Civil Engineering Impacts on Existing Tree Cover

at

Hammond Ground, Read in respect of
Application No. 3/2026/0356
For the erection of 77 no. dwellings and creation of community parkland with vehicular access from Whalley Road and associated infrastructure, parking and landscaping

Report Author: [redacted]

August 2026

HAMMOND GROUND

Technical Working Notes – Earthworks, Trees and Enabling Works

I have worked within the civil engineering industry for almost 20 years, progressing through roles including Site Engineer, Senior Engineer and Site Manager on a wide range of major infrastructure and redevelopment projects throughout the UK.

During this time, I have been responsible for delivering engineering works including bulk earthworks, highways, drainage, retaining structures, topographical surveys, setting out, quality assurance, machine control modelling and earthworks volume calculations. My role has regularly involved reviewing engineering drawings, interpreting technical information and ensuring that construction works are delivered in accordance with the design.

I currently work as a Site Engineer for Costain on the Simister Island/M62 Junction 18 Improvement Scheme, where I am involved in the delivery of highways and enabling works associated with a nationally significant infrastructure project. Previous projects have included large-scale remediation, infrastructure and commercial developments requiring substantial earthworks, structures, drainage and engineering coordination.

I previously submitted a brief personal objection to the Hammond Ground planning application based on my concerns as a neighbouring resident.

Since submitting that objection, I have reviewed the engineering drawings and supporting technical information in considerably greater detail. Having done so, I have identified a number of engineering and arboricultural matters which, in my opinion, would benefit from further explanation within the submitted information.

The purpose of these notes is to summarise those observations based on the information currently available.

What the drawings appear to show

- The submitted drawings appear to show significant remodelling of the existing ground through a combination of excavation, fill, retaining walls and tiered gardens.

- The proposed roads and finished floor levels do not simply follow the existing topography, indicating that substantial earthworks will be required before development can begin.

- The highway sections show significant differences between existing and proposed ground levels in several locations, including areas where approximately **3-4 metres** of level change appears to be proposed.

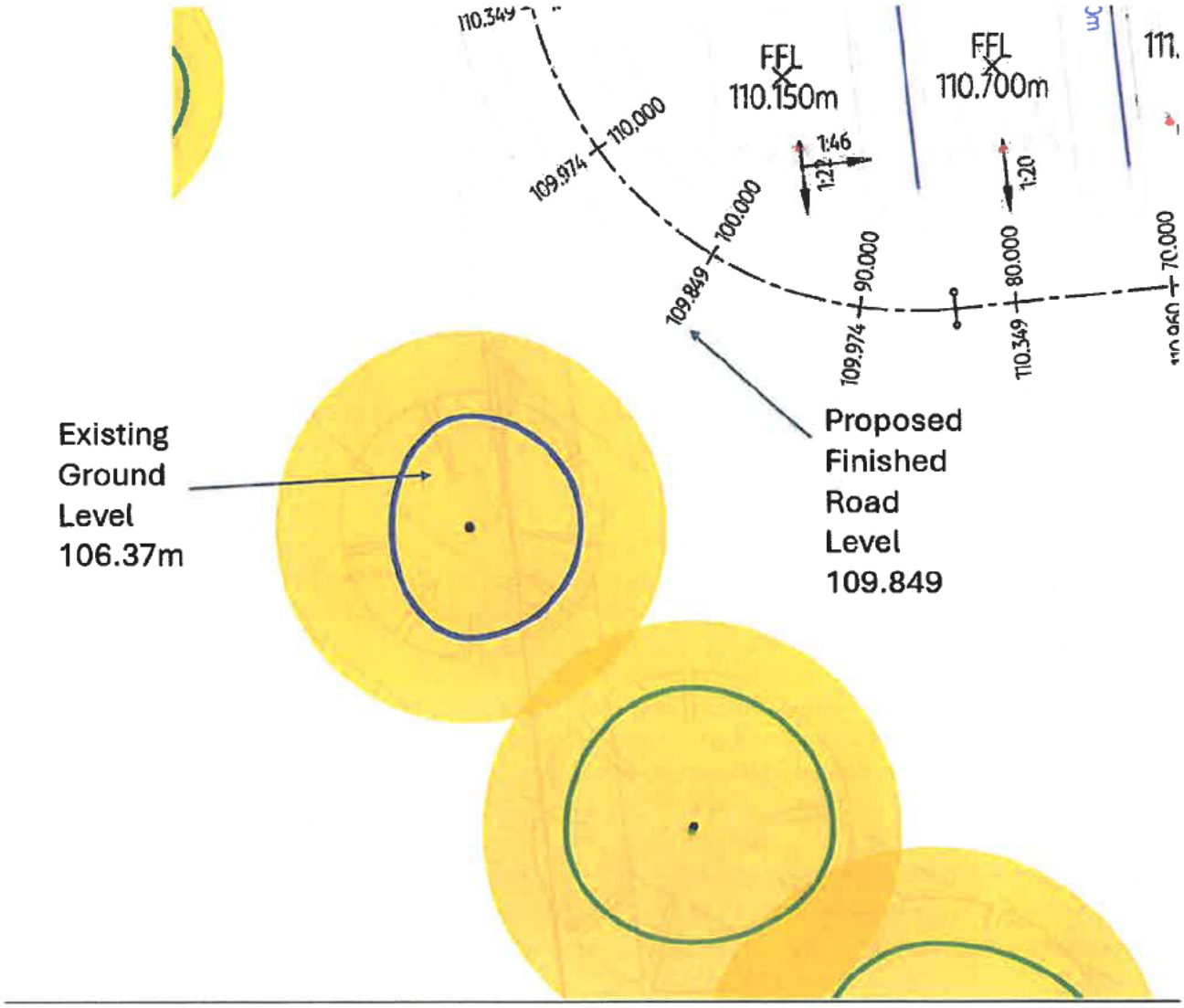
- The External Works drawings identify retained mature trees and Root Protection Areas within or adjacent to areas where significant engineering works are proposed.

