



**The Appleton Group**

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**Waddow View, Land off  
Waddington Road, Clitheroe, BB7 2DE**

Proof of Evidence for Lorna Cruice  
BA, Dip LA, CMLI

**Landscape and Visual Matters**

On behalf of The Huntroyde Estate/Clitheroe  
Auction Mart Co Ltd/Mr J Taylor/Ms Sarah  
Howard and Ms Samantha Howard

**Volume 1: Text**

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# Volume 1: Text

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1 My name is Lorna Cruice. I am a Chartered Landscape Architect and I hold a degree in landscape architecture awarded by Leeds Metropolitan University and a Post Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture by the same institution. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute which is the professional body for Landscape Architecture in Great Britain and qualified as such in 1985. I am also a member of the Arboricultural Association. I am currently an examiner for the Landscape Institute's Pathway to Chartership which I have carried out for several years including providing mentoring for potential Chartership candidates. I am also an Associate Member of the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment. I am a Director of The Appleton Group, a landscape consultancy based in the north west of England which has carried out commissions across the United Kingdom. The practice has particular expertise in carrying out landscape and visual impact assessments of development and infrastructure projects and in providing evidence as expert witness. We were appointed by The Huntroyde Estate/Clitheroe Auction Mart Co Ltd/Mr J Taylor (The Appellant) in June 2012 to prepare such a study for the Appeal Site.

### Instruction

- 1.2 I have been instructed by The Appellant to consider the proposals before this Inquiry and to provide my expert opinion on the effects of the proposed development on landscape character and visual amenity.

### Scope of Evidence

- 1.3 In particular I address the reason 1 for refusal of planning permission leading to this planning appeal, namely that:

*The proposed development due to its scale and location outside the defined settlement boundary of Clitheroe is considered to represent an urban extension in the open countryside which would change the character if this area of countryside to the detriment of the visual amenities of the area. As such, the proposal is contrary to saved Policies G1, G2 and ENV3 of the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan, Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DME2 of the Core Strategy 2008 – 2018 A local Plan for Ribble Valley Regulations 22 Submission Draft and the provisions of the National Policy Planning Framework in respect of visual amenity considerations.*

- 1.4 In my evidence I summarise the findings of the landscape and visual impact assessment which The Appleton Group prepared for the land off Waddington Road, Clitheroe (hereafter called 'the Appeal Site', together with proposals for the mitigation

of any visual impact. My evidence will also respond to the Appellant's Rule 6 Statement of Case. In this respect is focused on the following points:

- i. The significance of the development in relation to relevant landscape planning policies and guidance;
- ii. The impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the locality;
- iii. The impact on landscape features and visual amenity experienced by residents and visitors (the nature of receptors) to the area;
- iv. The impact of development and associated infrastructure adjacent but beyond the urban settlement boundary; and
- v. An assessment of any important historical features which may influence more significant views of the Site.

1.5 In preparing my evidence I have undertaken the following:

- i. Review of RVBC Report to Planning and Development Committee, dated 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013 (Core Doc. Ref: CD 15);
- ii. Review of the published landscape character assessments relevant to the Appeal Site
- iii. Consideration of the documentation submitted by the Appellant in support of the planning application;
- iv. Visits to the Site and the local area, including those viewpoints included within the original Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA); and Analysis of the relevant data, including mapping and aerial photography.

1.6 Issues in relation to the validity of the Council's refusal on planning policy grounds are dealt with by Jane Dickman. My evidence does not intend to provide expert opinion in matters related to heritage or ecology but I am familiar with much of the information provided by the ecological consultants (Bowland Ecology) to accompany the planning application, particularly in relation to tree issues.

### **Background Information**

1.7 The planning application for the residential development was supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LIVA) prepared by The Appleton Group. A summary of this assessment was also included within the Design and Access Statement. RVBC Report to Planning and Development Committee (dated 14.02.13) (Core Doc. Ref; CD 15), prior to determination of the application commented on a number of landscape related matters. The Council's Countryside Officer commented that the illustrative layout proposals provided insufficient tree planting and that insufficient attempts have been made to supplement the existing tree cover especially around the perimeter, in order to reduce the visual impact of the development on the

open countryside. My evidence will demonstrate that this can be addressed and that an appropriate condition applied in the event of outline planning permission being granted.

- 1.8 The LVIA considered that the proposals would affect the visual amenity of the Site from views that are generally at close quarters and RVBC, in their report to Committee, accepted this premise. These are views that are generally seen by:
- i. Walkers using the footpath that crosses the site and the footpath that runs along its western boundary.
  - ii. The occupiers of existing residential properties.
  - iii. Users of the short section of Waddington Road where the new access is to be formed.
  - iv. From the cemetery to the west and the older burial ground on the northern side of Waddington Road
- 1.9 These viewpoints, together with additional relevant viewpoints, were considered within the LVIA and are considered again within this evidence. The Council's landscape witness had not identified or disclosed the need to identify any additional viewpoint locations at the point of compiling my evidence. The company of the Council's landscape witness was contacted following discussions around the Statement of Common Ground with the officer's at RVBC but no response was received to agree further areas of common ground in terms of viewpoints or receptors.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT OF THE APPEAL SITE

### Location and Context

- 2.1 The location and context of the site are shown on **Figure TAG 1**. The site is located directly adjacent the urban boundary of Clitheroe on the north western side. The town of Clitheroe is a planned nucleated settlement situated on a triangle of land in the lower Ribblesdale between the River Ribble to the west and the Mearley Brook to the east at NGR SD 444 418 (centred). The historic core of the town is centred on the high point of a limestone reef knoll where the castle and surrounding gardens are located within a Conservation Area with later residential and commercial development in industrial and modern times spreading south-west and north-east along the communication arteries of the High street and the railway line, and towards the A59 which bypasses the town to the south-east. The knoll forms a small highpoint in a landscape of gently undulating drumlins, with the castle at a height of around 117m aOD. The land falls away gently to the west and the River Ribble, to a height of around 59m aOD at Low Moor and Brungerley Bridge. East of Clitheroe, the countryside rises sharply, to a height of around 110m aOD on the eastern edge of the urban area, placing Clitheroe on the lowland fringes of Pendle Hill, which overlooks and dominates the entire area some 5 kilometres to the east. The reef knolls and drumlins are characteristic of the area of rolling, undulating landscape within the broad valley of the River Ribble, contrasting with the open moorland and fell of Pendle Hill approximately 7 kilometres to the south-east and the Bowland Fells to the north. The valley is mainly pastoral in character, with small to medium sized fields bounded by hedgerows and with mature hedgerow trees, creating a sense of intimacy in contrast to the surrounding fells.
- 2.2 The site is accessed by agricultural vehicles from Back Commons on the southern boundary and from the western corner and eastern boundary off Waddington Road.

### The Physical Characteristics of the Site and its Surroundings (Baseline Environs)

- 2.3 The characteristics of the site are indicated on **Figure TAG 2**. A photographic survey (viewpoints) are within the **Appendices**. The viewpoints of the photographs and the ZVI (Zone of Visual Influence) are indicated on **Figure TAG 3**. The site itself is gently undulating with a rise from the northern boundary towards the urban settlement of approximately 3 metres. The Site comprises of five field parcels of semi-improved grassland of inconsistent size which are defined by trimmed and untrimmed hedgerows which are gappy in places. A number of mature trees are scattered along the boundaries. The land surrounding the site can be described in a series of distinct zones as follows:

Land to the north and immediate north east

- 2.3.1 Land beyond the site to the north and north east is pastoral with a slight rise in the landscape before falling steeply toward the river channel. The river Ribble itself is located in a deep gorge and is overlooked on the far side by Waddow Hall. This is a large stone built manor house of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century set in spacious well landscape ground with rolling lawns. The house is currently used for private Girl Guide camping and outdoor activities and as a conference centre. Between the river and the northern boundary of the site is the cemetery which is set out in a pattern of access road with burial places. A recent extension to the south west of the cemetery has provided for green burial and is generally more landscaped to the boundaries with trees and shrubs. A footpath follows the boundary of the cemetery and connects into the wider footpath network following the course of the river channel. The cemetery is proposed for a further extension which would see the boundary of the cemetery land abutting the proposed development site along approximately half of the length of the northern boundary. The church and older burial ground are located towards the north of the site (Waddington Road) with a small field used as horse and poultry pasture forming an intervening land parcel. The burial ground associated with the building church is a graveyard of older burials with the larger separate cemetery on the opposite side of Waddington Road set out for more recent interments and memorial stones.

Land to the west and north west

- 2.3.2 Land to the north east and east is pastoral with the land again gently sloping towards the river channel. Untrimmed hedgerows and mature and semi mature hedgerow trees edge the field boundaries providing a patchwork of field parcels.

Land to the south, east and north east

- 2.3.3 Residential housing directly abuts the site to the south, east and north east which forms the urban edge of Clitheroe in this area. Housing to the north east is older stone terraced property built between 1860 and 1914 together with a cul-de-sac (Brungerley Avenue) of semi-detached properties built in the intermediate post war years. Towards the southern side of the site residential housing off Swan Meadow and Kirkmoor Close is of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century with larger detached properties in spacious gardens overlooking the site (Back Commons). The grain of the urban landscape is moderate to high density with the railway line and stone built station and the more recent

Booth's store forming distinctive built urban features in relatively close proximity to the Site.

