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Initial Assessment - Landscape and Visual Impacts

Reference -

Erection of a detached dwelling 'Plot Two'.

At: 8 Hammond Drive Read BB12 7RE

Limits of this document - comments upon the revised design of Plot Two which is currently being prepared for a planning application with regards to landscape character and visual impacts.

This application is required for a redesign of the detached dwelling Plot Two.

Existing planning consent for a detached dwelling in this location was granted under the following reference:

Ribble Valley Borough Council Application No. 3/2013/0513 Decision Date: 17/10/13

1: Background

We have been engaged by JWPC Ltd to comment upon the proposed design and layout of Plot Two located at 8 Hammond Drive.

This document is composed by Antony Wood, Director at Yew Tree NW Ltd. He has been providing landscape design services since the foundation of Yew Tree and Gardens in 2005 following 15 years within the graphic design industry and during this period has worked extensively in the landscape sector with an increasing focus on arboricultural aspects, to this end he attended Myerscough College and obtained the RFS Cert Arb qualification in June 2008. Subsequent to this period of providing arboricultural and landscape consultancy services for numerous commercial and domestic clients since November 2013 he has been engaged by clients to provide Landscape and Visual impact Assessments (LVIA). These LVIA projects have been conducted to the framework and working practices contained within Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Third edition, Routledge 2013. Over this period he has produced LVIA assessments for a number of projects in the residential, commercial and leisure sectors, with many of these being within the landscapes of National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

At the time of drafting this document we have not undertaken a site visit or survey of receptor points, we are therefore utilising imagery within the public domain - see Appendix1 and data contained with Lancashire County Councils online Maps and Related Information Online service (MARIO).

We have previously visited the site on 10/06/16 in order to inform the production an Arboricultural Method Statement and Landscaping Plans to discharge a planning condition relating to the previous consented application.

In the following sections of this initial assessment we will consider the relative visual and landscape impact of the revised design of Plot Two in relation to the surrounding landscape, existing structures and the design of the previously consented detached dwelling.

2:Landscape and visual impacts

See Appendix 1 and 2:

With regards to Landscape Character, the site is located within the Industrial Foothills and Valleys character type and the 6a Calder Valley sub-character type within the Lancashire County Council Landscape Character local subtype. The site is outside of the Forest of Bowland AONB boundaries but is included within the Sabden Undulating Lowland with Parkland AONB character type.

The landscape to the immediate South of the site is heavily influenced by Read Hall which is situated to the West, extensive tree cover surrounds the hall and its environs with scattered individual mature trees occupying the land between the A671 Whalley Road and the site. This area, titled 'Hammond Ground' on available maps, has the characteristics of a planned landscape associated with the landscape movement of the 18th and 19th centuries. The individual trees within this landscape have the effect of partially obscuring the existing dwellings within Hammond Drive and within George Lane when viewed from the South.

This area of landscape is bounded to the East by the continuous development of dwellings within George Lane with these dwellings forming the Western edge of Read village and being visually significant when approaching Read from the West.

Hammond Drive is obscured from receptors to the West and South West by the wooded area 'Clough Syke'. This significantly reduces the period of visibility of the site for vehicle / pedestrian users of the A671 highway.

The existing dwellings within Hammond Drive are visible from the A671 as are the dwellings in George Lane, a continuous ribbon of dwellings of approximately 300 metres in length is located to the Southern side of the A671 and this group of dwellings is separated from Read village by a single field of 220 metres in width.

The existing dwellings outlined above combine to have a significant impact upon the landscape character surrounding Hammond Drive and the Western approaches to Read village.

The design of the consented dwelling at Plot Two is comprised of a 'split level' dwelling with a two-storey elevation to the South and a single-storey elevation to the North facing Hammond Drive.

The revised design maintains this overall layout but alters certain aspects of the elevations/footprint and also uses a different palette of materials both for external finishes and roofing.

With regards to Visual Impacts, as previously stated, we have not undertaken a survey of individual receptor points but have the following observations to make based upon the available mapping and image data within the public realm.

Hammond Drive is a private road leading towards Read Hall with 8 Hammond Drive being the final dwelling on the Southern side of the road, it can therefore be reasonably inferred that vehicle movements along Hammond Drive in the vicinity of the site would be infrequent and occasional.

A single dwelling 'Read Hall Cottages' is located to the North of the site on the Northern side of Hammond Drive. The relative levels of the site and the existing boundary vegetation are likely to provide significant screening from this receptor point, furthermore, the additional dwellings are not likely to significantly increase impacts on this receptor point over and above those created by the existing consented dwellings.

Dwellings to the East of the site will not be likely to have more than partial or glimpsed views of the development due to the screening effect of the existing dwelling at 8 Hammond Drive which is located adjacent to the Eastern boundary of the site and the existing boundary vegetation.

