



Land at Whalley Road, Hurst Green Hurst Green,
Landscape Appraisal - 021012



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Introduction

Smeeden Foreman Ltd. has been commissioned to carry out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for a proposed housing application at Hurst Green, in the Ribble Valley.

This document aims to identify both the sensitivity of the site character and the sensitivity of views into this site and then assess the potential effects of a housing development.

In order to satisfy this objective each section has been set out as follows:

Baseline Analysis - This is an analysis of the existing situation within and surrounding the site. It draws upon information gathered during a desk study (refer to the Bibliography at the end of this document for a list of the documents used) and field survey work. In relation to the visual amenity section, the area of study (extent of visibility) is also identified and the visual receptors are selected and visited.

Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects - This part of the study describes the likely nature and scale of changes to landscape character and visual amenity. The development and suggestions for general landscape mitigation were studied and then compared with the baseline information to ascertain potential effects upon the landscape. Consideration was also given to the implications of planning designations which seek to protect landscape quality and character.

Smeeden Foreman Ltd. is a registered practice with the Landscape Institute. The work was undertaken by qualified and experienced chartered landscape architects, based upon visits to the site and the surrounding area on the 13th March 2012. The practice has previously been engaged in assessing the potential impact of housing and other developments throughout the UK, frequently within protected landscapes.

Methodology

The process has been guided by the publication ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’, produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Assessment and the Landscape Institute [1]. Full details of the methodology and the scoring process are appended; however, a general summary is outlined below.

Landscape and visual assessments are separate, although linked, procedures. Landscape effects ‘*derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced*’. Visual effects ‘*relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscapes, to peoples responses to the changes, and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity*’ [1]. This document separates these elements into two distinct sections so that the differences can be clearly appreciated.

The methodology also responds to the nature, scale and location of this project and also the architectural layout information, in regards to the development.

Study Area

A distinction has been made in this landscape and visual impact assessment between the ‘study area’ and the ‘application site’.

The ‘application site’ is a field off Whalley Road, as shown within the red line boundary in figures 1 and 2.

The visual assessment considers the visual amenity of the application site and the surrounding area and identifies potentially sensitive visual receptors and the approximate visibility of the development. The ‘study area’ is defined as the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and it is ‘*the area in which a proposed development may have an influence or effect on visual amenity*’ [1].

The character of the application site is also examined in relation to the character of a wider area, which is set out and described in Natural England’s national character area assessment and Lancashire Country Council’s landscape character assessment.

Illustrative Material

1) General Photographs:

General photographs were taken as a record and also to illustrate character. These photographs are presented within the document, and they illustrate the features and collective character of the site and its surroundings and views from identified viewpoints.

2) Maps and Plans:

Plans have been produced, using Ordnance Survey maps as a base, to show the local landscape designations (figure 1) and viewpoint locations (figure 2).

Description of Development

An initial layout drawing was produced by PRA Architects which guided the landscape assessment process. The plan was then amended to encompass the findings of the assessment and ensure that the landscape character and visual amenity was protected and enhanced where possible.

30 dwellings are proposed, with the main vehicular entrance on Whalley Road. The proposed dwellings along the Whalley Road frontage would be set back to follow the line of the existing terraced houses on Warren Fold. There is a central green area, which allows for the existing mature tree to be retained and also acts a focal point as people enter the development. The school car park and drop off point would be moved to be closer to the school on the south eastern side of the site and link into the existing footpath. A layby would still be located on Whalley Road, but limited to 5 spaces.

Dwellings on the northern boundary would face towards the north, where possible to provide an active and positive frontage. Some properties would back onto this edge, but there would be a low stone wall to demarcate the boundary to maintain an open aspect and small groupings of tree and shrub planting would further break up this edge and create a naturalistic frontage to the north. This edge line would link the existing buildings on the east and western side of the site and form a continuation of the settlement edge. The line of the proposed housing would also not impinge any further to the north of a line between the existing buildings to either side. They would also be situated behind the ridge line so that when viewed from the north the houses would appear tucked behind this landform.

Proposed dwellings on the western side of the application site would be set back from the boundary to allow some space for screen planting and allow a buffer between the development and existing properties that face into the site.

The proposed layout from PRA Architects is shown on the next page. There are also detailed landscape proposal plans, SF2007 LL01 to LL05.



PRA Architects Layout Plan



The expansive Forest of Bowland and Pendle Hill are landscapes which are close to the site, the latter forming a backdrop to some of the views from Hurst Green.



View across farmland, from Knowles Brow, showing the gently undulating pasture, crossed by hedgerows, with large, mature hedgerow trees, and framed by broadleaved woodland.

Section I - Landscape Character

Landscape character is defined as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. Patterns in the landscape, activity or tranquillity, heritage and cultural associations, vegetation, land use and connectivity combine together to create landscape character. It is important this is considered so that an understanding of the site and its surroundings can be achieved.

Existing Landscape Character Assessments

Natural England have produced The Character Map of England which groups the English landscape into distinct character areas and types that share common features and qualities (NCA – National Character Areas). The site lies in Character Area 33, Bowland fringe and Pendle Hill, but it is also bordered to the south by Character Area 35, Lancashire Valleys [2].

The character area was reviewed and the key characteristics are listed as follows:

‘This is a diverse landscape of undulating pasture, broadleaved woodland, parkland and waterbodies. Fields are small to medium-sized and are enclosed by well-maintained hedgerows with large mature hedgerow trees.’

‘The combination of topography, tree cover and field enclosure creates a sense of intimacy in contrast to the expanse of the coastal plain and exposed moorland heights.’

‘The distinguishing characteristic of this area is the influence of human habitation. The settlement pattern is of small, stone villages, hamlets and farmsteads. The isolated country houses set in well-maintained formal parkland are a typical feature of this landscape.’

‘The road network is typified by a complex system of narrow lanes with a few direct routes between settlements.’

‘This is an intimate, tamed landscape in contrast to the wild exposed moorland of the Bowland Fells. The combination of well-maintained hedgerows and hedgerow trees with areas of parkland and well-grazed pasture gives this area an intensively managed character.’

‘The field pattern around settlements and on valley bottoms is generally irregular and small to medium-scale, indicating early piecemeal enclosure.’

Further to the south the character changes:

‘Intensely urban character derived from main towns of Blackburn, Accrington and Burnley which have developed rapidly since the industrial revolution.’

