

Ribble Valley Borough Council

Hammond Ground

READ

Proposed Development of up to 77 dwellings

LPA Ref:

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Landscape and Visual Impact

ISSUE 1

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 TPM Landscape was commissioned by Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) in July 2026 to review an application (ref) for housing at Hammond Ground in Read registered by Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) on 9 June 2026.
- 1.2 The proposals are for 77 detached residential dwellings located in an area in the south east corner of the land known as Hammond Ground.
- 1.3 I (Carl Taylor BA Hons Dip LA CMLI) am familiar with the site having defended the Council's refusal of an application for 50 dwellings on broadly the same site in a 2016 at appeal.
- 1.4 The Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008–2028 remains the same plan as referenced in the 2016 appeal. The 2018 appeal decision therefore must remain an important consideration due to the site-specific findings regarding Hammond Ground and the refusal by the Inspector at that appeal, of an application for housing, at broadly the same location, and for a smaller quantum of development.
- 1.5 The 2016 proposal was refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposal, by reason of its scale and location, would lead to the creation of new residential development in the open countryside in excess of the identified residual number of dwellings proposed to be accommodated in Read and Simonstone. The proposal would cause harm to the development strategy set out in the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. As such, the proposal does not comprise sustainable development and is therefore considered to be contrary to Key Statements DS1 and DS2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

3. The proposal, by reason of its scale and location, would be injurious to the setting of the AONB and would result in irreversible harm to the visual amenity of the parkland landscape that contributes significantly to the character of the village of Read and the surrounding area contrary to Policies EN2 and DME2.

Scope

- 1.6 As part of this report I have examined the application and landscape assessment work carried out to date in support of this (PGLA). I have also taken into account available information on matters of design; historical and cultural matters; arboriculture; and ecology to the extent that these influence or have a bearing on a rounded view of the potential impacts and effects the proposal may have on the receiving landscape.
- 1.7 In support of this process I have re-visited the site and carried out my own assessment of both the landscape of the application site and the surrounding area. This field review strongly follows my original work in 2016 in support of the Council's response to that application on broadly the same site..
- 1.8 In this report I intend to briefly summarise the key aspects of the planning background to the site; the inspectors' comments on the previous 2016 application; and the landscape related policies with which the proposals should align. I will then briefly outline the proposals and supporting landscape information.
- 1.9 Following this I will give my analysis of the landscape and visual baseline against which any landscape change and change to views and visual amenity will be judged. I will consider how much, if at all, these landscape and visual receptors have changed since the Inspectorate and LPA rejected proposals for development at this site in 2016/18.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The Statutory Development Plan

KEY STATEMENT DS1 Development Strategy

- 2.1 The policy sets out the Council's approach to housing planning across the Borough and its intention to focus new development within settlements according to their position in a set hierarchy or tier of settlement scale.
- 2.2 In allocating development, the Council will have regard to the AONB, Green Belt and similar designations when establishing the scale, extent and form of development to be allocated under this strategy. The relevant constraints are set out as part of the strategic framework included in the plan.

KEY STATEMENT DS2 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 2.3 When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:
- any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
 - specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

KEY STATEMENT EN2 Landscape

- 2.4 The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced. 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
- 2.5 The notes explain that: *Over 75% of the area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and outside these statutory areas the borough comprises extensive areas of open countryside much of which has an intrinsic value that contributes to the quality of the landscape in the borough. In addition the founding principle of landscape character is that all landscapes have a value. The Council considers that it is important to ensure development proposals do not serve to undermine the inherent quality of the landscape. Particular regard, consistent with the designation as AONB, will be given to matters of design and impact with an expectation that the highest standards of design will be required. 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*

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY DMG1 General Considerations

- 2.6 The policy outlines in bullet point form the key elements that developments must deliver. In regard to design five bullet points set out the requirements of design that must be of a high standard and sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of size, nature, scale and massing.

- 2.7 Design must consider density and layout with an emphasis on visual appearance and impact on landscape character as well as effects on local amenities.
- 2.8 Access and Amenity requirements include assessing the traffic and parking implications of the proposals and the protections and enhancement of public rights of way. The proposals must not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area and have regard to lighting and public safety.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY DMG2 Strategic Considerations

- 2.9 The policy discusses development in principle and Tier 1 settlements and directs their expansion to be cognisant and in relation to the existing settlement edge and built form.
- 2.10 In regard to the Tier 2 settlements criteria are set out within six bullet points which development must adhere to. Following these criteria the policy sets out that any development must also be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area.
- 2.11 Policy DMG2 requires development in the Open Countryside, and for development that would affect the character of the Forest of Bowland AONB to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, to *acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting*. The most important consideration in the assessment of any development proposals will be the area's protection, conservation and enhancement.