Hammond Drive is traversed by a public footpath, this is the only public right of way within the immediate vicinity of the site. Again, the presence of existing vegetation and the elevated level of Hammond Drive in relation to the site would reduce the visual impact upon a transient pedestrian receptor point to a significant degree. We also note that pedestrians traversing Hammond Drive in a westerly direction will encounter a continuous linear group of detached dwellings of varying styles formed by numbers 2 to 6 Hammond Drive prior to reaching the site; we are of the opinion that the proposed development would not greatly alter this perception.

Receptor points to the South of the site are largely confined to transient receptors using the A671 highway with the existing dwellings along the Southern edge of this highway having views of the site which are largely obscured by existing vegetation. The closest point of the public highway to the site is 440 metres away, this separation will serve to further reduce perceived visual impact from the development.

The existing vegetation along the Southern garden boundaries of dwellings within Hammond Drive combined with the existing scattered trees within the field 'Hammond Ground' have the effect of breaking up the significant mass of the existing dwellings 'Darnley' and numbers 2 to 8 Hammond Drive. We are of the opinion that the existing vegetation combined with even limited amounts of additional planting would have the same effect upon the proposed development. This is again aided by the 400 + metre distance from the closest receptor point to the South of the site.

With regards to the existing plot densities and sizes within Hammond Drive. The proposed development would not increase the density of dwellings within the site over that currently detailed in the existing planning consent. By comparison, the existing dwellings located at number 2 to number 6 Hammond Drive cover 69 metres in length when measured in MARIO mapping data with the gaps between the dwellings being no more than 5 metres. Based upon these existing densities the consented and proposed development would not represent a significant change from the overall mass and density of existing dwellings in Hammond Drive.

It should also be noted that as existing planning consents for a total of 3 individual dwellings are in place the visual impact of this current revised proposal for Plot Two will not be greater in magnitude than that which will result from the construction of these dwellings as detailed below.

Due to the distance between receptor points to the South of the site; transient receptors traversing the A671 highway, the increase in ridge height (approx. 650 mm) of the proposed development over that previously consented will have no greater visual impact than the previous design of Plot Two.

With regards to relative mass and visibility of the proposed dwelling in relation to the previously consented design. The orientation of the plot, presence of retained vegetation to the West of the site and both the consented Dwelling Plot One and existing dwelling at 8 Hammond Drive mean that only the southern and northern elevations of the proposed dwelling are likely to be visible from receptor points out with the site boundaries.

We have undertaken an approximate measurement from the pdf files supplied of the relative areas of the northern and southern elevations of the consented and proposed elevations of Plot Two which gives the following figures.

Consented design: southern elevation, 80 m²; northern elevation 57 m²

Proposed design: southern elevation, 90 m²; northern elevation 61 m².

It can reasonably be concluded that the scale of these increases in overall area (including the visible roof area of the consented design) would not be of greater visual significance for receptors to the south of the site and that the increase to the northern elevation is of a negligible magnitude.

With regards to materials and revised openings, again, the distance from receptor points to the South of the site will serve to make such changes have a negligible or barely discernible impact over and above that created by the previously consented design. The appearance of the proposed dwelling from transient receptor points traversing Hammond Drive is similar in scale and is partially screened by existing vegetation, the use of zinc roofing would not be more visually significant than the slate roof of the consented dwelling with a similar colour and the likely effects of weathering.

Conclusions.

Based upon the information available and the supplied development layout/design for the previous and current proposals we are of the opinion that any development of Plot Two would have a minor impact upon the landscape character of the area surrounding the site. We have formed this opinion due to the number and density of existing residential dwellings within 500 metres of the site, with these existing dwellings forming a nearly continuous belt around the East and North of the field 'Hammond Ground'. The expected impacts of the revised design would not represent an increase in magnitude of effect over that which would be expected to be created by the design of the consented dwelling.

Whilst we have not undertaken a survey of individual receptor points it is evident from the available information that receptor points are limited in number and are likely to be mainly comprised of transient receptors with partial or glimpsed views of the site. The existing dwellings, topography of the surrounding landscape and the distance to receptors would be likely to reduce potential impacts to a magnitude that would be reversible with even limited mitigation planting.

The negligible increase in the mass of the proposed dwelling design over that previously consented combined with existing screening, potential planting and distance from receptor points combine to maintain visual and landscape impacts at the same level as those created by the previous design of Plot Two.

We are of the opinion that landscape impacts would be likely to be in the 'minor adverse to negligible' category and that the visual impacts would be in a similar range with an opportunity to reduce both landscape and visual impacts further by 15 years post development with a minimal planting of screening vegetation.



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