‘The remnants of agricultural land are now fragmented by industry and scattered development which severely disrupt the continuity of the field pattern.’

Lancashire County Council has also produced a Landscape Character Assessment for the district [3]. The application site is within Landscape Character Area 5 – Undulating Lowland Farmland (5c Lower Ribble) [3].

This character area is defined as follows:

‘Some of the most picturesque stone villages of the county occur within this well settled landscape type.’

‘There is a high density of farms and scattered cottages outside the clustered settlements, linked by a network of minor roads.’

‘Although a rural valley, the area is well settled; a dense network of winding country lanes and tracks link the large number of stone farm buildings. Other features of this area are the country houses and designed landscapes, for example Stonyhurst College, Huntingdon Hall and Showley Hall.’

This is a landscape that is in transition, located between the large-scale and sweeping landscape of the Bowland Fells to the north and the industrial, urban south. The landscape is small-medium scale with enclosed farmland and a good cover of woodland, partly due to the parkland, surrounding Stonyhurst College and the country houses in the area. The application site and its surroundings display many of the characteristics listed above and this is explored more fully in the next few paragraphs.

Assessment of the Application Site

Smeeden Foreman carried out a detailed character assessment for the application site and its surroundings, and where possible characteristics have been related back to the existing character assessments above.

Landscape Pattern:

The site consists of small scale fields that are currently grazed by sheep. The fields are bordered by well maintained hedgerows and there is a large, mature tree in the centre of the site, within a hedgerow. The landform rises from Whalley Road, towards the north, until it then drops away in line with St. Joseph's RC Primary School. The landscape is relatively open and exposed in the centre of the site, with far views to the north and south; this diminishes on the outer edges of the site as the levels drop and views out are not as prevalent.

The site is perceived as land that might lend itself to housing infill and partially 'round off' the edge of the settlement. Buildings enclose the site on three sides, with St. Joseph's RC Primary School to the east, Whalley Road and houses to the south, and houses on Warren Fold and Warren Farm to the west. Fields extend to the north, until they then become playing fields within the Stonyhurst College complex. The perceived entrance to the village along Whalley Road, from the east, is at Dilworth House, where there is a row of detached properties, with the school rising behind on top of the hill, and bungalows (numbers 31 and 33, Whalley Road) further along the road. As the site is approached along the road, the terraced houses (numbers 24-34 Whalley Road) come into view in the foreground and the Eagle & Child pub is seen in the background. The application site forms a break in the built form and severs the eastern edge of the village from the main village hub.

Although the nature of the site would change, as farmland becomes housing, the pattern of the site would not be significantly impacted; the development would provide an infill, which would not appear out of place and would link the two sides of the village together. The topography would remain the same and the development would aim to utilise the landform to create positive views out of the development, and maintain a degree of enclosure at the outer edges. The hedgerows surrounding the site would be retained, although those within the site would need to be removed but the large, mature tree in the centre of the site would be maintained as a key feature in an open central green.

Culture and Heritage:

There are no apparent cultural or heritage assets on the site. Much of the Stonyhurst College estate is designated as Grade II* on the English Heritage register of Historic Parks and Gardens, and the grounds are fundamental in the setting of the Grade I Listed buildings within the complex. The Historic Parks and Gardens designation meets Hurst Green at its northern edge at Smithy Row, as the drive passes through woodland and then turns north east, where expansive views of the college are experienced.

The historic parkland and setting would not be physically affected by the proposed development as it is over 400m away and it is mainly separated by woodland along the drive and at Foxfall Wood.

The college also has associations with J.R.R. Tolkien and a walk dedicated to him starts at the Hurst Green War Memorial and proceeds to Stonyhurst College, Winckley Hall and then Hacking Hall, before it then follows the River Ribble back to Hurst Green. The development proposals do not physical effect this important footpath.

Views from the college grounds and public right of way are detailed in Section 2 of this document.



View up Whalley Road into Hurst Green (facing west). The terraced houses to the south of the application site are seen on the left and the corner of the site is central within the view.



View across parkland towards Stonyhurst College. The parkland is designated as a Historic Park and Garden and it has formal lakes to the front of the main building.



View across the site from the south western edge. The landform rises towards the school (in the background) and the large tree in the centre is a dominant feature.



View across application site to Warren Fold



View into Warren Fold from Whalley Road.

Vegetation:

The site consists of rough grassland, which is grazed, with boundary hedgerows running through the site and bordering it to the south (part), east (on the other side of the school footpath) and west. There is also a large, mature oak tree, which stands in the centre of the site, within a hedgerow. The hedgerows and tree are in good condition and the hedgerows have been trimmed on a regular basis. There are no protective designations on this site.

The housing development would aim to retain the tree so that it becomes a key feature within the scheme. The boundary hedgerows would be maintained where appropriate, but the inner hedgerows would need to be removed to accommodate the layout. New planting would be proposed which would combine native species at the periphery of the development and then some ornamental planting within the development. Planting would be reflective of that already present in the village, and it would assist with the village's aspiration of being 'the best kept village' in Lancashire (won in 1992 and 1993).

Built Environment:

The application site consists of open landscape, although there is a timber barn in the north western corner. Buildings surround the site to the south, east and west: St. Joseph's RC Primary School is situated on the eastern side, and this is a single and double storey building of varying styles. This building is tucked behind higher landform and mainly faces into the valley, towards the east. Whalley Road bounds the site to the south and on the other side are stone terraced and detached properties, with limited set back from the road. On the western side of the site there are two storey terraced, semi-detached and detached properties on Warren Fold and at Bilsberry Cottages and there is a line of stone cottages at Warren Farm Barn. The village almost surrounds the site and so it is perceived as being part of the village.

