

Derbyshire Landscape and Placemaking

Independent Landscape and Urban Design Advisors

email:

Landscape Comments

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SMP 2021 0610 Froghill Road Cheadle - Visual Landscape Impacts

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been carried out by fpcr. Overall, I consider that the methodology, scope, and process used in the appraisal are consistent with the guidelines detailed by GLVIA 3

Visual Envelope

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal describes the visual envelope as :

'The VE of the proposed development generally extends to the east and the south, views from the north are impeded mostly by topographical changes and intervening vegetation. Views from the south and south-west and west are available, however generally these are curtailed by the existing settlement of Cheadle, topographical changes, or vegetation.'

Whilst I generally agree with the chosen visual envelope and viewpoints, I would consider that an additional viewpoint is required to the southeast of the site along the PROW that is the approach to Wood Hall Estate.

Visual Effects

The viewpoint assessments are categorised by receptor types into, Residents, users of Public Rights of Way and users of the Highway. Viewpoint assessments are as follows (LVIA text shown in italics):

VP1 - Residents off Hammersley Hayes and Froghall Road

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal states: *'These residents will experience the greatest degree of visual change. As they are situated adjacent and have unobstructed views into the Site. Immediate views are open and look out across farmland. These properties have north-south facing windows which offer full/partial views to the Site as illustrated by viewpoint 01. Where views are possible the scale of effect will initially be High/Medium owing to the proximity of the proposals. At **completion** of the development, the visual effects are judged to be **Major/Moderate Adverse**. By **year 15**, the development and associated Green Infrastructure will be established to the point where it provides some filtering of the view and softening of the built form. This will help the development sit sympathetically within the landscape. The visual effects are likely to be **Moderate Adverse**.'*

I would consider the visual effects for this viewpoint to be **Major Adverse** at completion. The Parameters Masterplan does not show any proposals that are likely to significantly reduce visual effects by year 15, therefore I consider that they would remain **Major Adverse**.

VP12 - Residents off Froghall Road

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal states: *'There are many residential receptors located along Froghall Road, residents along this road will have a varying visual connection to the Site as the road runs from the town centre up to the western boundary of the Site. Views from Cheadle are represented in viewpoint 12. The views toward site from this location are partial and glimpsed and will be primarily from first floor level. This is due to existing settlement in the foreground screening*

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*views and the proximity to Site. For residents off the Froghall Road (viewpoint 12) The scale of effect will be **Medium/Low at completion**, reducing in time to low as vegetation matures that would filter and soften views of the built form, with the overall effect at **year 15 as Minor Adverse.***

I would agree with this assessment.

VP2 - Users of footpath Cheadle 40

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal states: *'Receptors along this track/footpath experience immediate views into the Site. For users of footpath Cheadle 40 the sequential experience and immediate context of the footpath will be altered from passing through a settlement edge/countryside landscape to a more developed context of houses, infrastructure and soft landscaping. The masterplan indicates that along the south-eastern boundary of the Site there will be Green Infrastructure with associated vegetation forming an important part of the POS within the scheme. This will ensure that the proposals provide a pleasant walking experience for users. Over time it is judged that once the proposals soft landscape features mature the scale of visual effect will lessen. At **completion**, the visual effects are judged to be **Moderate Adverse**. By **year 15** the proposals would be maturing and as such the visual effects are judged to be **Moderate/Minor Adverse.***

I would agree with this assessment.

VP3 - Users of footpath Cheadle 40

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal states: *'This view is taken along the Cheadle 40 approximately 700m east of the Site. This view represents what receptors along this PRoW experience when looking west. Views are of open countryside with limited features in the immediate foreground. The wider landscape features hedgerows and trees with glimpsed views toward the settlement edge of Cheadle on higher ground. A strong tree lined boundary to the north of the route contains views in this direction offering only glimpsed views. At completion of the development, the visual effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse**. By **year 15**, proposed vegetation would have established to the point where it provides some filtering of the view and softening of the built form, that would help the development sympathetically sit within the landscape. The visual effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse.***

I would agree with this assessment.

VP6&7 - Users of footpath Cheadle 31

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal states: *'Viewpoints 06 and 07 are taken on PRoW Cheadle 31 which is approximately 650-750m to the northwest of the Site. Receptors along this footpath (Viewpoint 06 and 07) experience partial/glimpsed views toward Site and as such are expected to have a limited visual relationship with the Site. This is largely due to screening provided by field boundary, which consists of semi mature to mature trees, additionally there are minimal breaks in hedgerow between the PRoW and the development. Despite relative proximity to the proposal, views will be screened when vegetation is in leaf with only minor breaks affording transient glimpses. In winter, views will remain filtered by overlapping winter stems. At **completion**, the visual effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse**. By **year 15** the proposals soft features would be maturing and as such the visual effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse/ Negligible.***

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I would agree with this assessment.