POLICY DMH3 Dwellings in the open countryside and AONB

- 2.12 The policy limits development within areas of open countryside and/or AONB with reference to three bulleted criteria of development types that would be acceptable

within these areas. It further directs that development should aim to enhance local landscapes through reference to the Lancashire County Council Landscape Character Assessment, the AONB Landscape Character Assessment 2010 and the AONB Management Plan.

POLICY DME2 Landscape and Townscape Protection

- 2.13 Guards against significant harm to important landscape or landscape features. Examples are listed within the Policy and include hedgerows and trees. The reasoned justification states that the Council will seek, wherever possible, to enhance local landscape. Reference is also made to a variety of guidance documents including the Lancashire County Council Landscape Character Assessment, the AONB Landscape Character Assessment 2010 and the AONB Management Plan.

OTHER RELEVANT CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

DME1 Protecting Trees and Woodlands

- 2.14 Sets out a presumption against the clearance of woodland and requires detailed assessment work to justify any other alteration of tree over.

INSPECTOR REPORT 2018

- 2.15 The previous application for 50 dwellings on the site was dismissed by the Inspectorate on the 14th Nov 2018 (Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/17/318544
- 2.16 The main landscape issues the Inspector considered at the Hearing were:
- The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the countryside, with particular regard to the setting of the Forest of Bowland

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Read village and any effects on 'parkland';

- The effect of the proposal on the setting of nearby listed buildings; and

- 2.17 The Inspector in 2018 when considering the site and Hammond Ground describes an attractive agricultural setting to the village of Read:

The appeal site forms part of Hammond Ground, an area of land in agricultural use, situated to the west of Read. Hammond Ground has an open character, includes a number of mature trees and has the character and appearance of parkland. It provides an attractive setting to the western part of the village. The western boundary of Hammond Ground is with an area of woodland known as Clough Syke. (15)

- 2.18 The Inspector goes on to outline the basics of the historical and landscape descriptions offered at the hearing by the Council concluding that Hammond Ground was considered as part of the parkland of the Read Hall estate:

Hammond Ground once formed part of the Read Hall Estate, as indicated on the plan of the estate dated 1896 and associated sales particulars. Those sales particulars describe Hammond Ground as 'a valuable enclosure of park land' and refer to 'some enclosures of ornamental plantation'. It is clear from the historic maps produced in evidence, including the 1830 Hennets Map, the Greenwood Map 1830 and first and subsequent editions of the Ordnance Survey, that Hammond Ground was considered cartographically as parkland in the nineteenth Century (C19). At that time, Hammond Ground is shown as being an open area of land with scattered trees, enclosed by woodland to the west, north and to the east of what became George Lane (16)

- 2.19 In considering whether the landscape of Hammond Ground formed part of a deliberately conceived parkland landscape for the estate, the Inspector concludes

that, although no record of this design appears to remain, the balance of probability alongside the evidence of the landscape itself leads to a conclusion that the parkland appearance of the land is not accidental and a deliberate and residual character deliberately created in the romantic style of landscape design for the benefit of the Read Hall estate:

I have had regard to the lidar images which indicate former field boundaries on the estate. As I saw during my site visit, the area to the west of Hammond Ground known as 'Front Field' includes a number of distinct plantations as well as isolated trees along former field boundaries and has a greater species mix than Hammond Ground. However, as I observed, the retention of trees on the former field boundaries is not uncommon on land which made up the Read Hall Estate and in this regard I also note the examples of this practice in the wider landscape. I have taken into account that a coal pit was situated within Hammond Ground, but do not consider that the presence of such activity within a country estate to be unusual or to mean that the land should not be considered as being parkland. Whilst there is no evidence before me which documents the setting out of a designed landscape in the Read Hall Estate, on the balance of probability, I am not convinced that Hammond Ground has developed the appearance of parkland 'accidentally' (17)

- 2.20 In considering the issue of landscape value, although now not a matter within the NPPF, value remains as a key consideration of landscape assessment and more broadly of how change and effects may be experienced by local residents. The Inspector concluded that the site and Hammond Ground has value in its own right and as part of the wider landscape:

Having carefully considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that as a greenfield site in the countryside the appeal site has value both in its own right and as part of the wider landscape. I also acknowledge that local residents value the site and the surrounding area. (20)

- 2.21 The Inspector identifies key parkland trees within Hammond Ground and the setting of the land in the village and wider context that remain as part of the current site and application.