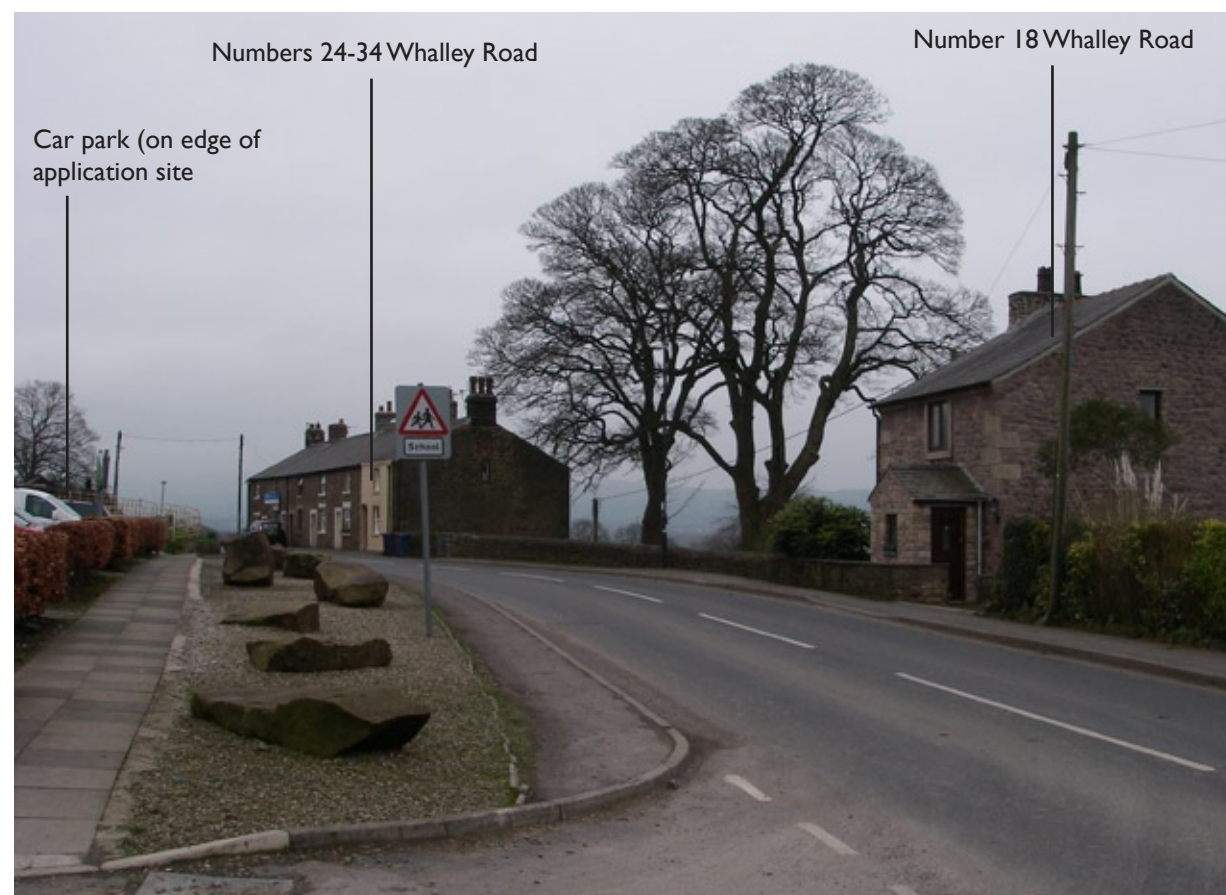
Hurst Green does not fully conform to the character description - 'small, stone villages' [2] – although there are some stone buildings there are also many recent additions, for example the post war housing estate at Warren Fold. The NCA description describes these areas: 'There has been some, limited, modern expansion of villages but these developments have generally been done sympathetically using local materials' [2]. The modern additions in Hurst Green are not as sympathetic as described in this assessment and houses have a generic design, rather than reflecting the local character. Houses that front onto the main roads (Whalley Road and Avenue Road) are more characteristic of a traditional village in this area: 'The predominant building materials are stone and roofs made of slate or, less commonly, stone flags.' [2].

The proposed housing development would be of a small scale, similar in size to other modern additions. The design of the buildings would be reflective of the local scale and style and would utilise local materials. This should ensure that the development becomes a harmonious addition, which does not look out of place within this locality.

Summary

The application site is located within a village which has a well-defined, compact shape, with many buildings along the main roads, which are characteristic in this area. Development on the application site would change the character and nature of the landscape from open, grazed farm land to housing. However, it is concluded that with a sensitive layout and design, the development is unlikely to negatively impact on the character of the village. It is a natural infill area, surrounded on three sides by buildings, and it could serve to link and unify all parts of the village as well as providing a high quality frontage onto Whalley Road.

The sensitivity of the application site is medium as it is open and green, with a mature tree and hedgerows. This is slightly diminished by the presence of buildings on three sides of the site, especially modern, generic housing at Warren Fold and also because it is perceived that this site is within the village but currently takes on the character of rural landscape. The magnitude of change would be low adverse, as although there would be a change, it would not appear out of place in this village environment. The resulting effect significance would be **minor adverse**. Once planting becomes established this would also help the development to integrate with the fabric of the existing village.



View along Whalley Road, towards the east, with number 18 in the foreground and the terraced houses behind. The site is located on the left side of the photograph.



View across Whalley Road from the front of number 18. The road and car park are dominant features in the view, with a backdrop of grazed fields.

Section 2 - Visual Amenity

Figure 2 - Viewpoint Locations, shows where each viewpoint is situated in relation to the site. It also shows viewpoints that were visited but where views of the site could not be seen, either because of undulating landform or screening vegetation.

A visual survey was carried out; the extent and nature of the views and the contribution made by the existing site was recorded. Any close and direct views of the site were recorded and then a wide variety of further views were selected within the visual envelope to demonstrate the effect on viewpoints from all directions surrounding the site.

The photographs are representative of the views experienced from each viewpoint, however, they should not be considered a substitute to visiting the viewpoint in the field. It is also noted that in some instances photographs could not be taken as access was unavailable and so locations as close as possible to the viewpoints were used instead.

Viewpoint 1 – Properties South of Whalley Road

These properties consist of six terraced houses (24-34 Whalley Road) and two detached houses (12 and 18 Whalley Road). The terraced houses front directly onto the road, with no set back from the pavement. Number 18 has a small set back and it is positioned at a slightly lower level than the road. Number 12 is further set back from the road and it is at a lower level, in which the ground floor windows face onto an embankment and do not experience views over the road. Open views are experienced from the back of the properties, where they face out over the valley towards the south. The sensitivity of the receptors would be high as they are residential properties, which experience open views to the south.

The magnitude of change would be moderate adverse as the change in the views from these properties would be relatively significant. However, views towards the north are already dominated by Whalley Road, which links Clitheroe with Longridge. In some of the views the school car park can also be seen. However, the backdrop of open fields would change due to development and the open aspect would become more enclosed and urban in nature.