- The drawings also contain notes stating that existing levels around certain retained trees are to remain unchanged, together with references highlighting the need for arboricultural consideration. This suggests the relationship between the proposed earthworks and retained trees has already been recognised as a design constraint.

- From reviewing the submitted information, I cannot reconcile how some of the proposed regrading, highways and retaining structures can be carried out whilst maintaining the existing ground levels required to protect a number of the retained trees.

- Without additional engineering and arboricultural detail, it is difficult to understand how the proposed works will be undertaken whilst protecting those retained trees throughout the construction process.

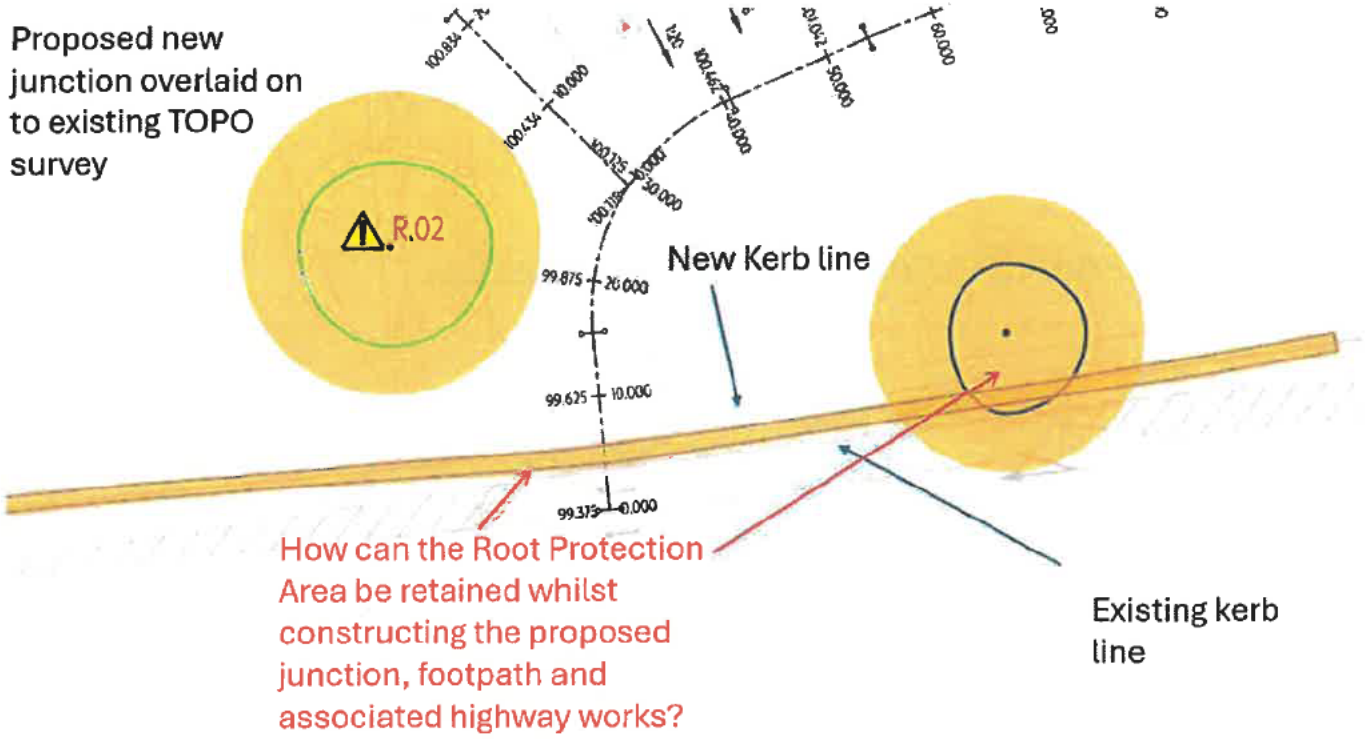
Example 1 – Highway Section Adjacent to Retained Tree



- The highway section indicates approximately **3 metres** difference between the existing and proposed ground levels.
- The adjacent External Works drawing shows a retained mature tree within close proximity to these proposed works.
- The submitted drawings also indicate that existing ground levels around retained trees should remain unchanged.
- Based on the information currently submitted, I cannot reconcile how these proposed earthworks can be undertaken whilst maintaining the existing ground levels around the retained tree.
- Additional engineering and arboricultural detail would help explain how this constraint is intended to be managed.