VP8 - Users of footpath Cheadle 39

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal states: *'Viewpoint 08 is taken on PRow Cheadle 39 and on the eastern periphery of Cheadle, approximately 520m from the southern boundary of the Site. Receptors along this footpath experience immediate views of irregular shaped pastoral field with weakened field boundaries. The vegetation does partially filter and reduce views northward from this location. The wider landscape features hedgerows and trees with partial views toward Broad Hayes Park and the Site beyond. At **completion**, the visual effects from this PRow are judged to be **Moderate/Minor Adverse**. By **year 15** the proposals soft features would be maturing and as such the visual effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse**'.*

I would agree with this assessment.

VP09&10 - Users of footpath Cheadle 38 and 39

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal states: *'Viewpoints 09 and 10 are representative of the views along PRow Cheadle 38 and 39 located approximately 750 to 820m southeast of the Site. The view shows that there is a visual connection from this location to the Site. However, the view is not full, in some instances, it is interrupted by existing vegetation and topography. Overall, the proposed development will be evident to users of these footpaths. The context of the view is of settlement edge character and although the development abuts eastward reducing the space between Broad Haye Farm and Cheadle, the visibility of the development is partially assimilated into the northern boundary of Cheadle. Additionally, consideration of the sensitive eastern edge has been reflected in the layout. It proposes a buffer area to the east of the Site, with an area of Public Open Space to the South. The provision of planting and open space will help soften visual changes experienced along this PRow. At **completion**, the visual effects are judged to be **Moderate Adverse**. This is anticipated to change by **year 15** and as such the visual effects are judged to be **Moderate/Minor Adverse**'.*

Whilst I would agree with this assessment at completion, I consider that visual impacts after 15 years will not reduce appreciably and would remain **Moderate Adverse**. Generally, I have concerns regarding the setting of Broad Haye in relation to development (see section below headed 'Landscape Setting of Broad Haye').

The photo below is taken from PRow Cheadle 38 from similar viewpoint to VP10. This view is characteristic for several point along the footpath and clearly shows the façade of Broad Haye set in isolation from the urban area of Cheadle. The photo of VP10 within the Landscape and Visual Appraisal partly obscures Broad Haye by positioning Woodhead Hall Farm in the foreground.

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The photo below shows the view from along the Public Right of Way leading to Woodhead Hall to the east of the site, the view is available over low fences for a good distance along the PROW. An additional viewpoint from here would have been useful in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal. The site is clearly visible from several point along the track, although the farm buildings partly detract from the farmhouse the prominent façade of Broad Haye stands out clearly set isolated from the urban area nestled in a wooded landscape.



VP4 - Road users of Froghall Road

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal states: *'This viewpoint (viewpoint 04) is located 5m west of the Site and is representative of views for road users of Froghall Road when travelling north or south. It is evident within the view that the field boundary is of moderate quality, the hedgerow does help to contain and filter views to a certain degree. However, there are occasions along this route where gaps appear leaving direct and open views into the site. Overall users of this road will have a visual connection to the Site, but due to the transient nature of the route and when vegetation is in leaf*

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*visible effects will not be major. At completion, the visual effects from this road are judged to be **Moderate Adverse**. By year 15 the proposals soft features would be maturing and as such the visual effects are judged to be **Moderate/Minor Adverse**.*

I would agree with this assessment.

VP5 - Road users of Froghall Road

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal states: *'This view (viewpoint 05) is taken from Froghall Road beside two farm tracks, approximately 380m north of the Site. The foreground of the view features Froghall Road and a hedgerow forming a field boundary. Views feature roadside trees and vegetation. The landform is undulating. Intervening hedgerow, a trees and topographical changes obscure views of the Site. Receptors of this road will have glimpsed views toward site largely due to intervening vegetation and because of the transient nature of views and receptors when traveling along roads. At **completion**, the visual effects from this road are judged to be **Minor Adverse**. By year 15 the proposals soft features would be maturing and although this will lessen the views into site it is judged that the visual effects will remain **Minor Adverse**.*

I would agree with this assessment.

VP11 - Road users of Leek Road

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal states: *'This view (Viewpoint 11) is taken from Leek Road beside approximately 1.1km west of the Site. The foreground of the view features an open agricultural field, hedgerow and a tree belt that forms a strong field boundary. Users of Leek Road have views in the direction of the proposed development contained by topography and woodland blocks. Any glimpses of the proposed development would be at a distance and feature Cheadle to the south. Users will also experience views in a sequential and transient manner. As such, stated visual effects only relate to a short section of this road. Effects at **completion** are anticipated to be **Minor Adverse/negligible**, views are not anticipated to change by year 15 and as such the visual effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse/negligible**'*

I would agree with this assessment.