The resulting effect significance would be **moderate adverse**, due to the change in the views that are experienced from these properties into the application site. However, these changes are tempered by the road and car park, which are dominant features in the foreground, and expansive views over countryside are focused to the south (which would not change).

The proposed housing is located off the direct sight line from the terraced houses and so they would look out onto a garage and the school car park, which would be enclosed by planting. A degree of openness would be maintained in the views and planting would also soften the view. The line of existing housing (at Warren Fold) would be followed as a natural continuation of the development pattern and this would provide a set back to also maintain openness.

Viewpoint 2 – St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Primary School

St. Joseph’s RC Primary School is a prominent building in Hurst Green; located on top of a hill at the edge of the village, and on the western side of the application site. The school consists of a small complex of buildings of varying styles and ages and they are generally set at a lower level to the site, and experience most of their views towards the east. These views are open and expansive, over the valley. Views to the west are limited due to the landform and low hedgerow, but some filtered views are available across the site towards the village. The sensitivity of the receptor is medium.

The oblique views, towards the south west, across the application site would change from being relatively open to enclosed development, and the fields would become housing. However, these are not direct views and also existing views are already screened at ground floor level by rising landform and hedgerow planting. The main views from the school, towards the east, would not be affected. The resulting magnitude of change would be negligible. Views from the footpath, running down to the car park would experience a greater change; currently views are open and green fields dominate - this would become housing.

The resulting effect significance would be **no change** from the school buildings. However, from the footpath this would rise to **low/moderate adverse**, as the open nature of views, across fields would change.

Viewpoint 3 - Properties on Warren Fold

There are 3 properties on Warren Fold, where the backs face directly onto the application site (numbers 15-17). The end terrace (number 14) also has a side window, which looks onto the site. These houses are two-storey, relatively modern houses, with a generic design. Although the backs of 15-17 face the site, most of the ground floor views are screened by two rows of hedgerow planting, along the boundary of the site and then at the bottom of the gardens. Views into the surrounding landscape are therefore only experienced from the first floor. The key views from number 14 Warren Fold face into Whalley Road or into the garage court behind the house. The limited views that are experienced are of grazed fields, with the school and 24-34 Whalley Road in the distance - the sensitivity is considered to be medium.

The magnitude of the change would be moderate adverse and views, mainly from the first floor windows, would change from farmland to housing and the openness currently experienced would be diminished. Proposed housing would be of side elevations onto the viewpoint to minimise their dominance, and space and screen planting has also been located here to maintain privacy and soften the development.

The effect significance would therefore be **moderate adverse**, mainly due to the loss of open views from first floor windows, and the changing nature of the views. However, the impacts would be reduced once planting matures and screens the development.

View across the application site, from the back of the school (on the footpath). Most views are screened by landform and hedgerow planting, but there are views from the footpath.



St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Primary School, on the eastern edge of the application site



Backs of numbers 15-17 Warren Fold. Views from the ground floor are mainly screened by hedgerow planting



View across the application site from numbers 15-17 Warren Fold

View from Warren Farm Barn, looking south over the application site



View of the houses at Warren Fold and Warren Farm Barn, looking across from the centre of the site



View of the houses at Bilsberry Cottages, from the northern edge of the application site



Viewpoint 4 - Warren Farm Barn

This dwelling is a barn that has been extended and converted into terraced housing. There is a small lane in front of the properties and then a gated access and low hedgerow between the buildings and the application site. These houses look over the open fields in the foreground, with the buildings along Whalley Road in the middle ground and then the valley in the background, forming an extensive backdrop. The sensitivity of the receptor is high, due to the open and rural nature of the views.

The change in the views would be significant. The open and rural nature of the views would become housing and the backdrop of the wider valley would be lost. However, the impacts would be minimised by providing some space between the existing and proposed houses and adding screen planting to soften the effects of the development. The resulting magnitude of change would be moderate adverse as the nature of the view would change but it would be tempered through planting and the provision of a suitable offset.

The resulting effect significance would be **moderate adverse** as the view would substantially change; from being open, with a backdrop of the Ribble Valley to becoming more enclosed and facing the new housing. However, the impact would be reduced once the screen planting matured and softened the view into the development.

Viewpoint 5 - Bilsberry Cottages

Bilsberry Cottages consist of two-storey, semi-detached houses on a small cul-de-sac, off Avenue Road. They front into the street and back onto an oval area of rough grassland, with farmland further in the distance. The rising landform directly behind the houses form a partial screen. Views into surrounding countryside are only experienced from first floor windows. The sensitivity of this receptor is medium due to the limited views available from these residential properties.

Views over the application site are generally oblique or they are partially screened by Warren Farm Barn. Changes would only be experienced from first floor windows, due to the rising landform and boundary features in the foreground. Views that are available over the site are of rough ground in the foreground, which would not change, however, farmland in the middle ground would become housing and the open and rural nature of the area would be slightly diminished. The magnitude of change would therefore be low adverse as some change would be experienced, but it would not be significant.

The resulting effect significance would be **low adverse** as only oblique or filtered views from first floor windows would change. The nature of these views would alter slightly as housing would be added to a generally open and rural scene.

Viewpoint 6 - Public Right of Way FP66 to Stonyhurst College

The public right of way runs through Warren Fold, in front of Warren Farm Barn and then north along the edge of the rough grass area (next to Bilsberry Cottages). It then passes into farmland, running north east towards the back edge of a field, which runs adjacent to the college playing fields. The footpath is a well used route as it leads to Stonyhurst College and it is also on the J.R.R.Tolkien Walk. The sensitivity of the receptor is high as it is experienced by many people, and the views are a key feature of this route. Views are mainly rural, although the village can be seen towards the south and west.

Views from the footpath, as it runs along the field boundary, would change slightly as the development would be seen over the brow of the higher landform. Already Timothy Farm, St Joseph's and Bilsberry Cottages can be seen as the village is approached along this route; the top of new houses would also become visible. Buildings tucked behind the landform is a character of this view, and further development should maintain this feature. The northern boundary would be of a high quality and be a positive edge to the village, which is both welcoming and attractive. The magnitude of change would be low adverse.