### **Footpaths**

- 2.4 The site is accessible to the public by a public footpath which bisects the site from north west to south east. This footpath allows access from the town to the wider countryside beyond and was observed as being used by local walkers, dog owners and people taking longer walks beyond the town environs. There is a footpath which follows the western boundary and turns to the west and south beyond the Site.
- 2.5 Internally, the site is visually enclosed when viewed from the north towards the town with boundary and internal hedgerows and trees to the boundaries providing visual interruption along field boundaries. Trees are generally mature native specimens forming lines of vegetation. Views towards the north are more expansive with open vistas to the rising landscape of the Bowland Fells and Longridge Fell.

### **Ecology and Trees**

- 2.6 A separate study was undertaken for the planning application by Bowland Ecology. The study concluded that the Site comprised of species poor semi-improved grassland fields bordered and cut across by species poor hedgerows and scattered mature trees. Of other interest, a two storey stone barn, a stream running through the centre of the Site and a water course bordering the north western boundary were identified. The barn is recommended to be surveyed for bats and the water course for water vole habitat, both species requiring the need for licensing and mitigation should the species be present.
- 2.7 The trees were assessed as being of variable condition; three trees were allocated high retention category values of 'A', seven trees and two groups were allocated moderate retention category 'B' and three trees were allocated low retention categories of 'C'. In addition, five trees and one group were allocated 'U' category grades and are therefore unsuitable for retention.<sup>1</sup>

### **Agricultural Land Quality**

- 2.8 The Site does not fall within a registered farm holding nor has it done so for many years. It is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land<sup>2</sup> which is defined as moderate quality agricultural land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops or lower yields of a wider range of crops. The Site's value in agricultural terms is therefore limited and if undeveloped its use will continue to be that for the grazing of livestock or mown for silage and hay.

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<sup>1</sup>BSI Standards Publications, 2012. *BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations*. (Core Doc. Ref: CD10)

<sup>2</sup> Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales. MAFF, 1988. (Core Doc. Ref: CD11)

### 3.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3.1 For the purposes of my evidence Landscape is defined by the European Landscape Convention, 2000 (ELC) as:

“... an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”

3.2 In the context of this definition the LVIA process seeks to consider the effects in an objective and systematic approach whilst recognizing the emotive and sometimes subjective response to the landscape (e.g. a landscape may figure in a famous artwork and therefore can produce feelings of sentiment or recognition of heritage). The definition also acknowledges the effect of man on the landscape character.

3.3 The impact of the Appeal Site development on the landscape will be discussed in chapter 4.0 and the process will deal with separate but interlinked issues of:

Landscape Character: The potential effects of the development upon discrete character area and/or character types comprising features possessing a particular quality or merit.

Landscape Features: The potential effects of the development on existing physical features which may in turn alter the character of a landscape.

Visual Amenity: The potential effects of the development on views from visual receptors and upon the amenity value of the views.

3.4 This chapter will discuss the landscape character of the Site in a national and local context. It is important to consider character so that any changes to the fabric of the landscape can be fully understood and discussed. This in turn will inform the landscape and mitigation strategy at later design detail stages of the scheme.

3.5 The Landscape Character Assessment Guidance<sup>3</sup> defines landscape character as:  
*“A distinct, recognizable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape and makes landscape different from one another, rather than better or worse.”*

Characterisation is the process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character. This process does not mean that the character is uniform across an area as there may be variation in character and changes both subtle and abrupt in dominance of the elements in the landscape which affect visual amenity directly.

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<sup>3</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency, (2002). *Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland*.

## Wider Context

- 3.6 In respect of the Appeal Site the following character assessments are relevant in placing the Site in a wider landscape context.

Context	Landscape Character Type	Comments/Status
National	<b>Bowland Fringe &amp; Pendle Hill.</b> <sup>4</sup> National character and profile Area 33.	A broad description of a national character area containing descriptions that can be identified with the wider landscape.
County	<b>Undulating Lowland Farmland.</b> <sup>5</sup> Landscape Type 5. Lancashire County Council, (July 2006).	Current adopted SPD to the Joint Structure Plan.
County	<b>Ancient Enclosure (Pre-AD1600).</b> <sup>6</sup> Lancashire County Council with English Heritage, (December 2002).	Current adopted SPD. A county level historic character type description which sets out the key characteristics of the early historic Clitheroe settlement area
County	<b>Undulating Lowland Farmland.</b> <sup>7</sup> Landscape Character Type 5e. Lancashire County Council, (December 2000).	The document was prepared as supplementary planning guidance to the former Joint Lancashire Plan and its contents have been carried forward into the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan SPD. This document no longer forms part of the statutory development plan, however, the character areas defined in this document are still relevant to the area.
County/District	<b>Undulating Lowland Farmland with Settlement and Industry.</b> <sup>8</sup> Landscape Character Type H & J. Forest of Bowland AONB, (September 2009).	Current adopted SPD. A county level character type description which specifically covers the Forest of Bowland and areas outside its defined margins.

## 3.7 **Regional Assessment – Landscape Character Areas**

The 'Character of England' is a nationwide assessment of landscape character prepared by the then Countryside Commission in 1998 (now managed by Natural England). The proposed site falls within the National Landscape Character Area 33, Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill (**Appendix 1**). The key characteristics within the National Assessment are given as:

- **This is an undulating, rolling landscape, with local variation created by numerous river valleys and by the moorland outliers of Beacon Fell, Longridge Fell and Pendle Hill.** (My emphasis).
- **The Bowland Fells provide a dramatic backdrop to the north, with extensive views across the river valleys and Lancashire plain below.** (My emphasis).

<sup>4</sup> Extract from Natural England, Character Area 33 - **Appendix 1**. (Core Doc. Ref: CD5)

<sup>5</sup> Extract from Lancashire County Council, Landscape and Heritage SPD - **Appendix 2**. (Core Doc. Ref: CD6)

<sup>6</sup> Extract from Lancashire County Council with English Heritage, Lancashire Historic Characterisation Programme.

<sup>7</sup> Extract from Lancashire County Council, Landscape Strategy for Lancashire, Landscape Character Assessment - **Appendix 3**. (Core Doc. Ref: CD7)

<sup>8</sup> Extract from Forest of Bowland AONB, Landscape Character Assessment - **Appendix 4**. (Core Doc. Ref: CD8)

- On the northern edge of the area, drumlins are characteristic, while on the south, strong mounded outcrops or 'reef knolls' of limestone form distinct landscape features in the Ribble and Hodder valleys.
- Semi-natural woodland, much of which is ancient, occurs in the main valley bottoms, side valleys and ridges, and is dominated by oak, ash and alder.
- **Small to medium-sized fields are defined by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees. Drystone walls are also common in some areas. Metal railings around estate boundaries and highway corners and junctions are characteristic of the southern and western edges of the NCA.** (My emphasis).
- Land use is mainly permanent, improved pasture for livestock and dairy farming.
- To the west, this NCA includes part of the Bowland Fells Special Protection Area (SPA), designated for its important populations of hen harrier, merlin and lesser black-backed gull.
- There are species-rich hay meadows, including several that are nationally and internationally designated.
- Rough grazing, rushy pasture and traditionally managed meadows at higher elevations are of national importance for breeding waders such as redshank, lapwing, curlew and snipe. These are also important habitats for breeding skylark.
- There are numerous rivers of importance for many protected species, including bullheads, salmon, trout, eels, otters, kingfishers and dippers. There are also many brooks and small reservoirs.
- There are many archaeological sites, particularly on the moorland fringes and in valleys where agriculture has been less intensive.
- A network of winding, hedge-lined lanes connect small, often linear, villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads, mostly in local stone. Traditional stone barns are commonplace on higher ground, and are of stone with slate or stone flag roofs.
- Isolated country houses set in formal parkland are typical of the area, and may be enclosed by belts of woodland and estate fencing.
- **The relatively urban areas of Clitheroe, Bentham and Longridge provide a contrast to the rural feel of the area.** (My emphasis).

3.8 The above key characteristics cover a wide area but it does provide an appreciation of the specific characteristics which are considered to be evident at the Appeal Site and surrounding land uses. The Appeal Site is located in countryside but this is contrasted by its proximity to the urban landscape of Clitheroe. The Bowland Fells also provide dramatic views beyond the urban edge and are flanked by an agricultural

landscape of hedgerow enclosed fields and small woodlands which extent far beyond the edges of the town.

### ***Borough Landscape Character Assessment***

- 3.9 A Strategy for Lancashire: Landscape Character Assessment published by Lancashire County Council and the former Countryside Agency in 2000 places the area with Landscape Character Type 5e, the Lower Ribblesdale (Clitheroe to Gisburn, 'Undulating Lowland Farmland' (**Appendix 3**) and describes the area as being particularly well settled with good communication routes along the Ribble Valley (railway and A59). This Lancashire County Council's adopted SPD. It also refers to the communication network as encouraging built development and industry with the large cement works to the immediate north of Clitheroe, being a prominent visual landmark for miles around.