Whilst Hammond Ground has lost the boundary planting to the north and east as indicated on the historic maps, it retains a number of mature trees which are indicated on the historic mapping and has the character and appearance of parkland. (22)

The character of the site is derived from its open parkland appearance and character, and due to its elevated position above the Calder Valley, there are expansive views across the site to the wider landscape. Whilst there is built development to the north, east and south of Hammond Ground, the appeal site and wider Hammond Ground provide a sharp contrast with the built edge of the village (30)

- 2.22 In concluding the Inspector outlines what are, in my opinion, the inevitable effects of any development proposed on Hammond Ground. As the proposals in this application are for more dwellings (70 as compared to the 50 proposed in 2016/18) it is not unreasonable to conclude that the same landscape and potentially the same visual effects will occur from this proposal.

Hammond Ground currently provides an attractive open parkland setting for adverse this part of the village when viewed from Whalley Road. There are key views of the appeal site from Whalley Road, from where the proposed development would appear very prominent on the edge of the village rising up the slope to the north. The proposed residential development, within part of Hammond Ground, would erode the parkland character and openness, giving rise to a significant adverse effect upon the setting of the village within the countryside (33).

In addition, there would also be significant adverse visual effects for residents and pedestrians arising from the proposed development from and between properties on George Lane and Hammond Drive, due to the harm to the parkland character and openness of Hammond Ground.(33)

The effect upon the wider setting of the village would also be seen from the footpath (334-fp8) to the northwest of Houlikers Farm from where the effect of the proposed development on the countryside setting of the village would be appreciated within the extensive views of the wider landscape.(33)

- 2.23 The same loss of parkland will occur with this application as the previous application, although a direct comparison of area is not possible as the current application includes all of the Hammond Ground Land, the 77 dwellings will form a larger Quantum of development than the 50 dwelling proposed and refused in 2016/18.

the proposed development, through the loss of parkland would give rise to substantial harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the setting of the village and have significant harmful effects upon both the Industrial Foothills and Valleys LCT and Undulating Lowland Farmland with Parkland LCA.(35)

- 2.24 In summation the Inspector finds that development proposals at Hammond Ground for residential homes with supporting infrastructure and landscaping would give rise to substantial harms to the character and appearance of the countryside setting and village. It is my view that this must also be true of the new application proposals as these ostensibly remain proposals for residential development over land that has been established as:

- Parkland associated with the Read Hall estate;

- Open attractive landscape that plays a key role in the setting of the surrounding landscape and village

2.25 The Inspector concluded that the proposals in 2016/18 would:

give rise to substantial harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the setting of the village and would have significant harmful effects upon both the Industrial Foothills and Valleys LCT and Undulating Lowland Farmland with Parkland LCA. The proposal conflicts with CS Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DME2. I also find that the appeal scheme fails to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment through the identified harm to the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.(38)

Hammond Ground was part of the Read Hall Estate and there is therefore an historical association between the appeal site and the listed buildings.(40)

3.0 THE PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Applethwaite Ltd is applying for full planning permission to develop 77 houses at land north of Whalley Road, Read. The proposed development would deliver a residential housing scheme (including 30% affordable housing).
- 3.2 The application is accompanied by a suite of supporting information including a landscape and visual assessment.
- 3.3 The proposed housing is arranged in a broadly linear fashion with access from Whalley Road through the established stone wall boundary. The developable areas travel northwards following the alignment of the boundary and George Lane. The development areas stop short of extending as far as the northern boundary and include landscape break areas accommodating retained trees and a landscape stand off zone between Whalley Road and the development areas.
- 3.4 The streets and surrounding areas and boundaries of the development are shown as landscaped with trees and shrubs.

- 3.5 The wider landscape of Hammond Ground to the west is also indicated as part of the landscape proposals and includes extensive new tree planting; Scrub and woodland planting to the northern boundaries; SUD wetland areas to the south western section of the grounds; and a network of paths running around and across.

