

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

SALESBURY VIEW ROAD, WILPSHIRE

PREPARED BY: PEGASUS GROUP | CLIENT: PERSIMMON HOMES | December 2025 | P21-0362.R001v9



Expertly Done.



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NOTE: This document is designed to be viewed at A3

01 METHODOLOGY

Published LVIA Guidance

- 1.1 This LVIA has been undertaken in accordance with the principles of best practice, as outlined in published guidance documents listed in the reference section of this report, notably the third edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (GLVIA3), (Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).
- 1.2 The methodology and assessment criteria for the assessment have been developed in accordance with the principles established in this best practice document. It should be acknowledged that GLVIA3 establishes guidelines, not a specific methodology. The preface to GLVIA3 states:
- 1.3 *"This edition concentrates on principles and processes. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand".*
- 1.4 The approach set out below and in detail in Appendix A has therefore been developed specifically for this assessment to ensure that the methodology is fit for purpose.

Distinction between Landscape and Visual Effects

- 1.5 In accordance with GLVIA3, landscape and visual effects are assessed separately, although the procedure for assessing each of these is closely linked. A clear distinction has been drawn between landscape and visual effects as described below:
 - Landscape effects relate to the effects of the indicative proposals on the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape and its resulting character and quality; and
 - Visual effects relate to the effects on specific views experienced by visual receptors and on visual amenity more generally.

Landscape and Visual Impact Process

- 1.6 The assessment of landscape effects follows a recognised process set out below:
 - Identify the baseline landscape resource (i.e. Individual landscape elements and a thorough understanding of landscape character both at a local scale and a wider scale) and its value;
 - Evaluate the sensitivity of the landscape resource to the type of development proposed;
 - Develop mitigation proposals / measures iteratively throughout the development process in order to avoid, reduce and

ameliorate potential adverse landscape impacts and to maximise the beneficial landscape impacts of the development;

- Identify predicted landscape impacts of the development;
 - Evaluate the magnitude of change to the baseline landscape resource; and
 - Assess the level of residual effect of the development on the landscape.
- 1.7 The assessment of visual effects follows a similar process as set out below:
 - Identify the geographical area within which views of the development are possible through field work;
 - Identify potential visual receptors for the development (i.e. Groups of people who would have views of the development);
 - Describe the nature of the baseline views towards the development for each receptor group, usually illustrated by a photograph;
 - Evaluate the sensitivity of the visual receptor groups;
 - Develop mitigation proposals / measures iteratively throughout the development process in order to avoid, reduce and ameliorate potential adverse visual impacts and to maximise the beneficial visual impacts of the development;
 - Identify predicted visual impacts of the development on receptor groups;
 - Evaluate the magnitude of change in the view of representative visual receptor groups; and
 - Assess the level of residual effects on the views from representative receptor groups and on overall visual amenity.
- ### Types of landscape and visual impacts considered and duration
- 1.8 The LVIA assesses both the permanent effects of the development and the temporary effects associated with its construction.
 - 1.9 Consideration has been given to seasonal variations in the visibility of the development and these are described where necessary.
 - 1.10 Both beneficial and adverse effects are identified in the assessment and reported as appropriate. Where effects are described as 'neutral' this is where beneficial effects are deemed to balance the adverse effects. The adverse and beneficial effects are communicated in each case so that the judgement is clear.
 - 1.11 As part of the proposed development, new planting would be introduced. Newly planted vegetation takes a number of

years to mature and average growth rates have been taken into consideration in this assessment. The effectiveness of vegetation would improve over time (both in terms of integrating the development into the surrounding landscape and in providing visual screening) and this needs to be considered appropriately.

Assessment criteria

- 1.12 The criteria used as guidance in assessing the effects of the development is outlined in Appendix A.

Assumptions and limitations of the assessment

Assessed Proposal

- 1.13 The proposed scheme assessed in this LVIA (see Figure 2) has been developed iteratively with the productions of this LVIA with the intention of incorporating mitigation into the scheme from the outset.

Study Area

- 1.14 A 1.5km study area was selected as a proportionate distance within which the greatest effects would be experienced.

Baseline Information

- 1.15 The baseline landscape resource and visual receptors were identified in part through a desk based study of Ordnance Survey mapping, published landscape character studies, relevant planning policies, interrogation of aerial photography, as well as photographs taken and observations made during site visits conducted during June 2021.
- 1.16 Access during site visits was restricted to publicly accessible locations or land within the ownership of the site landowners. No access was possible to private properties and therefore, assumptions have been made regarding the view from private properties. These assumptions have been based on an understanding of the properties and features present within the wider landscape gained during the site visit from publicly accessible locations. Assumptions are guided by professional experience and judgement.
- 1.17 Site visits were conducted during optimal visibility conditions allowing a good understanding of the landscape and the general visual character of the surrounding landscape.

02 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared on behalf of Persimmon Homes by Chartered Landscape Architects at Pegasus Group. It concerns a planning application for proposed residential development west of Whalley Road (A6), Wilpshire.
- 2.2 This assessment reviews the site and its surrounding context in landscape and visual terms to assess the capacity of the site to accommodate residential development within the parameters of current planning policy. It also provides information to inform the evolution of the development proposals and to inform the planning application.
- 2.3 The report considers the potential effects of the proposed development on landscape features, landscape character and visual amenity, in accordance with best practice 'Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment', (GVLIA 3) and the methodology set out in Appendix 1 of this document.
- 2.4 The assessment has been prepared through a desk study analysis of the site and its landscape and visual context, as well as a site visit in November 2018 and a review of the site conditions in 2023.
- 2.5 Following the production of a screened ZTV and assessment work undertaken on site, it was determined that an assessment study area of 1.5km from the site boundary was appropriate and proportionate to the development proposals as shown on Figure 8.
- 2.6 Following a further site visit in January 2024, Pegasus have created a winter photography record (see Appendix C) and a set of Photomontage Visualisations for viewpoints, 2,4 & 7 (see Appendix D).



View of the southern area of the site

03 SITE CONTEXT

- 3.1 The immediate landscape context is shown on the aerial mapping extract in Figure 1. The site is located on the southern edge of Wilpshire, a village north of Blackburn. The site lies on a valley side east of Whalley Road and north of Knotts Brook. Existing residential properties adjoin the site to the north and west; to the south beyond the well vegetated Knotts Brook is further residential development. Agricultural land extends eastwards from the site. A railway line runs parallel to Whalley Road connecting Clitheroe and beyond to the north and to Blackburn to the south.
- 3.2 A public right of way runs along the eastern boundary of the site connecting in to a wider network of footpaths to the north-east. Regional Cycle Route 91 runs along Parsonage Road to the south of the site. Parsonage Reservoir is located east of the site which outlets in to Knotts Brook. Agricultural land along with a good footpath network also extends beyond Whalley Road to the west.
- 3.3 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Allocation - Local Plan Policy H195 is located approximately 400m to the south east.

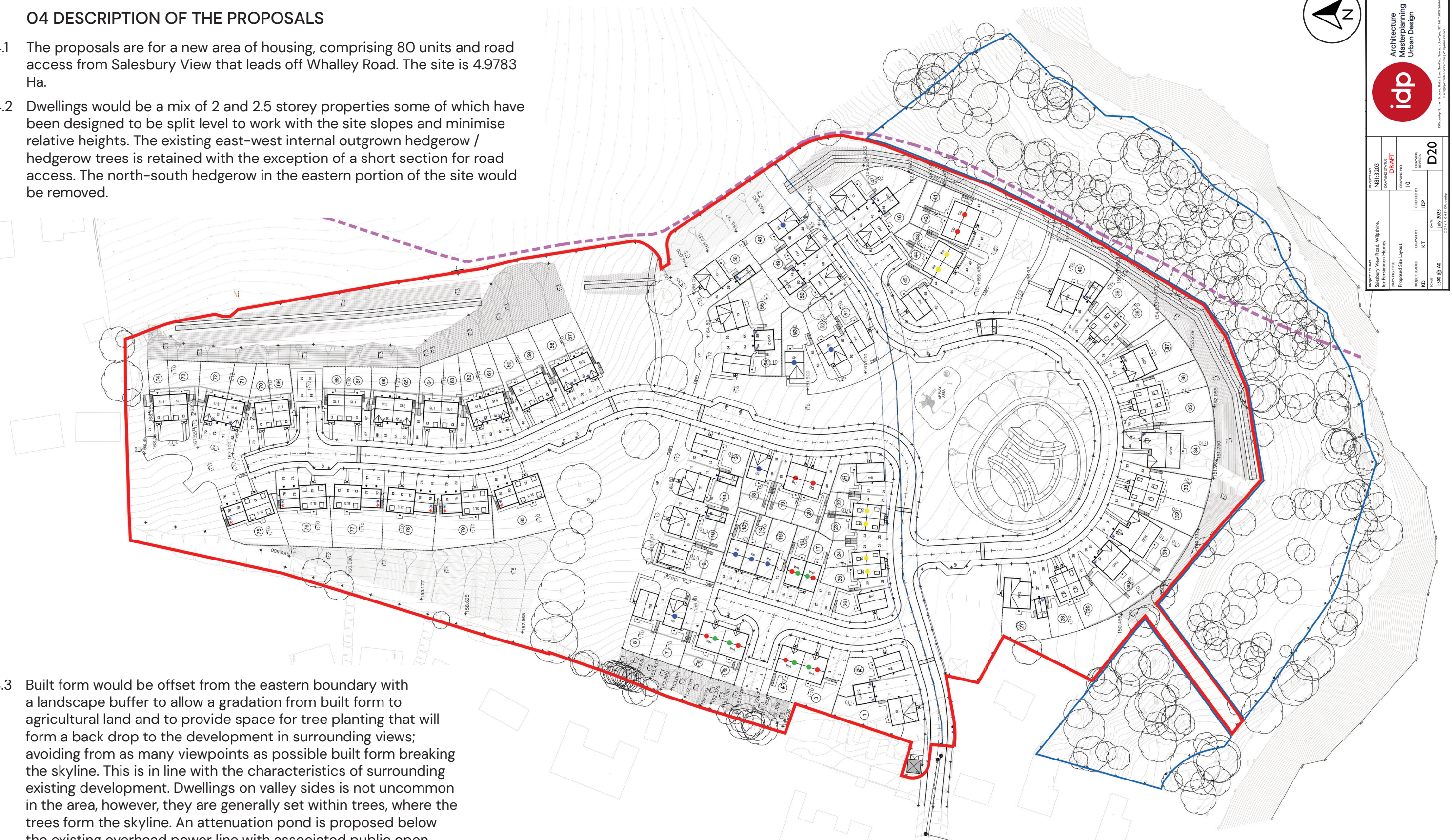


Figure 1: Landscape Context (Google Maps aerial extract)

04 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The proposals are for a new area of housing, comprising 80 units and road access from Salesbury View that leads off Whalley Road. The site is 4.9783 Ha.
- 4.2 Dwellings would be a mix of 2 and 2.5 storey properties some of which have been designed to be split level to work with the site slopes and minimise relative heights. The existing east-west internal outgrown hedgerow / hedgerow trees is retained with the exception of a short section for road access. The north-south hedgerow in the eastern portion of the site would be removed.

- 4.3 Built form would be offset from the eastern boundary with a landscape buffer to allow a gradation from built form to agricultural land and to provide space for tree planting that will form a back drop to the development in surrounding views; avoiding from as many viewpoints as possible built form breaking the skyline. This is in line with the characteristics of surrounding existing development. Dwellings on valley sides is not uncommon in the area, however, they are generally set within trees, where the trees form the skyline. An attenuation pond is proposed below the existing overhead power line with associated public open space. A planted swale is proposed along the eastern boundary.



Architecture Masterplanning Urban Design

idp

PROJECT NO.	NB13203
PROJECT NAME	Salesbury View Road, Wilshire, for Perfection Homes
DRAWING TITLE	Proposed Site Layout
DRAWING NO.	101
CHECKED BY	IDP
DRAWN BY	KT
DATE	July 2023
SCALE	1:500 @ A0
DRAWING STATUS	DRAFT
DRAWING NO.	D20

Figure 2: IDP Proposed Site Layout

05 MITIGATION

- 5.1 There are a number of landscape mitigation principles in relation to the proposed development, which are shown on the Landscape Framework Plan at Figure 3 and on the subsequent Landscape Masterplan at Figure 4. The aim of the landscape principles is to underpin the proposals with a robust landscape framework that will mitigate potential landscape and visual issues associated with the development of this site for housing, particularly in relation to forming a robust Green Belt boundary.
- 5.2 The main elements of the landscape mitigation are summarised as follows and are in line with the guidelines set out in the Landscape Strategy for Lancashire, for landscape character area 7a (see section 6):
- Retain, manage and augment existing hedgerow vegetation, (where possible, subject to level) to break up the mass of development and incorporate within new areas of Public open Space (POS);
 - New tree and hedge planting to replace those removed as part of the proposals;
 - Provide dense tree planting to parts of the eastern boundary to create a wooded backdrop to the development when viewed from the adjacent valley side, in keeping with the character of surrounding, existing development and to filter views of the proposed development from the adjacent footpath;
 - Other areas of public open space and incidental spaces around plots to be planted with trees adding and additional layer of filtering and opportunity to break up the development mass; and
 - Provide street and garden trees throughout the development.
- 5.3 The Landscape Masterplan at Figure 4 illustrates how these principles would be delivered as part of the proposals. Key elements include:
- Significant buffer and structure planting.
 - Street trees and new hedgerow planting to define public and private space.
 - Areas of public open space including connections to the wider recreational network.
 - Play area provision characterised by natural play and wider distribution across the site in terms of 'play on the way'.
 - Suds provision worked into the public open space to provide a sculptural landform.