How can the proposed changes in ground levels be achieved whilst maintaining the existing ground levels around this retained tree, as indicated elsewhere on the submitted drawings?

Example 2 – Proposed Highway Junction and Retained Trees



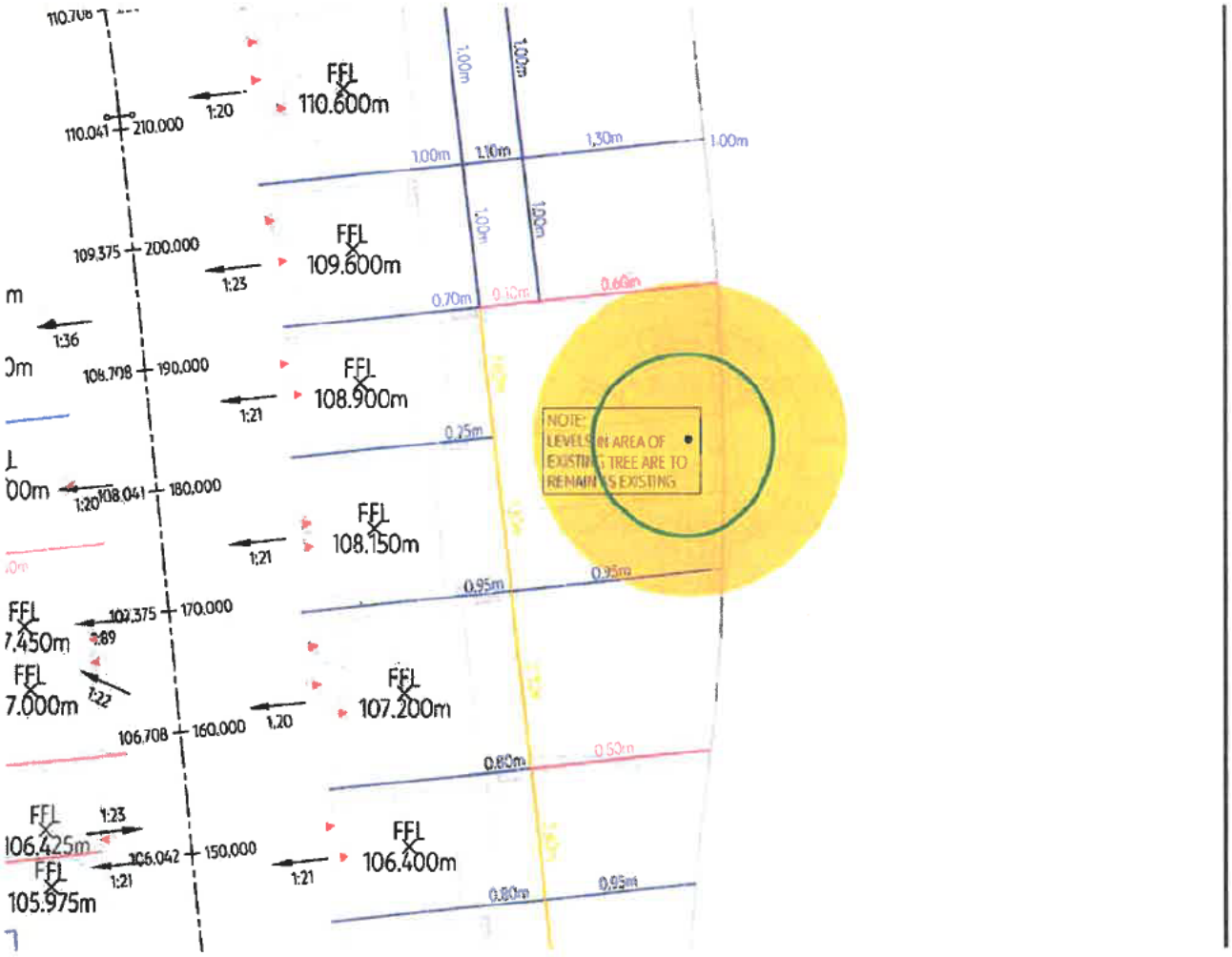
Observations

- The proposed highway junction appears to be located immediately adjacent to the retained mature trees, with parts of the proposed road and footpath extending into, or immediately alongside, the Root Protection Areas shown on the submitted drawings.
- The Root Protection Area also extends beneath the existing hedge line, yet the proposed junction appears to require the removal of part of the existing boundary and hedge to accommodate the revised highway layout and required visibility splays.
- I understand the applicant has now indicated that a substantial section of the existing boundary wall will be demolished and rebuilt further back from the highway. If this is the case, it would introduce additional excavation and construction activities immediately adjacent to the retained trees and their Root Protection Areas.
- Construction of the proposed junction would typically involve excavation, drainage installation, pavement construction, kerb construction, utility diversions (if required), and ground compaction, all within an area identified for tree protection.
- From reviewing the submitted drawings, I have been unable to identify how these engineering works can be undertaken whilst maintaining the Root Protection Areas and protecting the retained trees throughout construction.
- The submitted information also does not explain how temporary works, construction access, plant movements and excavation required to reconstruct the boundary wall would avoid impacting the Root Protection Areas.
- Whilst there may be an engineering solution, I have been unable to identify sufficient detail within the submitted information explaining how these potentially conflicting requirements will be achieved.
