

## **PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE OF THE MOORCOCK PUBLIC HOUSE @ SLAIDBURN ROAD, WADDINGTON – VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Rycroft Associates Landscape Architects were commissioned in August 2012 to carry out Appraisal of the Visual Impact of the Proposed redevelopment of former the Moorcock Public House at, Slaidburn Road, Waddington. The survey was carried out on 28th August which was a fine clear sunny day with excellent visibility.

The proposed scheme is for the demolition of the existing building and its replacement with 3 stone built detached residential dwellings to be located on the site of the former building and the adjacent car park area to the West of the site. The existing pub gardens to the South of the building are not included within this application. The purpose of this report is an assessment of the landscape and visual impact on the surrounding landscape of both the existing large building and the proposed new build development on the surrounding environment, having regard for landform, landscape character and setting. This report has been prepared by Sarah Rycroft Dip LA who is a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute with 33 years professional experience.

### **2.0 LANDSCAPE SETTING**

The Moorcock Hotel site is located 2.5 k to the North of Waddington Village and 5.0 k from Clitheroe in The Forest of Bowland this locality was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1964. The scenery of this region is an attractive mixture of hill and fell, moorland, woods, rivers and pasture land

The proposed development site is sited on the road between Waddington and Slaidburn and was formerly a public house, and restaurant with some residential rooms and conference facilities. The white painted Tudor style building is immediately adjacent to the roadside at the foot of Waddington Fell with a South facing aspect extensive views overlooking the Ribble valley and Pendle Hill.

The lower slopes of the hillside leading down towards the River Ribble at Clitheroe are predominantly agricultural, made up of a network of small fields with deciduous woodland and narrow lanes bordered with trees, but as the Slaidburn Road approaches the public house site the landscape character changes to more open moorland and is at the edge of the designated Open Access land.

The existing building is set into the base of the fellside with the ground rising steeply beyond the boundary from 250m up to a high point of 383m on the top of Waddington Fell.

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### 3.0 SITE APPEARANCE

We understand that the original use of the Moorcock Inn was as a farmstead with records dating back to at least 1847. By 1925 the building had become a pub with rendered elevations and stone quoins, possibly it was rendered to make it visible for potential customers or to disguise the use of non local materials. By the 1930's the mock Tudor additions had been incorporated and the buildings were extended and adapted further in the 1970's all of these actions progressively increased the visual impact of the buildings within the landscape.

The existing building has a large car park to the West accessed by a wide roadway which also forms the route through to the driveway leading up to a large detached residential property known as Moorcock House. This property is set at a higher level than the hotel buildings but is also white rendered and appears to have been built in the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The grounds of Moorcock House have extensive tree planting and are substantially screened from the pub site with trees and an evergreen hedge. It is not possible to see Moorcock House from any public rights of way as a result of its well vegetated setting despite its higher position.

To the front of the public house there are gardens which have been neglected since the closure of the business but there is evidence of ornamental tree and shrub planting with paths and paved areas which would have provided attractive seating areas and would have been well used by customers.

Although there are some trees planted along the outer boundary of this garden area it is mainly bordered with lower shrubs and light foliaged trees, presumably to prevent the pub from being hidden from the view of potential customers driving up the road from Waddington. The car park was also landscaped in the past with several island beds which were planted with shrubs and Birch trees, the majority of these are in a poor condition. To the front of the car park is a more densely enclosed lawned garden area which was possibly a more private garden for the landlord. The Southern boundary of the property is very well treed providing a dense screen which prevents any views of the car park area and the adjacent property Moorcock House from outside the site.

To the North of the site the ground rises steeply up towards Waddington Fell, there is a belt of mixed deciduous trees along the stone boundary wall and a copse of birch trees on the slope beyond leading up to the open fellside. As the building and its surroundings are nestled into the base of the hillside cannot be viewed from the North and the building only comes into view as the road begins to level out.

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#### 4.0 VISIBILITY OF DEVELOPMENT SITE WITHIN LANDSCAPE

Although the Moorcock Inn building is large and brightly coloured and appears to be very prominent when approaching it from the immediate South, the road is tree lined and the landscape undulating so that it is only visible for approximately 1.0 kilometre as the building is approached. It cannot be seen from any other highways with the exception of a short section of the minor trackway Browsholme Road which serves the properties Mitchells, New o Nook, Highfield and Summit House which are approximately 500-750metres away from the existing Moorcock building. It is possible that the pub building can be seen from some upper floor windows of Mitchells and from the upper windows of the side elevations of New o Nook and Highfield, but there are certainly no significant views from these properties located to the West & South West of the planned development site.

To the South and East it would appear that none of the farms and houses in the vicinity have any view of the site as they are either enclosed with trees or set below any sight line.

There area number of public footpaths and bridleways in the vicinity of the site with one pathway cutting diagonally across the field to the South East running from Cuttock Clough farm, there is a clear view of the existing pub building for 350metres.

Footpaths running across Bradford Fell would initially appear to afford clear views of the site, however when walked there is only one 200m section of the path running North West from Moor Lane and a 300m section of the spur pathway heading East West. The undulating land form and dry stone walls prevent more than very fleeting views of the pub building, despite the fact that the building is painted white and is a large single mass. It is also considered that there will be a more distant fleeting view of the building from the highest point on the bridleway which runs along the edge of the plantation on the top of Grindleton Fell.

The gardens and car park surrounding the Moorcock are completely screened from view from any public viewpoints by landform and the vegetation both surrounding and within the site.

#### 4.1 CONCLUSION

Although the existing building on the site is a large structure it is not seen on the skyline from any viewpoint and it is already well enclosed with mature vegetation from the majority of viewpoints. Careful siting and design of the proposed new buildings will ensure that they are significantly less visible than the existing building.

The proposed new houses will be significantly smaller than the original building on site, they will be traditionally styled and stone built using locally sourced building materials, which will be more appropriate to the local vernacular. The grouping of the houses has been designed so that from a distance they could be read as a single farmstead.

The buildings will be set into extensive gardens with new tree and shrub planting and enclosed with local stone walling which will ensure that they are well screened and will have very limited visible impact within the landscape.

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## 5.0 LANDSCAPE MITIGATION MEASURES TO REDUCE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCE SCHEME

The following mitigation measures have been considered when preparing the designs for the setting to the proposed scheme to reduce the impact of the development and to ensure its sensitive integration into the natural landscape:

Plant additional trees within site to reduce impact of buildings and reinforce screening effect of existing shelter belt

Ensure that existing tree planting to the boundary of the site is retained.

Supplement tree planting along Eastern section of Southern boundary to clients ownership to complete the screening effect afforded to rest of site.

Define external plot boundaries with local stone walls (Internal boundaries between plots to be fences or hedges).

Create informal grass verge along Slaidburn Road to reflect local roadside character and form green corridor.

Plant native trees and shrubs along the Slaidburn Road roadside boundary to soften the impact of boundary walls and integrate scheme into local environment.

Plant native trees and shrubs wherever possible within site.

Use local stone for building works and paving to site.

Design the landscape setting in simple style using local materials to avoid creating suburban effect.

Carry out tree and shrub planting along plot boundaries to soften boundaries and provide screening between properties.

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