Figure 3: Landscape Framework Plan



06 DESIGNATIONS AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 6.1 This section provides an overview of the designations and policy framework of particular relevance to the landscape and visual issues considered in this LVIA. Policies with specific geographical limits and which are relevant to a consideration of landscape and visual matters are illustrated on Figure 5.

European Landscape Convention

- 6.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is the first international convention to focus specifically on landscape. The convention promotes landscape protection, management and planning, as well as European co-operation on landscape issues. Signed by the UK Government in February 2006, the ELC became binding from March 2007. It applies to all landscapes, towns and villages, as well as open countryside; the coast and inland areas; and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection.
- 6.3 The Government has stated that it considers the UK to be compliant with the ELC's requirements and in effect the principle requirements of the ELC are already enshrined in the existing suite of national policies and guidance on the assessment of landscape and visual effects.
- 6.4 The ELC 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.'* (Council of Europe 2000)
- 6.5 It is important to recognise that the ELC does not require the preservation of all landscapes although landscape protection is one of the core themes of the convention. Equally important though is the requirement to manage and plan future landscape change.
- 6.6 The ELC highlights the importance of developing landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes. The analysis of landscape and visual matters in this LVIA read in context with appropriate national and local policy will enable decisions to be made with due regard to landscape character as promoted by the ELC.

National Planning Policy

- 6.7 A revision to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023. A summary of the key relevant text is outlined below:
- 6.8 The NPPF sets out the Government's national policy on land use planning in England. The primary principle of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in section 2, paragraph 11.

NPPF SECTION 12: ACHIEVING WELL DESIGNED PLACES

- 6.9 Paragraph 135 outlines some key points in respect to the design of new developments and states:
- 6.10 "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)..."

NPPF SECTION 15: CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- 6.12 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF in relation to valued landscapes, states:
- "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland..."

Local Planning Policy

- 6.11 The site falls within the administrative boundary of Ribble Borough Council. The Local Plan comprises the Core Strategy 2008–2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley, Ribble Valley Proposal's Map and the Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document. The latter includes the site as the proposed housing allocation for Wilpshire (HAL2 in Regulation 19 document).
- 6.12 The site is almost adjacent to the 'Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council' (Blackburn East) boundary to the south (see Figure 5). This Borough has prepared a local development plan called Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan 2021 to 2037 (Adopted January 2024). The document introduced a new site allocation for residential development and regulated it by policy H195.
- 6.13 The associated policies of relevance to the site are set out as follows.

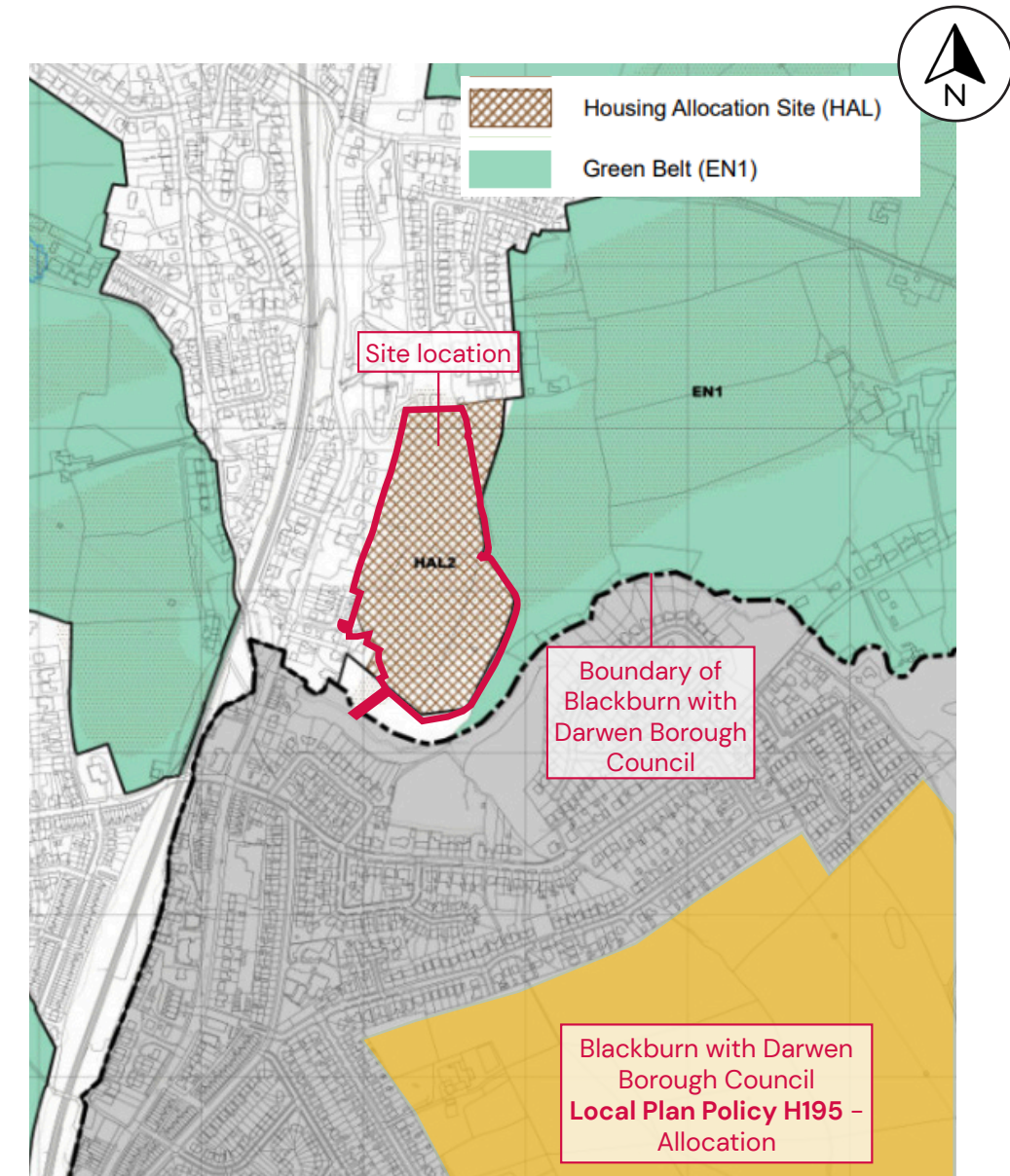


Figure 5: Housing and Economic Development DPD Proposals Map – Sheet 6 – Wilpshire (14) Whalley and Surrounding Area (18).

Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008–2028

- 6.14 The policies within the Plan, that are of relevance to this report are outlined below:

KEY STATEMENT EN1: GREEN BELT

- 6.15 "The overall extent of the green belt will be maintained to safeguard the surrounding countryside from inappropriate encroachment. The development of new buildings will be limited to the purposes of agriculture, forestry, essential outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the green belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of the designation".

KEY STATEMENT EN2: OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

- 6.16 "... As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials".
- 6.17 The policy goes on to discuss open countryside *"the Council will also seek to ensure that the open countryside is protected from inappropriate development. Developers should adopt a nonstandardised approach to design which recognises and enhances local distinctiveness, landscape character, the quality of the built fabric, historic patterns and landscape tranquillity"*.

KEY STATEMENT EN3: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- 6.18 *"Ribble Valley Borough Council will liaise with the County Council over development within Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) in both proposing future site allocations and in determining planning applications. This liaison will include consideration of the issue of preventing the unnecessary sterilisation of mineral resources within MSAs"*.

POLICY DMG1: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Design

- 6.19 Point 2 of the policy states all development must "be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials".
- 6.20 Point 3 of the policy states all development must "consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. Particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities".

Environment

- 6.21 Point 2 states "with regards to possible effects upon the natural environment, the council propose that the principles of the mitigation hierarchy be followed. This gives sequential preference to the following: 1) enhance the environment 2) avoid the impact 3) minimise the impact 4) restore the damage 5) compensate for the damage 6) offset the damage".

POLICY DMG2: STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.22 Point 1 states *"development proposals in the principal settlements of clitheroe, longridge and whalley and the tier 1 villages [which includes Wilpshire] should consolidate, expand or round-off development so that it is closely related to the main built up areas, ensuring this is appropriate to the scale of, and in keeping with, the existing settlement"*.

- 6.23 The policy goes on to state that *"within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build"*.

POLICY DME1: PROTECTING TREES AND WOODLAND

- 6.24 This policy seeks to protect trees; it states that the borough council will ensure that: *"the visual, botanical and historical value, together with the useful and safe life expectancy of tree cover, are important factors in determining planning applications, this will include an assessment of the impact of the density of development, lay out of roads, access points and services on any affected trees"*.

POLICY DME2: LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE PROTECTION

- 6.25 This policy states that *"development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape or landscape features including:*

1. *traditional stone walls*
2. *ponds*
3. *characteristic herb rich meadows and pastures*
4. *woodlands*
5. *copses*
6. *hedgerows and individual trees"*.

POLICY DMB5: FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

- 6.26 This policy states that *"in situations where a public right of way will inevitably become less attractive (due to adjacent/ surrounding development), the policy should require compensatory enhancements such that there is a net improvement to the public right of way network. The borough council will, unless suitable mitigation measures are made, protect from the development footpaths which:*
1. *provide a link between towns/villages and attractive open land;*
 2. *link with the ribble way footpath;*
 3. *are associated to the local nature reserves;*
 4. *and are heavily used.*
- 6.27 *The Council considers the protection and enhancement of the footpath and bridleways network to be important given the character of the area and the contribution such networks can be made to leisure, health and tourism"*.

Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan 2021 to 2037 (Adopted January 2024)

POLICY H195 NORTH EAST BLACKBURN STRATEGIC HOUSING SITE

- 6.28 This new allocation brought forward by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is a large scale Green Belt release site located approx. 400m to the south of the Salesbury View site (shown at Figure 5 and on the viewpoint plan at Figure 8). The extent of this allocation is also illustrated on the photomontage viewpoints at Appendix D. The allocation site can be clearly seen from Viewpoint 2 – view from footpath 3-46-FP 23 looking south and is partially visible from Viewpoint 4 – view from 3-33-FP 12 looking south east. Viewpoint 7 – view from public right of way north west of Upper Mickle Hey looking north west is located within Allocation H195 and would be subject to a significantly altered future baseline.

The Policy H195 states that:

"Amount/type of development: 750 residential units delivered within plan period with development continuing beyond 2037 (total of 1500 units to be delivered across the site)".

Landscape Designations

- 6.29 There are no local, national or international designations of landscape importance across the site.
- 6.30 Green Belt abuts the site along the eastern boundary. The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies approximately 5.8km to the north at its closest point. Ramsgreave Wood Ancient and Semi-natural woodland is located approximately 874m east of the site.

Heritage and Ecological Designations

- 6.31 The assessment of potential effects on ecological sites such as SSSI or Ramsar; or on the setting of sensitive cultural heritage designations such as Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas does not form part of this assessment. However, the identification of such assets is important as they provide an indication of the value and quality of the wider landscape character as well as an indication of areas from which visual receptors have a heightened visual sensitivity.
- 6.32 In terms of historic designations, there are two listed buildings within 1km of the site; Upper Mickle Hey Farmhouse and attached buildings approximately 845m to the south-east and Eddy Holes Stable and Shippens to Eddy Holes located approximately 965m south-east of the site. There are no Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments or Registered Parks and Gardens within 1km of the site.
- 6.33 There are no ecological designations present on the site or within the surrounding 1km of the site.

07 LANDSCAPE BASELINE / EFFECTS

- 7.1 A baseline study has been undertaken to record the character of the landscape and the elements, features and aesthetic and perceptual factors which contribute to it and to highlight any particular sensitivities that should be addressed in the masterplan.