#### *5e Lower Ribblesdale*

*This area forms the southern valley side of the Ribble, between Copster (Clitheroe to Green and Gisburn, on the lowland fringes of Pendle Hill. It is a Gisburn) particularly well settled area and provides a corridor for communication routes along the Ribble Valley. 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; the large cement works at Clitheroe is a prominent visual landmark for miles around. This character area is underlain by limestone and has some good examples of limestone reef knolls, particularly around Clitheroe; Clitheroe Castle is located on top of one of these knolls.*

- 3.10 The Appeal Site is also within the study area covered by the landscape characterization work undertaken for the 'Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment (September 2009) (**Appendix 4**). Although the Appeal Site is located outside the AONB boundaries it is categorised as lying within 'Landscape Character Type J2: Ribble. The key characteristics are set out as being:

- *Open, flat, fertile plain encompassing a patchwork of pastoral fields which are delineated by a combination of hedgerows, wooden fencing, post and wire fencing or stone walls;*
- *The gently meandering course of the river Ribble is defined by the steep wooded bluffs and terraces which enclose the floodplain;*
- *Lush green fields of semi-improved pasture are grazed by sheep and cattle. The large regular fields are defined by gappy hedgerows;*

- *Mature floodplain trees are notable features in this Landscape Character Area; ash and oak stand in the floodplain, their silhouettes striking against the open landscape;*
- *General absence of settlement within the floodplain itself, but a number of large farms and country halls are positioned along the edges of the floodplain;*
- *There are a number of historic crossing points which coincide with these settlements where old stone bridges are important historic features of the floodplain;*
- *Panoramic, open views towards the central Bowland Moorland Hills and Plateau to the north and Pendle Hill to the south;*
- *In the south of the area, the small village of Great Mitton is nestled within the valley corridor, at the point at which a minor road corridor crosses the river;*
- *There is a relatively strong sense of remoteness within much of the river corridor, which is slightly interrupted when it meanders around the northern edge of Clitheroe;*
- *Buildings associated within the Castle Cement works are dominant landmarks within views to and across this area.*

3.11 The Appeal Site abuts the settlement boundary of Clitheroe which is categorised as 'Landscape Character Type H1: Clitheroe and Charburn'. The key characteristics are set out as being:

- Landscape pattern within this Landscape Character Area is dominated by the large town of Clitheroe, which is situated at the convergence of major road and railway corridors;
- These corridors introduce a source of noise and visual intrusion and disturb the overall sense of tranquility;
- Clitheroe contains an assortment of housing (much of which is terraced and built from local stone) and commercial buildings;
- The tower of Clitheroe Castle (situated on a limestone outcrop above the town) is a landmark within views towards this area;
- At the eastern edge of the area, the small village of Chatburn, with its rows of terraced cottages, further contributes to settlement pattern;
- Large-scale quarries and associated works (including tall vertical chimneys) to the east of Clitheroe and west of Chatburn are a dominant human influence within views to this landscape from surrounding Landscape Character Types and Areas;

- Views northwards, across the corridor of the River Ribble are dominated by the rising mass of the central Moorland Hills and Plateau, whilst Pendle Hill contributes to recognisable sense of place within views southwards;
- At the edges of the urban development, patchworks of predominantly pastoral fields are delineated by, in places, remnant hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees.

### **Sensitivities and Capacity for Change**

- 3.12 The AONB Landscape Character Assessment outlines sensitivities and capacity for change.

*“The ecological sensitivity of the Landscape Character Type H is represented by the combination of hedges, hedgerow trees and diverse narrow stream corridors. There is also a rich built heritage within the main towns and villages. In addition, the landscape displays a mature structure of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Overall, landscape character and visual sensitivity is considered to be moderate. In places, hedgerows limit views, whilst there is strong intervisibility with the Unenclosed and Enclosed Moorland Hills, which provide a backdrop to most views from this lower landscape. Industrial chimneys and other industrial buildings at the edges of Clitheroe are also visible within most views to this Landscape Character Type from adjacent Landscape Character Types and Areas within the AONB.”*

- 3.13 The Ribble Landscape Type is considered to have limited capacity for change. The Landscape Type description relates to the wider open valley floodplains and wooded bluffs and terraces which enclose the floodplains, rather than the areas closely influenced by urban settlements. The Appeal Site relates very closely to the urban settlement of Clitheroe. It is considered that the capacity for change is heavily influenced by the urban features of the town including associated industry and infrastructure and that changes to the landscape becomes less significant where people experience development on a more frequent basis within towns. At some 3.00 kilometres from the boundary of the Forest of Bowland to the north west, the Appeal Site has a limited relationship, other than forming a part of the settlement character of Clitheroe. From the Appeal Site itself, the distant rising Fells and moorland will remain a dominant and notable features.

- 3.14 In order to manage landscape change, the assessment states:

*“There is also a need to ensure that potential new development at the edges of urban areas, utilises local vernacular limestone and gritstone and includes a robust planting structure of native tree and shrub species, particularly at the*

*edges. Opportunities also exist to screen existing urban edges using native trees and shrubs.*

*Open views towards the Unenclosed and Enclosed moorland hills Landscape Character Types, and framed views across the River Ribble should also be conserved.*

### **Clitheroe Historic Town Assessment**

- 3.15 This assessment charts and describes the historical development of the town and discusses urban character and the significance of archaeological resource. The Appeal Site is not included in the study area but it should be noted that it describes the surrounding countryside as:

*“.....an area of rolling, undulating landscape within the broad valley of the River Ribble, contrasting with the open moorland and fell of Pendle Hill to the south-east and the Bowland Fells to the north. The valley is mainly pastoral in character, with small to medium sized fields bounded by hedgerows and with mature hedgerow trees, creating a sense of intimacy in contrast to the surrounding fells.”*

### **Scheduled Monument – Clitheroe Castle**

- 3.16 The report also identifies one scheduled monument as the Castle, curtain wall and bailey.

*“Clitheroe Castle is the most prominent feature, not just of the town, but of the surrounding countryside of the Ribble valley. The keep, although very small, is perched on the highest point of the limestone knoll, and is surrounded by open land, mostly landscaped parkland. Originally sited on the hill top for its defensive properties, the castle now provides panoramic views across the town and the surrounding countryside, with the former castle yard and associated buildings to the north. The area is now a well-used open space, with the Castle and yard dedicated to museums and the public display of the monument, and the surrounding open land landscaped as public park with recreation grounds, tennis courts, bowling greens and open-air auditorium. The entire area forms a substantial public space at the centre of Clitheroe's modern urban area.”*

### **Clitheroe Conservation Area**

- 3.17 There is one conservation area within Clitheroe covering some 8 hectares within the town's historic core. It also comprises the area of late nineteenth century housing between the town centre and the railway line, as well as the open area to the east of the Roman Catholic church and the whole of Castle Park.

- 3.18 The Appeal Site lies outside the conservation area with substantial buildings, railway, railway line and supermarket between it and the central core of the town. The Castle is a prominent feature and can be seen from the Appeal Site and to land beyond to the north west. Views of the Castle diminish substantially with distance.

### **Landscape Character of the Appeal Site**

- 3.19 There are no statutory or local landscape designations applicable to the Appeal Site with the land lying outside but abutting the urban boundary as defined on the Proposal Map of the Ribble Valley District Wide Local Plan, adopted in June 1998. To the north, south and south east of Clitheroe and the Ribble Valley the land is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This is a nationally protected landscape managed by a partnership of landowners, farmers, voluntary organisations, wildlife groups, recreation groups, local councils and government agencies, who work to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of this special areas. Clitheroe itself benefits from the beauty of the surrounding landscape and with most of the town enjoying the views of the surrounding undulating landscape and fells.
- 3.20 The Site itself is currently formed by five fields of semi-improved grassland. It is pastoral in character with the small sized fields visually divided by hedgerows and limited mature trees. It relates to the wider countryside landscape towards the northern and north western boundaries with extended views towards the more open countryside of the Bowland Fell fringes but is influenced by strong urbanizing features to the south, east and north east, particularly residential buildings from the late nineteenth century to modern times and Waddington Road where the easterly field boundary meets the main Waddington Road. To the north east and north the character is influenced by 'urban fringe' features where the landscape interfaces more subtly with urban features. There is a degree of visual disturbance when viewing the Site from the north west towards the Clitheroe town. In summary, it is considered that there are two character types which influence the Site – that of the urban residential areas and that of more rural grassland with hedgerows and scattered trees. These both relate to the character types which are discussed in the published Landscape Assessments for the Lancashire region.

- 3.21 The characteristics of the site and the local environs are shown on **Figure TAG 2**.

### **Interim Conclusions**

- 3.22 The Appeal Site has an insular and intimate character which is strongly influenced by urban features within the existing settlement of Clitheroe.

- 3.23 The wider landscape, particularly that of the open moorland and Bowland Fells to the north contrast with the valley landscape. These views are can be observed from Clitheroe Castle and would not be interrupted by the proposed development at the Appeal Site.
- 3.24 The value of the Appeal Site is not designated in landscape terms and is set outside the AONB. It has the ability to absorb change and to allow the process of development and mitigation to assimilate development into the adjacent character. The vegetation which defines the Site boundaries is characteristic of the 'undulating lowland farmland' and can be retained and enhanced as part of the development proposals.

