

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

For Commercial Estates Group
in respect of

Land to the East of Clitheroe Road, Whalley

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planit-IE Ltd have been appointed by Commercial Estates Group (CEG) to carry out a landscape and visual appraisal of the land east of Clitheroe Road, Whalley. Planit-IE Ltd are a registered practice of the Landscape Institute and have considerable experience in all areas of landscape design and visual assessment.
- 1.2 Whalley is located in the Ribble Valley, between Clitheroe, Blackburn and Burnley. The settlement sits on the banks of the River Calder at the heart of the Ribble Valley. It is central to a cluster of smaller local settlements including Barrow, Wiswell, and Billington. It is developed on both sides of the B6246 Accrington Road, B6246 King Street, B6246 Station Road and Clitheroe Road.
- 1.3 The site lies immediately to the north-east of the existing residential properties on the eastern side of the settlement. The site is bounded to the north by open land, including and grass sports pitches associated with the College, and a small group of residential properties. To the immediate east of the site is the A671 Easterly Bypass and Spring Wood. There is residential development to both the south-west and west of the site.

Refer to Figure 1 for site location.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Site Description

The site is primarily comprised of improved pasture, with some existing hedgerows and trees along its northern boundary. A low hedge forms the site's boundary with Clitheroe Road. A small stream runs through the site lined with several small trees of ecological value. The site gently rises from west to east.

Spring Wood is a significant area of woodland and a well used informal recreational resource immediately adjacent to the site. The A671 cuts through the western edge of the woodland, creating a barrier to connectivity between Whalley and the main body of the woodland. Connection to the woodland from Whalley is via a public footpath east along the brook, with an informal footpath connection that passes underneath the A671.

3.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

3.1 This assessment has been carried out with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment, 2nd Edition, 2002 (referred to hereafter as “the Guidelines”). The assessment included both a desk-based analysis and on-site field study and observation. The desk study involved the collation and review of existing maps and written information about the site and the wider landscape beyond. The main sources of information included:

- Ordnance Survey plans and topographic survey information;
- Aerial photographs;
- Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan, 1998;
- Natural England National Character Areas;
- A Landscape strategy for Lancashire, 2000.

3.2 This information provided the basis for an appraisal of the pattern and character of the site and its surroundings. It served to identify relevant planning policy and special designated areas, and highlighted potential receptors of landscape and visual impact.

3.3 The visual assessment for the development was carried out through a mix of desktop analysis and on site observation. An initial desk study of the area, with reference to topographic data and aerial photographs, was used to determine the broad zones of visual influence (ZVI), i.e. areas of land that are visually connected to the site. The principal views of the site were determined in the field, with particular emphasis on checking potential visual receptor areas such as public footpaths, principal vehicular routes and residential areas.

3.4 Representative viewpoints were identified which were considered to be of particular significance in terms of providing a range of views of the site and where development would have the potential to affect their character and quality.

3.5 Photographs of each of the principal viewpoints were taken by a professional photographer using a fixed lens camera. The camera lens had a focal length equivalent to 50mm, i.e. similar to that seen with the naked eye. Where panoramic views were taken, the individual frames were stitched together in accordance with the Guidelines. A selected number of views have 2 photographs, to illustrate how the view looks when trees are in leaf, and in the winter months when trees are bare. The views selected were those considered to vary significantly in terms of the potential visibility of the site dependent on the time of year.

3.6 To create the photomontages, a digital block model of the proposed development was produced. Using 3-D modelling software, perspective views of the model are created and can be placed accurately within the photographs. The location and scale of the development

within the photographs is verified by topographic survey, whereby, key features within the view are surveyed. This can then be used, together with digital terrain data, to accurately position the rendered model within each photomontage.

- 3.7 In assessing impact on the selected viewpoints, a number of criteria have been employed. These include: a measure of the view's importance; the degree of visibility of the development from the viewpoint; the sensitivity of the visual receptor; the magnitude of the predicted impact, and the ultimate significance of the impact. An indication of the level of confidence in the prediction is also made.

Level of Importance

- 3.8 The importance of the various views have been categorized on the following basis:-

- National - Views from monuments of national significance such as The Abbey.
- Regional - Views from regionally important routes including recreational and vehicular routes, such as views from the A671.
- District - Views from important undeveloped areas, such as Spring Wood and the Nab Hill, and vehicular routes of district level importance.
- Local - All other views, including views from the local road and public footpath networks.

Degree of Visibility and Prominence

- 3.9 The degree of visibility and prominence of the proposed development within the selected viewpoint is measured in accordance with the following scales:

1	Highly visible	1	Very prominent
2	Partially Visible	2	Reasonably Prominent
3	Scarcely/Not Visible	3	Not Prominent

Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.10 For the purposes of this assessment the sensitivity of the landscape is based on an evaluation of:

- The character and quality of the wider landscape, and;
- The character and quality of the site.

The determination of the sensitivity of the landscape is based upon an evaluation of each aspect of the landscape likely to be affected. The evaluation reflects factors set out in the

guidance on landscape and visual impact assessment i.e *“it’s quality, value, contribution to the landscape character, and the degree to which the particular element or characteristic can be replaced or substituted.”* The sensitivity of the landscape has been assessed according to the categories below

3.11 High

- A highly valued landscape (e.g forming part of a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Historic Park or Garden or containing highly valued components
- A landscape in good condition, whose characteristics or components make a strong and positive contribution to defining landscape character.
- A landscape containing characteristics/components that would be irreplaceable or difficult to replace.

3.12 Medium

- A moderately valued landscape (e.g forming part of a locally designated landscape) or containing moderately valued components.
- A landscape in moderate/fair or declining condition whose characteristics or components make some positive contribution to wider landscape character.
- A landscape containing landscape characteristics/components that are likely to be replaceable to some extent.
- Moderate sensitivity may also apply to different combinations of high and low value, condition and contribution to character.

3.13 Low

- A landscape of very limited/low value.
- A landscape in poor condition whose characteristics or components do not contribute positively to landscape character.
- Containing landscape characteristics/components that are likely to be easily replaceable.
- Not all aspects noted above are required to apply concurrently to result in a low sensitivity.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 3.14 Visual receptors include the public or community at large, residents, visitors and other groups of people or individuals. In defining the sensitivity of visual receptors, account has been taken of the degree to which they are likely to be focussed on the landscape or wider setting. Potential seasonal screening effects have also been identified. The sensitivity of the visual receptors identified will be categorized as follows:

- High – Occupants of residential properties/communities with valued views. Recreational users whose attention or interest may be focussed on the landscape e.g visitor's to National Parks or AONBs.
- Medium – People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation including users of local public footpaths. People travelling on local roads.
- Low – People at their place of work or whose attention is focussed elsewhere. People travelling on main roads or railways through the landscape and who experience only fleeting views.

Confidence

3.15 The predicted impact is assessed against the criteria set out below in order to attribute a level of confidence to the assessment.

- High - The predicted impact is either certain, or very likely to occur, based on reliable information or previous experience.
- Medium – The predicted impact and its level are best estimates, based on on-site and desktop study.
- Low – The predicted impact and its level are best estimates, based on given knowledge and experience. More information may be needed to improve the level of confidence.

Magnitude of Impact

3.16 The magnitude of the impact is measured in relation to the extent that changes affect the character and features of the view, either in a positive or negative way. The following descriptions define the magnitude:

- High - Leads to a major alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the view and/or introduces elements considered to be totally uncharacteristic when set in the attributes of the receiving landscape.
- Medium - Leads to a partial loss or alteration to one or more of the key elements/features/characteristics of the view that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set in the attributes of the receiving landscape.
- Low - Leads to a minor loss of or alteration to one or more of the key elements/features/characteristics of the view, or change that may not be uncharacteristic when set in the attributes of the receiving landscape.
- Negligible - Leads to a very minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the view that are not uncharacteristic when set in the attributes of the receiving landscape – approximating to the “no change” situation.

Significance of Impact

3.17 In determining the significance of the impact, account is taken of the sensitivity of the visual receptor, the importance of the view and the predicted magnitude of the impact. The impact is described in terms of the beneficial and/or adverse effects where the impact is clearly identifiable, and negligible where the impact is not clearly identifiable.