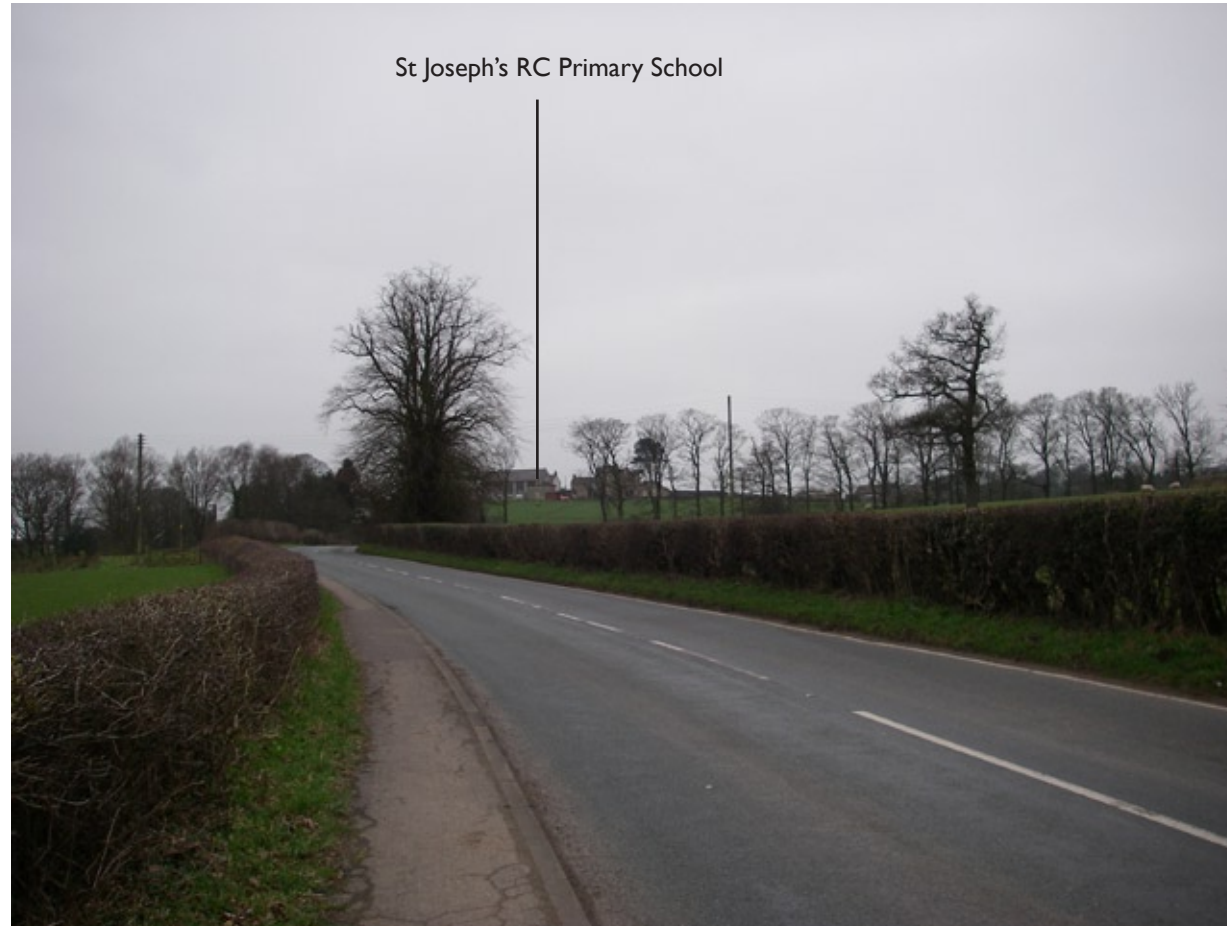
The resulting effect significance would be **moderate adverse**, due to the sensitivity of this receptor, as a key recreational route in the area. However, careful treatment of this northern boundary would limit the negative impact of development in this location and partial screen planting would soften the built edge.



View from Public Right of Way FP66, as it runs along the northern edge of the field. It is looking south towards the edge of Hurst Green.



View from Public Right of Way FP66, as it runs along side Fox Fall Wood, looking south towards Timothy Farm.



View from Whalley Road looking up towards Hurst Green. The photograph is taken at the end of the entrance tracks to Fair Field and Cross Gills.

Viewpoint 7 - Stonyhurst College and Public Right of Way FP66 (to the east of Fox Fall Wood)

As the Public Right of Way continues to the north east and then passes to the east of Fox Fall Wood, views become more confined to this narrow valley. The landform rises to the east and the wood forms a screen to the west. However, the footpath is still part of the J.R.R. Tolkein Walk and it is a well used link between Hurst Green and Stonyhurst College. The sensitivity of the receptor is therefore high.

The view at this location is limited by rising landform and the wood. However, views towards the south are experienced although these are filtered by scattered trees. A line of overhead cables also runs down this narrow valley and they are a dominant feature. Timothy Farm can be seen tucked beyond the brow of the hill. The application development would not be seen from this viewpoint and so the magnitude of change would be no change.

The resulting effect significance would be **No Change**. The application site is not visible from this location due to Fox Fell Wood, raised landform and scattered trees forming a screen.

Viewpoint 8 - Whalley Road (at the entrance to Hurst Green)

The viewpoint is a road which enters Hurst Green from the east (from Clitheroe). Cars travel at speed along the road and so most views are glimpsed, however, there is also a pavement along one side, and so pedestrians are also a potential viewer. Views out of the road are limited by hedgerow planting on both sides, although beyond these there are views of open countryside. The sensitivity of this receptor is medium as although views are generally fleeting, pedestrians also use this route and views are generally of a high quality.

The magnitude of change would be no change. This is because the application development would be screened by the brow of the hill and St. Joseph's RC Primary School, which is located at this prominent point. The hedgerow planting along the road and scattered trees in the foreground and middle ground would also form a partial screen.

The resulting effect significance would be **No Change**. The application site is not visible from this location due to raised landform and St. Joseph's forming an effective screen, and scattered trees and hedgerows in the foreground and middle ground.

Viewpoint 9 - Ribble Way (at the intersection of Whalley Road and Knowles Brow)

This viewpoint has been selected as being representative from the east (at a distance of approximately 1km). It is where the Ribble Way converges with Whalley Road and Knowles Brow. The receptor consists of walkers and drivers on the road. The sensitivity is medium as most views would be fleeting and also dense hedgerows border the road, allowing for few views out into the open countryside at this location.