4.0 THE PROPOSED SITE – LOCAL CONTEXT AND CHARACTER

THE PROPOSAL SITE

- 4.1 The development site is an open field with mature parkland trees that abuts the western edge of the village of Read, approximately 7km NW of Burnley. The development proposals cover the south eastern corner of the field, which forms part of the wider Read Hall estate parkland (Read Park).

SITE CONTEXT – LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

- 4.2 The proposed development site is located in Natural England's character area; NCA 35 Lancashire Valleys
- 4.3 Of the key characteristics listed for the NCA 35 area, the most relevant to the application site and its wider setting appear to be the following:
- Broad valleys of the rivers Calder and Ribble and their tributaries run northeast 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);
 - 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;
- There are numerous large country houses with associated parklands, particularly on the northern valley sides away from major urban areas;
- 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.

4.4 The NCA notes that the area contains several large country houses with associated parkland built for wealthy mill owners of the textile industry. *These are mainly located on south-facing slopes in the Calder Valley away from major urban areas, including those at Read Park Huntroyde Demesne, Gawthorpe, Dunkenhalgh and Towneley Halls. (page 8 Lancashire Valleys Today 3rd paragraph)*

4.5 The NCA goes on to note that *Numerous large country houses with ornamental settings occur, particularly along the northern valley sides away from industrial towns. These substantial houses, parklands and barns, dating from the 16th century, attest to the wealth generated by the textile industry. Traditional building materials used are sandstone grit and timber frame, brick was used from the 19th century with stone flag, and from the late 18th century Welsh slate roofs. In some areas, historic parklands have been subsumed within later enclosed farmland. Private and public parks and gardens are also a significant feature of the more*

urban landscapes (for example, the many parks at Burnley). (page 11 1st paragraph)

4.6 Under landscape Opportunities the NCA includes:

- Protect, conserve and actively manage parkland landscapes including restoring links to associated Country houses and farmland, especially in the undulating lowland farmland;
- Protect, conserve and strengthen field boundaries both hedgerows and walls, focusing on livestock farms, and relatively intact and visually prominent field boundary patterns, such as those on the Millstone Grit ridge;
- Protect the contrasts between the urbanised and industrial valley bottoms and the more rural lower valley sides;
- Conserve the historic character and unity of villages and hamlets on lower hillsides by using traditional building materials and patterns in restoration, conversion and any new development.

SENSITIVITY TO CHANGE

4.7 No sensitivity assessment is made for the character area with the preference being to offer statements relating to environmental opportunities and landscape change. Aspects of the description give strong indications as to what features, elements and characteristics are active and where the intrinsic character and value of this landscape may lie. Of particular note with regard to the appeal site and its surroundings are the recording of Read Park as one of a number of parks and gardens associated with large houses and estates. These are considered to be significant features of more urban areas where presumably they offer some historic resonance and open landscape space to counter balance more modern development..

4.8 As with all NCA's the landscape described are a variety of open countryside and urban landscape and range from those of high quality and value to those of lesser

value and quality. Typically the susceptibility to change for such a large area would be placed towards a centre line of judgement such as medium. In this instance however the NCA makes specific reference to not only the broader landscape setting of the appeal site but arguably the appeal site itself. A number of key features are to be found within the surroundings of the appeal site and within the site, and directions towards environmental and landscape opportunities require the conservation and protection of areas of parkland, hedges and field boundaries and the historic character and unity of villages and hamlets on lower hillsides, all of which are aspects susceptible to change through the proposals. As a consequence I would assess the susceptibility to change for the NCA at an elevated level of medium-high to reflect the direct threat to key features and attributes that this development represents.

- 4.9 The value of this landscape is equally varied across a wide range of experience where landscape value good access, rarity and historic and cultural references all play a role. A medium level of value is an appropriate generalisation but in the context of the appeal site and its immediate surroundings this has features that are good-high. The sensitivity of the NCA in has been assessed as medium-high.

LOCAL LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENTS

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY FOR LANCASHIRE (LSL) 2000

- 4.10 Lancashire County Council, in partnership with the Countryside Agency and others published an integrated landscape assessment of Lancashire. The study consists of a Landscape Character Assessment and a Landscape Strategy. 21 Landscape Types (LCT) are identified and a further 81 Landscape Character Areas (LCA) form sub divisions to these descriptions.
- 4.11 The site falls within LCT 6 Industrial Foothills and Valleys and LCA 6a Calder Valley.