Landscape Features

Topography

- 7.2 In terms of the wider context, the site lies within an area of landform where there are frequent rounded ridges formed by gritstone outcrops. The nearest of these hilltops is located approximately 350m north-east of the site at +202m AOD, (with the site area forming the lower slopes of this landform down to the existing residential edge between the 150m – 175m contours), another is located south of the site near Brownhill Farm forming part of the Blackburn with Darwen allocation H195 at an elevation of +190m AOD. Height House further to the south east sits on a ridge top at +235m AOD, this ridge extends along part of Blackburn Old Road to the north east before descending in to Great Harwood. A trig point north of York Road sits at +235m AOD with numerous other hill tops along York Road and Moor Lane forming another ridge top.
- 7.3 The site sits on the western side of the ridge, where the landform begins to fall down towards Knotts Brook and Showley Brook. Levels within the site range from approximately +177m AOD at the eastern boundary to +148.5m AOD on the southern boundary. It slopes relatively steeply from the east to the west and south. The wider landform of the rounded ridge continues gaining height to the north east.
- 7.4 The value of the site topography is judged to be low-medium. Whilst the sloping topography forms part of a landscape feature identified as a key characteristic of Landscape Character Area (LCA) 7a, Mellor Ridge, i.e. the rounded ridge profiles of the gritstone outcrops, (see 'A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire' (2000)), the site is located on the lower slopes of the western extent of the landform immediately adjacent to the residential edge and does not contain any individual topographical features of note nor does it form a key component of the ridge, being located in a portion of land of lower elevation than the wider feature. The ridges within LCA 7a are considered to be important buffers between urban development and rural landscapes and this function would be maintained by the development of the site which would be located on the lower slopes with open farmland continuing to rise to the north east.
- 7.5 The susceptibility of the landform to change is considered to be

medium. The landform is susceptible to some change in order to accommodate the development, some cut and fill is expected to enable the construction of development platforms and split level properties. Other works to land form will include topsoil stripping, temporary storage mounds and earthworks to accommodate building foundations and roads, swale and a SUDs pond.

- 7.6 In combining judgements on value and susceptibility the landform is considered to have a **medium** sensitivity to residential development.
- 7.7 The magnitude of change to landform is considered to be **medium.** The proposed properties would be constructed on development plateaus which are expected to vary in relation to the existing ground levels, more so in the steeper sloping areas of the site. Works to create the access roads are expected to be localised and generally follow the existing lie of the land.
- 7.8 The combination of sensitivity and magnitude of change results in a moderate level of effect to the topography of the site during all phases of development. The effects will be adverse, long-term and permanent but the overall ridge profile of the main body of the gritstone outcrop will be maintained beyond the site boundaries to the north east.

Land use, buildings and infrastructure

- 7.9 The site is currently used for pasture and is graded 4, (poor) under the Agricultural Land Classification. There are no buildings or Public Rights of Way present on the site. An overhead power line crosses the site with two pylons situated within the site boundary, in the southern field.
- 7.10 The site is considered to have **medium** value in terms of its use. It is typical of the wider agricultural land to the east, north and west where there is a mix of arable fields and land used for pasture. It is a greenfield site that contributes to the character of the immediate surroundings of the site both adjacent to the site and to an extent in views from across the valley to the west. However, the site is located on the urban fringe with development surrounding it on three sides, not immediately adjacent to it in the south, but visible from the site above Knotts Brook.
- 7.11 Susceptibility of this feature/landscape element at a site level is deemed to be **high.** The development would alter the baseline situation from a greenfield site to a housing development.
- 7.12 In combining judgements on value and susceptibility the overall sensitivity of this feature is judged to be **high.**
- 7.13 The magnitude of change is assessed as high. The proposals would see the introduction of 80 residential units across a total site area of 4.9783 Ha. In terms of scale, properties are expected to be two/two and a half storey, with the development mass

set back from the eastern boundary by a landscape buffer, planted with trees as illustrated in Figure 4 and outlined in the Mitigation chapter. Proposed dwellings are broken up by areas of green space that retain existing hedgerows where possible and include new tree planting, all of which lessens the perceived scale of the development. In terms of geographical extent the proposed development occupies a little over half of the site and a very small area of land when considering the wider landscape character area, with effects concentrated to the site itself and a localised area around it.

- 7.14 The overall effect is considered to be **moderate/major** during all phases of the development. Effects would be adverse, long term and permanent.
- 7.15 Adverse effects are however moderated by the manner in which the proposed development has been designed, the manner in which the existing landscape features have been sought to be retained and managed and the proximity of similar scale buildings to the north, west and south. This includes the retention of existing hedgerows and trees where possible and the incorporation of new tree planting on the eastern boundary, as well as throughout the site. The mitigation to the eastern boundary is key in reducing visual impact and mimicking the character of other built form on surrounding valley sides.

Vegetation

- 7.16 Vegetation on site comprises a linear band of trees that runs east-west through the centre, five of which are Category A trees, 4 are Category B. The remaining four trees and two tree groups are Category C. A mixed species hedgerow runs north-south through the southern field and is also Category C. The ground cover is rough grass, used for grazing.
- 7.17 The northern boundary has limited vegetation, some mature trees are located in a neighbouring garden. The western boundary comprises a mix of scattered hedgerow and trees. The southern boundary abuts the mature trees associated with Knotts Brook.
- 7.18 Within the wider landscape, to the south and south-west, mature trees continue along the route of Knotts Brook wrapping around Warrenside Close. Areas of woodland and tree groups are limited within the landscape immediately east of the site. Vegetation consists of occasional hedgerows and linear belts of trees along some roads. Trees associated with the fairways of Wilpshire Golf Club. West of the site beyond Whalley Road, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and small woodlands are more common, similarly in the north beyond Wilpshire.
- 7.19 In terms of value, trees and hedgerows are common in the landscape to the north and west, to the east they are a little less so. They are notable features when in close proximity to the site,

specifically from the footpath that runs immediately outside of the eastern boundary. Overall, the vegetation on site is judged to be of **medium** value.

- 7.20 The susceptibility to change of the vegetation on site is **high**. Within the site the field boundary vegetation is retained in some locations. A small section of the internal east-west boundary will be removed to facilitate road access. The north-south hedgerow leading to Knotts Brook will be removed. The proposed masterplan seeks to mitigate the loss of this vegetation through the implementation of additional tree planting with new tree buffers to sections of the north and eastern boundaries and throughout the development along streets and within gardens and areas of public open space.
- 7.21 In considering the susceptibility and value, the overall sensitivity of existing vegetation has been assessed as **high**.
- 7.22 The trees and hedgerows proposed for removal in order to accommodate the development represent a relatively small proportion of those within the surrounding landscape. Of the vegetation present on site, the north-south hedgerow will be removed and a proportion of the east-west hedgerow removed. The majority of the remaining vegetation along the site boundaries will be retained although this is limited to a small number of tree groups and individual trees (see Appendix B, Tree Survey). Significant new numbers of trees are proposed as part of the development. Effects are likely to be perceived at both a site level and within the immediate setting of the site by users of footpath 3-46-FP 25 and receptors in neighbouring dwellings.
- 7.23 During all development phases the magnitude of change is judged to be **high**, resulting in a **moderate/major** adverse landscape effect that is direct, long term and permanent during construction and year 01. As proposed trees throughout the site mature by year 15, in particular strengthening the eastern boundary buffer the landscape effect would fall to minor with a beneficial effect, and would continue to be beneficial in the long term.

Landscape Character

National Landscape Character Assessment

- 7.24 The site falls within National Character Area 35, Lancashire Valleys as shown in Figure 6.
- 7.25 The key characteristics relevant to the site and its immediate vicinity are described as follows:
- “Broad valleys of the rivers Calder and Ribble and their tributaries run north-east to south-west between the uplands of Pendle Hill and the Southern Pennines.
 - A Millstone Grit ridge extends between the Ribble and Calder catchments (including the Mellor Ridge and part of Pendle Hill).

- A broad trough underlain by Carboniferous Coal Measures provided the basis for early industrialisation.
- Field boundaries are regular to the west and more irregular to the east. They are formed by hedges with few hedgerow trees and by stone walls and post-and-wire fences at higher elevations.
- Agricultural land is fragmented by towns, villages and hamlets, industry and scattered development, with pockets of farmed land limited to along the Ribble Valley, the fringes of Pendle Hill, the area to the west of Blackburn, and in the north around Skipton.
- Farmed land is predominantly pasture for grazing livestock, with areas of acid and neutral grassland, flushes and mires. There is some upland heath and rough pasture on Pendle Hill and the higher land to the south.
- Small, often ancient, broadleaved woodlands of oak, alder and sycamore extend along narrow, steep-sided cloughs on the valley sides – for example, at Priestley Clough, Spurn Clough and south of Blackburn. Traditional stone-built weavers’ cottages.
- There are numerous large country houses with associated parklands, particularly on the northern valley sides away from major urban areas.
- There are many examples of proto-industrial heritage, including lime hushings, important turnpike and pack-horse routes involved in the early textile trade, and rural settlements with handloom weavers’ cottages.
- There is evidence of a strong industrial heritage associated with the cotton
- weaving and textile industries, with many common artefacts such as mill buildings, mill lodges and ponds, and links to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.
- The many towns, including Blackburn, Accrington and Burnley, which developed as a result of the Industrial Revolution give the area a strong urban character.
- Robust Victorian architecture of municipal buildings contrasts with the vernacular sandstone grit buildings of the quiet rural settlements on the valley sides.
- Numerous communication routes run along the valley bottoms, including the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, the Preston-Colne railway and the M65 motorway.”

- 7.26 The evidence base provided within the NCA description provides a useful contextual overview of the wider landscape character. However, this scale of character assessment is of limited assistance in considering landscape impacts at a localised level due to its broad coverage.

National Character Area 35 Lancashire Valleys

Note: In most instances, the NCA boundary is not precisely mapped and should be considered as a zone of transition between NCAs.

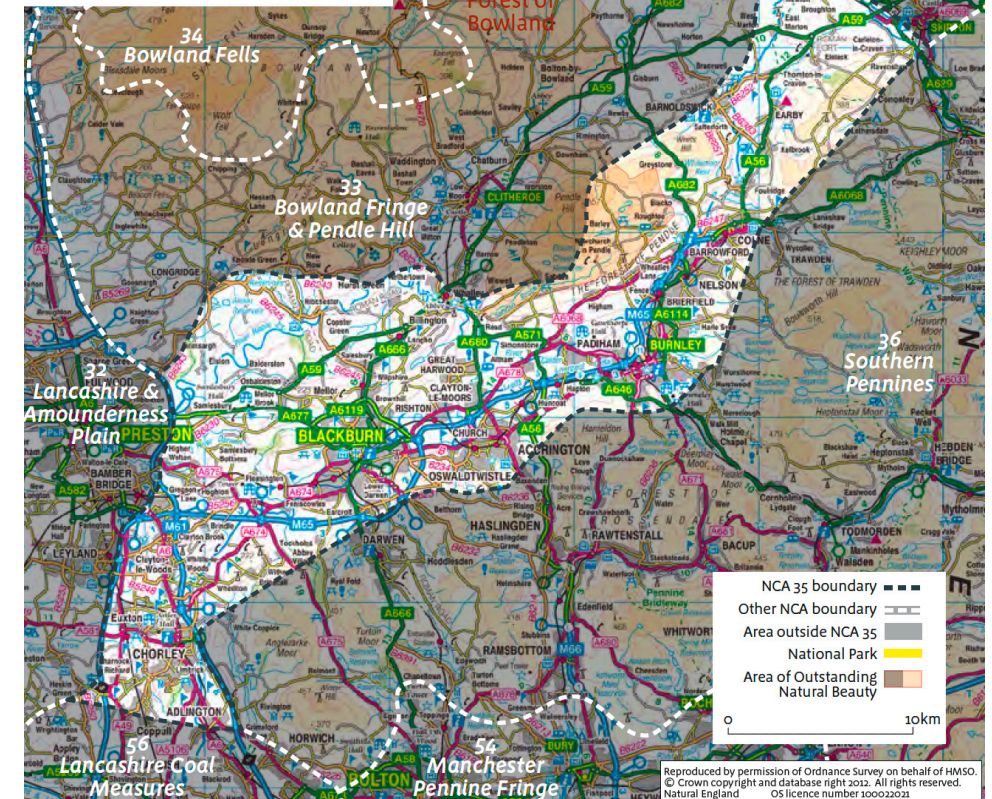


Figure 6: NCA 35, Lancashire Valleys

- 7.27 Although the document has been reviewed as part of the baseline study, it has not been deemed necessary to assess the effects of the proposed development on landscape character at this national scale. As such effects on the NCA are not considered further in this assessment.