The magnitude of change would be no change as there are no views over to the application site. The hedgerows form a dense screen and Loach Field Wood, in the middle ground screens off all further views.

The resulting effect significance would be **No Change**. The application site is not visible from this location due to screen hedgerows in the foreground and Loach Field Wood in the middle ground.



View of the road intersection from Knowles Brow, looking south east towards Whalley Road and the corner of the Ribble Way (which runs along the road at this point).

Viewpoint 10 - Ribble Way (alongside the River Ribble)

This receptor is located approximately 0.5km south of the application site. The Ribble Way is a national trail which is 73 miles in length, and it follows the River Ribble along the Ribble Valley from its mouth to its source. The footpath traverses the counties of Lancashire and North Yorkshire and is divided into 7 sections each approximately 10 miles long. The sensitivity of this receptor is high, due to the recreational value of this route and the importance of its views.

The magnitude of change would be no change as there are no views over to the application site. The landform rises towards the north and woodland planting within Raid Deep Wood would form an effective screen.

The resulting effect significance would be **No Change**. The application site is not visible from this location due to the rising landform and dense woodland in the foreground and middle ground.



View towards the Ribble Way from Whalley Road (at Hurst Green). The valley drops towards the river and Raid Deep Wood forms a woodland edge.



View towards the application site (facing south east) from the entrance track to Hill Farm.

Viewpoint 11 - Hill Farm

This receptor is located approximately 1km to the north west of the application site. The sensitivity of this receptor is high, as it is a residential property, which experiences open and rural views.

The magnitude of change would be no change as there are no views over to the application site. The landform dips and then rises towards the site and woodland planting within Mill Wood would form an effective screen.

The resulting effect significance would be **No Change**. The application site is not visible from this location due to the rising landform and dense woodland in the middle ground.



View towards the application site (facing east) from the entrance to Dove Cote.

Viewpoint 12 - Dove Cote

This receptor is located approximately 1.5km west of the application site. The sensitivity of this receptor is high, as it is a residential property, which experiences open and rural views.

The magnitude of change would be no change as there are no views over to the application site. The landform undulates towards the site and this forms an effective screen. Hedgerows and scattered trees also partially screen the wider landscape.

The resulting effect significance would be **No Change**. The application site is not visible from this location due to the undulating landform between the viewpoint and the site.

Viewpoint 13 - Properties on Gallows Lane

This receptor is located approximately 2.5km to the south west of the application site. The sensitivity of this receptor is high, as it is a series of residential properties which experiences open and rural views.

The magnitude of change would be no change as there are no views over to the application site. Although we couldn't see the views from the properties (without trespassing on private property), it is clear from the plan that the landform undulates towards the site and woodland planting within Clough Bank Wood and Bailey Hall Wood would form an effective screen.

The resulting effect significance would be **No Change**. The application site is not visible from this location due to the undulating landform and dense woodland in the middle and background.



View of Lord's View from Gallows Lane. The views from the property can't be viewed as they are screened by the landform, but an assumption has been made instead. This is based upon the topography and vegetation cover shown on the map.

Viewpoint 14 - Old Clitheroe Road

This receptor is located approximately 2.5km to the north west of the application site. The sensitivity of this receptor is high, as it is a viewpoint, off Old Clitheroe Road. There is a car park here and public rights of way (FPI, FPIb and BW8) also start at this location. Views are open, extensive and rural.

The magnitude of change would be no change as there are no views into the application site. The landform is undulating and woodland planting within Deer House Wood and Mill Wood would form an effective screen. The application is so far away that any change would not be noticeable within the view.

The resulting effect significance would be **No Change**. The application site is not visible from this location due to undulating landform and dense woodland.



View towards the application site (facing south) from the viewpoint off Old Clitheroe Road.



View towards the application site (facing south) from the eastern side of Stockbridge Cottages.

Viewpoint 15 - Stockbridge Cottages

This receptor is located approximately 1.5km to the north of the application site. The sensitivity of this receptor is high, as it is a cluster of residential properties which experience open and rural views.

The magnitude of change would be no change as there are no views into the application site. The landform is undulating towards the site and woodland planting within the Stonyhurst College grounds would form an effective screen.

The resulting effect significance would be **No Change**. The application site is not visible from this location due to the undulating landform and trees and woodland within Stonyhurst College.



View towards the application site (facing north), from the other side of the Ribble Valley at Langho.

Viewpoint 16 - Langho (across the Ribble Valley)

This receptor is located approximately 5km to the south of the application site. The sensitivity of this receptor is high, as there are a number of residential properties which experience open and rural views.

The site was not visible on the day of the survey as the weather was hazy and long distant views were not clear. However, even on a clear day the magnitude of change would be no change as the application site is too far away and so any changes would be negligible.

The resulting effect significance would be **No Change**. The application site is not visible from this location due to the distance from the site and the vegetation and buildings in the foreground and middle ground, which partially screen views over the valley.

Summary

The table below shows the impact the application proposals would have on the surrounding landscape. It is noted that the viewpoints below are only representative of views surrounding the site and it is not a definitive list of all views, although many of the properties and public rights of way have been assessed due to the location of the site at the edge of the AONB.

	Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Effect Significance	Residual Change (after 10-15 years)
1	Properties South of Whalley Road	High	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Low/Moderate Adverse
2	St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School	Medium	Negligible	No Change	No Change
3	Properties on Warren Fold	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Low/Moderate Adverse
4	Warren Farm Barn	High	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Low/Moderate Adverse
5	Bilsberry Cottages	Medium	Low Adverse	Low Adverse	Low Adverse
6	Public Right of Way FP66 to Stonyhurst College	High	Low Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Low/Moderate Adverse
7	Stonyhurst College and Public Right of Way FP66 (to the east of Fox Fall Wood)	High	No Change	No Change	No Change
8	Whalley Road (at the entrance to Hurst Green)	High	No Change	No Change	No Change
9	Ribble Way (at the intersection of Whalley Road and Knowles Brow)	High	No Change	No Change	No Change
10	Ribble Way (alongside the River Ribble)	High	No Change	No Change	No Change
11	Hill Farm	High	No Change	No Change	No Change
12	Dove Cote	High	No Change	No Change	No Change
13	Properties on Gallows Lane	High	No Change	No Change	No Change
14	Old Clitheroe Road	High	No Change	No Change	No Change
15	Stockbridge Cottages	High	No Change	No Change	No Change
16	Langho (across the valley)	High	No Change	No Change	No Change

The landscape character in this local area displays undulating landform and a relatively high level of woodland cover, hedgerow boundaries and scattered trees. These features provide a good screen, and all of the longer views are unaffected by the development proposals due to this screening. Only localised views of the application site are experienced, from receptors adjacent to or very close to the site.