- I understand the applicant has indicated that the existing boundary wall will largely be demolished and rebuilt further back to achieve the required visibility splays for the proposed junction. If so, this

would appear to require additional excavation and construction activity immediately adjacent to the retained trees and their Root Protection Areas. The submitted information does not explain how these works would be undertaken whilst protecting the retained trees.

How will the proposed highway junction, footpath and associated construction works be delivered whilst protecting the retained trees, their Root Protection Areas and the existing hedge?

Example 3 – Retained Tree Behind Existing George Lane Properties



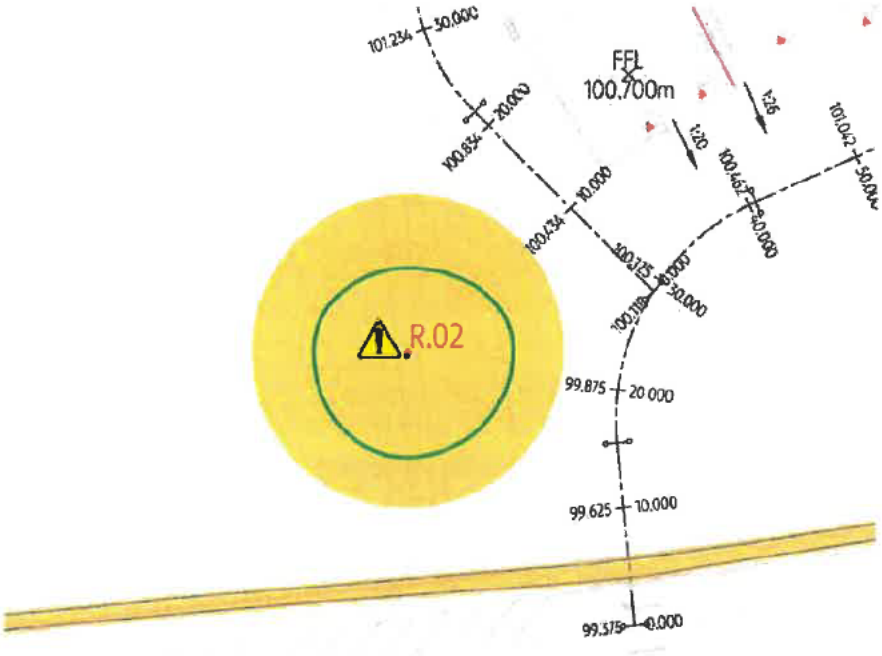
Observations

- This retained mature tree appears to remain within an area where substantial regrading of the site is proposed.
- The surrounding drawings indicate retaining walls, changes in finished levels and significant earthworks immediately around the tree.
- Before retaining walls and final levels can be constructed, it is likely that bulk earthworks would first be required to establish the new development platforms.
- From reviewing the submitted information, I cannot understand how those bulk earthworks could be undertaken whilst preserving the existing ground conditions around the retained tree.

- The submitted drawings do not appear to explain how the tree and its Root Protection Area will be protected throughout the earthworks and construction phases.
  How will the retained tree and its Root Protection Area be protected throughout the bulk earthworks and construction of the surrounding retaining walls?

Example 4 – Designer's Risk Assessment (Risk Reference R.02)

TABLE 1: DESIGNERS RISK ASSESSMENT		
RISK REFERENCE	RISK DESCRIPTION	RISK CONSIDERATION/ MITIGATION
⚠ R.01	PLOT 67	DUE TO ROAD GRADIENTS, IT IS NOT ACHIEVABLE FOR 1:20 ACCESS INTO BOTH ENTRANCES OF THE PLOT, ACCESS ADJACENT TO THE DRIVEWAYS IS PROPOSED WITH 1:320 ACCESS FOR PART M.
⚠ R.02	EXISTING TREE	LEVELS WITHIN TPO ARE LOWER THAN THE EXISTING ROAD. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT AN ARBORICULTURALIST IS CONSULTED.