## 4.0 THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The current development proposals, which apart from access are illustrative at this stage and are shown on the landscape (development) masterplan, **Figure TAG 4**. The proposals include for the construction of 345 new residential properties, including 30% affordable housing and a 50 place nursery unit. The height of the proposed new buildings within the application area would be 2.0 to 2.5 storeys for the residential buildings. The field pattern and existing landscape features have provided a strong driver for the development of an outline scheme. The built environment would follow good practice guidance such as recommended within 'Manual for Streets 2', produced by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transport<sup>9</sup> and supported by Design Council/CABE. This publication aims to better standards in building and new development and landscaping generally.
- 4.2 The topography of the Site is gently undulating giving a flat appearance but with the lowest areas to the west. The envisaged denser development has been allocated to the east where it abuts the settlement boundary. Density and character have also been important development strategies and the architects have taken a 'transitional' approach. The development is envisaged as being lower on the western and south western fringes, medium on the easterly fringes and higher on the north eastern edges. To allow for a 'positive' edge to the open countryside an appropriate density would be required with outward facing properties which can provide an open and well landscaped frontage.
- 4.3 Consideration will be made to the grain and age of adjacent existing properties so that there is connection with the local architectural character along the settlement edges, i.e. established low density detached dwelling along Swan Meadows in contrast to the post 20th Century urban edge and recently consented housing site off Milton Avenue, east of the Site.
- 4.4 Whilst there is limited ecology on the Site, perimeter hedgerows will be retained to maintain the character of the open countryside. The existing water course which runs through the Site will be integrated into the proposals to provide a wide area of public open space. This will allow a strong tract of undeveloped land which will maintain views of the Castle in the town centre and views across the Site to Waddow Hall will be maintained. This will also serve to substantially divide and break up building mass and allow for the enhancement of biodiversity and wildlife in the area.

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<sup>9</sup> Manual for Streets 2, The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, September 2010.

- 4.5 A large informal parkland greenspace vista is proposed in a central location within the development which will introduce further linkages with the countryside to the north west. A strong landscape structure would be created by the retention of existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and perimeter landscape planting of native species trees and shrubs. Large buffer zones of native tree planting would be provided to the north western and eastern boundaries to maintain visual amenity and assimilate the development into the adjacent landscape, particularly the rural edge and cemetery area to the north west. Such planting could be undertaken in advance of the main development taking place. Access roads and internal lanes would be hedge lined with careful consideration of vista terminations at the open space area. An irregular street layout with frontage parking will allow a network of tree planting which will assist in breaking up the built environment and create an identifiable sense of place.
- 4.6 The public right of way that crosses the Site from the end of Kirkmoor Road to the far side of the north western boundary would be retained and improved to provide a safe pathway through the development to the countryside beyond. Further additional footpath linkages will be provided through the areas of open space and along the watercourse which will provide an enhance network of linkages to this part of the town. Cycleways will be created within the landscape setting. Open aspects across the development would therefore be retained with no 'Secure by Design' issues due to the immediate proximity of housing.
- 4.7 Access arrangements have been agreed with Lancashire County Highways with vehicular access being provided from the end of Kirkmoor road and from Waddington Road at the north end of the Site.
- 4.8 The development at this location fulfills a considerable number of sustainable landscape objectives. It enables incorporation of existing natural and ecological features into the landscape strategy, in particular the water course and boundary hedgerows and trees. It will allow the introduction of SuDS to manage flood risk by the introduction of attenuation features within the open space areas. Amenity and biodiversity will be enhanced through the provision of greater number of trees and the creation of planted garden spaces throughout the development. The development will facilitate good connections to the public transport system due to the close proximity of the railway station and allow easy pedestrian access to both the town's resources and employment opportunities and to the adjacent countryside.

## 5.0 DEVELOPMENT IMPACT AND MITIGATION

- 5.1 The potential impact of the proposed development was fully considered within the Landscape and Visual Impact study prepared by The Appleton Group in June 2012 as a supporting document to the planning application (**Appendix 5**). This study was carried out in general accordance with the recommendations contained within the 'The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact 2<sup>nd</sup> edition' published jointly in 2002 by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. Subsequently, the Guidelines have been published as a 3<sup>rd</sup> edition in 2013 which aimed to build on the strengths of the first two editions. Given that the original study was carried out in 2012, further discussion within this chapter will follow relevant guidance from the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. However, it is considered that much within the new guidelines has been utilised in the study which further strengthens the findings. The new guidelines consider European legislation, green infrastructure, developments on landscape character assessment and new emphasis on ecosystem services. It also has more emphasis on the distinction between landscape effects and visual effects and stresses the importance of good narrative to make clear what the significant issues and effects are. Overly prescriptive tables and matrices should support the text rather than being relied on to too great a degree.
- 5.2 The impact was considered in terms of (A), landscape impacts – the irreversible loss of natural features such as habitats and vegetation, (B) visual impact as the result of the development on a range of receptors and (C) any adverse change in the character of the landscape. In summary the findings of the LIVIA for both the construction and completion phases are set out in the following chapter.
- 5.3 In considering the impact on the landscape the degree of change in respect of the loss or impact on natural landscape assets such as trees or hedges, manmade features such as walls or the modification of the topography and quality of existing features is assessed. This is known as '*landscape impact*'.
- 5.4 The '*visual impact*' of the proposed development on the general public is assessed. Such impacts could be the result of visual intrusion into an important viewpoint or the direct obstruction of views into the wider landscape. However, it must be remembered that in respect of residential occupiers that within English law there is no right to a 'view'. No matter how long a view has been enjoyed by the owner or preceding owners of land it can never be enjoyed as of right.
- 5.5 The following are relevant when assessing the significance of the impact on visual amenity:

- The receptor's sensitivity and activity type, receptors that have greater awareness of the view such as walkers will notice the introduction of new features more than those who are not actively absorbing the view.
- The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed site. The greater the distance of the viewpoint from the feature the less detail is observable and it becomes more difficult to distinguish the feature from the background.
- The duration of the perceived impact, the number of potential receptors will increase as the duration of the impact increases.
- The scale and degree of the proposed scheme, the greater the proportion of the view that it taken up by the proposed feature the greater the impact. Proposed features that would include considerable movement will result in an increased negative impact.
- The elevation of the proposed feature from the viewpoint, if the proposed features is viewed against the sky then the impact will be greater than if the feature is viewed against a background.

5.6 The sensitivity of the receptor also needs to be taken into account.

- Number of users
- Frequency of use
- Period of use
- Focus of attention on the landscape
- Movement and orientation of user
- Publicity and reference to viewpoint (i.e. well known in art or literature or locally known viewpoint)

The sensitivity of identified receptors is summarised in the Table 5.1 below.

Visual Sensitivity Criteria

Table 5.1

Sensitivity	Type of Visual Receptor	Justification
<b>High</b>	Observers whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape and recognized views in particular.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Many people.</li> <li>▪ Long periods of time observing view.</li> <li>▪ Sedentary views e.g. seat.</li> <li>▪ Noted in literature or art, identified on maps or guides.</li> <li>▪ Designed views.</li> <li>▪ Recognised/Important views.</li> </ul>
	Private residential dwelling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sensitive residential views from windows.</li> <li>▪ Views occupied during daylight/waking hours.</li> <li>▪ Age of property and ability to absorb change.</li> <li>▪ Long length of time looking at view or time spent in a garden.</li> </ul>
	Public rights of way (PRoW). Open Access land. National Trust Land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Heavily used.</li> <li>▪ Views focused on the landscape because of activity.</li> <li>▪ Recreational trails.</li> </ul>
<b>Medium</b>	Tourist spots, Country Parks, documented viewpoint locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frequently used.</li> <li>▪ Moderate length of stay.</li> <li>▪ Attention not always focused on landscape due to activity e.g. undertaking outdoor sport.</li> <li>▪ Known as a local viewpoint.</li> </ul>
	Private residential dwelling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Views from rooms unoccupied during daylight/waking hours e.g. first floors.</li> <li>▪ Partially filtered or screened views.</li> </ul>
	Public rights of way (PRoW). Open Access land. National Trust Land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frequently used.</li> <li>▪ Transitory.</li> <li>▪ Moderate length of time spent in local area.</li> </ul>
	Public road network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transitory e.g. country road.</li> <li>▪ Users of roads have clear open views across the landscape.</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	General views around the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not known as a definable viewpoint.</li> </ul>
	Drivers and passengers of vehicles on highways, trainlines and water course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rapid transit.</li> <li>▪ Focus of attention is on the traffic conditions and the road ahead.</li> <li>▪ Attention id focused on the activity of driving.</li> </ul>
	Receptors involved in recreational or other activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus of attention solely on activity.</li> </ul>
	Private residential dwelling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No views from any window or garden area.</li> <li>▪ Filtered, densely screened or oblique views.</li> </ul>
	Public rights of way (PRoW). Open Access land. National Trust Land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Infrequently used.</li> <li>▪ Used by few people.</li> </ul>
	Places of employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attention not focused on landscape as part of job.</li> <li>▪ Activity is mainly indoors.</li> </ul>
	Agricultural and farming activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Views associated with outdoor farming which is considered to be of a nature of which is potentially tolerant of visual changes.</li> </ul>
<b>Negligible</b>	Public rights of way (PRoW). Open Access land. National Trust Land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rarely used by few people.</li> </ul>
	Drivers and passengers of vehicles on highways, trainlines and water course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rarely used by few people.</li> </ul>

5.7 An assessment to establish the '*character impact*' is made to assess the degree of change affecting both the site and the wider environs. Adverse changes in landscape character can occur as the result of the loss of landscape features which are acknowledged components of local distinctiveness, or the construction of new features that do not match those that already exist.

