the airport from these properties, the surrounding landscape and appearance of the landform surrounding the properties.

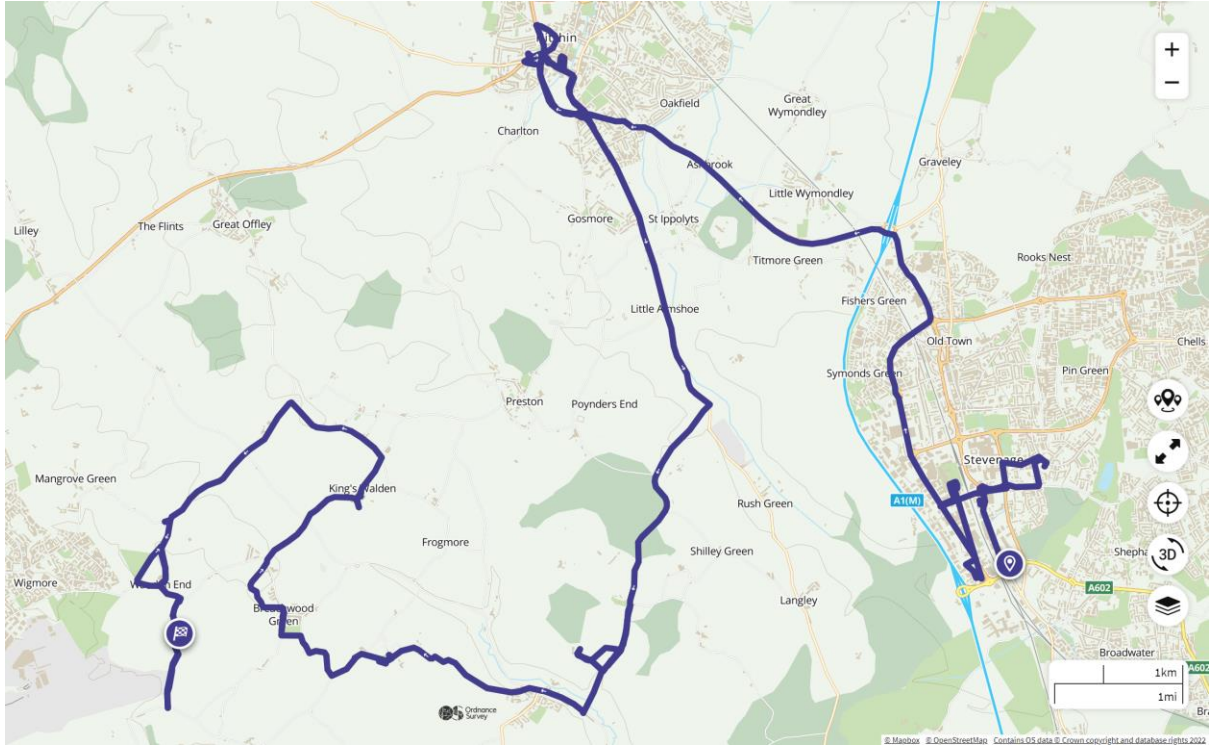
After departing Winch Hill Cottages, the ExA continued along Winch Hill Road to the location of **Assessment Viewpoint 28** [AS-092] to observe the character and appearance of the landscape, topography and views towards the airport.

Following Viewpoint 28, the ExA drove north along Winch Hill Road and stopped to observe the location of the now demolished Winch Hill Farmhouse.



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## Annex B: Map of route taken on Tuesday 8 August 2023



Map data from [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/)