

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

In respect of a proposed dwelling at

NJS Equine Rehabilitation Centre

Whitewell Road

Cow Ark

Clitheroe

BB7 3DG

1 Introduction

This assessment has been prepared to provide a landscape and visual impact assessment in relation to a proposed rural workers dwelling at NJS Equine Rehabilitation Centre, Whitewell Road, Cow Ark. The location of the application site with receptor viewpoints is shown as Appendix A. The application site is within an area of grassland west of an existing agricultural building and north of an existing equine menage.

An appraisal of the surrounding area has been conducted using Ordnance Survey data, local policy and landscape character assessments to assess the likely landscape and visual impact effects. Viewpoint images are shown as Appendix B.

The method follows the guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVA3) as laid down by the Landscape Institute. The assessment is proportionate to the scale of development as instructed by GLVA3. Appendix C summarises the methodology and rationale of GLVA3 with descriptions of the values attributed to the various parameters included in the appraisal.

Landscape

- European Landscape Convention 2000 defines landscape as:
“an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”
- Not only landscapes that are recognised as being special or valuable, but also about ordinary/everyday (landscapes where people live, work and spend leisure time)

Landscape effects looks at the way change may affect:

- Individual components of the landscape
- Aesthetic or perceptual qualities
- Character of the landscape in different areas

Visual effects

- How surroundings of individuals/groups of people may be affected by changes in landscape
- How people will be affected by changes in views and/or visual amenity at different places

The objective of the assessment is to provide a clear judgement and transparency in both assessments and evaluation of significance. The expectation is to distinguish **significant** effects from **non significant** effects.

2 Relevant Landscape Policies and Planning History

Local Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy Statement
- Ribble Valley Local Plan
- A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire - Lancashire Character Assessment

Planning History

Planning history relating to the proposed development (see section 4 for a full history of the site development).

Application reference: 3/2023/1028 Proposed construction of one new two bedroom dwelling together with installation of solar panels on adjacent stable buildings, package treatment unit and landscaping. Refused 15/02/2024

3 Site Setting and Landscape Context

Location

NJS Rehabilitation is located 1 mile south of Cow Ark and 2 miles west of Bashall Eaves. The built environment includes two modern steel frame buildings which provide stabling for 6 horses and storage for machinery and equipment. A container unit houses an electrical generator. A 40m x 25m equine menage runs in a west/east orientation to the west of the stable building. This facility is surrounded by a 1.2 metre grass bund to the north, west and south.

The surrounding area is flat grassland at AOD 126m. Field boundaries are predominantly wire fences and hedgerow. A stand of conifer woodland lies to the southeast of the site. The closest dwellings lie 350 metres to the east.

The closest public right of way (PROW) is Footpath 0309015 which runs across the south of the buildings and connects an unmade stone track 400 meters to the west of the site with Bashall Eaves (approximately 2 miles to the east).

4 Landscape Character

The Landscape Character Assessment for the area describes the area as Undulating Lowland Farmland. These areas occur on the lower fringes of the uplands, below 150 metres AOD.

The Landscape Strategy for Lancashire ascribes the area as 5b Lower Hodder and Lound Valley. The area description is noted as:

This area forms part of the Undulating Lowland Farmland to the south of the Forest of Bowland and includes the deeply incised wooded course of the Hodder below Whitewell and its tributary, the River Loud, as far as its confluence with the Ribble. The underlying bedrock is limestone which is overlain with good soils, providing lush green pastures and good tree growth. The course of the Hodder is particularly well wooded and the pattern of incised minor wooded tributaries is distinctive to this character area. The area is little affected by modern development and the picturesque villages of Chipping and Waddington have retained their vernacular character.

Cultural and Historic Development of the Site and Surrounding Area

The development of the site in respect of the built environment began in 2007 when the land was managed as a 56 ha agricultural unit known as Lees House Farm. The unit was owned and managed by the current applicants parents. The initial building was a steel frame building for livestock, fodder and machinery. In 2009 a second steel frame building was erected to cover existing stock handling pens.