- Major - Where there would be a very noticeable and highly significant alteration to the existing view
- Moderate - Where there would be a clearly noticeable and moderately significant alteration to the existing view
- Minor - Where there would be a perceptible alteration to the existing view, but one of low significance.
- Negligible - No discernable change in the existing view or landscape.

4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Landscape Character

National Landscape Character

- 4.1 Refer to Figure 3 for an illustration of landscape character. Whalley lies on the fringes of two National Character Areas, as defined by The Character of England Landscape, Wildlife and Cultural Features Map produced in 2005 by Natural England with support from English Heritage (updated from *The Countryside Character Map of England, Countryside Commission, 1996*).
- 4.2 Whalley lies on the northern edge of Character Area 35: *Lancashire Valleys*. The area extends from Chorley in the south-west, to Skipton in the north-east, and incorporates the conurbations of Blackburn and Burnley. The Area is defined by the following key characteristics: -
- The broad valley of the river Calder and its tributaries running north-east/south-west between natural backdrops of Pendle Hill and the Southern Pennines;
 - Intensely urban character derived from main settlements of Blackburn, Accrington and Burnley which have developed rapidly since the industrial revolution;
 - A strong industrial heritage, associated with cotton weaving and textile industries. Redundant or underutilised mill buildings, mill lodges and ponds;
 - Profusion of communication routes along the valley bottom including the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, the Preston-Colne rail link and M65 motorway;
 - Numerous large country houses with associated parklands particularly on northern valley sides away from major urban areas;
 - Remnants of agricultural land fragmented by industry and scattered development;
 - Field boundaries, regular to the west and irregular to the east are degraded around the urban areas, formed of hedges with few hedgerow trees and, at higher elevations, of stone walls and post and wire fences;
 - Small woodlands are limited to cloughs on valley sides.
- 4.3 To the immediate north of Whalley lies Character Area 33: *Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill*. The Area is extensive, extending from Whalley in the south to Kirby Lonsdale in the north but is interrupted by the Bowland Fells, which occupy higher ground to the north of Whalley.
- 4.4 Key characteristics of the Character area include:-
- Undulating rolling landscape with local variation created by both the numerous river valleys

and the outlying upland features of Beacon Fell, Longridge Fell and Pendle Hill;

- Meandering and commonly tree-fringed rivers with oxbow lakes form prominent features within the predominantly pastoral landscape;
- Predominantly Grade 3 agricultural land supporting permanent pasture, mostly improved, for dairy and livestock farming;
- Intensively managed landscape, with lush hay meadows in small- to medium-scale fields defined by well-maintained hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees. Some rough grazing at higher elevations;
- Extensive semi-natural woodland, much of which is ancient, on both main valley bottoms, side valleys and ridges;
- Numerous water courses and bodies including the rivers Ribble, Hodder, Calder, and Wyre;
- Small villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads, mostly in local stone, are well integrated into the landscape and connected by a network of winding hedge-lined country lanes;
- Bowland Fells provide a dramatic backdrop to the east and north.

Regional Landscape Character

A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire, Lancashire County Council, December 2000.

4.5 The Landscape Strategy consists of two documents: -

1. Landscape Character Assessment (to provide an objective description and classification of the Lancashire landscape, and
2. The Strategy (which provides evaluation and guidance based upon the Landscape Character Assessment).

4.6 The document was prepared as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the former Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and its contents have been carried forward into the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan, Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance, Landscape and Heritage (July 2006) document. This document no longer forms part of the statutory development plan, however the character areas defined in this document are still relevant and applicable to the area.

4.7 Within the Landscape Character Assessment the site falls within Landscape Character Type 5: Undulating Lowland Farmland. This Landscape Type is broken down further, and the site falls into Landscape Character Area 5E: Lower Ribblesdale (Clitheroe to Gisburn). The landscape character description for this Landscape Character Type is: -

- Generally below 150m, the Undulating Lowland Farmland lies between the major valleys and the moorland fringes;
- The underlying geology is largely masked by heavy boulder clays and hedgerows

predominate over stone walls;

- This lowland landscape is traversed by deeply incised, wooded cloughs and gorges;
- There are also many mixed farm woodlands, copses and hedgerow trees, creating an impression of a well wooded landscape from ground level and a patchwork of wood and pasture from raised viewpoints on the fells;
- Some of the most picturesque stone villages of the county occur within this well settled landscape type;

4.8 The area also has many country houses whose boundary walls and designed landscapes add to the species diversity and visual appeal. There is a high density of farms and scattered cottages outside the clustered settlements, linked by a network of minor roads.

4.9 The Landscape Character Area description for Area 5E: Lower Ribblesdale Clitheroe to Gisburn) is as follows: -

- This area forms the southern valley side of the Ribble, between Copster Green and Gisburn, on the lowland fringes of Pendle Hill. It is a particularly well settled area and provides a corridor for communication routes along the Ribble Valley.

4.10 The A59(T) runs the length of the area, linking the settlements of Copster Green, Whalley, Clitheroe, Chatburn and Gisburn. The railway links the valley to Blackburn and Yorkshire. This communication structure has encouraged built development and industry.

4.11 The Landscape Strategy Document identifies the following as 'Key Environmental Features' for this Landscape Character Type: -

- Wooded river corridors and gorges;
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees;
- Small mixed woodlands;
- Historic villages, stone bridges and stone walls;
- Limestone outcrops and knoll;
- Roman remains and roads;
- Historic drove roads;
- Country houses and estates.

4.12 The document includes the following key landscape strategy principles for Undulating Lowland Farmland' of relevance to the site:

- Retain the characteristic pattern of river corridor and valley side woodlands;
- Conserve the distinctive rural hedgerow network;

- Conserve the lowland herb-rich hay meadows and unimproved neutral grasslands;
- Conserve rural built features such as stone bridges, historic villages and stone walls;
- Conserve the distinctive settings to rural settlements;
- Ensure new development on the edges of villages reflects the characteristic clustered form; development should be sited to retain views to landscape features and landmarks, such as church towers on the approaches to villages;
- Encourage tree planting as an integral part of new development, creating links with existing farm woodlands and the network of hedgerows;
- Enhance the wooded character of the lowland landscape;
- Promote the planting of new woodland to link existing woods and hedgerows, arising from a continuous network of trees, hedgerows and woods where this does not conflict with other habitats of biodiversity significance.

4.13 The document states that ribbon development, which would disrupt the characteristic clustered form of settlements and the rural character of local road, should be avoided.

Local Landscape Character

4.14 The land to the immediate west of Whalley is defined by the low-lying river valley, and characterised by open views over predominantly pasture land. Both the River and the Railway viaduct form prominent features in the landscape. Urban influences are also present, in the form of light industrial uses on the fringes of the settlement and interspersed in the farmland.

4.15 Land to the east of Whalley is more typical of the landscape character as defined within The Landscape Strategy for Lancashire, detailed above. The area is characterised by rolling landform, which then rises more steeply to Wiswell in the north-east, and includes small mixed woodlands, copses and hedgerow trees creating a well wooded appearance and a patchwork of wood and pasture. Spring Wood and the north-eastern extents of the site form a key part of the landscape context around Whalley. Within the western parts of the site, the landscape changes, with a shallower gradient, and a character which is influenced by the more domestic planting and fences, which define the rear boundaries of houses along Clitheroe Road.

The local landscape character appears to share most characteristics with National Character Area 33, as defined by Natural England.

Key features the local landscape shares with this defined National Character Area include:

- undulating, rolling landform;
- meandering, tree-fringed rivers;

- agricultural land used for grazing;
- small to medium scale fields, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and semi-natural woodland.

4.16 The locally defined character areas have been assessed in terms of their landscape sensitivity as follows:

Landscape Character Area	Landscape Sensitivity
1 Calder River Valley	Medium
2 Rolling Landform with Integrated Settlements	Medium
3 Wooded Hillside	High
4 Upland Farmland	High
5 Hillside Farmland	High
6 Semi-wooded Upland Farmland	High

The majority of the site lies within Character Area 2: Rolling Landform with Integrated Settlement, and is therefore considered to be of medium landscape sensitivity. A portion of the site which occupies higher ground levels to the north-east forms part of Character Area 4: Upland Farmland, and is therefore considered to be of high landscape sensitivity.