5.8 To assess the significance of the potential impacts the degree or magnitude of change, both adversely and beneficially, acting on the baseline conditions and the sensitivity of receptors is objectively considered. This is considered with and without mitigation based on prescribed criteria.

**Magnitude of Change Criteria**

**Table 5.2**

Magnitude	Justification
<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Total loss or major alteration to key or primary elements/features/characteristics of the baseline existing) landscape or view, and/or the introduction of totally uncharacteristic elements with the receiving landscape.</li> <li>▪ Development will dominate view or directly faces viewpoint.</li> <li>▪ Development fills whole of site or a substantial proportion of it.</li> <li>▪ Site is within an open view with few or no intervening factors.</li> <li>▪ Very close proximity to view – less than 1 kilometre.</li> <li>▪ 24 hour use of lighting.</li> <li>▪ Development at construction phase, and of a temporary but lengthy duration, i.e. over 5 years.</li> </ul>
<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that may be prominent but not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.</li> <li>▪ Development is moderately close to views – 1-2 kilometres away.</li> <li>▪ Site is a notable component of the view.</li> <li>▪ View in general direction of development.</li> <li>▪ Approximately 50% of development can be viewed.</li> <li>▪ View is limited by intervening factors.</li> <li>▪ Use of lighting for part of the night.</li> <li>▪ Development at construction phase, therefore of a moderate temporary duration, i.e. between 2-5 years.</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.</li> <li>▪ The development is a small part of a wider or panoramic view.</li> <li>▪ Development is over 3 kilometres away.</li> <li>▪ Development fills half to a small proportion of the site.</li> <li>▪ View of development is largely obscured by intervening factors.</li> <li>▪ Development blends well with its surroundings.</li> <li>▪ Occasional use of lighting.</li> </ul>
<b>Negligible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic within the receiving or adjacent landscape – approximating to 'no change' situation.</li> <li>▪ Site is over 4 kilometres away.</li> <li>▪ Site is barely visible to views.</li> <li>▪ Development is only identified by one or two of its components.</li> <li>▪ Intervening and screening factors detract from seeing or noticing development – view severely restricted.</li> <li>▪ Development will be indistinguishable from its surroundings or adjacent land uses.</li> <li>▪ No use of lighting.</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3**

<b>Landscape Impact (Landscape effect)</b>				
Sensitivity of Landscape Features	Plus	Magnitude of Change	➔	Significance of Effect on the Landscape
<b>Visual Amenity Impact (Visual Effect)</b>				
Receptor Sensitivity	Plus	Magnitude of change or intrusion	➔	Significance of Effect on Visual Amenity
<b>Landscape Character Impact</b>				
Sensitivity of Landscape Character	Plus	Magnitude of Change	➔	Significance of Effect on the Character

## Predicted Landscape Impacts

### *Removal of existing trees and hedgerows and loss of grassland pasture*

- 5.9 The proposed development will involve the removal of a limited number of trees internally (approximately 11no.). They are Alder and Ash species and assessed as 'average to poor' in terms of their possible retention. Internal hedgerows will be removed to accommodate the built arrangement. These are assessed as intact but species poor and generally unmanaged. There should be no impact on hedgerows to the boundaries with the exception of breaking through the very gappy hedge and vegetation off Waddington Road and off Kilmoor Road to create the access points into the proposed development. There is also the opportunity at this access point to increase and enhance pedestrian routes and linkages from Waddington Road to the town centre. The pre-existing footpath which crosses the site will be accommodated within the development layout and will remain on its current alignment. The areas of pasture grassland will be removed to accommodate the development but the existing brook and associated bankside features will be retained. An area of grassland, approximately 20-30 metres in depth, will be retained on the northern boundary where it abuts the open countryside beyond. The existing footpath within the site may be temporarily closed or rerouted during the course of construction.

## Predicted Visual Impacts

- 5.10 Within the field verified Zone of Visual Influence, i.e. those receptors who would see the Site to some degree and experience a possible change in the view during both the construction phase and at final operational stage should it be developed can be described as follows. The photomontages have been produced using a methodology compliant with revised Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11<sup>10</sup> using a Nikon Prime lens (AF-S DX Nikkor 35mm f/1.8G) which gives the most accurate representation of the human eye. Photographs have been 'stitched' together to give the representation of the landscape that would be taken in when observing the view.

### *Visual amenity of users of the nearby footpaths (Photograph Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6)*

- 5.11 Users of the footpaths are considered to be sensitive users. The proposals include the removal of some trees and internal hedgerows, some modification to land levels (considered not significant), change in the context of the existing footpath through the site and the construction of new houses with associated infrastructure. The impact will reduce with distance. The views from the footpath within the Site and the adjacent footpaths to the south and north west will be from close quarters. The current views will be replaced with new housing vistas with integrated open space and landscape.

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<sup>10</sup> 'The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact' 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition published jointly in 2002 by The Landscape Institute and The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

There will be a loss of a view over open fields. No new properties would be higher than 2.5 stories and the visual appearance of the new dwellings can be subject to planning condition. All views gained from the north west will be in the context of the existing townscape of Clitheroe. Substantial planting belts are proposed for the boundaries together with the retention of boundary hedgerows and trees.

*Views from adjacent residential properties (Photograph Viewpoints 6 & 7)*

- 5.12 Views from adjacent houses immediately abutting the site will be private views in the context of their own garden surrounds. Visual impact will vary in degrees depending on the alignment of dwellings and the location of windows. 2no. properties which directly overlook the site are located on Brungerley Avenue and which will have views from rear elevation windows. Other properties on this roads are aligned at 90 degrees to the Site with side elevations towards the Site. These views are restricted and obscured by other properties. These will also be influenced by residential development which is permitted off Milton Avenue. Properties on Back Common and Kirkmoor Close will be impacted upon by the changes with views predominately from front elevations and similarly public views gained directly from Back Common which is closest to the new access construction. The property (Albion House) at the end of Kirkmoor Road will be influenced the greatest by the proposed development. The front elevation to the property is south easterly facing, away front the Site. It is understood that this property is currently let.
- 5.13 Properties on Milton Avenue, Cowper Avenue and Chester Avenue to the east of the Site are terraced streets of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century era with limited direct views from house rooms to the Site. Users of these roads will have obstructed views due to the permitted development on the adjacent land parcel.
- 5.14 Significant new planting within an appropriately landscape buffer area on the north western boundary, in advance of the main construction phase would reduce the visual impact of the proposed development from residential views. Similarly, internal planting associated with the road network, gardens and areas of open space would reduce longer term impacts on sensitive receptors in close up views. It will not be possible to observe the full extent of any new development other than in close views, as the rise and crest of the land obscures views when approaching from the river. The new buildings are likely to average 7-8 metres in height and will not breach the general height of the surrounding houses within the urban settlement. The juxtaposition of the houses clusters with intervening new planting and landscaping will serve to integrate the proposals into the adjacent settlement and reduce impact.
- 5.15 There will be opportunities to mitigate the visual impact of the building by the choice of materials and colour, which will have immediate effect on the completion of

construction prior to any screen planting becoming established. The degree of retention of existing trees and hedgerows to the boundaries is important in assessing the extent of the visual impact on all sensitive receptors, since some of the trees perform a screening function already.

*Views from the Castle (Photograph Viewpoint 11)*

- 5.16 From the more elevated position of Clitheroe Castle viewing balcony a panoramic view of the site is possible and, as an historic environment and scheduled listed building within the Conservation Area, is accepted as a sensitive receptor in landscape terms. The Castle is situated on a steep limestone rock outcrop which rises some 39m above the valley floor, thus the castle commands extensive views over the surrounding area. Views can be of short or long duration and the location is popular with tourists who wish to view the landscape of the Bowland Fells. In the context of the overall landscape the Site sits within the open land on the edge of the settlement but is viewed from the castle as a narrow strip of land directly behind the properties between the railway corridor and the south eastern edge of the Site. The Site is considered in this context to be a narrow belt of development set within the edge of the urban settlement. Views from the Castle are naturally drawn to the wider landscape of the AONB beyond and the expanse of the landscape beyond the immediate urban edge. There is considered to be no visual relationship between the Site and the Castle from this viewpoint. Indeed the main focus of attention to foreground urban elements is Booth's store and the linear expanse of car parking between the store building and the railway station. However, due to the elevation of the Castle it will not be possible to totally screen the proposed development and its construction would be visible as a middle distance view. The selection of building and roofing materials will give opportunities for mitigation together with screen planting.
- 5.17 The completed development is illustrated in **Photographic Montages one, two, three and four within the Appendices**. Photomontage Two illustrates the anticipated view as envisaged with the development of the land off Milton Avenue which has the benefit of planning permission. This forms a block of development which fills a natural 'void' in the urban settlement in this location. The development of this land will screen the proposed development from views to the along Milton Avenue, Cowper Avenue and from the sheltered properties off Kirkmoor Road which directly abut this land. Photomontage Three illustrates the proposed development as constructed at Year 1 and Photomontage Four illustrates the proposed development following 15 years of growth from landscape structure planting. Areas of open space within the development will allow areas of native vegetation to filter views and deliver a natural connection to the wider landscape beyond the Site. Views of Waddow Hall would not be interrupted and would remain in a wide panorama of open land and wooded hillside. In this context the proposed development forms a narrow tract of

development behind existing residential development. Roofscapes may be visible at the northern edges of the development with nearer properties becoming assimilated as part of the overall settlement edge. Materials and colouration choices would be carefully selected to reflect the local existing predominance of stone and slate as building materials.