A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire (2000)

- 7.28 The assessment identifies 21 landscape character types within the study area and provides landscape management guidelines for each character area.
- 7.29 The site falls within Landscape Character Type 7, Farmed Ridges and falls within Landscape Character Area 7a, Mellor Ridge.
- 7.30 The key characteristics identified in the assessment of relevance to the proposals include (those of most relevance in bold):
- “Rounded ridge profiles of the gritstone outcrops set them apart from the adjacent lowland agricultural landscapes and often provide important buffers between rural and urban landscapes.
 - Mosaic of mixed farmland and woodland forms a textural

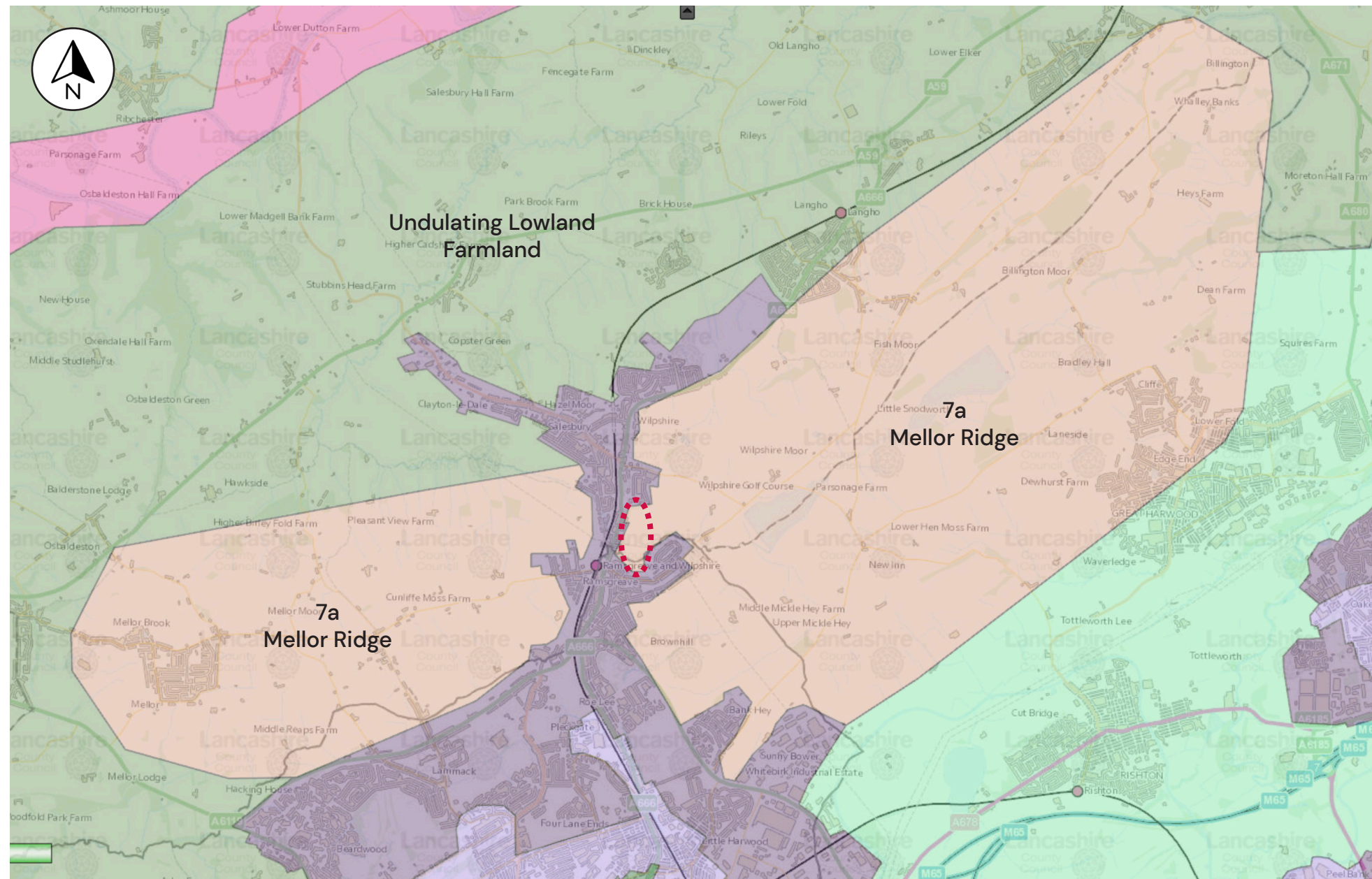


Figure 7: Landscape Character Area Map (MARIO)

Landscape Character Types

Coastal Dunes	Moorland Hills
Coastal Plain	Moorland Plateaux
Drumlin Field	Mosslands
Enclosed Coastal Marsh	Open Coastal Marsh
Enclosed Uplands	Reservoir Valleys
Farmed Ridges	Rolling Upland Farmland
Historic Core	Settled Valleys
Industrial Age	Suburban
Industrial Foothills and Valleys	Undulating Lowland Farmland
Limestone Fells	Valley Floodplains
Low Coastal Drumlins	Wooded Limestone Hills & Pavements
Moorland Fringe	Wooded Rural Valleys

backdrop to the surrounding lowlands. Broadleaved woodlands on the hill sides are important visually as well as supporting valuable fern, bryophyte and bird species.

- Ridge-top settlements and roads, from which there are long views over the surrounding lowlands.
- Distinctive vernacular architecture including stone built villages, farmsteads and short terraces of cottages, reflect the industrial history of these areas.
- In-bye pastures and hay meadows on the upper hill sides form an important element of the farmland mosaic.
- Views over the surrounding lowlands from villages, footpaths, parking places and picnic sites, serve as reminders of the possible early strategic use of the ridges.
- Designed landscapes and country houses, some adapted for new uses, reflect the long history and suitability of the ridges for settlement".

7.31 The assessment identifies local forces for change and their landscape implications:

- "Pressure for ribbon development and large houses on the highly visible ridges may erode the rural character of the landscape backdrop and overall setting of the ridge villages.
- The development of prominent vertical elements, such as communication masts, would be particularly visible and could lead to cluttering of the skyline on the distinctive rounded ridge profile.
- The ongoing decline in woodland cover due to neglect, mismanagement or agricultural intensification could alter the balance of the local landscape pattern; the mosaic of fields and woodland is prominent in views from the surrounding lowlands. The loss of farm woodlands would also lead to a decline in wildlife habitats. However, initiatives such as Elwood may have a significant impact on the landscape through new planting.
- Changes in the agricultural sector leading to the loss of hedgerows and changes in the proportion of landscape elements. The landscape pattern of the Farmed Ridges is similar to that of the Undulating Lowland Farmland, although the upstanding ridge ensures that the former is far more prominent. The Farmed Ridges are therefore particularly sensitive to changes such as hedgerow removal and the amalgamation of fields and farm units. This would also cause a decline in wildlife habitats".

7.32 The landscape strategy highlights the following recommendations (those of relevance to the site and proposals):

“Conserve the character of the ridge settlements

- *new development should reflect the pattern of clustered settlements of local stone buildings and short terraces to counteract the pressures for ribbon development and reflect the characteristic settlement pattern; some settlements (eg Mellor) are clustered, but others are loose-knit, with buildings strung out along ridgetop roads.*
- *consider softening abrupt urban edges with woodland planting which links to the hillside woodlands.*

Maintain the balance of rural landscape elements

- *maintain hedgerows to conserve the historic field pattern*
- *encourage planting of small scale farm woodlands which provide ‘stepping stones’ for wildlife between larger woodlands*
- *conserve the rural setting of individual farms by ensuring new built development does not encroach*

Conserve the hedgerow network to maintain a strong field pattern

- *manage the hedgerow network to ensure it remains intact, particularly where historic field patterns are visible*
- *wherever possible, manage hedgerows for species diversity and wildlife habitats*

Conserve the smooth uncluttered skyline of ridges

- *minimise vertical structures on the skyline*
- *conserve views over the surrounding lowlands*

Conserve the function of the ridge as a rural buffer

- *retain the rural character of the ridge by minimising the use of urban elements such as kerbs and street lights outside settlements*

Enhance hedgerows where they are degraded or gappy

- *plant hedgerow trees to ensure a new generation of trees replace the existing generation*
- *replant degraded sections of hedgerow which contribute significantly to the characteristic overall pattern*

Enhance settlement character

- *ensure new built development respects local materials and styles; stone built farmsteads and village buildings are characteristic*

- *enhance settings to settlements by creating gateways to the settlements and resisting ribbon development*
- *retain views over the lowlands which is an important historic feature of the ridge-top settlements*
- *encourage strategic tree planting as a backdrop to new development; it will form the skyline in many views*

Restore broadleaved woodlands

- *aim to extend woodlands on the ridge sides using native species*
- *encourage the planting of woodlands around settlements to provide enclosure and a rural setting to settlements ...”.*

7.33 The assessment highlights potential indicators for monitoring landscape change identifying: increased clutter from new built development to ridge-top skylines; changes in the proportion of landscape elements due to encroachment of new built development affecting the prominent landscape pattern on hill sides; and loss of vernacular character of settlements due to pressure for new development.

7.34 Recommendations for the site are outlined in the Mitigation section of chapter 4 Description of the proposals, and draw on the points highlighted in the landscape character assessment above.

Character of the site and immediate surroundings

7.35 The site is situated on the lower slopes of the west facing side of a ridge immediately adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Wilpshire. The highest part of the site is on the eastern boundary at +177m AOD, it slopes down to the west and south-west with a low point of +148.5m AOD near to Knotts Brook. The nature of the topography allows long distance views of surrounding ridgelines and valley sides in all directions, to differing degrees depending on the location within the site, comprised of a mixture of settlement interspersed with mature trees, agricultural fields and woodland. These views are more readily available from higher areas of the site but may still be glimpsed from lower areas. The neighbouring settlements of Wilpshire, Blackburn and Mellor can be observed to varying degrees from the site.

7.36 The eastern boundary is fairly open, defined by a drystone wall that has fallen in to disrepair. Views are available over the neighbouring field that rises to a high point to the north-east. The southern section of the eastern boundary has the remnants of a hedgerow. Existing residential properties on Hollowhead Avenue to the north are visible from the site. The southern boundary is defined by the mature trees along Knotts Brook. The western boundary is generally formed of rear garden boundaries

of existing residential properties located off Wilpshire Banks, Whalley Road and Salesbury View. Boundary treatments vary from close board fencing with mature trees, hedgerows and garages located off Salesbury View. A hedgerow runs east-west through the centre of the site along with an overhead pylon running east to west through the southern field.

7.37 The site has a typical edge of settlement character influenced by both the surrounding residential development and the adjacent field and brook. The topography allows longer distance views of ridges, valleys, woodland and settlement. The lower areas of the site feel more enclosed by vegetation, existing built form and landform.

Landscape effects upon Landscape Character Area 7a Mellor Ridge

7.38 The Mellor Ridge landscape character area is described as an area of ridges formed by gritstone outcrops that provide important buffers between rural and urban landscapes. The landscape is a mixture of farmland and woodland that forms “a textural backdrop to the surrounding lowlands”. Ridge-top settlements and roads are also characteristic with views over the surrounding lowlands.

7.39 In terms of value the character area has high recreational value with an extensive network of footpaths. Regional Cycle Route 91 also passes through it. There are two SSSIs located within its boundary, a Scheduled Monument and the edge of two Conservations Areas just fall within the eastern part of the LCA. A large proportion of the LCA is Green Belt. There are several Listed Buildings within its boundaries. There are some areas of ancient woodland located north of Great Harwood. The local plan also designates parts of the LCA as Open Countryside. Other factors that indicate the value of the LCA include the strategy set out in the Landscape Strategy for Lancashire on page 54; conserving the character of the ridge settlements, conserving landscape features such as hedgerows and the smooth, uncluttered skylines of the ridges as well as their function as a rural buffer. The value assigned to the character area is judged to be high.

7.40 The attributes of the character area such as the ridges create a character that feels open in parts with some opportunities for medium to long distance views, whilst on occasion, on ridge sides particularly when coupled with development and mature trees such as along the Whalley Road corridor, the character feels more enclosed. The location of the site on the side of a ridge presents some inter-visibility with surrounding landscape character areas to the west. The part of the character area where the site is located is heavily influenced by the neighbouring suburban area of Wilpshire as well as by other development on nearby ridge sides to the south and west such as that around Parsonage Road

RECEPTOR	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	YEAR 01 EFFECT	YEAR 15 EFFECT
LANDSCAPE FEATURES				
Vegetation	High	High	Moderate/Major Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Land use	High	High	Moderate/Major Adverse	Moderate/Major Adverse
Topography	Medium	Medium (at a site scale)	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER				
LCA 7a	Medium	Low (at a whole character area scale)	Minor Adverse	Negligible
Site	High	High	Major Adverse	Major Adverse

Table 1: Summary of Landscape Effects

and in Mellor. Overall the susceptibility to change for the LCA is judged to be **low**.

7.41 The resulting sensitivity for the overall landscape character area based on consideration of susceptibility and value is assessed as **medium**. However this is considered to be lower along some parts of the character area boundaries where it borders existing development with little in the way of vegetation to soften the urban edges.