Townscape Character

4.17 Figure 4 provides an illustration of the townscape character areas referred to within the Design and Access Statement that accompanies this application. In addition, we have identified Conservation Areas and Local Buildings of Merit.

Whalley Conservation Area and Townscape Character

4.18 The settlement of Whalley is comprised of a mix of historic 18th and 19th century buildings at its core, with a large number of pre war buildings and several clusters of modern housing development.

4.19 The historic centre of the settlement is clustered around The Sand and The Abbey, which are located at the southern edge of the settlement along the riverbank. A mix of 18th and 19th century buildings are nestled along the traditional streets and lanes. This area has generous areas of open space and buildings have a positive relationship with the river. King Street forms the 'high street', and is the natural centre of the settlement. High quality buildings vary in scale, providing a fine grain mix of commercial and retail, which create a good sense of enclosure along the high street. The areas that comprise the historic centre, are designated

as a Conservation Area, and include several Grade I and Grade II listed buildings. Refer to the Heritage Assessment (Land east of Lawsonsteads, Whalley, Heritage Appraisal, February 2013) for a full assessment of the predicted impacts on the Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.

- 4.20 There are a several modern housing estates adjacent to the historic centre of Whalley, which are of varying quality, and often do not contribute to the traditional character of the settlement due to poor quality buildings and a lack of well defined open space.
- 4.21 The relationship between the settlement and the surrounding rural/agricultural land and woodland forms a defining feature of the townscape and landscape character of Whalley. This rural edge is particularly visible from the footpath that runs towards Spring Wood to the south of the site, and from Nab Hill. When viewed from Clitheroe Road, the site and the fields beyond up to Spring Wood create a distinct change in character from King Street, which has a 'centre of town' character, to Clitheroe Road, which has a more 'edge of town' character.
- 4.22 There are three identified townscape character areas of Whalley that are particularly relevant to the site due to their proximity; these are Wiswell Lane, Brooke's Lane, and Clitheroe Road.

Wiswell Lane

- 4.23 Wiswell Lane forms a clearly defined character area adjacent to the site to the north and west. The area to the very north of Whalley, Wiswell Lane, is primarily comprised of large detached and semi detached late 19th century houses, with some later post war properties. Most are detached, situated within generous gardens. This area has many buildings of good architectural quality and characteristics of edge of settlement/semi rural townscape. Situated on the edge of the settlement and representing the transition from urban to rural, the character of this area is less relevant to definition of character within the proposed development site.

Brooke's Lane

- 4.24 Brooke's Lane forms a clearly defined character area adjacent to the site, and has formed a key area from which to identify townscape characteristics of value, which has influenced the masterplanning of the site. The housing along Brooke's Lane is predominantly late 19th century detached and pre-1919 semi detached properties. Brooke's Lane shows a change from an urban to rural and agricultural character along its length. The rising topography of the landscape beyond Brooke's Lane up to Spring Wood is visible beyond the Lane end.

Clitheroe Road

- 4.25 The character of Clitheroe Road changes upon leaving the centre of the main shopping street towards the site, and turns from a tight to a more loose urban grain, reflecting the change from settlement centre, to settlement fringes. The building line along Clitheroe Road varies immediately around the site to further reinforce the change in character. The character is comprised of good quality pre- 1919 terracing and 1920-30's semi/detached housing set within generous gardens with mature planting.

Woodland Drive

- 4.26 The Woodland Drive character area is located to the south-west, adjacent to the southernmost portion of the site immediately adjacent. This area is characterized by a mix of good quality pre-war suburban housing and poor quality, standard modern housing, which makes no reference to the traditional character of Whalley, and therefore has no real relevance in terms of informing the masterplanning of the site.

Whalley Buildings of Townscape Merit

- 4.27 A number of buildings within close proximity to the site have been identified within the Ribble Valley Borough Council's Townscape Appraisal as 'Buildings of Townscape Merit'. These buildings are unlisted, but have been judged as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. A number of buildings along Brooke's Lane and Clitheroe Road have been identified as Buildings of Townscape Merit.

Landscape Designations

- 4.28 Figure 5 illustrates environmental designations and Public Rights of Way.

Open Countryside

- 4.29 The site falls under the landscape designation of *Open Countryside*. New development in these areas is required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape area and should reflect local vernacular, scale, style, features and building materials. Proposals to conserve, renew and enhance landscape features, are permitted, providing regard has been given for the characteristic landscape features of the area.

Green Belt

- 4.30 A large area to the south of Whalley, on the southern bank of the River Calder is designated as protected Green Belt. Green Belt is a policy and land use designation used to retain areas of largely undeveloped land separating neighbouring urban areas. This area includes Nab Hill, Painter Wood and other areas of ancient woodland. The site itself does not lie within designated Green Belt.

Ancient Woodland

- 4.31 Ancient Woodlands are designated as areas which have had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD and have only been cleared for underwood or timber production. Whalley has several areas of woodland that are protected under the designation of policy *ENV12 Ancient Woodlands*. These include St John's Wood and Planes Wood along the River Calder, and Spring Wood to the east of the site. There is no designated ancient woodland within the site.

Public Footpaths and Cycleways

The Lancashire Cycleway

- 4.32 The Lancashire Cycleway is a strategic cycle route, which connects Whalley to Longridge, Ribchester, Waddington, Slaidburn and also Mellor and Clitheroe. For the majority of the route the cycleway is on the highway. There are sections of the disused railway line between Great Harwood and Padiham and between Preston and Longridge where traffic-free links from the urban areas to the Ribble Valley countryside have been established. A section of this route runs along Clitheroe Road, along the western boundary of the site.

Public Rights of Way

- 4.33 The application site is surrounded by a comprehensive network of public footpaths. A footpath route currently runs through the site, emerging from the eastern end of Brooke's Lane, before following the line of the stream. The route is well used, providing access to both Spring Wood to the east and the river to the south. However, the route of the A671 creates a barrier to pedestrian movement, and slices through Spring Wood to the west. In order to access the main body of the wood, pedestrians from Whalley have to use a path underpass under the A671. The pathway suffers from poor quality surfacing and drainage, and is a poor quality pedestrian environment.
- 4.34 A second footpath connects Clitheroe Road with the end of Brooke's Lane, to the immediate south of the site boundary.

- 4.35 Other well-used Rights of Way include routes around Nab Hill, a landmark hill to the south of Whalley. The Nab provides elevated long-range views, with potential for views of the proposed development within the same visual context as the rest of Whalley, including the Conservation Area.

Topography

- 4.36 Figure 6 illustrates topography in the wider context around the site. The site lies on the north-eastern fringes of Whalley. Ground levels on Clitheroe Road, adjacent to the western site edge, are approximately 57 metres AOD, and reach over approximately 85 metres above sea level to the north-east of the site. The ground levels continue to rise steadily beyond the site edge.
- 4.37 The settlement of Whalley lies at the bottom of a valley at a relatively low ground level, approximately 0-100 metres above sea level along the fringes of the River Calder. Ground levels rise steeply to the north-east beyond Whalley, at White Hill and on Pendleton Moor, with levels reaching over 450 metres above sea level. The topography also rises steeply to the south-west of Whalley, towards Nab Hill, where ground levels reach over 200 metres above sea level. The surrounding settlements of Wiswell, Pendleton, Langho, Great Harwood and Simonstone all lie on higher ground than Whalley, potentially making them more visually prominent within the wider context.
- 4.38 Oakhill College, to the immediate north of the site lies approximately on the 73 metres AOD contour line. The College appears as a visually prominent element in views from the Nab to the south due to its scale, massing and location to higher ground north of the settlement.

Other Site Features of Value

- 4.39 Figure 7 illustrates key features of value within the site, and around the immediate site boundary. The site is primarily open pasture used for grazing. Two streams run through the site, one in a roughly north to south direction, and the second along the public footpath route. There are significant clusters of trees and native shrubs along this route. There is also a group of Hawthorn and Ash trees along the banks of the stream to the north, close to where the stream enters the site at its northern edge. A low hedge forms the western boundary with Clitheroe Road. There is also a mature existing hedge to the north-east of the site, along the site boundary.
- 4.40 A concreted area of hard standing is located in the upper north-eastern corner of the site, with a gated access off the immediately adjacent A671.