4.12 Key Environmental Features recorded in the strategy include:

- Hedgerow trees and parkland trees contribute to the well-treed character of the landscape;
- parkland provides opportunities for survival of specimen and veteran trees. •
- Large country houses and designed parklands indicate the importance of the urban fringes as ideal locations for wealthy industrialists and provide pockets of increased species diversity;
- Stone walls are an important link to past farming activities and maintain the rural essence of the area;
- Older stone public buildings such as churches, halls, and pubs reflect past building styles and quality;
- Historic field patterns indicate past land use before the age of extensive industrialisation, urbanisation and intensive agriculture;
- Mills, other industrial buildings and terraces of brick or stone reflect a strong industrial heritage associated with textile industries.

(ref Landscape strategy appendix 1.5)

4.13 This LCT is described as a complex transitional landscape of relatively small scale with intensive settlement. The landscape character shows a mixture of rural agricultural and industrial land uses. Gritstone is the characteristic material of farm houses, laithe houses, mills and cottages with more modern developments often built out in brick.

4.14 Concentrations of semi natural woodlands are found within the valley of the Calder. Occasional private estates and designed parklands are significant locally.

4.15 The LCA 6a Calder Valley encompasses the landscape of the broad valley of the River Calder outside the urban settlements. Agricultural activity is productive with lush, improved pastures utilised for dairy farming as well as sheep grazing.

- 4.16 The landscape is well populated, there are many houses, footpaths and large farms. Stone walls and farm buildings are important remnants of earlier landuses, particularly where modern developments threaten to obscure the visual and cultural appeal of the area. Modern houses are conspicuous for their rendering or use of alien materials and their gardens and ornamental plants.
- 4.17 Designed landscapes such as Huntroyde and Read Park, are important locally to the visual and cultural qualities of this character area; they also contribute to an important wooded element to the landscape.

SENSITIVITY

- 4.18 No sensitivity assessment is made for the landscape character type or area. In common with the NCA description, the LCT and LCA make specific reference to Read Park. The parkland is once again described as significant and important locally to the visual and cultural qualities of the character area. Unlike the NCA the more localised study area draws out more clearly the distinction between settled and industrialised valley bottoms with more open and remote hill sides within the generally more rural setting of the Calder Valley. The proposals would directly affect the key characteristics of parkland and trees within the parkland setting, potentially altering their visual appearance and the relationship between the neighbouring settlement and landscape. They also potentially introduce modern housing in a form and location that is not contiguous with cultural appeal of the area as identified. For these reasons I have assessed the susceptibility for the LCA as medium-high.
- 4.19 The value of the landscape includes aspects of rarity and historical and cultural interest through architecture and parkland and the industrial heritage of the valleys and is assessed as good. The sensitivity is assessed as medium-high.

TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

- 4.20 The site is located immediately to the west of Read village. The village historically developed along the main medieval road between Whalley and Padiham, close to Read Hall which was the seat of the Nowell Family from the 1300's.
- 4.21 The approaches into Read are clearly defined with the settlement edge following George Lane up the slope to the junction with Whins Lane, and properties along Whins lane and Hammond Drive defining the northern extent of Hammond Ground and the older part of the village around the vicarage and church. Either side of the Whalley Road on the western approach are open fields with hedgerow and stone wall boundaries. Within these, and forming boundaries across the slopes, are woodland blocks and individual mature trees. Views north across Hammond Ground are open as far as Whin lane and Hammond Drive where both properties and the wooded upper slopes of the hill form the horizon line. The steeple of St John the Evangelist is prominent in the view. Views south are wide ranging across the valley with the land falling quickly away to the river allowing views across to the rising ridgelines further south. The appearance along the route from Whalley into Read is punctuated by both the entrance drive and lodge into Read Hall and the well treed and wooded parkland landscape that extends from this location alongside the A671 all the way into the village.

PARKLAND LANDSCAPE

- 4.22 The Inspectors consideration of the parkland nature of Hammond Ground have been identified previously in this report and highlight the Inspectorates view that in all likelihood this is a designed landscape deliberate in its appearance as a parkland setting to Read Hall.
- 4.23 Read Hall and Park are included within *A Local List of Lancashire's Unregistered Historic Designated Landscapes* 2013 (see appendix 6.2), produced by the Lancashire Gardens Trust, Lancashire County Council and Manchester Met

University. This builds on an earlier piece of work (*Historic Designed Landscapes of Lancashire* by Bennis and Dyke 1998) that categorised Read Hall and Gardens as being of national significance and it was recommended for inclusion on the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest in England*. The later 2013 report categorises the Read landscape as of Regional or County Significance.