Observations

- The Designers Risk Assessment identifies **Risk Reference R.02** relating specifically to the existing retained tree.
- The risk assessment states:
  - *"Levels within TPO are lower than the existing road. It is suggested that an arboriculturist is consulted."*
- This indicates that the design team has already recognised that the relationship between the existing tree, surrounding levels and the proposed engineering works requires further consideration.
- However, from reviewing the submitted drawings, it remains unclear how the proposed level changes and associated construction works will be carried out whilst protecting the retained tree and its Root Protection Area.
- The submitted information would benefit from further explanation demonstrating how the engineering proposals and tree protection measures are intended to work together throughout construction.

The designers have identified this tree as a design risk. What engineering and arboricultural measures are proposed to address that risk whilst delivering the proposed level changes?

Information that appears to be missing

- A complete cut-and-fill balance showing cut, fill, topsoil, unsuitable material, import and export.
- Detailed retaining-wall sections and foundation arrangements.
- Tree-by-tree sections showing existing and proposed levels through each Root Protection Area.
- An Arboricultural Method Statement explaining how excavation, fill, drainage, utilities and construction traffic will be controlled.
- A preliminary foundation and ground-treatment strategy.
- Construction traffic and HGV forecasts.

Technical questions

- Where is the quantified cut-and-fill assessment for the whole development?
- What quantities of material are expected to be imported and exported?
- What proportion of excavated material is expected to be suitable for reuse?
- What is the preliminary foundation strategy, and could piling or ground improvement be required?
- How many HGV movements are anticipated during the earthworks phase?
- How will retained trees be protected from excavation, fill, compaction and changes in drainage?
- Can detailed sections be provided through each retained mature tree showing existing ground, proposed ground, retaining structures and the Root Protection Area?
- What Arboricultural Method Statement supports the proposed tree retention?
- How will drainage, utilities, retaining-wall foundations and temporary haul routes avoid Root Protection Areas?
- What monitoring and protection is proposed for neighbouring properties during enabling works?

Conclusion

Having reviewed the submitted information, I believe additional engineering and arboricultural information would assist in explaining how the proposed earthworks, retaining structures and tree protection measures are intended to be delivered together.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Landscape and Visual Review

Hammond Ground, Read

P02

Prepared for

Hammond Ground Community Group

Date

July 2026

[redacted]

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[redacted]

Contract

JBA Project Manager [redacted]

Address

JBA Project Code 2026s0720

This report describes work commissioned by [redacted] by an instruction dated 25th June 2026. The Client's representative for the contract was [redacted] carried out this work.

Purpose and Disclaimer

[redacted] has prepared this Report for the sole use of [redacted] and its appointed agents in accordance with the Agreement under which our services were performed.

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The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by [redacted] in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The work described in this Report was undertaken between June and July 2026 and is based on the conditions encountered and the information available during the said period. The scope of this Report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

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Contents

Abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now National Landscape)
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
GLVIA3	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition
HGCG	Hammond Ground Community Group
LI	Landscape Institute
LVA	Landscape and Visual Appraisal
NL	National Landscape
RVBC	Ribble Valley Borough Council
TGN	Technical Guidance Note
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

1 Introduction

[redacted] trading as [redacted] have been commissioned by [redacted] to produce a Landscape and Visual Review (LVR) report regarding the live planning application for Land at Hammond Ground Whalley Road Read BB12 7RP. The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 77 no. dwellings and creation of community parkland, with vehicular access from Whalley Road and associated infrastructure, parking and landscaping (planning reference no. 3/2026/0356).

[redacted] have previously provided high level advice to [redacted] by email following the circulation of consultation material associated with the above planning application. This report develops that advice following a desk-based review of the landscape and visual documentation submitted with this application.

A review of the followings documents and drawings have informed the findings of this report:

- Landscape and Visual Appraisal and supporting figures (BUR2303_LVA01, final report), PGLA Landscape Architects
- Illustrative Landscape Strategy (BUR2023_LP01.00 Rev P1), PGLA Landscape Architects
- Planting Plan Sheets 1-20 (BUR2303 PP01.00 P1 – P20), PGLA Landscape Architects

For context and a broader understanding of the site and proposals, the following documents have also been reviewed, although are not subject to detailed critique within this report:

- Planning & Affordable Housing Statement, Connollys
- Design and Access Statement, Woodcroft Design
- Indicative Street Scene & Cross Sections (Drawing 23-154-SS01 Rev -), Woodcroft Design
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Envirotech

The following documents relating to the 2018 appeal ref APP/T2350/W/17/3185445 have also been reviewed:

- Appeal Decision
- Ribble Valley Borough Council Appeal Statement
- Statement of Common Ground
- Design and Access Statement
- Illustrative Masterplan – Housing Mix
- Illustrative Site Plan - Sections

- [redacted] (Landscape Witness for Ribble Valley Borough Council) Proof of Evidence for Landscape and Visual Impacts together with Design Matters, and supporting Appendices

The findings and conclusions presented within this report are based on a desk-based assessment. No site visit has been undertaken at this stage. Where conclusions depend on current visibility, vegetation condition or public access, this limitation is identified and those matters should be verified through fieldwork.