Visual Analysis

- 4.41 The site as a whole is screened from the majority of the village by existing houses and neighbouring development. This is evidenced within the key viewpoints plan (Figure 8), which was formulated in consultation with the Council between January and March 2012, following refusal of an initial earlier application. The plan clearly identifies locations within the town and surrounding landscape where views of the site can be gained. There are limited number of private views of the site from properties which either back or front on to it. Within the built up area, the site is likely to most apparent from travelling views along Clitheroe Road, and from Hayhurst Road and Station Road, from where there are glimpsed views up towards Spring Wood. Other viewpoints include the Public Right of Way that leads from Brooke's Lane, and the public route that connects Clitheroe Road to the end of Brooke's Lane.
- 4.42 At the wider level, the site sits at predominantly low ground levels, with higher ground to the rising within the east of the site. Views from within the settlement itself are extremely limited due to similar ground levels and the density of built form. The site is visible from the high level vantage point of Nab Hill to the south, where it can be seen in relation to the existing urban edge of Whalley which is defined by the built development associated with the college, to the north, through to rear properties of Woodlands Drive, to the south. To the east of the site, the topography changes and rises up to to Spring Wood. Views from public footpaths within Archbishops wood and Spring Wood, to the east of the site, are restricted by dense belts of woodland.

Visual Receptors

- 4.43 Visual receptors refer to those people who will be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed development.

Key visual receptors for the new development include the following:

- Users of surrounding cycle and footpath routes for recreational purposes, whose attention may be focussed on the landscape;
- Occupiers of neighbouring residential properties with views affected by the development;
- Communities where the development results in changes in the landscape setting or valued views enjoyed by the community;
- People travelling through or past the affected landscape in cars.
- People at their place of work.

5.0 MASTERPLAN VISION

- 5.1 The vision for this proposal is to create a new sustainable neighbourhood that sits within a country park, and which responds to the surrounding landscape in a manner that has a positive impact on the lives of the people within and around the new development. The proposals will have a positive impact on the wider settlement of Whalley by providing a new link road to ease congestion within the centre of the town, and providing a new primary school in a highly accessible location; encouraging sustainable patterns of travel within the town as a whole. A fundamental driver of the proposed masterplan is to create a neighbourhood, the urban structure, form, and pattern, of which responds to the most relevant - locally distinct – townscape characteristics, and which feels like a legible extension of the settlement. This has been achieved within the scheme through a detailed understanding of the historic townscape characteristics of the town.
- 5.2 As set out in the Planning Statement, this site has been subject to a much larger previous application for 300 dwellings, a nursing home and a new primary school (Ref: 3/2011/0111), which was refused by the Council in January 2011 on three grounds, including the impact of the development on the Conservation Area. However, since then, the Council has approved a smaller scheme for 55 dwellings and a nursing home, adjacent to the settlement boundary and Conservation Area (Ref: 3/2012/0687 dated November 2012). This has established the principle of development in this location.
- 5.3 Planit-IE has prepared a masterplan following extensive analysis and evaluation of constraints and opportunities, and a detailed study of the local context. The masterplan proposes up to 260 houses and a new primary school, along with a new recreational space with enhanced linkages to Spring Wood and the wider footpath network.
- 5.4 A comprehensive landscape framework has been developed by Planit-IE, which aims to retain the key existing landscape and ecological features of value on site. These include the high hedge along Clitheroe Road, which will potentially be cut back to an appropriate height and to allow access, and the trees and native shrubs located along the watercourses running through the site. The provision of a country park will form a major feature of the new neighbourhood. Running through the majority of the park, the brook reflects the rural landscape character of the site. The Country Park will be enclosed by housing and would incorporate rural characteristics, such natural as stone walls and hedgerows.
- 5.5 The masterplan aims to respond positively to existing ground levels within the site, with development working with the existing contours. A substantial area of the highest part of the site to the north-east has been left free from development, due to the potential visual impacts

on Whalley, and consideration of contribution this open area has on the visual setting off Whalley.

- 5.6 A substantial wedge of green open space has been retained along the course of the stream and public footpath that crosses the site, in order to facilitate the retention of existing valuable native tree and shrub planting along the course of the stream. In addition, this green wedge is intended to visually 'break up' long-range views of the development from Nab Hill. The area proposed for development to the south, adjacent to Woodland Drive forms a logical infill site, roughly in line on a north-south axis with the eastern edge of development along Sydney Avenue to the south and Oakhill College to the north.
- 5.7 The masterplan also has due regard to the setting of the Whalley Conservation Area, and the locally identified Buildings of Merit, through the general siting, scale, form, structure and visual appearance of the proposed development.

Refer to Appendix 10.2, Figure 9 for the Masterplan Vision.

6.0 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Prediction of Impacts

- 6.1 Potential landscape impacts relate to individual landscape elements, landscape character and the characteristics of the surrounding townscape. The predicted landscape impacts can be divided into temporary impacts, i.e. those which will occur during the construction phase, and permanent impacts, which will be ongoing throughout the operational phase of the proposals.

Potential Construction Impacts

- 6.2 The development is at a relatively early stage in the design and construction programme and, as such, it is difficult to predict with much certainty the precise methodology that will be adopted for construction and site management. However, it is possible to identify some broad impacts that may arise during the construction phase:-

- the visual impact of HGV movements carrying out enabling works on the site, implementing landscape proposals and implementing masterplan proposals;
- the visual impact of site lighting around construction areas
- the visual and landscape impact of remodelling ground levels
- landscape impacts of incorporating service and utilities.
- visual impact of temporary screening measures and protective fencing
- landscape and visual impacts of temporary parking, on-site accommodation and work areas
- landscape and visual impact of material stockpiles

Potential Operational Impacts

- 6.3 The significant potential effects that will be identified and assessed are:

Landscape Impacts

- 6.4 The significant potential effects that have been identified and will be assessed are:

- impacts on the landscape character areas within the site and valuable site features;
- impacts on the surrounding landscape character;
- impacts on the surrounding townscape;
- Impacts on designated landscapes of value and Conservation Areas and Buildings of Townscape Merit;
- impacts on Public Rights of Way and cycleways;

- impacts on site topography;
- impacts on other site features of value.

Visual Impacts

Potential visual impacts are considered in terms of changes to the extent of visibility of the site and changes to the identified principal viewpoints.

Assessment of Landscape & Visual Effects

Construction Phase

Feature/Nature of Impact	Timescale	Magnitude of Impact	Significance of Impact	Confidence Level
The visual impact of HGV movement & general construction works	Medium Term	Moderate Negative	Moderate Adverse	Medium
The visual impact of site lighting around construction areas	Medium Term	Minor Negative	Moderate Adverse	Medium
The visual and landscape impacts of remodelling ground levels/cut and fill operations	Medium Term	Moderate Negative	Moderate Adverse	Medium
The landscape impacts of incorporating services and utilities.	Medium Term	Slight Negative	Minor Adverse	Medium
The visual impacts of temporary screening measure and protective fencing.	Medium Term	Slight Negative	Minor Adverse	Medium
The landscape and visual impacts of temporary parking, on-site accommodation and work areas.	Medium Term	Moderate Negative	Moderate Adverse	Medium
The landscape and visual impact of material stockpiles.	Medium Term	Slight Negative	Minor Adverse	Medium

Operational Phase – Landscape Impacts

Impact on Landscape Character

- 6.5 At the national level, Whalley lies within the *Lancashire Valleys* character area, as defined by Natural England. As described in the baseline, this area is largely defined by its industrial heritage, urban character, remnants of agricultural land and degraded field boundaries around urban areas. The site shares few characteristics with the site, and therefore the development

proposals are predicted to be **negligible** in terms of the significance of their impact at the national level.