- 4.24 Read Hall and parkland are also included within Lancashire County Council's Historic Landscape Characterisation assessment where the whole of the park area denoted within the early OS mapping is included within a character type called *Ancient and Post Medieval Ornamental* and a Heritage Assessment of Read Hall identifies that its "parkland setting remains as legible today as when the mansion was first built"
- 4.25 The landscape both to the south and north of Read Hall has a clear parkland appearance, through the arrangement of the features and elements as described above and from the visual clues that become apparent on a journey around the estate. Although no longer easily visible from any location around Read Park, the presence of Read Hall is evidenced through the gate piers and lodge alongside Whalley Road and from the associated enclosing walls, boundaries and out buildings found close to and to the rear of the Hall itself. Glimpses of the Hall are possible from Whalley Road alongside filtered views to Hammond Ground across Front Field and also from more distant views to the south.

LANDSCAPE VALUE.

- 4.26 The local landscape character areas range in value between Low-medium through to High. This is a reflection of the AONB; the parkland landscapes; access to the countryside; the sense of place created through the landscape and its features; and the ecological value for parts of the landscape and its broader importance to the identity of the area.

- 4.27 With regard to the proposal site and the local landscape surrounding this, the landscape quality and condition is typically good with well defined boundaries, mature woodland and trees and a recognisable landscape character which is both visual and anchored within the relationship with the village and its history.
- 4.28 The scenic quality varies from within the village to the more open landscapes on the approaches towards Read. Within Read itself the townscape is typical of its type with stone clad terrace housing and small industrial development lining the road route through the lower valley. The eastern edge of the village is clearly defined with George Lane marking a clear break from settlement into open landscape. Hammond Ground and the other field groups that surround Read Hall have a distinct parkland appearance discussed at length previously. This is a landscape of good-high scenic quality with attributes and characteristics that are easily recognisable and distinguishable from other countryside locations.
- 4.29 The landscape of the parkland surrounding Read Hall is of some rarity. The Lancashire Historic Landscape Characterisation Programme identifies this parkland as being within the *Ancient and Post-Medieval Ornamental* HLCT. This is a landscape character type covering just 0.5% of the Lancashire study area and as such can be considered a rare example of its type.
- 4.30 The landscape of and surrounding the appeal site includes a number of specific characteristics that are representative of the general character of the area. All of the landscape character assessments from the NCA downwards note the presence of parkland and Read Park specifically as being a key feature. Within the detail of this description are references to the presence of historic manor houses and grounds; woodland; and mature, solitary trees.
- 4.31 The landscape and townscape does have specific historic and conservation interest. This is clearly defined through the contribution of Read Hall and parkland

and the other historic features of note to the Regional and Local landscape character.

- 4.32 Recreational opportunities are limited to the public rights of way network. This allows good access into the countryside with the site and Hammond Ground being a notable and attractive part of the view from routes to the south.
- 4.33 The landscape has aspects of tranquillity, but this is noted as a landscape where settlement and human activity are common place and therefore perceptual aspects do not offer any further value.
- 4.34 On the evidence set out above I continue to believe that this is a landscape which scores highly on almost all of the assessment criteria within Box 5.1. The Inspector from the previous hearing also considered this is a landscape that has *value both in its own right and as part of the wider landscape*.

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 4.35 The change to the proposal site will see the introduction of built development across a portion of Hammond Ground. The change will also see landscape features of trees and hedgerow either lost (hedgerow at access) or else placed within a suburban context which will alter their setting and the general understanding and appreciation of the existing parkland style landscape. The trees in particular, although potentially retained as part of the proposals, will no longer be seen as part of an older, historic parkland, but will be subsumed within a completely different urban setting.
- 4.36 Openness across Hammond Ground will be lost, particularly as experienced from journeys along Whalley Road and for residents along George Lane, Whin Lane and Hammond Drive. Views from these locations will be altered through the introduction of residential development, lighting, acoustic fencing, boundaries and other

associated infrastructure. Some longer distance views from public footpaths will also be affected and the eastern approach into the village of Read will change with a corresponding loss of open parkland to the north of the road.