2 Planning Background

An outline planning application was submitted in 2016 for up to 50 dwellings located to the southeast corner of Hammond Ground, forming a triangular shaped development footprint covering approximately a fifth of the total area of Hammond Ground. The application was refused and the subsequent appeal was dismissed in 2018.

Four reasons for refusal were given by the Council when the application was refused. Two remained in dispute and were addressed in evidence at the appeal, these are detailed below.

'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.'

The current application was registered by Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) on 9 June 2026. The Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008–2028 remains the same plan as referenced in the 2016 appeal. Given that the plan was adopted over ten years ago, the weight to be attributed to individual policies and the current housing land supply position are planning matters beyond the principal scope of this landscape and visual review. The 2018 appeal decision remains an important consideration of this report due to the site-specific findings regarding Hammond Ground.

3 Review of Landscape and Visual Context

3.1 Overview

This section provides a review of the landscape and visual documentation submitted as part of the live 2026 application (3/2026/0356), evaluating the adequacy of the information provided and a comparison with the previous 2016 planning application and the reasoning in the 2018 appeal decision.

3.2 Submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal

3.2.1 Technical approach and adequacy

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) by PGLA Landscape Architects (BUR2303_LVA01, final report) follows a recognised methodology and approach informed by Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GVLIA3). A number of methodological inaccuracies have been noted which reduce reliability of parts of the LVA. These are detailed below.

- A bare-earth (non-screened) Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has not been provided. Although a screened ZTV may assist in identifying likely visibility under existing conditions, a bare-earth ZTV would provide a clearer indication of the theoretical extent of visibility arising from landform alone and would allow the influence of existing vegetation to be distinguished.
- The stated development height is inconsistent. Both 9m and 10m are referenced within the report and figures, reducing the reliability of the information presented within the ZTV.
- Page 3 of the LVA notes that all viewpoint photography has been taken using a 50mm fixed lens as per current industry guidance, LI TGN 06/19. However, the image dimensions and apparent fields of view are not presented consistently across the viewpoint sheets. The supporting technical information does not clearly state viewing distance, enlargement factor, weather conditions or other information necessary to enable like-for-like comparison.
- The viewpoint selection generally seems appropriate although Viewpoints 1-3 are not optimally positioned to demonstrate the open parkland character. The location of viewpoint 4, as selected in the 2018 appeal Proof of Evidence *Landscape and Visual Impacts together with Design Matters* by [redacted] more accurately reflects the open nature of the parkland view from the southeast corner of the site.
- No current representative viewpoint appears to have been included from the elevated northern side of the site or its immediate surroundings. It is acknowledged, however, that the previously publicly accessible view from this location is now partially screened by recently constructed properties. The

[redacted]

continued availability of a publicly accessible viewpoint to the north should be confirmed through a site visit.

- It is noted that PGLA undertook site visits in March and April. Some of the viewpoint photographs show trees in partial leaf, meaning that, in certain cases, they may not fully represent the worst-case winter condition when vegetation is at its most open. This is particularly relevant to Viewpoint 10. The Appeal Decision also refers to views from the north-east of the site in relation to the wider setting of the village.

3.2.2 Landscape baseline, value and effects

The LVA acknowledges that Hammond Ground contains parkland characteristics and forms part of a parkland setting, although appears to understate the importance of this, noting the site displays only minor parkland characteristics and concludes the site does not contribute to the setting of Read Hall.

The parkland character and setting of the site is strongly evidenced within [redacted] *Proof of Evidence Landscape and Visual Impacts together with Design Matters* compiled for the 2018 appeal. The 2018 Appeal Decision also acknowledges both the parkland appearance and character of the site, concluding it has not been formed 'accidentally'. The 1848 and 1913 Ordnance Survey map extracts presented in Appendix 4 of [redacted] Proof of Evidence shows both Hammond Ground and Read Park shaded as parkland, with individual trees evidently forming part of a wider designed parkland. There have been no significant alterations to Hammond Ground since 2018 that would support a revaluation of the parkland characteristics to 'minor'.

The LVA understates the potential effects to the setting of Read Hall to the west due to this being visually screened by woodland. A lack of intervisibility does not remove Hammond Ground from contributing to the setting of Read Hall as setting can also be established through historical, functional and spatial relationships in addition to a visual relationship. The change to Hammond Ground as a result of the proposed scheme and the associated mitigation strategy has potential to affect the setting even when no intervisibility exists due to the increase in built development, the loss of open parkland and degradation of the existing parkland character. This effect is anticipated to be greater than the negligible effect reported within the LVA.