- 6.6 At the regional level, the site lies within the Lower Ribblesdale Clitheroe to Gisburn character area, as defined within *A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire*, Lancashire County Council, December 2000. As outlined in the baseline section of this report, the site and immediate site context contain a low proportion of the key characteristics identified as typical high quality features within the character area, these include hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and small mixed woodlands. The development proposes the retention of existing hedgerows, with some breaks to the existing hedgerow along Clitheroe Road to allow access, and no loss of any woodland. The proposals incorporate new tree and hedgerow planting which will contribute positively to the reinforcement of landscape character, as defined at the regional level. The overall impact on regional landscape character is therefore predicted to be **minor beneficial**.
- 6.7 At the local level, the site lies within the *Rolling Landform with Integrated Settlements* character area. The area is characterised by undulating, rolling landform, meandering, tree fringed watercourses, agricultural land used for grazing, small to medium scale fields with hedgerows, hedgerow trees and semi-natural woodland, and settlements well integrated into the landscape and topography. As part of the proposed development of the site, the existing tree lined watercourse and associated public footpath will be retained and set within a country park. The development proposes the retention of existing hedgerows wherever possible, and will result in no loss of woodland. The proposals will also incorporate new tree and hedgerow planting to reinforce local character.
- 6.8 In addition, the Design and Access Statement which accompanies the application describes how the new development will work with the existing ground levels within the site to create minimal need for topographic changes, whilst also minimising potential visual impacts of new housing on rising ground levels.
- 6.10 The proposed development will result in some inevitable loss of open agricultural land, however the proposed new development will not be out of character with the surrounding local settlement character. The Design and Access Statement describes in detail how the proposed development has been highly influenced by the character of high quality housing along Brooke's Lane, with a variety of housing typologies proposed that respond to the form, detailing, colour and materiality of the housing present not only along Brooke's Lane, but also within the wider Conservation Area/townscape. The overall impact on minor is therefore predicted to be **minor adverse**.

Impact on Townscape Character and Conservation Area

- 6.10 Developing a townscape character which fits with the key characteristics of those areas of value immediately surrounding the site has been a key driver of the design proposals. The quantity and extent of development within the site has been determined in order to minimise the potential for negative visual impacts on the existing town, particularly the Conservation Area and Buildings of Townscape Merit. The development aims to retain the existing a green edge to the development to the north-east corner of the site, which has been identified as being the most visible part of the site due to elevated ground levels, and forms an important backdrop to the settlement.
- 6.11 The proposed development site is visually and physically disconnected from the core of the Conservation area. However, the masterplan seeks to respond to the townscape characteristics identified in the surrounding area, with particular reference to the Conservation Area and the character areas identified around the site boundary in terms of; structure and layout, levels of enclosure, and the typologies both of building form and streets and spaces within the proposals. The proposed high quality approach to both architectural design and materials will help to ensure that the development is a positive addition to the wider townscape character. Refer to the Heritage Assessment (Land east of Lawsonsteads, Whalley, Heritage Appraisal, February 2013) for a full assessment of the predicted impacts on the Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
- 6.12 The historic development pattern within the eastern extents of the town is strongly influenced by Brooke's Lane. The character of Brooke's Lane changes from an urban character to a much more agricultural/rural character adjacent to the countryside. These characteristics are reflected in the masterplan, in the informal layout of the housing and proposed density, and will enable the development to appear sympathetically integrated into the surrounding townscape.
- 6.13 The proposed Primary School will pick up existing traditional building details and roof forms as currently found in housing along Clitheroe Road, which will break up the overall building massing. The height of the proposed school has been kept to a minimum one storey in order to minimise the potential visual impacts. The design study provided within the Design and Access Statement illustrates how such a building could be sympathetically assimilated into the townscape of Whalley. In addition, it is proposed to set the building back from Clitheroe Road and surround it with generous high quality planting and landscape, to further reduce any potential impacts.
- 6.14 The proposals also aim to respond to the existing change in character defined by the site in its current state as open fields, signifying the change from 'centre of town' to the 'edge of

town' character. The proposed street layout within the site will allow views to permeate the site, and partial views to Spring Wood beyond the site to be retained. The housing and street layout respond positively to the natural ground level changes within the site, creating a loose and informal character to the housing.

The overall impact on the townscape is therefore predicted to be **minor beneficial**.

Impact on Designated Landscape Areas

- 6.15 The site is designated Open Countryside, which states that new development should be in keeping with the surrounding landscape and townscape character. The masterplan vision has extensively explored the landscape and townscape characteristics, and aims to be in keeping with this principle. The masterplan responds to the local vernacular in terms of scale, style, architectural features and building materials. The overall predicted impact has therefore been assessed as **minor adverse**.

Impact on Public Rights of Way and recreational routes

- 6.16 The footpath route through the site will be retained within the proposals and set within a substantial country park to minimise any potential impacts on the character of the route. The development also creates the potential to enhance the existing connectivity between the settlement and Spring Wood. In addition, a new cycleway is proposed through the site, forming a connection along the new link road between Whalley and the A671.

Visual impacts on key viewpoints identified along the public footpath through the site are considered separately within this report. This section considers the impact on the existing network of public footpaths and cycleways within and around the site only, in terms of connectivity and sustainable patterns of travel. The overall impact is therefore predicted to be **minor beneficial**.

Impact on Topography

- 6.17 The Masterplan Vision will require only minor modifications to the existing topography. A key aim of the masterplan is to work the development into the existing natural topographic levels, in order to create a development that is appropriate to the context on the fringes of Whalley. Minimum amounts of remodelling ground levels/cut and fill operations will be required in order to accord with current access regulations. The overall impact is therefore predicted to be **negligible**.

Impact on other site features of value

- 6.18 The masterplan proposes the retention and enhancement where possible of existing features of the site, including trees, hedges and the small stream. The proposals seek to enhance the value of these features by retained them within areas of green open space that will run through the development, and as part of areas of public green open space, will be subject to ongoing management.
- 6.19 The landscape strategy for the site aims to create continuous linkages between existing tree belts and hedges to the north and south of the site, which is positive in terms of ecological potential and landscape character.
- 6.20 Landscape features are one element that contribute to the creation of a clearly defined landscape character. The impact on the overall landscape character of the site is considered separately above. The overall impact on these features of value is predicted to be **minor beneficial**.

Operational Phase – Visual Impacts

Principal Viewpoints

- 6.22 A total of 18 views were identified that represent a range of distant and closer views from around the site. The viewpoint locations are identified within Appendix 10.3. Following further assessment there are only 16 valid viewpoints, from where views of the site will be available.
- 6.23 From these views, a number of Principal Viewpoints were selected for the production of photomontages. These were views that it was felt would best illustrate the potential impacts of the development from sensitive locations, or which illustrated the clearest views of the development. A total of 12 photomontages have been produced, with two alternative views from the Abbey (View 16). These are illustrated, together with all of the existing views, within Appendix 10.3.
- 6.24 All viewpoint photographs have been taken in winter to show the maximum potential impact, or worse case scenario, with minimum tree cover. In views that are likely to look significantly different in summer and winter, summer photographs were also taken at a later date in order to fully assess the impact of the proposals when trees are in leaf.

View 1: Public Footpath, Painter Wood

- 6.25 This viewpoint is located on a well-used public footpath near Painter Wood, a high point located approximately 0.7 miles south of the site. The view looks north/north-east over the eastern fringes of the low-lying settlement, and takes in the landscape beyond. The hilltops of Pendleton Moor are visible in the distance and form a prominent feature that defines the high quality and character of the view.
- 6.26 The view incorporates features typical of the regional and local landscape character, such as meandering watercourses, undulating, rolling landform and small pockets of dense woodland. However, the established built form of the settlement is also a significant feature of the view. The whole site is clearly visible north of the existing settlement.
- 6.27 The photomontage indicates that the proposed development would assimilate into the settlement when perceived from this viewpoint. The use of locally appropriate materials, considered layout, appropriate scale and massing, along with a strong landscape framework to embed the development into the landscape, as detailed within the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the application, will facilitate this assimilation.
- 6.28 The existing settlement edge will be extended eastwards, but from this perspective appears in line with existing development to the south on Sydney Avenue. The proposed Hill Top Park to the north-east of the development appears as a thin margin of green from this angle, and forms a green edge to the proposed development and a visually important buffer between development and Spring Wood. The approach taken in development the design proposals is clearly illustrated from this viewpoint. Oakhill College sits along the 73 metre AOD contour line and the edge of the settlement extends out to this level, which continues through the north-eastern corner of the site. No development is proposed above this contour line. The contour line is then visually broken by Spring Wood and woodland along the brook.
- 6.29 The proposed development is visible in conjunction with Whalley Parish Church and the eastern extents of the Conservation Area. The proposed development will have some visual impact on the setting of the Conservation Area, however this is not considered harmful. Refer to the Heritage Assessment (Land east of Lawsonsteads, Whalley, Heritage Appraisal, February 2013) for a full assessment of the predicted impacts on the Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
- 6.30 The proposals will result in a loss of an area of good quality open countryside, and visual receptors will be relatively sensitive to visual change from this viewpoint. However, the proposed development will be in keeping with the existing townscape character of Whalley and appears as an appropriate eastern extension of the settlement viewed from this point. In

addition, impacts on the Conservation Area, which forms part of the visual context of the site from this location are not considered detrimental. The overall significance of the visual impacts on this viewpoint is predicted to be **moderate adverse** in winter, and **minor adverse** in summer. The magnitude of impacts is likely to reduce to some extent over time as the landscape grows and matures.