*Views from Waddow Hall and Grounds (Photograph Viewpoint 10)*

- 5.18 Waddow Hall is a 17th-century Grade II listed building within a 178-acre (72 ha) wooded estate that serves as a conference and activity centre for Girlguiding UK. It has been managed by Girlguiding since 1927. The Hall sits just above the River Ribble channel on the 70 metre contour with the land rising locally to approximately 100aOD behind the Hall with wooded slopes. The frontage elevation faces towards Clitheroe town. Looking south east towards the proposed Site the views from ground level and lower stories are substantially obscured by close mature vegetation and by the rise of the land which forms a slight crest before a gentle fall in the land towards the Clitheroe settlement. Beyond a middle distance line of mature trees it is considered that the roofscape of the nearest properties would be visible. A screen belt of vegetation and native trees would be planted along this edge which will over time serve to filter views. The Photograph viewpoint also illustrates that there is intervisibility between the Hall and Clitheroe Castle which would not be interrupted by the proposed development.

*Views from the newer Cemetery*

- 5.19 Views from the cemetery area to the west of Waddington Road will be restricted and partially screened by the existing vegetation around the edges. People visiting the cemetery and older burial grounds will have some intermittent views of the site although this is filtered by fairly dense vegetation and trees within the grounds and on the boundary to the site along Waddington Road. Visitors to the cemetery are generally tending graves and less inclined to observe the wider landscape. Areas to the immediate south west and south east are currently approved for an extension to the cemetery and will, it is assumed, be landscaped in a similar manner to the existing area to the boundary of the proposed Site.

*Views from Waddington Road (Photograph Viewpoint 9)*

- 5.20 Views from Waddington Road and the old cemetery are screened by existing intervening vegetation and the field parcels although the construction of the new access has the potential to open up views into the site from Waddington Road to the east of the site. Some views into the approach of the proposed development will be visible from this point and views of the access will be possible from the grounds and approach path to the older burial grounds. Views from passing vehicles will be exceptionally fleeting to the south west of the Site by vehicle users. The new access

will be created onto Waddington Road. New landscaping will be created to the north of the junction fronting Waddington Road and there will be a substantial 6-10 metre strip of landscaping to the south side of the access road as it enters the site along the undeveloped adjacent field parcel. This landscaping will join with the open and wetland habitat area which runs through the development following the course of the existing stream.

*Longer distance views (Photograph Viewpoint 12)*

- 5.21 Views from longer distance and from the AONBs are severely limited by intervening topography and tall tree vegetation and hedgerows. The site is generally lost to view at approximately 0.25 kilometres distance from the site. At greater distance from the site and within the AONB areas the site is lost in the general townscape features given its close and tight proximity to the urban settlement.

**Predicted Character Impacts**

- 5.22 Impacts on landscape character have been addressed with chapter 3. The ability of the Site to absorb the development has been considered and once built and established in the overall landscape scene and with appropriate screening it is considered that the proposed development would not adversely impact on the character of the existing wider open countryside beyond its boundaries. Similarly, the proposed development would be absorbed into the existing settlement of Clitheroe and would not adversely impact on any of the existing features in this location.

**Mitigation of Impact**

*Views from public footpaths*

- 5.23 Without mitigation the visual impact of the proposals on the public footpaths outside and adjacent to the site would be **moderate adverse**, though development would be seen in the context of the townscape in views from the northwest. Mitigation measures are therefore required, mainly in the form of new landscape features and areas of open grassland integrated throughout the development. It is also important for the detailing of the new properties and their juxtaposition at reserved matters stage to be thoroughly addressed to allow opportunities for landscaped areas of open space, pockets of trees and new hedgerow lines to be integrated throughout the development and to prevent the coalescence of built forms in a visual massing. This is illustrated on the **Indicative Masterplan at Appendix ?**. Wide buffer zones of open grassland and planted areas to the boundaries would also aid in the screening and assimilation of views of the existing townscape. The visual assessment illustrates that whilst visible in some views, the proposed development layout, colouration and roofscape assimilates well with the existing scene. The relationship between the

existing footpath within the site and the new development would be a changed experience for users but this could be associated with the open spaces areas in the development, which would provide a positive experience in amenity terms.

- 5.24 New landscape planting will grow from planted heights over the years. During the winter months whilst planting is establishing, views will be possible to a degree through the planting, but it is anticipated that the planting would assimilate views all year round after a 15-20 year period. Overall the long term impact on the users of the local footpath network is evaluated as **minor beneficial** as the planting would moderate views of the existing properties.

*Visual amenity of views from adjacent residential properties/public roads*

- 5.25 The proposed development would have a **moderate adverse** impact of the visual amenity of receptors from close adjacent properties due to their physical proximity. These views would primarily be a combination of houses, roads and garden areas, although approximately 50% of these receptors would already be viewing residential development on the land off Milton Avenue. Receptors from Waddington Road and the adjacent older burial grounds would see an opening up and the urbanising effect of development of a currently pastoral setting on this part of Waddington Road. There are no designated or identified strategic views towards the Appeal Site set out within the current or emerging planning policy for the area. This is also considered to have a moderate adverse impact. The impacts would be off set by mitigating landscape and tree planting and sensitive design of the new primary access and it is considered that impact on these receptors would be over the long term **minor adverse**.

*Visual amenity of views from the Castle*

- 5.26 The views from the historic centre of the town would impact on the amenity that the public currently enjoy from this vantage point by the extension of urban features further into the open land beyond the current town edge. However, views from this point would see the new development as a narrow band of building set in the context of urban features to the immediate south side and forming a 'closed edge' to built form as it wraps around to meet with properties along Waddington Road. Mitigation by means of internal tree planting would allow the proposed development to assimilate well with the existing scene, particularly at roofscape level. The impact is considered to be **moderate adverse** moving towards **minor adverse** over the longer term as the development is accepted as part of the whole townscape.

## Night time Impacts

5.27 Street lighting and lighting from houses would impact on the amenity of existing receptors to a minor degree. Footpaths are not generally used to the same extent as in daylight hours and views from existing houses are generally inverted as occupiers close their curtains to the darkness. However, a degree of intrusions would exist from the baseline of no lighting which is considered **minor adverse**. The use of appropriate down lighters to reduce light spillage and the specification of lighting columns to reflect the scale and character of the town would help to mitigate this issue.

## Cumulative impact

5.28 The existing townscape can currently be seen in views from the north and north west. The addition of a further parcel of residential development would not significantly increase the bulking effect of building or have any further impact on the character of the town if the detailing of the built forms is adequately addressed. It is therefore anticipated that there would be a **negligible cumulative impact**.

## Summary of Impacts

5.29 I set out below a summary of the residual landscape and visual impact in terms of significance as included in the Landscape and Visual impact Assessment following the construction to operational stage when houses and infrastructure are completed. The significance of impacts at construction stage are discussed within the Landscape and Visual Impact assessment. However, the final significance of the development that endures within the landscape is considered in the following table.