Landscape Setting of Broad Haye

The prominence and importance of Broad Haye in the landscape is recognised in the Heritage Statement:

'The three-storey, classically proportioned principal façade was evidently designed as an eyecatcher, as illustrated in LVIA Photo Viewpoint 10, and as a deliberate expression of the social status aspirations of the landowner'.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment of Staffordshire Moorlands (2008) places the proposed development site within *Ancient Slopes and Valley Farmlands* Landscape Character Type. One of the Key characteristics of this Character Area is isolated properties which Broad Haye is consistent with. The Assessment also recommends that:

'Development and new tree planting should take account of the setting of the historic parklands, of the setting of important buildings and of important local views. Any proposals for development or land use change which impacts upon the setting of an historic parkland must take account of the unique character of that designed landscape'.

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Therefore, the relationship of Broad Haye in the landscape, to the urban edge and to proposed development is important.

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal mentions Broad Haye but does not discuss the cultural heritage and significance of isolated farms in the landscape surrounding the site:

'Cultural Heritage: The local landscape contains a limited number of cultural heritage features. The Grade II Broad Haye Farmhouse is located along the north-eastern boundary. Other listed buildings are found within Cheadle itself such as the Church of St Giles located 1km away'

The Heritage Statement discusses the setting and views of Broad Haye in the landscape in greater detail and the likely impacts of the development. It states:

.....'in terms of the asset's setting, the relationship and views experienced to the south-east of the asset (and the return views to the north-west) are of the most importance in understanding the significance of the building. 4.10 In its present state the subject site, as open rural and agricultural land, makes a positive contribution to the setting and significance of the asset through the provision of context and through the historic ownership links with the asset, but in the hierarchy of the contribution to the significance of the asset is considered to be of lesser value than the land to the southeast.'

I agree that the land to the southeast is most important to preserving the view of the building façade, however I also consider the land partly occupied by the site is important in terms of the isolated setting of the building,

The Heritage Statement discusses coalescence with the urban edge, but I do not consider it gives enough emphasis to the importance of isolation of Broad Haye.

'The proposals will cause a large degree of change to the character of the field parcel, with the loss of the present rural open expanse. A considerable buffer is retained, however, in the vicinity of Broad Haye Farmhouse, which prevents visual coalescence in views from the PROWs in the vicinity, as evidenced by the comparison of Photo Viewpoint 10 and Drawing Number 020-020-P004, which demonstrates that the development edge is largely subsumed by, and experienced in the context of, existing development, and allows the asset to be experienced within a broadly rural context, although the presence of residential development will be increased within its periphery.'

In terms of the likely effects upon visual coalescence I disagree with the Heritage Statement.

I consider that the proposed development will result in Broad Haye having much stronger visual links to the expanded urban area of Cheadle and a loss of isolation in its setting in the landscape. I am not convinced that the proposed inclusion of a buffer zone adjacent to Broad Haye will retain the impression of an isolated setting.

Conclusion

At year 15, the Landscape and Visual Appraisal assesses visual effects to include 1 view as Moderate, 5 views as Moderate/Minor and 6 views as Minor or less: with receptors having a high or high/moderate sensitivity. I would consider the visual effects for the views investigated by the Landscape and Visual Appraisal at year 15 to be 1 view as Major, 1 view as Moderate, 4 views as Moderate/Minor and 6 views as Minor or less. I would also include an additional view from along the Public Right of Way leading to Woodhead Hall to the east of the site for which I would consider the visual effects to be Moderate at year 15.

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal concludes the following:

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'It is assessed that the design and mitigation approaches adopted by the proposed development through its design and master planning are appropriate and would minimise impacts on landscape and visual receptors in the longer term. In conclusion, it is assessed that the proposed development would not result in any unacceptable long-term landscape and visual effects.'

Whilst the masterplan has made considerations to reduce long-term visual effects, I am not confident that the development would not result in any unacceptable long-term landscape and visual effects.

In terms of sensitivity of the landscape to accommodate change, the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment states that *'Urban fringe pressures can have an adverse impact on landscape quality with the proliferation of incongruous features and the deteriorating condition of existing landscape features...'*

For this particular site Broad Haye is a characteristic landscape feature and I am not confident the proposals would successfully mitigate the potential loss of visual isolation of Broad Haye. I suggest that a more detailed study on the likely visual effects upon the of landscape setting of Broad Haye is required including photomontages to investigate the likely effectiveness of the proposed Green Infrastructure for views where the façade of Broad Haye form a noticeable feature in the landscape.