In 2021 permission was granted retrospectively for a change of use of the initial livestock building for equine use including 4 stables for business use and 2 stables for private use, together with the equine menage. The unit is managed as NJS rehabilitation which together with 16 ha of dedicated horse paddocks deals with the rehabilitation of horses which have suffered injury.

The surrounding area is predominantly livestock farming. Small to medium sized dairy, beef and sheep units are managed as permanent grassland. Meadows are cropped as silage and hay. In addition to privately owned property over six thousand acres and 50 houses and cottages are owned by the Duchy of Lancaster.

5 Viewpoints

Viewpoint B1 to B4 are viewpoints along an unmade track running 400 metres to the west of the site. The site is largely obscured by trees and hedgerow with glimpses of the building roofs along the track.

We judge that the significance of the proposed development would be no greater than none to negligible (neutral) at all phases of the timeline.

Viewpoint F1

Viewpoint F1 is located 276 metres west of the site from the public footpath in the same parcel of grassland as the buildings and proposed site. The proposed dwelling would be partially viewed above the menage bund.

We judge that the significance proposed development would be no greater than moderate at all phases of the timeline.

Viewpoint F2 is located 190 metres south west of the proposed development from the public footpath. The proposed dwelling would be partially viewed above the menage bund.

We judge that the significance of the proposed development would be no greater than moderate at all phases of the timeline.

Viewpoint F3 is from a position 105 metres south east of the proposed development from the public footpath. The proposed dwelling would not be visible from this location.

We judge that the significance of the proposed development would be moderate at all phases of the timeline.

Viewpoint F4 is from a position 112 metres south east of the proposed development from the public footpath. The proposed dwelling would not be visible from this location.

We judge that the significance of the proposed development would be none at all phases of the timeline.

Viewpoint F5 is from a position 227 metres south east of the proposed development from the public footpath. The proposed dwelling would not be visible from this location.

We judge that the significance of the proposed development would be none at all phases of the timeline.

6 Character assessment / impacts

The character assessment identifies that the setting of the site is adjacent to existing modern buildings and a bunded equine menage.

The site is located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and is identified as Undulating Lowland Farmland. The landscape character assessment describes the area as lush green pasture with areas of deeply incised woodland which is consistent with the development site.

When assessing landscape impacts from development GVLIA guidance is constrained to publicly accessible locations and viewpoints.

Whitewell Road is more than 400 metres to the west and the site is not visible from the highway. The unadopted track which is a public byway is 400 metres from the site and again the site cannot be seen from this public way.

There is one public footpath which passes to the south of the development. Footpath 0309015 diverges from the public byway at 400 metres west of the site in an easterly direction towards the site. A thick boundary hedge with mature trees effectively screens the development across this parcel. Crossing the boundary the path emerges into a pasture with unrestricted views of the site from a distance of 276 metres.

As walkers pass the site to within 105 metres of the site the proposed development will be visible. The proposed dwelling is positioned 5 metres west of the existing agricultural building with two car parking spaces between the buildings.

The dwelling is 860mm lower than the adjacent agricultural building. At 14.30 metres long plus the 5 metre separation the building extends 19.30 metres west of the existing building. Only the roof and upper 3.57m will be visible.

7 Conclusion

The site is within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape with some detracting features and evidence of recent change (agricultural buildings and equine menage) which can be defined as medium sensitivity.