**Table 5.4**

Landscape Impact					
Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance	Mitigation	Residual Effect
Loss of vegetation - trees	Local importance - Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Mitigation with tree planting	Minor beneficial
Loss of grassland	Local importance - Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Provision of open space with mitigation planting and improved biodiversity	Minor - moderate beneficial
Use of existing public footpath through Site	Frequently used - Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Integration into newly landscaped setting	Minor beneficial

Visual Amenity Impact					
Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance	Mitigation	Residual Effect
Visual amenity of users of close footpaths and existing footpaths within the Site	High	Medium	Moderate adverse	Screen/buffer planting.	Negligible to minor beneficial
Visual amenity of distant footpaths	High	Low	Neutral	Screen/buffer planting with landscaping integral within development.	Negligible
Views from adjacent residential properties – Back Commons	High	High - medium	Major-moderate adverse	Screen/buffer planting with landscaping integral within development. Good design of development in terms of building layout, open space provision, materials, colours and juxtaposition of built elements.	Minor adverse
Views from adjacent residential properties – Kirkmoor Close	High	High - medium	Major-moderate adverse	Ditto	Minor adverse
Views from adjacent residential properties – Swan Meadows, Kirkmoor Road	High	Low	Minor adverse	Ditto	Minor adverse
Views from adjacent residential properties – Bungerley Avenue	High	Medium	Moderate adverse	Ditto	Minor adverse
Views from adjacent residential properties – Mitton Avenue, Cowper Avenue, Chester Avenue	High	Low	Minor adverse	Screen planting along south eastern boundary.	Minor adverse
Views from Clitheroe Castle	High	Medium	Moderate adverse	Screen/buffer planting with landscaping integral within development. Good design of development in terms of building layout, open space provision, materials, colours and juxtaposition of built elements.	Minor adverse
Views from Waddow Hall	Medium	Low	Minor adverse	Screen/buffer planting to north western boundary.	Negligible
Views from the cemetery	Low	Low	Minor adverse	Screen/buffer planting to north western boundary.	Negligible
Views from Waddington Road and older cemetery	Low	Low	Minor adverse	Adequate landscaping to new access junction	Minor adverse

Magnitude	Justification
<b>Major</b>	Effects cannot be mitigated and are at variance with landscape characteristics, damaging the integrity of that landscape visual amenity (adverse), or strongly complement landscape characteristics (beneficial). For existing highly sensitive, high quality landscape changes or high magnitude tend to result in adverse effects, but this may not always be the case.
<b>Moderate</b>	Effects are at variance with some of the landscape characteristics, adversely affecting the character and/or visual amenity (adverse), or fitting well with the landscape characteristics but changing their emphasis for improvement (beneficial).
<b>Minor</b>	Not quite fitting the characteristics of the landscape or have local/limited scale adverse impact on visual amenity (adverse), or locally improving or adding to the quality of the landscape (beneficial).
<b>Neutral</b>	Complementing the landscape characteristics and maintaining the existing landscape character, visual amenity and quality landscape features.

### Interim Conclusions

- 5.30 The visibility of the Appeal Site is contained in part by the local topography and the surrounding settlement of Clitheroe. Views of the site from sensitive receptors are generally at close quarters with a vantage point from Clitheroe Castle. The views from the Castle provide natural vistas to the wider landscapes beyond the Site.
- 5.31 Overall, many of the surrounding visual receptors will experience moderate adverse effects moving to minor adverse – negligible following mitigation. Receptors most affected will be from the local footpath network within the Site and properties closest to the proposed development. Appropriate design methods will be engaged to provide vegetation screening, appropriate off-set distances and good landscape design to enhance the experience of users of the footpath network.

## 6.0 RELEVANT LANDSCAPE POLICIES, CONSULTATION RESPONSES, LANDSCAPE RESPONSE TO REASONS FOR REFUSAL AND APPEAL DECISION PRECEDENTS

6.1 The evidence of Jane Dickman addresses planning policy and issues surrounding the prematurity of the development application in the context of the emerging policies of the Council's Core Strategy. However, I will discuss the key landscape and visual related issues and the relevant Ribble Valley Borough Council policies as set out in the reasons for refusal and as agreed in the Statement of Common Ground.

### **National Planning Policy Framework** (Core Doc Ref: CD22)

6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and presumes in favour of sustainable development unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF at Paragraph 7 defines 'sustainable development' as having 3 dimensions:

- Economic – building a strong, responsive and competitive economy to support growth and innovation;
- Social - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities and responding to local needs; and
- Environmental – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

6.3 Sustainable development underpins the aspirations of the Framework to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimize waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

6.4 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF says that where the development plan is absent, silent or policies are out of date, permissions should be granted unless *"any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against policies in this Framework taken as a whole, or where specific policies in this Framework indicated that development should be restricted"*.

6.5 The NPPF is centred on a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Appeal Site, whilst outside the town's settlement boundary, is not in a Green Belt designation, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a Site of Special Scientific Interest or Local Green Space, all of which would indicated that development could be restricted. In landscape terms the Appeal Site accords with the NPPF and is not prejudicial to Ribble Valley Borough Council's Core Strategy emerging policies.

- 6.6 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF also states that *“the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
- *Protecting and enhancing **valued** landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;”* (My emphasis).

6.7 The NPPF does not define what is meant by a valued landscape but it is generally identified by the provision of a designation which is provided for within Planning Authorities Local Plans in order to protect, enhance and manage networks of green space and locally important landscapes. The Landscape Character Assessments supports the definition of the term valued landscape through the application of a national or local designation<sup>11</sup>, although it can be valued by different communities of interest for other more subjective reasons. Paragraph 170 supports the use of landscape character assessments, and for areas where there are major expansion option assessments of landscape sensitivity. Therefore the NPPF is focused on valued landscapes. Again, there are no such designations or valued landscapes present in respect of the Appeal Site.

**Regulation 22 – Draft Core Strategy: 2008-2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley**  
(Core Doc. Ref: CD13)

DMG1: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.8 The Core Strategy Submission Draft seeks a sequential preference to the principles of mitigation hierarchy.

- *“CONSIDER THE DENSITY, LAYOUT AND REALTIONSHIP BETWEEN BUILDINGS, WHICH IS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE, PARTICULAR EMPHASIS WILL BE PLACED ON VISUAL APPEARANCE AND THE RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDINGS, INCLUDING IMPACT ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, AS WELL AS THE EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT ON EXISTING AMENITIES.*
- *NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AMENITIES OF THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE”*

6.9 Consideration has been given to the above through the process of the Landscape and Impact Assessment prepared for the application and the urban design strategy developed by the architectural consultants. The indicative layout and landscape masterplan has also given consideration to the provisions of this policy.

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<sup>11</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage and The Countryside Agency. (2002) *Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland*, p.53.

## DMG2: STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.10 The Core Strategy Submission Draft requires that development proposals should be in accordance with the Core Strategy development strategy and should support special vision.

*“DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN DEFINED SETTLEMENTS SHOULD CONSOLIDATE, EXPAND OR ROUND OFF DEVELOPEMNT SO THAT IT IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE MAIN BUILT UP AREAS, ENSURING THIS IS APPROPRIATE TO THE SCALE OF, AND IN KEEPING WITH, THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT.*

*“WITHIN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE REQUIERD TO BE IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE LANDSCAPE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE SPECIAL QUALITY OF THE AREA BY VIRTUE OF ITS SIZE, DESIGN, USE OF MATERIALS, LANDSCAPING AND SITING ...”*

- 6.11 In this regard the development is considered to be in keeping with the character of the adjoining townscape by virtue of its anticipated use of materials, landscaping and siting. It has been demonstrated that the western side of the town is an eclectic mix of buildings which range from late 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace houses through to intermediate post war housing and late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing. The grain of density and material colours are elements which unify the urban fabric in this area and define its urban character. Older historic elements are identified within the central core around the castle. The development of new housing will have regard to materials and massing in order to reflect the adjacent residential area of similar type. Whilst the proposed development is outside the AONB, due regard will be made of the proximity of this designation and the views out of town and the proposed residential Site to this area. In all respects, it is considered that there would be no lasting significant detriment to the views to or from the AONB.

## DME2: LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE PROTECTION

- 6.12 The Draft Core Strategy Document requires that development does not significantly harm important landscape features.

*“DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE REFUSED WHICH SIGNIFICANTLY HARM IMPORTANT LANDSCAPE OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES.*

*HEDGEROWS AND INDIVIDUAL TREES (OTHER THAN IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE SATISFACTORY WORKS OF MITIGATION OR ENHANCEMENT WOULD BE ACHIEVED, INCLUDING REBUILDING,*

*REPLANTING AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT TOWNSCAPE ELEMENTS SUCH AS SCALE, FORM AND MATERIALS THAT COPNTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTERISTIC TOWNSCAPES OF THE AREA”*

- 6.13 No landscape feature as listed in the policy would be harmed by the proposed development. Of the hedgerows that would be lost, they have been assessed by independent consultants and are considered to be outgrown and species poor hedgerows. Trees that will require removal number 7 category ‘B’ trees, 1 category ‘C’ tree and 3 category ‘U’ trees (which are recommended for removal in any event due to their condition). Tree loss would be more than compensate for by new tree planting as illustrated on the landscape masterplan **Figure TAG 5**. In considering mitigation for loss of trees and any visual impact the potential cumulative impacts of a development will be considered where recent development has already taken place within the settlement boundary.

KEY STATEMENT EN2: LANDSCAPE

- 6.14 *“The landscape and character and the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.*

*The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced.*

*As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials”.*

- 6.15 The Appeal Site does not lie within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with a distance of approximately 1.5 kilometres at its closest point. The Appeal Site therefore does not contribute to the function or setting of the AONB. The intrinsic value of the AONB is protected by virtue of its designation and not by the value of adjacent landscapes. However, the indicative proposals of the Appeal Site illustrates that the landscape features accord with the provisions of the policy statement and that the character of the AONB will not be significantly harmed in terms of long distance views of the AONB from areas in close proximity to and from within the town of Clitheroe.