View 2: View from Moor Lane to Dean Lane

- 6.31 Viewpoint 2 is located on a public footpath on high ground on Nab Hill, approximately 0.65 miles south of the site. The view is panoramic, and looks northwards towards Whalley.
- 6.32 As with viewpoint 1, viewpoint 2 allows clear views of Whalley, which is located at lower ground levels. The surrounding open countryside and areas of woodland, trees and hedges are important features in the view, and are typical of the local landscape character. The developed extents of the settlement currently appear as an irregular north south line, with development around Sydney Avenue forming a clear projection east beyond the main development edge. As in Viewpoint 1, the view clearly illustrates the key design principle of responded to the ground levels of Oakhill College, and ensuring that all proposed development is at or below the 73 AOD contour line.
- 6.33 The site is clearly visible from this viewpoint and forms part of the settlement, with Spring Wood to the east forming a natural 'settlement edge'. The proposed development will appear as an extension eastwards of the settlement, but this will not be out of keeping with the eastern extents of the settlement formed by development around Sydney Avenue. Development on the site is likely to be highly visible from this viewpoint although, as with view 1, the proposed development will be in keeping with the existing character of Whalley with a strong, integrated landscape framework, and therefore is not predicted to have a negative impact on the townscape, appearing as an appropriate extension of the settlement viewed from this point. However, it will result in a loss of an area of good quality open countryside that contributes positively to the view. The overall significance of the visual impacts on this viewpoint is predicted to be **moderate adverse**. As with view 1, the visual impacts are likely to reduce in summer months. The magnitude of impacts is also likely to reduce to some extent over time as the landscape grows and matures.

View 3: View from Nab Side Farm-Nab Wood

- 6.34 This Viewpoint is very similar to Viewpoint 2, but is located on a public footpath slightly higher up Nab Hill. It provides a long-range view from a potentially sensitive location, approximately 0.75 miles south of the site.

- 6.35 The existing rural landscape within the site is prominent in the view, and has features typical of the regional and local landscape character, including rolling landform and areas of woodland, including Spring Wood. As in views 1 and 2, the eastern edge of the settlement appears as an irregular north-south line, with development around Sydney Avenue projecting eastwards significantly further, up to the woodland edge. The site is clearly visible from this viewpoint in both summer and winter views. As in Viewpoint 1, the view clearly illustrates the key design principle of responded to the ground levels of Oakhill College, and ensuring that all proposed development is at or below the 73 AOD contour line.
- 6.35 The photomontage shows that the majority of the proposed development is likely to be visible from this viewpoint in winter. The photomontage indicates that the proposed development will assimilate well into the existing form of the settlement, forming a natural extension to the settlement. The proposed Hill Top Park to the north-east of the development appears as a thin margin of green from this angle, and forms a green edge to the proposed development and a visually important buffer between development and Spring Wood. However, the development will result in a loss of an area of good quality open countryside that contributes positively to the view. The overall significance of the visual impacts on this viewpoint is predicted to be **moderate adverse** in winter, and **minor adverse** in summer. The magnitude of impacts is likely to reduce to some extent over time as the landscape grows and matures.

View 4: View from Station Road

- 6.36 Viewpoint 4 is located within the settlement of Whalley. The viewpoint is situated along Station Road, which is approximately 0.35 miles west of the site. The view looks east along Station Road in the direction of the proposed site, and represents the views of vehicular traffic, cyclists and pedestrians travelling east along Station Road towards the centre of the settlement.
- 6.37 The view is urban in character, and shows a standard residential street with some landscape and townscape features of character and value, such as mature street trees and typical stone wall and hedge front garden boundaries. Spring Wood is visible in the distance and forms an important feature within the view. The houses lining the street screen views of the site.
- 6.38 There is potential for heavily screened, glimpsed views of the proposed development on the hillside from this point. However, it is unlikely that there will be any significant change in the character of this view. The overall significance of the visual impact on this view is therefore predicted to be **negligible**.

View 5: View from Limefield Avenue/Hayhurst Road

- 6.39 View 5 is located within the settlement of Whalley, looking eastwards towards the site from

Limefield Avenue. The viewpoint is approximately 150m meters from the site.

- 6.40 Partial views of the open countryside within the site from this point create a clear 'edge of settlement' character to the view. The open landscape appears as part of the settlement, with views of Spring Wood beyond forming a natural settlement edge.
- 6.41 Much of the proposed development will be located in areas that are visually screened by existing development. The photomontage indicates that glimpsed views of the new development will be viewed as part of the existing residential context, and will therefore be unlikely to materially change the character of the view. Green open space in the foreground gives the new development 'breathing space'. Views of Spring Wood remain and remain a visual edge to the settlement. The overall impact is therefore predicted to be **minor adverse**.

View 6: View from Clitheroe Road

- 6.42 View 6 is a close range view of the site from Clitheroe Road. The view represents that likely to be experienced by vehicular traffic and cyclists travelling northwards from Whalley centre.
- 6.43 The viewpoint is located within close proximity to the application site boundary, and looks directly towards the proposed new development. The existing view is rural in character, and the hedgerow field boundary forms a typical landscape feature of quality and value. Views of Spring Wood on higher ground levels beyond the site forms a key feature of the view.
- 6.44 Whilst not publicly accessible, the open fields contribute to the sense of a change in character, from 'centre of town' to 'edge of town' character, created by long and wide views of open countryside between existing intermittent development.
- 6.44 The proposals will significantly alter the character of the view, changing the existing 'edge of settlement' character and making it firmly part of the main settlement within Whalley. However, this change will not be uncharacteristic when considered within the wider context of Clitheroe Road, which is characterised by dwellings fronting onto the street. In order to mitigate against the potential negative impacts of this change in the character of the view, a number of design considerations have been employed. Key mitigating factors will include; the retention of a hedgerow boundary to the front of the properties as existing; setting back of properties from the roadside to reflect the existing dwellings along Clitheroe Road, and to provide opportunities for planting and tree planting within front gardens to soften the visual impact of development; generous spacing of properties to allow filtered views through to Spring Wood beyond the site; and high quality housing, designed using typical local materials.
- 6.45 Despite changing the view from rural to a more urban view, the proposed character of the view will not be out of keeping with the existing character of Clitheroe Road, and new housing

will contribute positively to the streetscene due to the considered design approach adopted, as demonstrated within the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the application.

- 6.46 The overall significance on this viewpoint in summer and winter is therefore predicted to be **minor adverse**.

View 7: View from Brooke's Lane

- 6.47 View 7 is located on Brooke's Lane, looking east from the development. The viewpoint is situated adjacent to houses which are designated 'Buildings of Townscape Merit' and is situated within the extended Conservation Area
- 6.48 The Buildings of Townscape Merit' are visually prominent in the view due to their proximity, and contribute positively to framing the view due to their high quality and local distinctiveness. The view is semi-rural in character due to clear views out the end of Brooke's Lane to the open countryside beyond and Spring Wood in the distance.
- 6.49 The photomontage indicates that the proposed development will be partially visible from this viewpoint and will result in a change to the existing character of the view. However, the proposed housing aims to pick up features of high quality and local distinctiveness in their form and materials, and therefore views of the proposed new housing will not necessarily be harmful to the character of the Conservation Area. Refer to the Heritage Assessment (Land east of Lawsonsteads, Whalley, Heritage Appraisal, February 2013) for a full assessment of the predicted impacts on the Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. In addition, rising ground levels beyond the site ensure that views towards Spring Wood, which forms a valuable backdrop to the view, will be retained. Therefore the impact of the proposals on this view, and the identified Buildings of Townscape Merit, are predicted to be **minor adverse**.