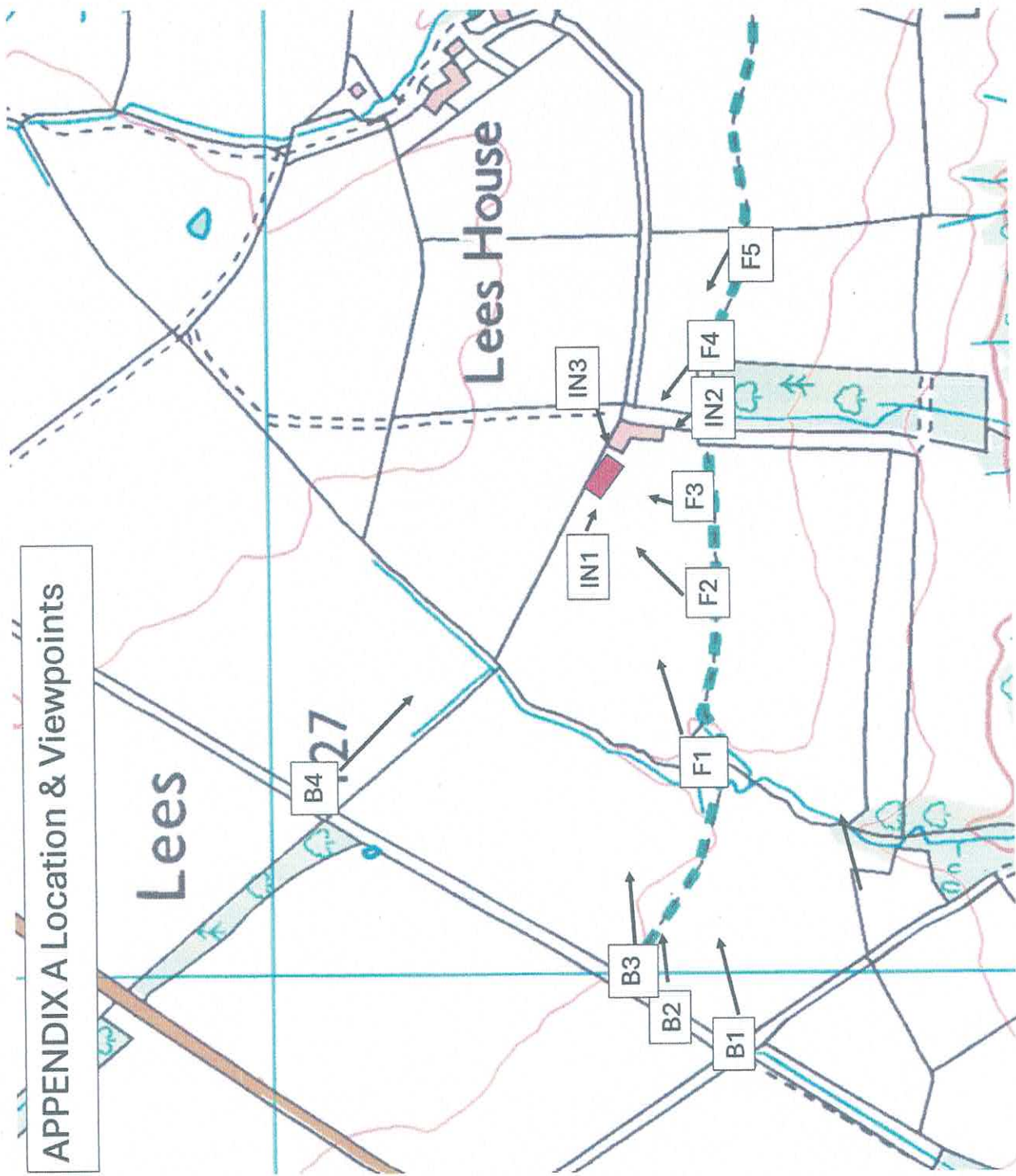
Visual sensitivity for walkers on public rights of way are high.

The magnitude of change based on the scale and design of the development has been partially mitigated by the position within the site and design. The proposed location is 100 metres north of the public right of way and will only be partially visible beyond the menage bund for a limited distance.

On this basis the magnitude of change is Low.

Planting to the west of the small domestic garden with native species hedgerow and trees will enhance the site and form a natural limit to the curtilage boundary.

APPENDIX A Location & Viewpoints



Appendix B (attached separately)

Appendix C

Methodology

a. The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment have jointly published Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment Third Edition (2013) that gives guidance on carrying out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), either as a standalone appraisal or part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This methodology takes on board the above guidance.

b. When assessing character within an urban context, this methodology can be applied to Townscape Assessments and how the development will affect the elements that make up the townscape and its distinctive character.

c. The main stages of the LVIA process are outlined below. This process will identify and assess the potential effects of a development on the landscape resource and the visual environment.