The LVA states that there would be 'moderate major adverse' effects to the physical fabric of the site in the short term, reducing to moderate adverse once mitigation planting establishes. [redacted]do not consider that the establishment of the proposed planting would result in a reduction of effect due to the wholesale change to Hammond Ground, through both the loss of parkland as a result of the development and further loss of parkland associated with the poor mitigation strategy not representative of the site's existing character and landscape setting.

A well-considered approach to defining landscape value has been taken through the application of Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21, Assessing landscape

[redacted]

value outside national designations. However, numerous aspects of value have been understated, importantly cultural heritage and perceptual aspects. Combined with understated residual magnitude of change assessments, JBA considers that the LVA underestimates the residual effects on the character of Hammond Ground and its immediate landscape setting.

3.2.3 Visual effects

The visual receptors identified within the LVA appear to be broadly appropriate and well considered. It is also agreed that notable visual effects are generally limited to receptors in close proximity to the Site, particularly residents of properties on roads bounding the site.

The LVA appears to understate the visual effects likely to be experienced by residents of George Lane, immediately to the east of the site. A number of these properties, including a small number of bungalows, have principal ground-floor rooms that directly face the site and from which Hammond Ground is visible. The assumption that the development would not be visible from principal rooms is therefore questionable.

The assessment does not appear to have fully considered the scale of change in visual amenity experienced by this receptor group as a result of the replacement of open parkland with built development. Furthermore, the 2026 Noise Impact Assessment by [redacted] (reference NA103373-RPT01-V1), submitted with the current planning application, identifies a requirement for acoustic fencing of up to 2.5 metres in height in parts of the site. This includes fencing along the boundaries of four existing properties on George Lane, which would further adversely affect the views available from those properties.

Paragraph 5.52 of the LVA states 'there is a substantial landscape buffer separating the rest of the existing properties from the proposed.' Although the proposed dwellings would not immediately abut the boundary of dwellings to the north of the site along Hammond Drive, the topographic information indicates open views across the proposals would be likely. The inclusion of dense proposed planting along the northern site boundary is anticipated to screen views of the proposed dwellings in the long term, however this would also screen the wider outlook across Hammond Ground and the wider setting, resulting in changes to visual amenity for a number of receptors. Appendix 1 and 2 of [redacted] Proof of Evidence *Landscape and Visual Impacts together with Design Matters* compiled for the 2018 appeal included a viewpoint location 1, representative of residents and footpath users to the north of the site. No such comparable viewpoint was included within the 2026 LVA by [redacted] although it is understood that new dwellings now mostly restrict public access to this view.

Paragraph 5.53 of the LVA refers to the views available from viewpoints 3 and 4 (properties along Whalley Road to the south of the site), stating that the proposed scheme would be seen within the context of the existing settlement. It is concluded that this understates the changes in view due to the combination of bungalows, 2 storey and 2.5 storey proposed development. It is anticipated that views of the proposed dwellings would typically eclipse

[redacted]

the majority of views of existing built form at George Lane and there would be a loss of open parkland views as a result of the combination of the built form and inadequate mitigation strategy.

Overall, [redacted] agrees that the most prominent effects would be experienced by sensitive residential and road users in the immediate surroundings. However, the submitted LVA generally understates the magnitude of change and the associated residual effects to these receptors.

3.3 Landscape Strategy and Mitigation

The Illustrative Landscape Strategy (BUR2023_LP01.00 Rev P1) by [redacted] presented within the 2026 planning submission lacks basic technical clarity such as provision of a clear legend, to better convey to non-specialist readers which features are existing and to be retained or removed and which features are proposed.

The Landscape Strategy looks relatively well considered in terms of the proposed planting around the area of development to the east, however it proposes a substantial transformation of the remaining parkland to the west of the site.

It is acknowledged that the proposed scheme achieves a net gain in biodiversity, with trading rules met. [redacted] understand the importance of well-considered landscape and ecological design, and the requirements for ecological enhancements to be embedded within the proposals, however, the biodiversity enhancements in this instance do not equate to good parkland design.

The defining characteristics of Hammond Ground are its open parkland character, scattered mature trees, and relationship with the settlement edge. The submitted Landscape Strategy would introduce a comparatively busy landscape comprising numerous individual trees, areas of scrub and wildflower planting, paths, seating and drainage features.

Furthermore, the Landscape Strategy and Planting Plans do not clearly define the extent to which the stone boundary wall and hedgerow along Whalley Road would be removed to accommodate the new access and associated visibility splay. There may be a substantial loss of hedgerow and, although replacement hedgerow planting is proposed, this would take time to establish and provide an effective landscape feature.

A stronger parkland led approach could have been developed considering the following;

- A historically informed restoration of Hammond Grounds demonstrating reinforcement of lost lines of trees and parkland pattern;
- Identification of vistas and view corridors to be retained;
- Larger uninterrupted areas of open grassland;
- Carefully positioned individual trees or small clumps of trees, with an improved considered approach to succession planting that still reflects the key elements of a parkland landscape;
- A path network informed by historic routes, tree lines and vistas:

- A clear strategy of veteranisation of existing mature trees through long term management, consistent with [redacted] Biodiversity Net Gain Report (submitted as part of the 2026 live planning application).