View 8: View from Brooke's Lane

- 6.50 View 8 is located at the eastern end of Brooke's Lane, at the end of the footpath, within the site boundary.
- 6.51 This view is typical in terms of the character of the eastern fringe of Whalley, at the interface between the edge of the settlement and the countryside beyond. The view is dominated by the existing hedge and foliage that runs along the boundary of the footpath. The Lawsonsteads dwelling on the end of Brooke's Lane is partially visible within the view and relatively prominent. The landscape beyond slopes up, with glimpsed views of typical local landscape features, such as trees and hedges.

- 6.52 The winter photomontage view indicates that the proposed development will create a clear change in the character of the view. However, the foreground of the view will be free from development, dominated by the proposed school playing fields. The proposed housing will be similar in character to that currently found in Whalley in terms of form and materials, and will form an extension of the character of Brooke's Lane. The inclusion of landscape features typical of the wider character, such as trees and native hedgerow, will help to embed the new development in the landscape. Views beyond the roofline to Spring Wood will also be a positive feature of the view. The substantial green space buffer along the route of footpath will be a key design element which avoids substantial negative impact on the route.
- 6.53 The proposed developed will represent a noticeable change in the character of the view in winter, changing it from rural in character to semi-rural/edge of settlement. However, due to the high quality design and carefully considered masterplanning of the site set within a robust landscape framework, will result in a **moderate adverse** impact.
- 6.54 In summer, the photomontage indicates that the view will be dominated by dense shrub growth and the existing hedge. The photograph and wireline photomontage indicate that views of the proposed development will be very much reduced when the trees and shrubs are in leaf, and will therefore not change the existing character of the view. The potential impact is predicted to be **negligible**.

View 9: View from Public footpath off Brooke's Lane

- 6.55 This viewpoint is located further east along the Public Right of Way that extends east towards Spring Wood from Brooke's Lane. The viewpoint is situated within the site and looks north.
- 6.56 The view is distinctively rural in character, and feels removed from the settlement with only minimal glimpses of development. The brook and native trees and shrubs form key features within the view.
- 6.57 The photomontage indicates that new houses will be clearly visible in the winter months when the trees are bare, and will result in a significant change in the character of the view. However the photomontage demonstrates that potential magnitude of this impact will be minimised through high quality and sensitive design, appropriate use of materials and substantial native buffer planting to provide visual screening. The set back of housing from the footpath route forms a element within the masterplan, designed to minimise potential impacts. The overall visual impact in winter is therefore predicted to be **moderate adverse**.
- 6.58 The photograph and photomontage indicate that when the trees are in leaf, the proposed development will be well screened, and are unlikely to result in a significant change in the

character of the view. The overall predicted impact is therefore predicted to be **negligible**.

View 10: View from Public footpath intersection

- 6.59 Viewpoint 10 is located further east of views 8 and 9 along the public footpath route that extends from Brooke's Lane. The viewpoint represents a slightly more elevated view of the proposed development from the edge of the woodland to the east.
- 6.60 The view looks north/north-west and is predominantly rural in character with elements of typical local landscape character forming significant features within the view, including areas of agricultural land used for grazing with clearly defined field boundaries, and woodland to the east (Archbishop's Wood and Spring Wood). The site is screened substantially from this viewpoint by tree cover along the course of the brook, with only glimpsed views of the open countryside beyond.
- 6.61 The proposed development is likely to be partially visible in winter beyond the tree line. The glimpsed views of housing will be in keeping with the existing character of the views of the edge of the settlement currently available. The screening tree cover along the course of the brook and along the site boundary will be retained and will continue to provide significant site screening. However, the development is likely to result in some loss of glimpsed views of good quality open countryside beyond the treelines. The overall impact is therefore predicted to be **minor adverse**. Views of the proposed new development are likely to be substantially obscured from this location when the trees are in leaf.

View 11: View from Public footpath east of A671

- 6.62 Viewpoint 11 is located within Spring Wood to the east of the development, looking back towards Whalley. The view is rural in character, with existing trees framing views back towards the settlement. The proposed development will extend eastwards to Spring Wood, however a substantial finger of green open space along the course of the brook will help to minimise impacts on this viewpoint. Glimpsed views of proposed new housing may be available, however the character of the view is unlikely to be substantially due to the limited views from this point.
- 6.63 The photomontage indicates that the majority of the development will be effectively screened by the existing trees. Therefore, the overall impact is likely to be **negligible**.

View 12: View from Public footpath, east of Archbishop's Wood

- 6.64 Viewpoint 12 is located south-west of the site, along the Public Right of Way that runs adjacent to Archbishop's Wood. The view looks north-west towards the site. The view is elevated and predominantly rural in character, and feels detached from the settlement. However, several buildings on the eastern fringes of Whalley are glimpsed through the tree.
- 6.65 The photomontage of this view in winter demonstrates that only glimpsed views of the proposed development are likely to be visible due to both existing and proposed tree cover, and the location of the site at lower ground levels. The slight change in the view is entirely in keeping with the existing character of the view. The sensitive design and siting of buildings within the site are likely to minimise the potential visual impact of the development, which appears to nestle into the existing landscape and form a natural extension of townscape character. The overall significance of the impact in winter is therefore predicted to be **minor adverse**.
- 6.66 The photograph and wireline photomontage indicate that visibility is likely to be significantly reduced from this point when the trees are in leaf. The overall significance of the visual impact on this view is therefore predicted to be **minor adverse/negligible**, and as proposed new tree cover matures over time this is likely to reduce to **negligible**.

View 13: Spring Wood

- 6.67 View 13 is located from within Spring Wood looking westwards towards the site. The A671 and a substantial area of open countryside separate the woodland from the site. There is no view of the site from this potentially sensitive viewpoint, as it is screened from view by the woodland tree cover. The overall impact is therefore predicted to be **negligible**.

View 14: Spring Wood

- 6.68 View 14 is similar to view 13, located from within Spring Wood looking westwards towards the site. Again, there is no view of the site from this viewpoint, as it is sufficiently screened from view by the woodland tree cover. The overall impact is therefore predicted to be **negligible**.

View 15: Clitheroe Road

- 6.69 View 15 is located on Clitheroe Road, close to viewpoint 6. Similar to viewpoint 6, view 15 is a close range view into the site from Clitheroe Road. The view approximates the view likely to be experienced by private dwellings on Clitheroe Road, vehicular traffic and cyclists travelling northwards from the settlement, and by pedestrians walking along the roadside footpath on Clitheroe Road.

- 6.70 The existing view is dominated by the hedgerow field boundary that runs along the length of the site's interface with Clitheroe Road. The majority of the site is therefore currently screened by the hedge. However, Spring Wood is visible beyond the site due to its location on higher ground, and forms a key feature of the view. The view is rural in character, and includes landscape features typical of the local landscape character, including hedgerows, hedgerow trees, pasture and woodland.
- 6.71 The photomontage indicates that, due to the proximity of the site in relation to the viewpoint, the character of the view is likely to change substantially. However, the photomontage demonstrates that a high quality design, and sensitive design approach will be able to maintain key visual links through the development to Spring Wood and create development that is in keeping with the wider townscape context. Landscape proposals including the proposed shared street and street tree planting will visually 'break up' and screen new housing to ensure it appears embedded in the landscape, and an appropriate extension of the character of Whalley.
- 6.72 The proposed dwellings do represent a change in the character of the view, however the impact is not out of character when considered in the context of the existing settlement. Due to this the overall impact is likely to be **moderate adverse**.

View 16a & 16b: View from the Abbey

- 6.73 Two representative viewpoints from the Abbey have been included, in order to demonstrate that the proposed development will not have a visual relationship with the Abbey. The Abbey is a highly sensitive viewpoint location due to its historic significance. The views look north-east in the direction of the site. View 16a represents the view from the highest publicly accessible point within the Abbey. View 16b represents a slightly higher vantage point, but this is not typically available to the public.
- 6.74 The wireframe photomontages show the position of the site relative to the existing buildings. The site is not visible from these viewpoints, obscured from view by built form, intervening tree cover and landform. The overall significance of the impact is therefore predicted to be **negligible**.