1. Baseline study

Landscape

- Define the scope of the assessment.
- Outline the planning policy context, including any landscape designations.
- Establish the landscape baseline through a site visit and an assessment of published Landscape Character Assessments to identify the value of the landscape resource (receptor), at community, local, national or international levels where appropriate.

Visual

- Define the scope of the assessment.
- Identify the extent of visual receptors within the study area, with the use of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) where appropriate, and establish the number and sensitivity of the representative viewpoint and/or groups of people (receptors) within the study area whose views may be altered as a result of the proposals.

Project description

The baseline study highlights clear opportunities and constraints for the integration of the proposals into the receiving environment. The aspects of the scheme at each phase that will potentially give rise to effects on the landscape and visual amenity will need identifying. At this time, the proposals can be modified to ensure that further mitigation measures are incorporated into the design as a response to the local landscape and visual environment.

Description of Effects

The level of effect on both landscape and visual receptors should be identified in respect of the different components of the proposed development. In order to assess the significance of the effect on the receiving environment, it is necessary to consider the magnitude, i.e. the degree of change, together with the sensitivity of the receptor.

This will identify whether the effects are:

Adverse or Beneficial - beneficial effects would typically occur where a development could positively contribute to the landscape character or view.

Neutral effects would include changes that neither add nor detract from the quality and character of an area or view. Adverse effects would typically occur where there is loss of landscape elements, or the proposal detracts from the landscape quality and character of an area or view.

Direct or Indirect - A direct effect will be one where a development will affect a view or the character of an area, either beneficially or adversely. An indirect effect will occur as a result of associated development i.e. a development may result in an increase of traffic on a particular route.

Short, Medium or Long Term – this relates to the expected duration and magnitude of a development. Within this assessment the potential effects are assessed during the Construction Phase, then at Years 1 and 10, following completion of the development.

Reversible or Irreversible – can the resulting effect of a development be mitigated or not, and whether the result of the mitigation is beneficial or adverse.

Significance of Effects (EIA only)

A final judgment on whether the effect is likely to be significant, as required by the Regulations. The summary should draw out the key issues and outline the scope for reducing any negative/ adverse effects. Mitigation measures need to be identified that may reduce the final judgement on the significance of any residual negative effects in the long term.

Assessing the significance of effects

Landscape Sensitivity

1.4. The sensitivity of a particular landscape in relation to new development is categorised as very high, high, medium, low or negligible. This takes into account the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the value attributed to the existing landscape. The following table explains each threshold and the factors that make up the degree of sensitivity.

Table 1: Landscape Sensitivity Thresholds

Sensitivity	Definition
Very High	Landscape resource where there is a very high susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of high value, have a high degree of intimacy, strong landscape structure, a high sense of intactness and contain features worthy of protection. Townscapes may include a high proportion of historic assets. Typical examples may be Nationally designated e.g. World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Heritage Coasts, AONB's etc.
High Landscape	Resource where there is a high susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of high value, have a high degree of intimacy, strong landscape structure, relatively intact and contain features worthy of protection. Townscapes may include a high proportion of historic assets. Typical examples may be of Regional or County importance e.g. within the setting of National Parks, AONB's, Conservation Areas etc
Medium	Landscape resource where there is a medium susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be medium scale, good landscape structure, with some detracting features or evidence of recent change. Townscapes may include a proportion of historic assets or of cultural value locally. Typical examples may be designated for their value at District level.
Low	Landscape resource where there is a low susceptibility to change. Typical landscapes would be of local landscape interest, and contain evidence of previous landscape change.
Negligible	Landscape resource where there is little or no susceptibility to change. Typical landscapes are likely to be degraded, of weak landscape structure, intensive land uses, and require landscape restoration.