7.42 In terms of the magnitude of landscape effects, within the wider character area, the proposed development would constitute an extension to the settlement edge associated with Wilpshire. Due to the nature of the landscape and the size and scale of the proposed development, it would be visible from a limited number of places within the character area, mainly, immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary and along the ridge to the south running between Brownhill Farm and Black Low. The character area extends beyond Whalley Road to the west with some visibility of the site available from some locations on this eastern facing ridge side. The development proposals would not be out of character with the locality, with similar built elements running between the eastern and western parts of the character area. When viewing the site from the west, rooftops of the existing residential properties along Whalley Road are often visible amongst mature

trees. The presence of development would be brought further in to the character area to the east. However, with mitigation proposals to the eastern buffer there may be an improvement of the settlement edge, by softening with a stronger vegetated boundary.

7.43 Therefore, the proposals would not constitute an overly adverse element within the wider LCA. In this regard it is noted that the geographical extent of the landscape which would experience the identified long-term effects of the development is generally already influenced by development.

7.44 The proposed development would represent a limited change to the overall landscape character area, as such the magnitude of change is assessed as **low** in Year 01 and Year 15. The overall effect is **moderate/minor** adverse for Year 01. By Year 15 it is expected that the effect would reduce to **minor** adverse and would be direct, long term and permanent. It is noted that the much larger Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Allocation – Local Plan Policy H195 located approximately 400m to the south east also forms part of this character area.

Landscape effects upon the site itself and immediate surroundings (within 200m to the east).

7.45 As previously described the site is located on the lower portions of a west facing side of a ridge that falls down to Whalley Road. The site slopes fairly steeply from the eastern boundary to the west and southern boundaries. There is a row of trees that runs east-west across the centre of the site and another hedgerow running north-south through the southern area of the site. Existing residential development surrounds the site to the north and west and also to the south beyond Knotts Brook. Due to the range in topography the character across the site varies, from higher elevations the site is more open, with longer distance views available. At lower elevations it has a feeling of enclosure from surrounding vegetation, built form and landform.

7.46 The value attached to the site and the area immediately east of it is judged to be **medium**. It is considered to be valued at a community and local level. There are no landscape designations on the site itself. The western extent of the Green Belt boundary runs along the eastern boundary of the site. The location of the site on the settlement edge has an urbanising influence over the site.

7.47 The susceptibility of the landscape character of the site to a residential development of the type proposed is considered to be **high**. Although the character of the site is heavily influenced by surrounding residential properties, the proposal will involve changing a greenfield site to a residential development that occupies a large proportion of the site area. Overall, the sensitivity of the site is judged to be **high**.

7.48 The magnitude of change is judged to be **high** as the development will occupy a large part of the site, introducing built form, associated infrastructure and will involve the removal of some internal boundary vegetation. New planting is proposed to the eastern boundary and throughout the areas of public open space, within gardens and along streets.

7.49 The above assessments result in a **major** level of effect on the character of the site and immediate surroundings to the east during all phases of the development. Adverse effects would be moderated by the appropriate treatment to sensitive boundaries such as mitigation planting within the eastern landscape buffer, the retention of vegetation where possible, the incorporation of open spaces with additional tree planting and tree planting to the street scene and within gardens.

08 VISUAL BASELINE / EFFECTS

- 8.1 The assessment of visual effects identifies the main changes in views and visual amenity as a result of the development. The aim is to establish the different groups of people who may experience views of the development, the places where they will be affected and the change in nature and visual amenity of the views that would be affected. Seven representative viewpoints have been selected which are considered to be a proportional reflection of the visual context of the site. These viewpoints provide a summary illustration of locations where key effects of the proposals are likely to be visible.
- 8.2 A site visit undertaken in November 2018 and a further review in 2023, demonstrated that the visibility of the site in the local area was limited by a combination of landform, vegetation and intervening built form. The photos in the following section illustrate the nature of existing views from publicly accessible locations within the landscape surrounding the site.

Effects on visual receptors

- 8.3 The potential visual effects of the Proposed Development following construction are assessed from the seven viewpoints as shown on the adjacent Figure 8. For each of the assessment viewpoints, a short description is given of the baseline view followed by a description of the features of the Proposed Development which would be visible from that viewpoint.
- 8.4 For each viewpoint the commentary includes details of any vegetation, buildings or topography would affect the visibility of the Proposed Development. A comment on the sensitivity of the viewpoint, the magnitude of change experienced and the significance of visual impacts is given for each viewpoint. All effects during the operational phase of the Proposed Development are long term and permanent.
- 8.5 During the construction phase of the proposed development there would be additional visual effects in relation to construction activities including the movement of plant on site. The construction activity on site would be visible for a brief period, and as such these effects would all be short term and non-permanent. At all of the viewpoints listed below there would be no greater than a minor additional effect, tending towards no additional effect during the construction phase.

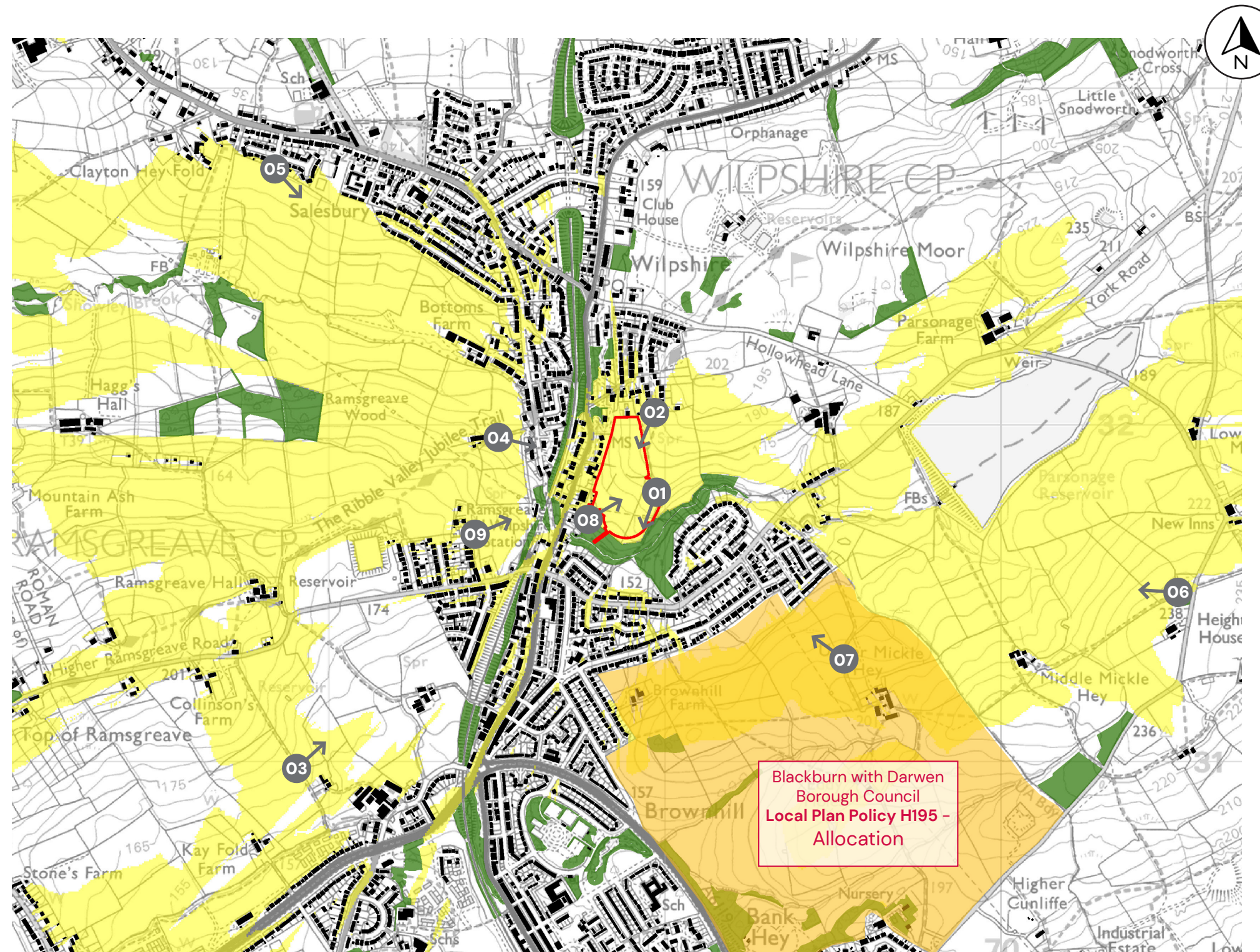


Figure 8: Screened ZTV with Viewpoints

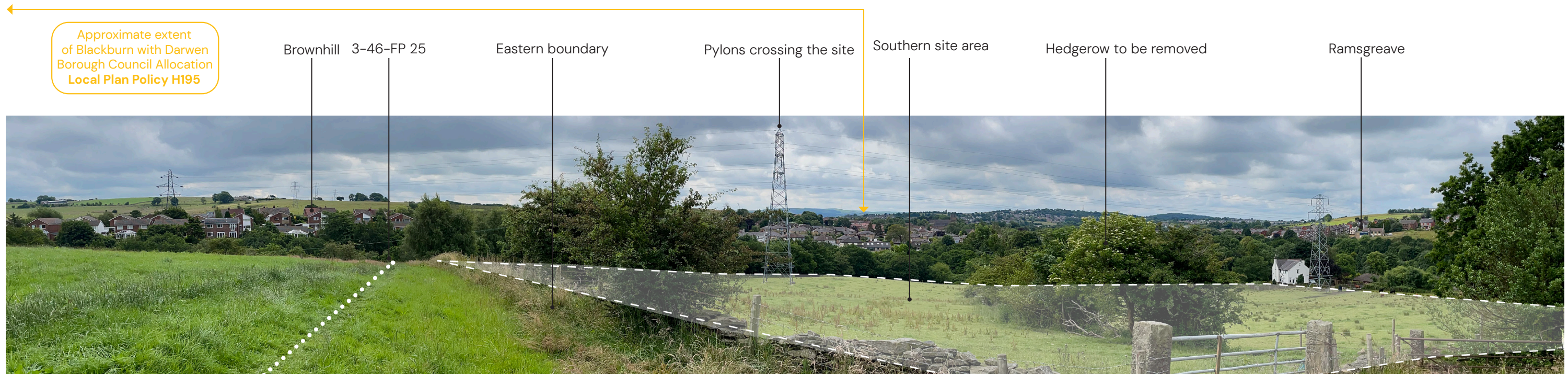
KEY

- Site Boundary
- OS Open Map Local Buildings
- OS Open Map Local Woodland
- Blackburn H195 Allocation
- ZTV - 9m High Development Visible
- Viewpoint locations

Screened ZTV Production Information -
 - DTM data used in calculations is OS Terrain 5 that has been combined with OS Open Map Local data for woodland and buildings to create a Digital Surface Model (DSM).

- Indicative woodland and building heights are modelled at 15m and 8m respectively.
- Viewer height set at 1.7m (in accordance with para 6.11 of GLVIA Third Edition)
- Calculations include earth curvature and light refraction

N.B. This Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) image illustrates the theoretical extent of where the development may be visible from, assuming 100% atmospheric visibility, and includes the screening effect from vegetation and buildings, based on the assumptions stated above.



Viewpoint 01: View from 3-46-FP 25 adjacent to the eastern site boundary looking south

VPI Viewpoint representation

- 8.6 This viewpoint considers receptors using 3-46-FP 25. This footpath runs alongside the eastern site boundary. Users of this right of way are considered to be of high sensitivity.

Existing conditions

- 8.7 This footpath is accessed from Walden Road, south of the site, where it passes through Knotts Brook, climbing up along the eastern site boundary, through farmland, before connecting to Hollowhead Avenue. This viewpoint is taken at approximately 171m AOD, the lower section of the footpath near Knotts Brook. It shows the southern area of the site comprising pasture and the adjacent field to the east through which the footpath travels. The existing residential areas of Ramsgreave and Brownhill can be seen rising above Knotts Brook in the middle distance. Overhead pylons cross the site and continue southwards in to the distance. Wooded hills interspersed by residential areas are visible beyond the site. Moorland can be seen in the far distance. The skyline is generally defined by farmland hill tops and trees as a backdrop to residential areas, occasionally broken by overhead pylons. It is noted that the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Allocation H195 site is visible on the skyline in the left hand side of the viewpoint image.

Anticipated changes to views

- 8.8 Changes in the view would be to the site area identified on the viewpoint photograph. A landscape buffer would be retained along the eastern boundary with residential development set beyond this. As shown in the proposed layout, the buffer will be planted with structural woodland planting, a native shrub mix and trees to filter views of the development. A mix of rear and side elevations would face this boundary, with the topography of the built form falling away from the boundary. Where garden fences form boundaries these would be softened with hedgerow and tree planting. Proposed properties in close proximity may alter the existing skyline from wooded hilltops, as proposed properties are likely form in part intervening features. The existing internal hedgerow will be removed as identified on the above photograph and replaced elsewhere in the site.