**Local Planning Policy: Ribble Valley District Wide Local Plan (adopted June 1998) with saved policies September 2007** (Core Doc. Ref: CD 14)

- 6.16 The Draft Core Strategy contains policies that are intended to supersede the saved policies within the district wide local plan and these policies will no longer continue to be saved upon adoption of the Core Strategy.
- 6.17 At a local level the Appeal Site is not covered by Policy G6 (Essential Open Space) and it is not designated as part of the AONB. The Site is also beyond the Green Belt (Policy ENV4) and is not listed as 'Open Land' (Policy ENV5). There is also no designation of 'Local Green Space' for the Site but should this be a consideration as a future designation then local policy for managing development within Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.
- 6.18 The reasons for refusal state that the proposals are contrary to policies G1, G2 and ENV3 of the Ribble Valley Local Plan. G1 and G2 are saved policies which will be replaced by DMG1 and DMG2 in the Core Strategy and which I have addressed above.

POLICY G2

- 6.19 Policy G2 of the Local Plan is concerned with the scale of development in terms of consolidation of development, expansion and rounding off.

*"Clitheroe – consolidation and expansion of development and rounding off development. In all cases this must be on sites wholly within the settlement boundary and must be appropriate to the town's size and form".*

- 6.20 It is accepted that the Appeal Site development is outside the settlement boundary of Clitheroe. However, it is considered that the development is appropriate to the town's size and structure. The Site provides a natural extension to the development proposals at land off Milton Avenue (Appeal Decision 4<sup>th</sup> February 2013, Ref: APP/T2350/A/12/2181354) and would extend to cover approximately 9.2 hectares with existing settlement features on two boundaries. When viewed from the north and north west the Site does not significantly increase the expanse of town and does not materially alter the character of the settlement pattern. The Appeal Site would be visually linked to the urban form. The development also forms a natural link with other land uses outside the settlement, specifically the cemetery and its proposed extension
- 6.21 The principal reason for refusal of the development is in relation to landscape and visual matters contained within policy ENV3. The policy description includes:

*“In the open countryside outside the AONB and areas immediately adjacent to it, development will be 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, will be permitted, provided regards has been given for the characteristic landscape features of the area.”*

### POLICY ENV3

- 6.22 In accordance with ENV3 of the Local Plan, a full landscape and visual assessment of the proposals based on the parameters of the development, was undertaken, and details of which were contained within the Design and Access Statement. It is accepted that landscape and visual impacts will accrue but that appropriate measures will mitigate these issues so that they will be acceptable and that development can successfully be assimilated into the surrounding landscape. The development design process recognises that adjacent open countryside is worthy of conservation and must seek to respond to the local characteristic landscape features. Important features of the Appeal Site will be retained including the watercourse, boundary hedgerows and trees and these will be enhanced to provide a strong landscape infrastructure, informal screening belts of native trees on the perimeter of the Site and specifically where sensitive receptors have been identified. Wildflower and grassland areas will be proposed within open space provision. Details of all these matters would be subject to scrutiny at Reserve Matters stage.
- 6.23 The Appeal Site has the ability to absorb change as it does not represent the most valued attributes of an AONB or any other locally designated landscape. The development would offer a high quality settlement edge which is contained in tight proximity to the existing settlement boundary, with improved public access, whilst safeguarding many features which currently define its character by the creation of public open space, additional footpath networks and enhanced trees planting, all of which will contribute to enhanced biodiversity. The masterplan layout demonstrates the Sites ability to become part of the urban fabric without contributing to urban sprawl into areas that are visually remote from the influence of the existing settlement.
- 6.24 It is not accepted that the development is an inappropriate urban extension which would change the character of this area of countryside to the detriment of visual amenities of the area. The Design and Access Statement has provided a clear process of design to provide a high quality and well considered scheme which will reflect local style, features and character. The development will be an extension of the urban character in this location with mitigation for identified impact on visual

amenity. In the longer term landscape amenity features will be enhanced with regard to the surrounding characteristics of the landscape.

### **Landscape Reasons for Refusal**

- 6.25 I set out below a further consideration of the landscape character and visual amenity reasons for refusal.

*“The proposed development due to its scale and location outside the defined settlement boundary of Clitheroe is considered to represent an urban extension in the open countryside which would change the character of this area of countryside to the detriment of the visual amenities of the area....”*

- 6.26 It is accepted that there will be change to both the character and visual amenity for some receptors. Perhaps, the most significant loss on a subjective level relates to the residential properties that are immediately adjacent to the Site. As high sensitivity receptors, the loss of rear views across the adjoining fields is considered moderate adverse. However, overall the proposed development influences a relatively limited visual envelope and the design process has been established to protect the views of local residents. Important views such as those from the Castle are acknowledged as being particularly special to many residents and visitors to the town. However, the development does not in any way detract from the wider and further views of the Bowland Fells and the AONB. Over time the development will be absorbed into the near foreground by the filtering effect of mitigation planting and the focus of the view will not be directed towards the Appeal Site in isolation. As recognized in the GLIVA methodology, such factors reduce the magnitude of effect and associated impacts.
- 6.27 The Appeal Site is located within open countryside but is not protected by a specific landscape designation. And has the ability to absorb change without changing the character of the adjacent countryside. Furthermore, the integration of new development adjacent to existing settlement is a more sustainable option supporting existing facilities and infrastructure. Alternative proposed development sites represent settlement in their own right and contribute to sprawl within pastoral countryside which has no visual interrelationship with exiting settlement.
- 6.28 The value of a landscape is generally protected through policy and designation. For a settlement such as Clitheroe, development opportunities to meet housing need into the future will need to be sought on non designated land that has the ability to absorb development in the most sustainable way. Planning evidence will demonstrate that there is limited capacity within the settlement of Clitheroe to meet or deliver future housing land supplies and that areas of non designated land in highly sustainable locations such as the Appeal Site should weigh heavily in favour of development.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Appeal Site itself is located with 'open countryside' and is not protected by a specific landscape designation. It abuts the settlement edge of Clitheroe to the south, south east and east. Clitheroe sits within the lower Ribble Valley close to areas of outstanding natural beauty, views of which can be seen from viewpoints such as Clitheroe Castle which look out over the town to the expansive Bowland Fells to the north and north west. Whilst the central area of Clitheroe around the castle has historic roots, in modern times the town has developed and spread and offers good communication lines by means of the railway, station and the A59 bypass.
- 7.2 The value of the site in landscape terms represents a minor sensitivity receptor outside the AONB and influenced heavily by the urban features of the town due to its close proximity. The Appeal Site has the ability to absorb change in relation to the adjoining residential context. The vegetation which defines the Site boundaries is characteristic of the 'undulating lowland farmland' and can be retained to all the boundaries and substantially enhanced to provide filtering and screening to development.
- 7.3 I accept that development will result in an alteration of the existing character of the Appeal Site and the loss of a number of low value existing landscape resources. However, this loss represents a localized moderate to minor effect. This needs to be considered alongside the benefits that a residential development will offer in terms of increased public access to the wider country beyond the site, areas of public open space, increased planting to both structure screen planting and roadside trees. All these landscape benefits will enhance the biodiversity of the area from the present baseline environs in accordance with SPD landscape strategy requirements.
- 7.4 The proposed development would affect the visual amenity of users of the site and from views that are generally at close quarters as seen by walkers using the nearby footpath network, from existing residential properties and from the Castle. These are local views rather than longer distances where the proposals are lost in the general townscape of Clitheroe. Both construction and operational phases would see some changes to the character of the Site but these are seen in the context of both the existing townscape and the adjacent countryside which has no landscape designation. Views from the Castle would not see any significant change to the wider panoramic views for the Bowland Fells and views towards Waddow Hall would not be interrupted from within the proposed development Site.
- 7.5 There are good opportunities to provide mitigation for all identified impacts that may be predicted on the landscape and visual amenity of the Site and its affect on

adjacent land and close receptors. The planning of significant landscape buffer areas and the introduction of an integrated landscape and tree planting scheme and extensive open space areas will serve to integrate the new houses and associated features into the adjacent settlement and provide a significant screen and fringe of landscape against the adjacent countryside. Proposed development orientation, colouring of materials and roofscape will sit well within the existing scene. New development will be further screened and diminished in mass over time as new landscaping matures.

7.6 As set out in my evidence, the importance of landscape is generally valued by its condition, location, rarity, historical connections and through policy and designation. For Clitheroe heritage is confined to its historic core around the Castle. Valued landscape in the borough are protected by the AONB designation. In a planning context, new housing development will need to be explored on non-designated land in sustainable locations that has the ability to absorb change in a manner which provides the least 'resistance' in landscape terms. Other guiding policy and objectives will secure a sensitive approach to new development in area such as found at the Appeal Site. I consider that the proposals would not intrude into the wider part of the AONB or into any significant views from the Castle.

7.7 The Appeal Site has responded to the landscape opportunities and constraints of the Site and surrounding area. Whilst there will be some change to the character of the Site and impact on views from certain receptors, I consider that these are not significant and detrimental to cause harm to the character and visual amenity of the local or wider landscape. Any such changes in appearance to the character of the landscape and visual amenity are outweighed by other public benefits and the need to secure a 5-year land supply of deliverable housing land.

7.8 In view of my evidence, I respectfully submit that there are no reasons in terms of landscape character and visual amenity effects that should prevent the granting of planning permission for the development as proposed.

*end*

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