- 4.37 The NCA 35 landscape character area represents a very large landscape where the proposed development would only represent a very small change. This change however will be directed towards one of the characteristic components of the NCA in the parks and gardens of Read Park, and as a significant feature of the NCA, any loss to this landscape must register as an adverse loss to the NCA.
- 4.38 The landscape change to the LCT6 from the Landscape Strategy for Lancashire affects the LCA 6a Calder Valley. Within this relatively local landscape area, the proposed development will affect changes to a number of key environmental features, namely:
- hedgerow trees and parkland trees;
 - Open Parkland landscape;
 - Large country houses and designed parklands defining the edge of settlement and location of urban fringes;
 - New tree planting at the boundaries of the proposed development.
- 4.39 The proposed development will have a direct effect on the above features, principally by altering the setting and context of the hedgerow boundary and parkland trees that contribute a defining element to the parkland appearance of the LCA. Although the scale of change is not across the whole LCA the development will have an adverse effect over the association of open land, boundaries and parkland trees to the parkland at Hammond Ground and by extension to Read Park as a whole. This, and the changes to the relationship between Read and the open landscape and parkland to the west, are notable and adverse changes affecting characteristics which help define the LCA.

- 4.40 The proposed development will have an effect on the parkland landscape of Hammond Ground with an actual loss of parkland; a change to the understanding and appreciation of these open landscapes and the parkland trees that populate them.

REVIEW OF APPLICATION- ASSESSED LANDSCAPE IMPACTS

- 4.41 Generally I believe that the application LVA although following a recognisable methodology, underplays both landscape and visual effects and over states the ability of the proposed mitigation measures to counter identified adverse effects.
- 4.42 The application LVIA considers that the site and surrounding landscape will undergo Moderate Major adverse effects during construction and Moderate adverse effects through Operation. My view would be that the elevated sensitivity of this site and its local importance, historical connections and value to residents and the character of the village as a whole would mean that this is an underestimate of this landscape effect. I don't accept that mitigation will reduce this adverse landscape effect to the degree suggested as the fundamental landscape changes to the site will remain adverse.
- 4.43 For similar reasons I believe the application LVIA underplays the importance of the site within the wider landscape setting and does not acknowledge Hammond Ground's established place within the Read Hall estate and the character of the village as evidenced and described, and as acknowledged by the Inspectorate at the Hearing in 2018. As a result I believe the stated landscape effects of Minor reducing to negligible are under scored, and not cogniscent of the recognised value of Hammond Ground, as part of the Read Hall estate, and as part of the local landscape character area and type (LCA 6A)

VISUAL EFFECTS

REVIEW OF APPLICATION- ASSESSED LANDSCAPE IMPACTS

- 4.44 In general the LVIA appears to understate the visual effects likely to be experienced for residents and users of the highway footpaths and routes through and around the village where these will have a clear site of the development and the change to Hammond Ground. A number of properties, including a small number of bungalows, have principal ground floor rooms that directly face the site where Hammond Ground is visible. There does not appear to be a rigorous examination of receptors, susceptibility, sensitivity, change and effect for the visual receptors identified but rather a general summary offered up for groups of receptors within the study area.
- 4.45 The LVIA does not appear to take into account incongruous features such as the proposals for 2.5m high acoustic fencing along boundaries on George Lane and overplays the ability of landscape proposals to mitigate this and does not consider the possibility of the landscape proposals themselves forming adverse and incongruous features within what is currently an open parkland vista and view.
- 4.46 Much is made of views from Whalley Road, suggesting that the proposals will be seen against the backdrop of existing settlement. This appears to be used to downgrade the potential level of change and effect. In fact this is only true for views looking from the west and fails to acknowledge that this change will be prominent and notable and a clear loss of open space associated with the parkland landscape of Hammond Ground and Read Hall.
- 4.47 My original views and view locations from the 2016/18 application and hearing appear still to be a useful guide as to what was considered and the extent to which Hammond Ground is visible from the surrounding landscape. For residential, and local highway and footway routes views (2,3,4 and 6 [views from the road now

blocked but from new residential properties]) (applicant LVIA view 1-4 along Whalley Road)