View 17: View south off public footpath from Brooke's Lane

- 6.75 The view looks south from within the site, on the public footpath that extends eastwards towards Spring Wood from Brooke's Lane. It must be noted that the majority of views south from the footpath are heavily screened by trees and shrubs along the route of the footpath, and the screening effect is particularly strong when the trees are in leaf. The viewpoint

represents one of the few opportunities to gain glimpsed views through the screening vegetation, and represents a winter view. It can therefore be considered a 'worst case scenario' in terms of potential visual impacts.

- 6.76 The existing view is semi-rural in character, with a significant band of open grazing farmland in the foreground of the view. Housing around Sydney Avenue is clearly visible beyond, and is relatively poor in terms of its local distinctiveness. Beyond the housing, the Nab hillside forms a prominent, high quality and distinctive feature in the view.
- 6.77 The photomontage indicates that the proposed development will mean that new housing will be significantly closer to the viewpoint than the existing housing in the view, and is therefore likely to have some impact where glimpsed views are available. However, the photomontage shows that the character of the view is unlikely to fundamentally change. A significant green buffer will remain between the footpath and the new housing, and partial views of the Nab beyond will be retained. The proposed housing design aims to incorporate local architectural features of quality and value currently present within Whalley, in terms of form and materials, and will therefore form a positive addition to the view, set within a strong landscape framework. In addition, it is proposed that the road infrastructure is de-engineered to create a simple, country lane character, which does not dominate views. The overall significance of the impact is therefore predicted to be **moderate adverse**.

View 18: View from A671

- 6.78 Views into the site are currently well screened by tree cover along the edge of the road. The character of the view is likely to change significantly at this point, due to the proposed new entrance into the site. The change in the view will be experienced by high volumes of traffic travelling past the site.
- 6.79 The photomontage illustrates how the proposed new entrance will open up views west towards Whalley and the green hillside beyond. New development will be partially visible, set against the backdrop of the existing settlement. New housing will be at lower ground levels than the viewpoint location, and as such will appear set into the landscape. The winding course of the new route, along with hedgerow field boundaries will create an attractive country lane character and entrance to the development. The overall significance of the impact is therefore predicted to be **minor beneficial**.

7.0 MITIGATION & ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

- 7.1 The design proposals have been formulated through a lengthy, iterative process involving environmental assessment and consultation. This process has allowed site constraints and

opportunities to directly influence the evolution of the masterplan and the landscape proposals. As a result, mitigation measures form an inherent component of the detailed design of the landscape and surrounding built form.

7.2 The principal mitigation measures can be summarised as follows:

- In order to minimize potential landscape and visual impacts, a development edge has been defined by drawing a two dimensional development line from Oakhill College towards the rear of properties at Sydney Avenue, and not Woodland's Drive, given that the development of this field creates a logical infill. In addition, taking a 3 dimensional approach, Oakhill College sits along the 73 metre AOD contour line, and the edge of the settlement is proposed to extend out to this level, with green open space beyond on the highest part of the site;
- The primary school has been located set back from the road and considered in relation to existing housing on Clitheroe Road in order to have the minimal visual prominence. Further, the overall form and roofscape has been designed to reduce visual impact and sensitively integrate with the existing townscape.
- The proposed dwellings and primary school will be designed to a high standard in order to achieve a high quality overall development, thus minimising any potential landscape or visual impacts. The buildings will also be sensitively sited within the defined masterplan area, with careful consideration of topography and existing landscape features to minimise visual impact and potential negative impact on landscape character. The layout of the buildings facilitates green linkages through the site, to create visual permeability and create green linkages into the surrounding countryside and woodland.
- Incorporation of existing landscape features, such as the watercourse and existing trees and hedges, will ensure the proposals are well integrated into the landscape, and will also help to minimise landscape and visual impacts.
- Additional planting proposed as part of the masterplan will provide further screening and softening of proposed development, and will also contribute to the overall habitat and ecological value of the site.
- The proposals will have the potential to enhance connectivity into the wider footpath and cycle route network.
- Substantial new areas of open space, including a semi-natural play area are proposed as part of the masterplan vision, which will form new, well overlooked publicly accessible facilities available to the wider community.
- Building design, plot layout and masterplan arrangement have all been informed by a careful townscape analysis, to reflect high quality and characteristic elements present within the existing settlement of Whalley. This will ensure the proposed development will sit well within the local landscape and townscape setting.

8.0 RESIDUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Consideration has been given to the potential residual effects of the proposals and includes any negative landscape or visual impacts, and the identification of the potential long-term enhancements as a result of the proposals.

8.2 Residual negative landscape impacts as a result of the proposals include:

- Loss of areas of improved pasture fields. In addition to providing potential ecological and habitat value, the fields contribute to establishing a rural landscape character to the site, which incorporates features typical of the wider surrounding area. However, the landscape assessment has concluded that, despite some loss of pasture, the proposals will retain key existing features of the landscape, such as hedgerows, trees and the stream. In addition, the proposals will introduce areas of planting to complement the development, the surrounding local landscape character and add visual screening. This will provide some mitigation against loss of pasture.
- Cut and fill requirements to accommodate development and access requirements. There will be minor alterations to the topography of the site at a local level, however the impact assessment has concluded that these will be kept to a minimum due to the masterplan working with the existing levels across the site.
- A number of views will suffer adverse visual impacts. However for a high proportion of these views any adverse impacts will be significantly reduced or completely avoided when trees are in leaf. Impacts are likely to reduce further as the proposed landscape matures.

8.3 The proposals will potentially deliver a number of enhancements on the site and the surrounding area. The residual enhancements can be summarised as follows:

- Potential habitat/ecological value from the proposed planting and retention of existing landscape features within the site.
- Commitment to the long-term management of the site to ensure that the landscape works are preserved over the long term.
- Creation of high quality new homes for Whalley within a sustainable location, and reinforce local townscape character and quality.
- Creation of a high quality new semi-natural play for wider community use.

9.0 SUMMARY

- 9.1 This assessment has examined the landscape and visual impacts in relation to the development proposals for the and to the east of Clitheroe Road, Whalley. The potential impacts have been thoroughly assessed through a combination of desk study research and walk-over surveys of the site and the surrounding context.
- 9.2 The aim of the proposed scheme is to create a high quality residential development for Whalley that is sustainable and responds appropriately to its surrounding landscape and townscape context.
- 9.3 The proposals for the site have been formulated through an iterative process, which has included comprehensive survey and assessment work along with consultation. As a result, the landscape and visual impacts have been kept to a minimum.
- 9.4 The proposals will result in the following landscape impacts:
- a **moderate adverse** impact on landscape character;
 - a **minor beneficial** impact on townscape character;
 - a **minor adverse** impact on designated areas;
 - a **minor beneficial** impact on public footpaths and recreational routes;
 - a **negligible** impact on topography;
 - a **minor beneficial** impact on other site features of value.
- 9.5 The visual impacts of the development proposals have been assessed through a process of identifying principal viewpoints, using observations on site, and through the creation of photomontages to illustrate the proposed development from a total of 12 of the identified principle viewpoints. Photomontages of both winter and summer views have been produced where this was deemed relevant, due to a substantial change in the character of the view over the course of the seasons. Examination of the photomontages and onsite/desktop study has concluded that from the majority of identified key viewpoints the extent of visual impact will be minor adverse or negligible, dependent on the time of year.
- 9.6 A total of 5 views have been assessed as having a moderate adverse impact. The assessment largely relates to the inevitable change in the character of views close to the site from rural to developed, and long-range views from the Nab. However, it must be noted that the assessment represents the worst case scenario. Views 1,2 and 3, from the Nab, which have been assessed as moderate adverse in terms of impacts, are assessed as minor adverse when the trees are in leaf, due to the visual softening and screening impacts of the

landscape. The magnitude of change in the view is also likely to be less over time as the landscape matures and provides further additional screening. Similarly, views from the public footpath through the site are generally atypical of views available to walkers. Tree and shrub cover provides significant screening on the route, and the views represent the infrequent gaps available between the trees.

- 9.7 This assessment demonstrates how extensive mitigation measures have been employed throughout the design process, along with good design principles, to identify and retain features of value, or important visual linkages, to ensure that the potential landscape and visual impacts are minimised or avoided where possible.