Section 3 – Landscape Designations

The following designations are applicable to the application site. Their locations are shown on Figure 1, Landscape Designations.

Policy ENVI - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The policy states: *‘The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. In addition, development will also need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. The environmental effects of proposals will be a major consideration and the design, materials, scale, massing and landscaping of development will be important factors in deciding planning applications (see Policy G1). The protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment will be the most important considerations in the assessment of any development proposal. Regard will also be had to the economic and social well-being of the area.’* [4]

The application site is on the southern edge of the AONB. The character of the area has been described in Section 1 of this report and it is already changing into small-scale settlements, *‘parkland and well-grazed pasture’* [2], which then becomes more urban in character further across the valley. The Character Map of England shows this transition - the site is within Character Area 33, Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill, but it is bordered to the north by Character Area 34, Bowland Fells (described as being *‘large-scale sweeping landform’* [2]) and to the south by Character Area 35, Lancashire Valleys.

As already described in this report, the application development is set within a relatively small-scale and discrete landscape and it is situated within the perceived curtilage of the village. It is surrounded on three sides by buildings and views into the site are very localised. No significant impacts in the wider landscape have been identified and the layout of the development has been produced in response to impacts highlighted in this assessment and have been minimised where possible.

The design of the development reflects the distinctive architectural and landscape features within the village. The tree within the centre of the site should be retained and protected. Hedgerows would need to be maintained where ever possible and new hedgerows could be introduced where appropriate. A positive edge to the development would need to be provided to ensure that it fits within its immediate surroundings and views from the J.R.R.Tolkien Walk would need to be considered when planning the northern boundary of the development.

If the above considerations are incorporated into the design of the development then it is concluded that the it would not conflict with the objectives of the AONB policy.

Policy ENV21 - Historic Parks and Gardens (Stonyhurst College)

The policy states: *‘Development proposals affecting a historic park or garden and its setting will be strictly controlled to ensure they do not harm the appearance or function of the area. Proposals will be assessed in terms of scale, size, design and materials.’* [4]

The Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest describes Stonyhurst College as follows *‘Gardens and parkland with late 17th-century origins, including a well-preserved formal garden from around 1700 and an avenue and water features of similar date’* [5]. The description mentions the village of Hurst Green, set within *‘an area which is predominantly rural and agricultural’* [5].

The application site is not situated within this designation and the boundary of the Historic Park and Garden is approximately 300m away, as the wooded drive leads north out of Hurst Green. The assessment has identified that physically the designation would not be effected and visually the setting of the designation would also be unaffected by the proposals. Views out from the college and the surrounding parkland are screened by woodland, especially at Fow Fall Wood and along the perimeter of the main avenue. The undulating landform also dissipates views towards the site.

The public right of way from Hurst Green, towards Stonyhurst College, has views towards the application site. The northern edge of the development has addressed these views and form a positive edge within this view, as previously described.

It is concluded that the development would not conflict with the objectives of the Historic Parks and Gardens policy.

Conclusion

The assessment has identified the following key points and issues:

Landscape Character

The application site is located within a village which has a well-defined, compact shape, with many buildings along the main roads, which are characteristic in this area. Development on the application site would change the character and nature of the landscape from open, grazed farm land to housing. However, it is concluded that with a sensitive layout and design, the development is unlikely to negatively impact on the character of the village. It is a natural infill area, surrounded on three sides by buildings, and it could serve to link and unify all parts of the village as well as providing a high quality frontage onto Whalley Road.

Key features that already exist within this locality, would be maintained and enhanced within the landscape and architecture. For example the tree within the centre of the site would be retained and protected and boundary hedgerows would be maintained and replaced where appropriate.

Visual Amenity

The landscape character in this local area displays undulating landform and a relatively high level of woodland cover, hedgerow boundaries and scattered trees. These features provide a good screen, and all of the longer views are unaffected by the development proposals due to this screening. Only localised views of the application site are experienced, from receptors adjacent to or very close to the site.

Proposed housing have a set back from the footpath to the school, so it does not become too enclosed. However, the fact that they face onto the footpath is positive and would provide passive policing.

Dwellings face onto the public right of way, as it passes alongside Warren farm, to provide a positive frontage and achieve a level of passive policing. This would also fit in with the character of the footpath, where other properties face onto it within the village.

The northern boundary of the development has been designed to ensure that views from public right of way FP66 are not negatively impacted. This means tucking houses into the landform and ensuring that only the top of the dwellings can be seen. It is also need an active frontage with some houses facing the north.

Landscape Designations

The landscape designations ENVI and ENV21 would not be effected by the application development if sensitively designed; incorporating the character of the locality and respecting local views into the site.

It is concluded that a small-scale housing development, which has been sensitively designed, would be acceptable, in landscape terms. It would fit within the curtilage of the village and would not significantly effect landscape character or visual amenity.

Bibliography

- [1] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Assessment and the Landscape Institute, 2002).
- [2] The Character Map of England (Natural England, 1996).
- [3] A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire - Landscape Character Assessment (Lancashire County Council, Dec 2000).
- [4] Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan (Ribble Valley Borough Council, adopted June 1998).
- [5] Stonyhurst College, Grade 2*, Reference GDI951 - Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (English Heritage, description written August 1997 and edited March 1999).

Appendix I – Methodology

To accompany the description of baseline and assessment information, a series of classifications have been applied to the landscape character of the site and each visual receptor. These act as a summary and place a defined value on; the sensitivity of the character area/visual receptor; the magnitude of change and the subsequent significance of the effect of the development.

Sensitivity of Existing Landscape Character/Visual Receptors:

The sensitivity of the landscape to change is the degree to which a particular landscape can accommodate changes, or new features, without significant detrimental effects to its essential characteristics.

The sensitivity of visual receptors will depend on three key factors:

- The receptor's activity whilst exposed to the view (work, recreational activities, resident);
- Degree of exposure to view; and,
- Period of exposure to view.

The sensitivity of landscape character or a visual receptor is defined as being High/Medium/Low, where High is the most sensitive.