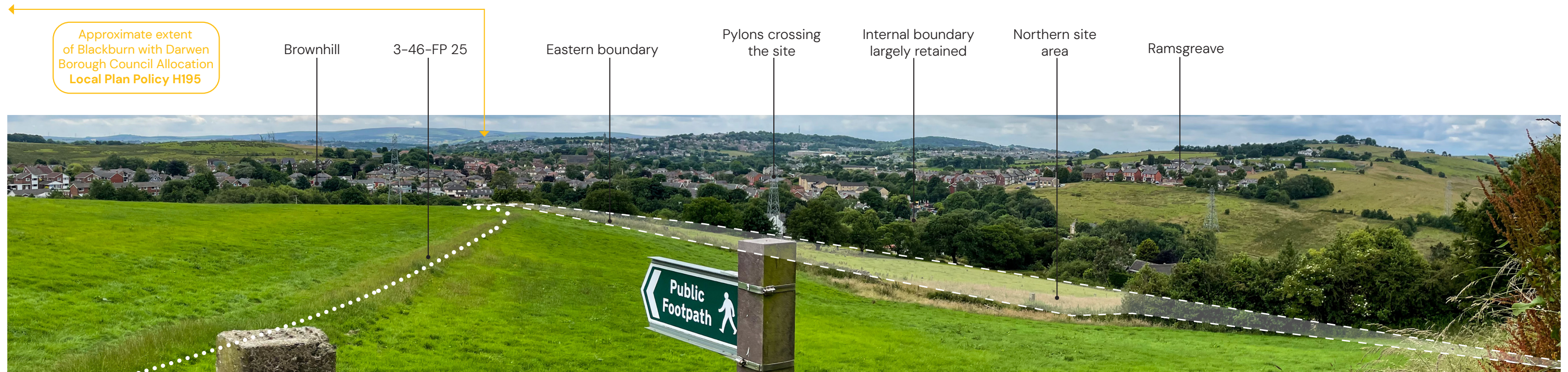
Mitigation

- 8.9 Mitigation to the proposed development encompasses the retention of approximately an even depth landscape buffer / offset to the eastern boundary, additional interventions as set out in Section 5 include individual tree planting alongside woodland planting, to this eastern buffer that will eventually heavily filter if not screen views of the majority of the development. Recommendations also include reinstatement of the existing drystone boundary wall and retention of the trees

along the internal east-west boundary, breaking up the mass of development along with street and garden trees and new hedgerow planting.

Overall impact effect

- 8.10 In Year 01, it is judged that there will be a **high** magnitude of change for visual receptors using this proportion of the route. Whilst existing residential properties are a feature in the middle distance of the view, new housing development will occupy over half of the foreground view from this location, possibly altering the skyline as mentioned above. Mitigation planting to the eastern boundary will be young and offer little to no filtering. This would result in a **major** visual effect on receptors using this footpath. Effects would be adverse.
- 8.11 In Year 15, tree planting to the eastern boundary will have matured sufficiently to provide a good level of filtering to the development in winter and possibly screen during summer months, if planted at higher densities as recommended, the magnitude of change is judged to be **medium to low**. New trees and structural woodland planting along the eastern boundary would form a continuation of trees from Knotts Brook. This would result in a **major / moderate** to **moderate** level of effect that is considered to be adverse.



Viewpoint 02: View from 3-46-FP 25 looking south at the end of Hollyhead Avenue

VP2 Viewpoint representation

- 8.12 This viewpoint also considers receptors using 3-46-FP 25. This footpath runs alongside the eastern site boundary. Users of this right of way are considered to be of **high** sensitivity. The viewpoint also considers residential receptors at the southern end of Hollowhead Avenue. Residential receptors have **high** sensitivity (see Appendix D for a photomontage visualisation of this viewpoint).

Existing conditions

- 8.13 This footpath is accessed from Walden Road, south of the site, where it passes through Knotts Brook, climbing up along the eastern site boundary, through farmland, before connecting to Hollowhead Avenue. This viewpoint is taken at approximately 185m AOD adjacent to Hollowhead Avenue. It shows the northern area of the site comprising pasture, the southern area of the site is filtered by internal boundary trees. The footpath passes through the field east of the site. The existing residential areas of Ramsgreave, Brownhill and the outskirts of northern Blackburn can be seen in the middle to longer distance, rising above the site. Overhead pylons cross the site and continue southwards in to the distance. Wooded hills interspersed by residential areas are visible beyond the site. The skyline is generally defined by farmland hill tops and trees as a backdrop to residential areas, with Darwen Moor visible in the far distance, including the tower

on Darwen Hill. It is noted that the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Allocation H195 site is visible on the skyline in the left hand side of the viewpoint image.

Anticipated changes to views

- 8.14 Changes in the view would be to the site area identified approximately on the viewpoint photograph above. A landscape buffer would be retained along the eastern boundary with residential development sited beyond this. As shown in the proposed layout, this will be planted with woodland and tree planting to filter views of the development. Generally, rear elevations and garden boundaries would be visible from this location, but softened by split level designs of the properties and landscape mitigation proposals. Proposed properties are expected to screen parts of the residential areas on the distant hills, and will introduce built form in a larger scale. The existing internal boundary comprising trees identified will largely be retained.

Mitigation

- 8.15 Mitigation to the proposed development encompasses the retention of a landscape buffer to the eastern boundary, additional interventions in Section 5 suggest a higher density of trees to this eastern buffer that will eventually heavily filter if not screen views of the majority of the development. This

planting includes tree and hedgerow planting to screen boundary fences in addition to structural woodland planting on the boundaries. Recommendations also include reinstatement of the existing drystone boundary wall and retention of the trees along the internal east-west boundary, breaking up the mass of development along with street and garden trees.

Overall impact effect

- 8.16 In Year 01, it is judged that there will be a **high** magnitude of change for visual receptors using this proportion of the route. Whilst existing residential properties are a feature in the middle distance of the view, new housing development will occupy over half of the foreground view from this location, and will be larger in scale. Mitigation planting to the eastern boundary will be young and offer little to no filtering. This would result in a **major** visual effect on receptors using this footpath. Effects would be adverse.
- 8.17 In Year 15, tree planting to the eastern boundary will have matured sufficiently to provide a good level of filtering to the development, if planted at higher densities as recommended, the magnitude of change is judged to be **medium to low**. New trees along the eastern boundary would form a continuation of trees from Knotts Brook. This would result in a **major / moderate to moderate** level of effect that is considered to be adverse.



Viewpoint 03: View from 3-33-FP 4 looking north-east

VP3 Viewpoint representation

- 8.18 This viewpoint assessment considers receptors using footpath 3-33 FP 4, north of Brook Farm. Users of this footpath are considered to be of high sensitivity as it is a sign posted recreational route which provides access to the countryside. This viewpoint is just over 1km from the western site boundary.

Existing conditions

- 8.19 This section of the route lies north of Brook Farm, running on the western side of a hedgerow that filters and in parts screens views towards the site. The residential area of Ramsgreave and the covered reservoir can be seen in the middle distance. Hollowhead Avenue (north of the site) and the eastern site boundary can be made out beyond the existing residential area. From this location the skyline is defined by a mixture of farmed and wooded hilltops and residential areas along with the covered reservoir.

Anticipated changes to views

- 8.20 Due to the intervening landform and housing area west of the site, there will be minimal changes to the view for receptors on this section of the route. At worst an additional row of rooftops, possibly sitting slightly higher than those in front of the site, will be visible. Any additional area of built form will be seen in the

context of the existing residential area of Ramsgreave sitting in front of the site, when viewed from this location.

Mitigation

- 8.21 Proposed mitigation tree planting both within the site and along the eastern boundary are likely to reduce the perception of additional rooftops beyond an existing residential area in the view.

Overall impact effect

- 8.22 The magnitude of change for both Year 01 and Year 15 is considered to be **very low**. This will result in a **minor** effect on receptors using this section of the route. Effects will be adverse.



Viewpoint 04: View from 3-33-FP 12 looking east

VP4 Viewpoint representation

8.23 This viewpoint assessment considers receptors using footpath 3-33-FP 12, west of the site on elevated ground as it rises up from Knowsley Road. Users of this footpath are considered to be of **high** sensitivity as it is a sign posted recreational route which provides access to the countryside. This viewpoint is just over 340m from the western site boundary (closest point). See Appendix D for a photomontage visualisation of this viewpoint.

Existing conditions

8.24 This footpath leads west from Knowsley Road towards the covered reservoir and connects in to 3-33 FP 30 and 3-33-FP 11. The path rises up from approximately +125m AOD at Knowsley Road to +170m AOD near to the reservoir. Views towards the site comprise the existing residential area of Wilpshire located either side of Whalley Road. Properties are set amongst mature trees. The skyline is defined by trees and farmland along the eastern site boundary, occasionally punctuated by pylons.

Anticipated changes to views

8.25 Views in the direction of the site would see the addition of new residential properties to the hillside emerging above existing housing.

Mitigation

8.26 Whilst built form will dominate the skyline from this lower section of the route. Mitigation proposed to the eastern boundary in the form of a well planted landscape buffer would ensure a continuation of the wooded skyline from the upper sections of the route as elevation is gained and act as a backdrop to the proposed new properties. This is in keeping with the character of the surrounding residential area.

Overall impact effect

8.27 The magnitude of change to views from this section of the footpath is judged to be **medium** in Year 01, reducing to **low** in Year 15 with the maturation of mitigation planting to the eastern boundary. This is considered to result in a **moderate** effect in Year 01 that is adverse, reducing to a **minor / moderate** effect in Year 15 that is considered adverse.



Viewpoint 05: View from the southern end of Ryder Road, off St Peter's Close, north-west of the site

VP5 Viewpoint representation

8.28 This viewpoint assessment considers residential receptors on St Peter's Close. Residential receptors are considered to be of **high** sensitivity. This viewpoint is approximately 1.2km north-west of the site (closest point).

Existing conditions

8.29 Small parts of the site are visible beyond trees in the middle distance. The route of the overhead pylons that pass through the site can be seen on the horizon. Generally, the skyline is formed of farmland or wooded hills, with the exception of the occasional farmstead such as Eddy Holes, dwellings in Ramsgreave and the covered reservoir.

Anticipated changes to views

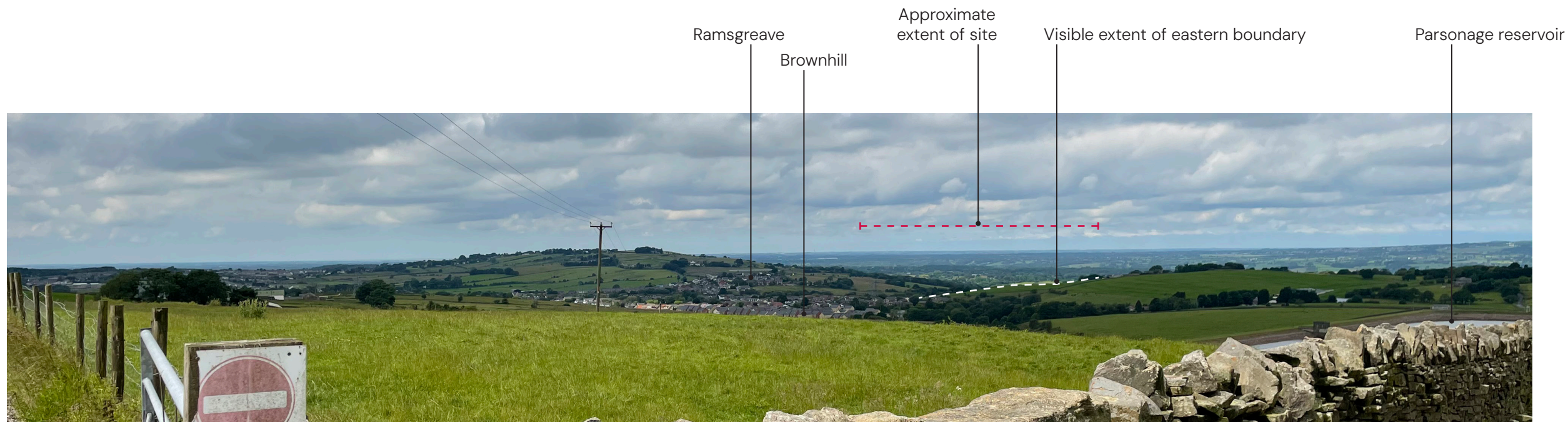
8.30 Development of the site would introduce glimpses of new housing to a small proportion of views, generally from properties on the southern side of St Peter's Close. The site is at sufficient distance away for the changes to form a minor element of panoramic view. The proposals would not alter the skyline from this location.

Mitigation

8.31 Tree planting proposed to streets and within gardens may provide an additional level of filtering to the proposed built form once it has reached maturity.