Visual Sensitivity

1.5. The sensitivity of the visual receptor will be assessed against the magnitude of visual change, and is categorised as very high, high, medium, low or negligible. Factors affecting the visual sensitivity will be assessed on whether there will be a loss of views of visual amenity.

Table 2: Visual Sensitivity Thresholds

Sensitivity	Definition
Very High	Viewers on public rights of way whose prime focus is on the quality of the landscape around, and are often very aware of its value. Examples include viewers within nationally designated landscapes such as National Parks or AONB's.
High	Viewers on public rights of way whose attention may be focused on the landscape, or occupiers of residential properties with primary views affected by the development. Examples include viewers within regional/local landscape designations, users of National Trails, Long Distance Routes or Sustrans cycle routes, or the setting of a listed building.
Medium	Viewers engaged in outdoor recreation other than appreciation of the landscape, often within moderate quality landscapes. Examples include outdoor sport activities, outdoor tourist attractions, and occupiers of properties with oblique views affected by the development.
Low	Viewers passing through or past the area and not necessarily visiting for the appreciation of the landscape. Examples include rail passengers and road users.
Negligible	Viewers whose attention is focused on their work or activity, and not susceptible to changes in the surrounding landscape.

Effect Magnitude

1.6. The magnitude of change relates to the degree in which proposed development alters the fabric of the landscape character or view. This change is categorised as very high, high, medium, low, or negligible.

Table 3: Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Effect Definition
Very High	Change resulting in a significant degree of deterioration or improvement, or introduction of dominant new elements that are considered to make a major alteration to a landscape or view.
High	Change resulting in a high degree of deterioration or improvement, or introduction of recognisable new components that may be prominent within a landscape or view.
Medium	Change resulting in a moderate degree of deterioration or improvement, or constitutes a noticeable change within a landscape or view.
Low	Change resulting in a low degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view, or constitutes only a minor component within a landscape or view.
Negligible	Change resulting in a barely perceptible degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view.
No Change	It is also possible for a landscape or view to experience no change due to being totally compatible with the local character or not visible due to intervening structures or vegetation.

Significance Threshold

1.7. The magnitude of change is then considered against the sensitivity of the landscape resource as a receptor or the existing character of the panorama / view. In formulating the significance of effect, reasoned professional judgement is required which is explained within the assessment. This is carried out both in terms of the predicted effects on landscape character or on visual amenities. The significance thresholds are predicted as Substantial, Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible and None, and can be either beneficial or adverse. Unless otherwise stated, all effects are predicted in the winter months. The extent of mitigation measures should be clearly stated, and in the case of planting proposals, the contribution to reducing adverse effects should be demonstrated at different stages (construction stage, operational stage year 0, and year 10).

Table 4: Significance of Effect

Significance	Threshold Definition
Substantial	A very high magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view of national / international importance that has little or no susceptibility to change.
Major	A high magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that has limited susceptibility to change. Positive effects will typically occur in a damaged landscape or view.
Moderate	A medium magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that may have the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
Minor	A low magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that has the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
Negligible	A negligible magnitude of change that has little effect on a landscape or view that has the ability to accommodate change.
None	It is also possible for a magnitude of change to occur that results in a neutral effect significance due to the change being compatible with local character or not visible.

1.8. The significance of the effect is measured on the ability of a landscape or view to accommodate the change. In assessing the significance of effects, the following matrix will be used to determine the significance thresholds, through determining the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change.

Table 5: Measuring Significance of Effect

	Sensitivity of Receptors					
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of Change	Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
	High	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
	Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

1.9. It should be noted that where there is no perceptible change in terms of the effect magnitude regardless of the sensitivity of the receptor, the significance of the effect on a landscape or view will be none.

1.10. Landscape and visual effects that are Substantial, Major or Major/Moderate are considered to be significant.

1.11. A final written statement summarising the significant effects is provided, supported by the tables and matrices. This conclusion relies on professional judgement that is reasonable, based on clear and transparent methods, suitable training and experience, and a detached and dispassionate view of the development in the final assessment.