- 4.48 The LVIA appears to consider that recreational views of the site are not possible and considers that the effects are *little or no visibility* leading to *minor or negligible effects*. This is not the case, particularly in winter, where views are possible from the public footpath network to the north and south. (views 7 and 8) (applicant LVIA view 7 and 10)

LANDSCAPE AND MITIGATION PROPOSALS

- 4.49 The landscape proposals include for works across the whole of the Hammond Ground and the management of existing parkland trees and their possible replacement through new planting to ensure longevity to the overall parkland landscape appearance is a beneficial aspect of the proposals.
- 4.50 The proposals include for public access and, although this is currently not available, its addition to the proposals does not in my view add a great deal of benefit acting as it does to dilute the simple, open, agricultural parkland appearance of Hammond Ground.
- 4.51 The proposals include for scrub and tree planting along boundaries which, although potentially reducing views towards the site, are not in keeping with the character of open parkland.
- 4.52 The proposals appear heavily treed with a busy design with many more trees than is required to maintain a parkland characteristic and a poorly defined sense of place. There is also recreation use proposed with paths meandering loosely around the site.
- 4.53 I am in agreement with the residents appointed consultants (JBA consulting) when they suggest that a stronger parkland led approach to this design and mitigation could have been prepared with:

- A historically informed restoration of Hammond Ground demonstrating reinforcement of lost lines of trees and parkland character;
- Identification of vistas and view corridors to be retained and developed;
- Larger uninterrupted areas of open grassland;
- Carefully positioned individual trees or small clumps of trees as succession planting; and
- A path network informed by the above.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 I have reviewed the Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) and application details for a proposal for 77 residential units at Hammond Ground in Read. The LVA has considered landscape and visual effects of the proposed development and follows a recognisable methodology that appears to follow the current industry guidance in GLVIA3.
- 7.2 I have also reviewed the previous application across a broadly similar area of the eastern side of Hammond Ground which was refused in 2016 and dismissed at appeal in 2018.
- 7.3 Having reviewed both the application for 77 individual dwellings and associated infrastructure and the previous rejection of proposals on this site for 50 homes by both the LPA and the Inspector at appeal, and having reviewed the reasons for this refusal, I find that the fundamental reasons for refusing development on this site remain.
- 7.4 I find no strong or pressing reason for this proposal to be acceptable in landscape and visual terms given the previous refusal by the LPA against still extant policy and the inspectorates upholding of this decision. This is in the context of the previous proposal being for a smaller quantum of development, on broadly the same area of Hammond Ground.

- 7.5 The Local planning background has not altered since the previous application on the site with the same policies that development on this site were found not to be compliant with still extant.
- 7.6 The National Planning Policy Framework has changed with the issue of valued landscapes now not part of the consideration for the site. The site however remains a site of local value with a clearly identifiable level of value as described through reference to Box 5.1 of the landscape guidance (GLVIA3)
- 7.7 I believe that the landscape effects as described and assessed by the application LVA are under played and over play the ability of the mitigation and landscape proposals to effectively reduce or remove the adverse aspects of the proposals.
- 7.8 I believe the visual effects as described and assessed by the application LVA are also underplayed with a failure to identify where visual change occurs and a lack of detail as to how each view and receptors visual effects have been assessed.
- 7.9 Overall I find that the Inspectors reasons for refusal of proposals for development at Hammond Ground remain appropriate for the current proposals for 77 dwellings:

Hammond Ground currently provides an attractive open parkland setting for this part of the village when viewed from Whalley Road. There are key views of the appeal site from Whalley Road, from where the proposed development would appear very prominent on the edge of the village rising up the slope to the north. The proposed residential development, within part of Hammond Ground, would erode the parkland character and openness, giving rise to a significant adverse effect upon the setting of the village within the countryside.

the proposed development, through the loss of parkland would give rise to substantial harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the

setting of the village and have significant harmful effects upon both the Industrial Foothills and Valleys LCT and Undulating Lowland Farmland with Parkland LCA.

Although acknowledging the proposals efforts in providing a landscape masterplan and landscape based mitigation measures I am of the opinion that these do not reverse the permanent adverse effects that will remain. This reflects the Inspectors view of mitigation proposals previously that included parkland trees and screen planting from the previous application that:

Whilst the harmful landscape and visual effects could diminish over time as a result of landscaping conditioned by way of a future reserved matters proposal, the proposed mitigation measures would not prevent the development from having substantial harmful effects on the character and appearance of the countryside.