Overall impact effect

8.32 The magnitude of change to views from these properties is judged to be **low** in Year 01, reducing to **very low** in Year 15 with the maturation of mitigation planting to the eastern boundary. This is considered to result in a **minor effect** in Year 01 that is adverse, reducing to a **no effect / minor effect** in Year 15 that is considered adverse.



Viewpoint 06: View from 11-6-FP 15, north of Height House Farm, looking north-west

VP6 Viewpoint representation

8.33 This viewpoint assessment considers receptors using footpath 11-6-FP 15, south-west of the site. Users of this footpath are considered to be of **high** sensitivity as it is a sign posted recreational route which provides access to the countryside. This viewpoint is approximately 1.5km from the western site boundary (closest point).

Existing conditions

8.34 Views from this section of the footpath have far reaching views in almost every direction. When looking in the direction of the site, Ramsgreave, Brownhill and northern parts of Blackburn are notable residential areas. Parsonage reservoir is a notable feature. The eastern boundary of the site can be seen, however, the remainder of the site is not visible due to the nature of the topography on the site. The skyline is formed by a combination of the distant lowland horizon and occasional rounded ridges topped with wooded areas or farmland.

Anticipated changes to views

8.35 Changes to the view will be fairly minimal as proposed dwellings are located away from the eastern boundary on lower ground. A landscape buffer will be located along the eastern boundary planted with structural woodland planting and trees. Following

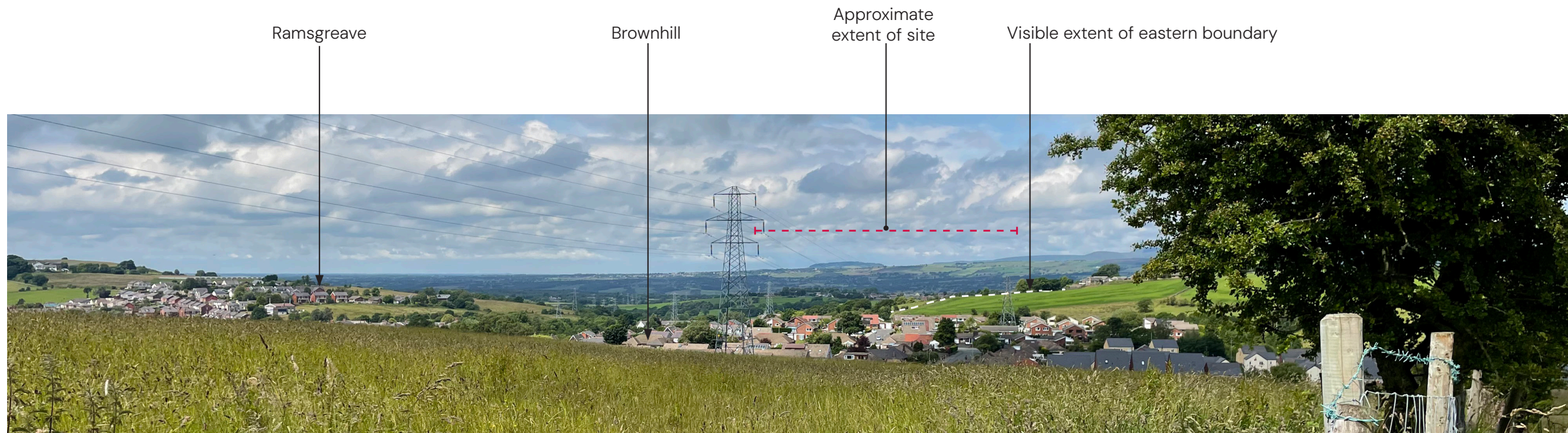
construction, trees will be young and offer little screening or filtering, therefore, in the worst case rooftops and possibly some first floor windows may be visible as a continuation of the building mass associated with Brownhill. The development will not alter the skyline from this location. Any elements of the development that are visible, will form a very small proportion of the view that is in the context of the surrounding residential area.

Mitigation

8.36 If mitigation recommendations are implemented, by year 15, when vegetation has matured, this is anticipated to offer a good level of screening and will introduce a landscape feature that is typical of the surroundings, as a continuation of the trees surrounding Knotts Brook south of the site.

Overall impact effect

8.37 The magnitude of change to views from these properties is judged to be **low** in Year 01, reducing to **very low** in Year 15 with the maturation of mitigation planting to the eastern boundary. This is considered to result in a **minor** effect in Year 01 that is adverse, reducing to a **no effect / minor** effect in Year 15 that is considered adverse.



Viewpoint 07: View from public right of way north west of Upper Mickle Hey looking north-west

VP7 Viewpoint representation

8.38 This viewpoint assessment considers receptors using the public right of way that leads south from Parsonage Road past Upper Mickle Hey. Users of this footpath are considered to be of **high** sensitivity as it is a sign posted recreational route which provides access to the countryside. This viewpoint is approximately 750m from the southern site boundary (closest point). See Appendix D for a photomontage visualisation of this viewpoint.

Existing conditions

8.39 Views from this section of the footpath have far reaching views in a northerly direction. When looking in the direction of the site, Ramsgreave and Brownhill are notable residential areas. The eastern boundary of the site can be seen, however, there is limited visibility of the remainder of the site due to the nature of the landform sloping away from the eastern boundary westwards. The skyline is formed by a combination of the distant lowland horizon and moorland and occasional rounded ridges topped with wooded areas or farmland. Overhead pylons occasionally cross the skyline. It is noted that this viewpoint is taken from within the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Allocation H195 and therefore will be subject to significant future change.

Anticipated changes to views

8.40 The proposed development will form a minor part of the view. Changes to the view will be fairly minimal as proposed dwellings are located away from the eastern boundary on lower ground. A landscape buffer will be located along the eastern boundary planted with structural woodland planting and trees. Following construction, trees will be young and offer little screening or filtering, therefore in the worst case rooftops and possibly some first floor windows may be visible as a continuation of the building mass associated with Brownhill. The proposed development will not add any new features to the view and will be smaller in scale than the existing residential areas seen in the viewpoint. The proposals will not alter the skyline.

Mitigation

8.41 If mitigation recommendations are implemented, by year 15, when vegetation has matured, this is anticipated to offer a good level of screening and will introduce a landscape feature that is typical of the surroundings, as a continuation of the trees surrounding Knotts Brook south of the site, noting that this viewpoint is located within Allocation H195 and will be subject to significant change to the baseline of this view.

Overall impact effect

8.42 The magnitude of change to views from these properties is judged to be **low** in Year 01, reducing to **very low** in Year 15 with the maturation of mitigation planting to the eastern boundary. This is considered to result in a **minor effect** in Year 01 that is adverse, reducing to a **no effect / minor effect** in Year 15 that is considered adverse.



Viewpoint 08: View from Salesbury View looking northeast to the site (winter photography)

VP8 Viewpoint representation

8.43 This viewpoint assessment considers receptors using or living on the road of Salesbury View. Residents in properties are considered to be of **high** sensitivity. This viewpoint is adjacent the southern site boundary.

Existing conditions

8.44 Views from this road are open to the east of the site through and above the field gate. Residential properties can be seen on Hollowhead Avenue in the background. Overhead pylons cross the site right next to the site access.

Anticipated changes to views

8.45 The proposed development, particularly to the north and via the access road would form a major part of the view. The more open landscape around the pylon base to the south would form part of the open spaces within the site. Changes to the view would overall be very high. Landscape mitigation proposals would soften the built form. Following construction, trees would be young and initially offer minimal screening or filtering.

Mitigation

8.46 If the mitigation recommendations are implemented, by year 15, when vegetation has matured, this is anticipated to offer a good level of softening and will introduce landscape features that are typical of the surroundings.

Overall impact effect

8.47 The magnitude of change to views from these properties is judged to be **high** in Year 01 and in Year 15, resulting in **major adverse** level of effect.



Viewpoint 09: View from Paris Ramsgrave looking northeast towards the site (winter photography)

VP9 Viewpoint representation

8.48 This viewpoint assessment considers receptors using or living on a street named Paris in Ramsgrave, located approximately 350m west of the site. The street is a single sided cul de sac with properties fronting to the east of the street. Residents at home are considered to be of high sensitivity.

Existing conditions

8.49 Views from this street are across the intervening valley containing the railway line and Whalley Road. To the immediate east is a field of rough grazing. Further to the east views of the site area are available above intervening housing lining Whalley Road and framed by further housing to the north and the woodland forming the site boundary to the south. The location of the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Allocation Local Plan Policy H195 can be seen above the existing built form of the adjacent settlement of Brownhill.

Anticipated changes to views

8.50 The proposed development would fill much of the opposite hill in the mid distance and will form an extension to the existing residential edge. The retention of the majority of the central hedgerow and the new buffer planting on the eastern boundary would soften and integrate the built form. It is noted that the

location of Allocation H195 is also apparent in this view to the south.

8.51 Following construction, trees will be young and initially offer little screening or filtering, therefore rooftops and some windows would be visible as a continuation of the building existing mass associated with Wilpshire. From this position the proposals are likely to alter some of the skyline particularly until the associated mitigation matures.

Mitigation

8.52 If the mitigation recommendations are implemented, by year 15, when vegetation has matured, this is anticipated to offer a good level of softening within and surrounding the built form as is characteristic of the local landscape.

Overall impact effect

8.53 The magnitude of change to views from these properties is judged to be high in Year 01, reducing to low in Year 15 with the maturation of mitigation planting within the site and to the eastern boundary. This is considered to result in a major effect in Year 01 that is adverse, reducing to a moderate effect in Year 15 that is considered adverse.

VIEWPOINT	RECEPTOR TYPE	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE YEAR 01	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE YEAR 15	YEAR 01 EFFECT	YEAR 15 EFFECT
01	Recreational	High	High	High	Major Adverse	Major / Moderate to Moderate Adverse
02	Recreational Residential	High	High	High	Major Adverse	Major / Moderate to Moderate Adverse
03	Recreational	High	Very Low	Very Low	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
04	Recreational	High	Medium	Low	Moderate Adverse	Minor / Moderate Neutral
05	Residential	High	Low	Very Low	Minor Adverse	Minor / No effect Adverse
06	Recreational	High	Low	Very Low	Minor Adverse	Minor / No effect Adverse
07	Recreational	High	Low	Very Low	Minor Adverse	Minor / No effect Adverse
08	Residential	High	High	High	Major Adverse	Major Adverse
09	Residential	High	High	Low	Major Adverse	Moderate Adverse

Table 2: Summary of Visual Effects

09 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

9.1 This report is a non-EIA Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Persimmon Homes to accompany a planning application for the proposed residential development off Salesbury Road.

9.2 It considers the site and its surrounding context in both landscape and visual terms, to assess the potential effects of the development proposals upon landscape features, landscape character and visual amenity.

Landscape Effects (Features)

9.3 The land use of the site would change from a pastoral field to an area of residential development with landscape enhancements to the majority of the site boundaries. The proposed development seeks to retain the internal east-west hedgerow, incorporating it in to an area of public open space, another area of public open space in the southern area of the site incorporates an attenuation pond and tree planting. At Year 15, the proposed development is expected to give rise to moderate/major, adverse effects for landuse.

9.4 In terms of alterations to the site topography to form development platforms and to the change in land use from pasture to residential development, at Year 15, the proposed development is expected to give rise to a moderate, adverse effect on the topography of the site. The overall profile of the higher ground of the local ridge or gritstone outcrop will be maintained beyond the site boundary to the north east.

Landscape Effects (Character)

9.5 There will be an inevitable effect on the landscape character of the site itself as a consequence of the proposed development. However, the design process has ensured that notwithstanding this, the mitigation proposals seek to integrate the proposals with the surrounding landscape character. This will be achieved through the appropriate treatment to sensitive boundaries including mitigation planting within the eastern landscape buffer, the retention of vegetation where possible, the incorporation of open spaces with additional tree planting and tree planting to the street scene and within gardens.

9.6 This change in character would be perceived from a limited number of locations, generally within very close proximity to the site; including the adjacent footpath immediately east of the site, some nearby residential properties to the north and west. By year 15, with the maturation of mitigation planting, effects on these nearby receptors are anticipated to reduce.

9.7 In terms of the wider landscape character area, (7a, Mellor Ridge), any change to its character brought about by the proposed development, is judged to form a very small part of the wider character area and would be negligible in Year 15.

Visual Effects

9.8 In terms of visual effects, views of the development from publicly accessible locations are limited by the existing topography, vegetation and built form. Where they are possible, they are generally from within close proximity to the north of the site from Hollowhead Avenue, east of the site on adjacent footpath 3-46-FP 25 and in some views from the footpath network to the east where the site is viewed in the context of existing residential development.