In conclusion, it is acknowledged that the submitted Illustrative Landscape Strategy provides some ecological and recreational benefits, however the design of the remaining undeveloped area of Hammond Ground is at risk of further degrading the parkland character, reducing the openness and contributing to the long-term loss of views for surrounding high sensitivity visual receptors, in turn not responding to the surrounding setting of Read Hall.

3.4 Comparison of 2016 and 2026 proposals

The 2026 scheme presents a more linear development concentrated adjacent to the existing settlement edge to the east whilst also extending further north into the highest part of the site. The development footprint covers approximately a quarter of Hammond Ground.

There are several similarities between the 2016 and 2026 schemes, including the retention of mature trees, a mix of dwelling types including bungalows and the setting back of development from Whalley Road.

The street scenes presented within the 2026 Design and Access Statement by Woodcroft Design indicate that some of the tallest two and two-and-a-half storey dwellings will be located toward the north and highest part of the site.

The 2026 scheme would reduce the open character of Hammond Ground by reducing the space between new and existing dwellings to the northeast corner of the site. The significant extent of proposed tree planting is also anticipated to alter the existing open character as well as resulting in the loss of views in the long term.

A key difference between the proposals is the extension of the red line boundary, which now extends across the entirety of Hammond Ground, introducing permissive routes, a SuDS basin and additional tree planting into the wider site, in addition to the dwellings. This would open Hammond Ground for public recreational use, although how this will be managed long term is not clear.

It is acknowledged that recreational use could provide benefits to the local community as well as the opportunity for enhancement of the parkland. This benefit would not necessarily mitigate for the harm to the landscape character and visual amenity as a result of the direct loss to this landscape arising from the proposed scheme. This weighing up of adverse and beneficial effects would have to be considered in the overall planning balance.

3.5 Ongoing relevance of the 2018 appeal decision

There are many aspects of the 2018 Appeal Decision which remain highly relevant to the 2026 planning submission, this is detailed below.

- The inspectors' findings regarding the parkland appearance and setting of Hammond Ground remain directly relevant. The proposed scheme contains a

greater number of dwellings which extend further north, in addition to altering the remaining parkland area to the west of the proposed dwellings.

- Although proposed built form is now more closely related to the existing settlement edge at George Lane, there remains an erosion of the open characteristics and relationship between the settlement edge and parkland landscape setting.
- Both the 2018 appeal decision, the submitted 2026 LVA and this report acknowledge that the most notable visual effects would be experienced at a local level. However, the limited wider visibility does not reduce the importance of the change in views for visual receptors in close proximity to the site.
- The Inspector identified a clear connection between the site at Hammond Ground and the setting of Read Hall, despite the lack of intervisibility. The submitted 2026 LVA does not consider that the setting of Read Hall would be affected by the proposed scheme, with this justification solely relating to lack of visibility.
- Several mitigation measures considered within the 2016 scheme are also included within the current proposal; use of bungalows, retention of trees and setting the development back from Whalley Road. [redacted] do not consider that these measures, alongside the planting to the wider parkland, provide suitable or appropriate mitigation to reduce the anticipated landscape and visual effects over and above those identified at the 2018 appeal.

4 Summary and Conclusions

The submitted 2026 LVA follows a broadly recognised assessment methodology and identifies the majority of the relevant landscape and visual receptors. However, the reliability of the LVA is reduced by inconsistencies in the assumed development height, limited technical information for viewpoint photography, the absence of a bare-earth ZTV and the lack of a representative viewpoint from the north site boundary.

The LVA understates the site's landscape value, and the importance of its parkland character as well as the magnitude of change arising from the proposed scheme. The reduction in residual effects attributed to established mitigation planting is not fully justified. Planting may reduce the visibility of built form from some locations, but it would not mitigate the direct loss of open parkland and key site characteristics of openness.

The Illustrative Landscape Strategy provides some benefits to biodiversity and recreation. However, the approach to mitigation results in a degradation of the remaining open parkland through introduction of significant tree planting not in accordance with parkland characteristics. The extensive planting would create a busier and more enclosed landscape, reducing open areas of grassland as well as filtering and enclosing existing views, all which currently contribute to the character and value of Hammond Ground.

The proposed scheme differs from the 2016 proposal in its layout, the concentration of development toward George Lane to the east and the provision of permissive public access across the wider site. Nevertheless, many of the Inspector's site-specific findings remain relevant, particularly in relation to parkland character, the setting of Read, close-range views and the historic association with Read Hall.

In summary, [redacted]do not consider that the adverse effects arising from the scheme have been accurately reported and that the proposed mitigation would adequately address the adverse effects long term.

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