General criteria for establishing the sensitivity of visual receptors and landscape character are set out in Table 1.

Magnitude of Change

The magnitude of change is the 'combination of the scale, extent and duration' [1] of the development and its impact on landscape character and visual receptors.

In the case of landscape impacts this relates to:

- The size, extent or degree of change to landscape character or individual landscape features;
- Whether there is a direct impact resulting in the loss of landscape features or a change beyond the land take of the scheme having an impact on the character of the area; and,
- Whether the impact is permanent or temporary.

For visual impact this relates to:

- Degree of change to existing views;
- Distance of the receptor from the application site; and,
- Whether the impact is permanent or temporary.

The criteria for establishing the magnitude of change on visual receptors and landscape character are set out in Table 2.

The magnitude of change may also be Negligible or No Change and in this instance the resulting Effect Significance would also be Negligible or No Change as the application development would hardly be seen or not seen at all or the loss to landscape features and the character of the area would experience very little or no change.

Scoring Matrix

The two principal criteria determining significance of effect are the magnitude of change and the environmental sensitivity of the location or receptor. 'A higher level of significance is generally attached to large-scale effects and effects on sensitive or high-value receptors; thus small effects on highly sensitive sites can be more important than large effects on less sensitive sites. It is therefore important that a balanced and well-reasoned judgement of these two criteria is achieved' [1]. Table 3 encourages transparency in the process of identifying the significance but the experience and judgement of the landscape architect is also used.

Note that the significance of effects may be adverse or beneficial depending upon the nature of the magnitude of change.

Sensitivity	Visual Receptors	Landscape Character
High	1. Residential properties with predominantly open views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from principal living rooms and from windows of rooms in use during the day. 2. Users of Public Rights of Way with predominantly open views and of recreational use. 3. Non-motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside 4. Visitors to recognised viewpoints or beauty spots. 5. Users of outdoor recreational facilities with predominantly open views where the purpose of that recreation is enjoyment of the countryside – e.g. Country Parks, National Trust sites etc...	Strong landscape structure. Strong positive character. Good condition. Strong sense of place. Visually distinctive. Aesthetically pleasing/occasional detracting features. Distinct features worthy of conservation.
Medium	1. Residential properties with views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views from ground floor windows will be oblique or partially obscured by garden and and/or other intervening vegetation. 2. Users of Public Rights of Way with restricted views, in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features. 3. Schools and other institutional buildings, and their outdoor areas. Motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside. Where alteration is focussed upon often narrow and winding routes.	Recognisable landscape structure. Positive character. Moderate condition. Reasonable sense of place. Visually notable. Aesthetically satisfactory or uninspiring/some detracting features. Some features worthy of conservation.
Low	1. People in their place of work. 2. Users of main roads or passengers on public transport on main routes. 3. Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views and where the activity is focussed within the area. 4. Occupants of industrial premises.	Weak or degraded landscape structure. Weak or negative character. Poor condition. Poor sense of place. Visually poor. Aesthetically unsatisfactory or unpleasant. Many detracting features, which are likely to be dominant. Few or no features worthy of conservation. Scope for positive enhancement.

Table 1

Magnitude of Change	Visual Amenity	Landscape Character
High	Where the proposals become the only dominant feature in the scene or would form a significant and immediately apparent element which would affect the overall impression of the view.	High degree of loss or major alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements considered to be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Medium	Where proposals would form a visible and recognisable new feature in the scene but may not be immediately apparent, or become the dominant feature in the view.	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Low	The proposals constitute only a minor component of the wider view, and may not be immediately apparent to the casual observer. Awareness of the proposals would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene.	Minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.

Negligible	The proposal is largely indiscernible and/or they are at such a distance that they are scarcely appreciated. Consequently they have little effect on the scene.	Very minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape.
No Change	No change to the view is experienced.	No change to the landscape character is experienced.

Table 2

		Magnitude of Change				
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible	No Change
Sensitivity	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Neutral	Neutral
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Neutral	Neutral
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Neutral	Neutral

Table 3

Nature of an Impact

Determination of the nature of an impact is a result of judging whether the introduction of a proposed development would be of benefit or detriment to the existing landscape character or view. Therefore, the impact of a proposed development can be adverse or beneficial. Table 4 defines the difference between adverse and beneficial.

The following standards are used in assessing whether the impacts are short, medium or long term.

- Short term – < 12 months
- Medium term – one to five years
- Long term - + five years.

Effect Significance Table

Effects will be categorised using the terms Neutral, Minor, Moderate and Major effects, with both moderate and major categories being considered as comprising significant effects. Table # shows how each of these categories have been summarised.

	Nature of Impact
Adverse	The key characteristics of the existing landscape or view would be weakened by the introduction of the proposed development.
Neutral	The key characteristics would neither be weakened nor strengthened by the proposed development.
Beneficial	The key characteristics of the existing landscape or view would be strengthened by the introduction of the proposed development.

Table 4

Effect Significance	Visual Amenity	Landscape Character
Major adverse	The proposals would cause a significant deterioration to an existing view.	The proposed scheme would result in effects that are at complete variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape. It would permanently degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of valued characteristic features, elements and/or their setting. A high quality landscape would be permanently changed and its quality diminished.
Moderate adverse	The proposals would cause a noticeable deterioration to an existing view.	The proposed scheme would be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform and it would leave an adverse impact on a landscape of recognisable quality.
Minor adverse	The proposals would cause a barely perceptible deterioration to an existing view from a receptor.	The proposed scheme would not entirely fit into the landform and scale of the landscape and it would have an effect on landscape character.
Neutral	No or negligible discernable deterioration or improvement in the existing view.	The proposed scheme would not effect the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and would maintain existing landscape quality.
Minor beneficial	The proposed development would cause a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view.	The proposed scheme has the potential to improve landscape character. It would fit in with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and enable the incorporation of valued characteristic features.
Moderate beneficial	The proposed development would cause a noticeable improvement in the existing view.	The proposed scheme would have the potential to accord with landscape character and improve the quality of the landscape through removal of damage caused by existing land uses.
Major beneficial	The proposed development would cause a significant improvement in the existing view.	The proposed scheme would have the potential to accord seamlessly with the landscape character and significantly improve the quality of the landscape through restoration and the removal of damage caused by existing land uses.

Table 5