9.9 The effects of the proposed development on the selected viewpoints is generally reduced, by Year 15, when considering the mitigation proposals. The highest level of effect is experienced from footpath 3-46-FP 25 east of the site and from residential properties in close proximity. It is noted that several of the viewpoints also include views of the land included in the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Allocation H195 to the south east and that the location of Viewpoint 7 is located within the allocation.

Summary

9.10 Overall, there are a limited number of locations where views of the site are available. Any effects on landscape character will generally be perceived at a site level and within very close proximity to the east, north and west. These effects will be mitigated over time as proposed planting, particularly to the eastern boundary, but also other boundaries, matures. The adjacent Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Allocation H195, located approximately 400m to the south east is likely to subject the future baseline to significant changes in terms of the extent of future built form in the locality.

9.11 In overall terms, it is considered that this is a good site for residential development. There is visual and physical containment on many of its boundaries, and likely landscape and visual effects will be both localised and limited in extent and nature. Any identified likely effects are also capable of being successfully mitigated with the strong mitigation proposals set out on the landscape masterplan. The proposals relate well to the surrounding landscape and will form a logical extension to the existing settlement of Wilpshire. In landscape and visual terms, the proposed residential development is considered to be acceptable, and is not likely to result in material harm to the local landscape character or visual amenity.

INTRODUCTION

- A.1 This appendix presents the assessment criteria adopted for the assessment of landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development.
- A.2 The primary source of best practice for LVIA in the UK is 'The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013). The assessment criteria adopted to inform the assessment of effects has been developed in accordance with the principles established in this best practice document. It should however be acknowledged that GLVIA3 establishes guidelines not a specific methodology. The preface to GLVIA3 states:
- 'This edition concentrates on principles and processes. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand.'*
- A.3 The criteria set out below have therefore been developed specifically for this assessment to ensure that the methodology is appropriate and fit for purpose.
- A.4 The purpose of an LVIA when undertaken outside of the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is to identify and describe the relative level of any landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the proposals. As confirmed in GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 (Landscape institute, 10th June 2013) an LVIA for development which has been screened as not requiring EIA should avoid concluding whether the effects are significant or not and this is the approach adopted in this assessment.
- A.5 An LVIA must consider both:
- effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right (the landscape effects); and
 - effects on specific views and visual amenity more generally (the visual effects).
- A.6 Therefore, separate criteria are set out below for the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

- A.7 The nature or sensitivity of an individual landscape feature or element reflects its susceptibility to change and the value associated with it. Sensitivity is therefore a function of factors such as the feature's quality, rarity, contribution to landscape character, degree to which the particular element can be replaced and cultural associations or designations that apply. A particular feature may be more 'sensitive' in one location than in another often as a result of local value associated with the feature. Therefore, it is not possible to simply place different types of landscape feature into sensitivity bands. Where individual landscape features are affected, professional judgement is used as far as possible to give an objective evaluation of its sensitivity. Justification is given for this evaluation where necessary.

- A.8 The nature or sensitivity of individual landscape features has been described as **very high, high, medium, low** or **very low**.

NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- A.9 The nature or sensitivity of landscape character reflects its susceptibility to change and the value associated with it. It is essentially an expression of a landscape's ability to accommodate a particular type of change. It varies depending on the physical and perceptual attributes of the landscape including but not necessarily limited to: scale; degree of openness; landform; existing land cover; landscape pattern and complexity; the extent of human influence in the landscape; the degree of remoteness/wildness; perception of change in the landscape; the importance of landmarks or skylines in the landscape; inter-visibility with and influence on surrounding areas; condition; rarity and scenic quality of the landscape, and the value placed on the landscape including any designations that may apply.
- A.10 In this assessment, the nature or sensitivity of landscape character is considered with reference to a number of local character areas as defined in this LVIA for the purposes of this study. Information regarding the key characteristics of these character areas has been extrapolated from relevant published studies where possible but also informed by project specific field assessment. An assessment of landscape sensitivity to the development proposed has been undertaken employing professional judgement for relevant local landscape character areas.

- A.11 The nature or sensitivity of landscape character has been described as **very high, high, medium, low** or **very low**.

NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF VISUAL RECEPTORS

- A.12 The nature or sensitivity of visual receptor groups reflects their susceptibility to change and the value associated with the specific view in question. Sensitivity varies depending on a number of factors such as the occupation of the viewer, their viewing expectations, duration of view and the angle or direction in which they would see the site. Whilst most views are valued by someone, certain viewpoints are particularly highly valued for either their cultural or historical associations and this can increase the sensitivity of the view. The following criteria are provided for guidance only and are not exclusive:
- **Very Low Sensitivity** – People engaged in industrial and commercial activities or military activities.
 - **Low Sensitivity** – People at their place of work (e.g. Offices); shoppers; users of trunk/major roads and passengers on commercial railway lines (except where these form part of a recognised and promoted scenic route).
 - **Medium Sensitivity** – Users of public rights of way and minor roads which do not appear to be used primarily for recreational activities or the specific enjoyment of the landscape; recreational activities not specifically focused on the landscape (e.g. Football); motel users.
 - **High Sensitivity** – Residents at home; users of long distance or recreational trails and other sign posted walks; users of public rights of way and minor roads which appear to be used for recreational activities or the specific enjoyment of the landscape; users of caravan parks, camp sites and 'destination' hotels; tourist attractions with opportunities for views of the landscape (but not specifically focused on a particular vista); slow paced recreational activities which derive part of their pleasure from an appreciation of setting (e.g. Bowling, golf); allotments.

- **Very High Sensitivity** – People at recognised vantage points (often with interpretation boards), people at tourist attractions with a focus on a specific view, visitors to historic features/estates where the setting is important to an appreciation and understanding of cultural value.

A.13 It is important to appreciate that it is the visual receptor (i.e. The person) that has a sensitivity and not a property, public right of way or road. Also, the sensitivity of a receptor group is not influenced by the number of receptors. As an example, although many people may use a motorway, this does not increase the sensitivity of each receptor using it. Likewise, a residential property may only have one person living in it but this does not reduce the sensitivity of that one receptor. Whilst the number of receptors affected at any given location may be a planning consideration, for the purposes of this assessment it does not alter the sensitivity of the receptor group.

A.14 Where judgements are made about the sensitivity of assessment viewpoints, the sensitivity rating provided is an evaluation of the sensitivity of the receptor group represented by the viewpoint and not a reflection of the number of people who may experience the view.

A.15 For some developments (e.g. Wind energy developments) it is important not to confuse the concept of visual sensitivity with the perception of the development. For example, it is recognised that some people consider wind turbines to be unattractive, but others enjoy the sight of them.

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS – GENERAL NOTE

A.16 The following discussion sets out the approach adopted in this LVIA in relation to a specific issue arising in GLVIA3 which requires a brief explanation.

A.17 Prior to the publication of GLVIA3, LVIA practice had evolved over time in tandem with most other environmental disciplines to consider the level of effect (relative significance) principally as a function of two factors, namely: sensitivity of the receptor and magnitude of the effect (the term 'magnitude' being a word most commonly used in LVIA and most other environmental disciplines to describe the size or scale of an effect).

A.18 Box 3.1 on page 37 of GLVIA3 references a 2011 publication by IEMA entitled 'The State of EIA Practice in the UK' which

reiterates the importance of considering not just the scale or size of effect but other factors which combine to define the 'nature of the effect' including factors such as the probability of an effect occurring and the duration, reversibility and spatial extent of the effect.

A.19 The flow diagram on page 39 of GLVIA3 suggests that the magnitude of effect is a function of three factors (the size/scale of the effect, the duration of the effect and the reversibility of the effect).

A.20 For certain types of development (e.g. Residential) the proposed development is permanent and non-reversible. For other types of development (e.g. Wind and solar energy) the proposed development is for a time-limited period and would be largely reversible at the end of the scheme's operational period. Reversibility of a proposed development is a material consideration in the planning balance but does not reduce the scale of the effect (i.e. The 'magnitude' in the traditional and commonly understood sense of the word) during the period in which the scheme is operational. In this regard, it would be incorrect to report a lesser magnitude of change to a landscape or view as a result of a time-limited effect or the relative reversibility of the effect.

A.21 For clarification, the approach taken in this LVIA has been to consider magnitude of effect solely as the scale or size of the effect in the traditional sense of the term 'magnitude'. Having identified the magnitude of effect as defined above, the LVIA also describes the duration and reversibility of the identified effect, taking these factors into account as appropriate in the consideration of the relative level of effect.

A.22 In the context of the above discussion the following criteria have been adopted to describe the magnitude of effects.

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE FEATURES

A.23 Professional judgement has been used as appropriate to determine the magnitude of direct physical effects on individual existing landscape features using the following criteria as guidance only:

- **Very Low Magnitude of Change** – Negligible loss or alteration to existing landscape features;
- **Low Magnitude of Change** – Minor loss or alteration to

part of an existing landscape feature;

- **Medium Magnitude of Change** – Some loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape feature; and
- **High Magnitude of Change** – Major loss or major alteration to an existing landscape feature.
- **Very High Magnitude of Change** – Total loss or alteration to an existing landscape feature.

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A.24 The magnitude of effect on landscape character is influenced by a number of factors including: the extent to which existing landscape features are lost or altered, the introduction of new features and the resulting alteration to the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape. Professional judgement has been used as appropriate to determine the magnitude using the following criteria as guidance only. In doing so, it is recognised that usually the landscape components in the immediate surroundings have a much stronger influence on the sense of landscape character than distant features whilst acknowledging the fact that more distant features can have an influence on landscape character as well.

- **Very Low Magnitude of Change** – Negligible loss or alteration to existing landscape features; no notable introduction of new features into the landscape; and negligible change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- **Low Magnitude of Change** – Minor loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of minor new features into the landscape; or minor alteration to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- **Medium Magnitude of Change** – Some notable loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of some notable new features into the landscape; or some notable change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.

- **High Magnitude of Change** – A major loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of major new features into the landscape; or a major change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- **Very High Magnitude of Change** – Total loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of dominant new features into the landscape; a very major change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON VIEWS AND VISUAL AMENITY

- A.25 Visual effects are caused by the introduction of new elements into the views of a landscape or the removal of elements from the existing view.
- A.26 Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of impacts using the following criteria as guidance only:
- **Very Low Magnitude of Change** – Negligible change in views;
 - **Low Magnitude of Change** – Some change in the view that is not prominent but visible to some visual receptors;
 - **Medium Magnitude of Change** – Some change in the view that is clearly notable in the view and forms an easily identifiable component in the view;
 - **High Magnitude of Change** – A major change in the view that is highly prominent and has a strong influence on the overall view.
 - **Very High Magnitude of Change** – A change in the view that has a dominating or overbearing influence on the overall view.

- A.27 Using this set of criteria, determining levels of magnitude is primarily dependent on how prominent the development would be in the landscape, and what may be judged to flow from that prominence or otherwise.
- A.28 For clarification, the use of the term 'prominent' relates to how noticeable the features of the development would be. This is affected by how close the viewpoint is to the development but not entirely dependent on this factor. Other modifying factors include: the focus of the view, visual screening and the nature and scale of other landscape features within the view. Rather than specifying general bands of distance at which the proposed development would be dominant, prominent or incidental to the view etc. The prominence of the proposed development in each view is described in detail for each viewpoint taking all the relevant variables into consideration.

TYPE OF EFFECT

- A.29 The assessment identifies effects which may be **beneficial**, **adverse** or **neutral**. Where effects are described as neutral this is where the beneficial effects are deemed to balance the adverse effects.
- A.30 For some developments (e.g. Wind energy developments) it is recognised that some people consider the development to be unattractive but others enjoy the sight of it. A landscape and visual assessment for these developments therefore assumes that all identified landscape and visual effects are 'adverse' unless stated otherwise. This allows decision makers to assess a worst-case scenario.

DURATION OF EFFECT

- A.31 For the purposes of this assessment, the temporal nature of each effect is described as follows:
- **Long-term** – over 5 years
 - **Medium Term** – between 1 and 5 years
 - **Short Term** – under 1 year

REVERSIBILITY OF EFFECT

- A.32 The LVIA also describes the reversibility of each identified effect using the following terms:
- **Permanent** – effect is non-reversible
 - **Non permanent** – effect is reversible

LEVEL OF EFFECT

- A.33 The purpose of an LVIA when produced outside of the context of an EIA is to identify and describe the relative level of effects on landscape and visual amenity arising from the proposed development. The judgements provided within the assessment may then inform the planning balance to be carried out by the determining authority.
- A.34 The level (relative significance) of landscape and visual effects is determined by combining judgements regarding the sensitivity of the landscape or view, magnitude of change, duration of effect and the reversibility of the effect. In determining the level of residual effects, all mitigation measures are taken into account.
- A.35 The relative level of effect is described as **major, major/moderate, moderate, moderate/minor, minor** or **minor/no effect**. **No effect** may also be recorded as appropriate where the effect is so negligible it is not even noteworthy.

