Moneystone Quarry – Full Planning Applications
SMD/2019/0716 & SMD/2019/0725
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Technical Note
April 2020

INTRODUCTION

This Landscape and Visual Impact Technical Note, prepared by Planit-IE on behalf of Laver Leisure, seeks to establish whether the proposed conversion of existing laboratory buildings and the construction of new water outfall are likely to result in a change to the assessed effects identified within the Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted pursuant to the adjacent permitted Moneystone Park leisure development (application reference SMD/2016/0378) hereby referred to as the 2016 Assessment. Whilst it is noted that both of these applications are located on land that was not part of the 2016 application, both are immediately adjacent to it and have a direct physical and operational link to the main site.

The two full planning applications are:
SMD/2019/0716 – Change of use of the existing building from a laboratory to a sports hall with climbing wall, soft play area, two-lane mini bowl, cinema room; craft room and craft store, bike store and maintenance and bike hire office, cafe, viewing area, WCs, management office and plant rooms associated with Moneystone Park. These facilities are for the visitors of the Moneystone Park leisure development and local residents. Access will be via the permitted Moneystone Park leisure development.

This full application sits within Moneystone Park but outside the red line boundary of the outline planning permission. The majority of the uses proposed within the laboratory buildings were consented in the hub building as part of the 2016 outline planning permission. Due to the approved hub parameters, not all of these uses could be accommodated within the building proposed as part of the Reserved Matters application and therefore a separate change of use application has been submitted.
SMD/2019/0725 - Proposed construction of surface water outfall associated with Moneystone Park leisure development.
This full application for the surface water outfall was required because the position of the outfall required to discharge water from Quarry 3 extends beyond the red line boundary of the outline planning permission. The proposed surface water outfall was always envisaged as part of the Flood Risk Assessment ('FRA') submitted with the outline application.

The following drawings have been reviewed to understand the location, extent and nature of the proposed changes to both applications:

1. Ref: Moneystone Park – Activity Building - DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT – RELATING TO CONVERSION OF LABORATORY BUILDING TO LEISURE ACTIVITY BUILDING OCTOBER 2019
2. Ref : 1733-LB-019 Proposed Site Plan.
3. Ref :1733-LB-014 Proposed Elevations.
4. Ref: 1733-OF-010 Rev 3 Site Plan Outfall Area.

No additional viewpoint photomontages have been produced to support these applications, and therefore the visual assessment within this report is based on previous photomontages produced for the 2016 assessment, design information provided within the Design and Access Statement and Proposed building elevational drawings referenced above.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

The applications seeks to make a number of minor changes that are relevant to the Landscape and Visual Assessment:

Proposed Conversion of Laboratory Building

Proposed internal building changes

- The conversion of the existing building into the Activity Centre involves the removal of the internal walls currently subdividing the existing portal framed warehouse within the upper building to create a Sports Hall.
- The entrance into the Activity Centre is positioned on the Northwest elevation facing towards the new Hub building and this is 'oversized' to create a clear visual signifier.
- There are 3no. small extensions to the existing building footprint:

1. Feature entrance and lobby set within the opening formed by the existing roller shutter door on the Northwest elevation.
2. Small extension to the rear of the lean-to to create sufficient length for the Bowling Alley.
3. Additional space to the side of the stair within the link corridor to enable the inclusion of a wheelchair platform lift to allow wheelchair users access between the two levels.

Proposed external material changes

The aim has been to change the nature of the external appearance from 'Industrial' to 'Agricultural', whilst at the same time tying it in visually with the other buildings included within the Reserved Matters Application. It is therefore the intention to remove existing metal cladding and patent glazing and replace with black Marley Eternit Profile 6 cladding (regularly used on agricultural buildings), add new gutter profiles and overclad the brickwork with vertical board and batten 'Accoya' timber panelling, as proposed for the Hub and Housekeeping buildings included within the separate Reserved Matters Application. Windows to be replaced with grey powder coated double glazed aluminium framed units, to match those proposed elsewhere on the wider site.

Proposed Surface Water Outfall at Quarry 3

A channel /cutting shall be made through the existing landbridge between Q3 Lake and Stream A at a level of 153.8m AOD through the existing bedrock, reducing to a level of 153m AOD where joining Stream A. A flat bed weir shall then be constructed in line with the existing outfall, to maintain lake levels at or close to 154m AOD.

METHODOLOGY

This technical note utilises the assessment methodology established in the 2016 Assessment to understand if the above minor amendments are likely to cause further likely significant effects over and above the residual effects identified in the 2016 Assessment.

This technical note will assess the potential for effects in relation to the operational stage of the development. It is not considered that there will be further significant effects at the construction stage due to the minor nature of the changes and temporary extent of construction effects. Construction phase effects have therefore been scoped out of this Technical Note.

UPDATES TO THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated on 19 June 2019 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This revised Framework replaces the previous NPPF published in March 2012.

The environmental objective is of particular relevance to the purposes of LVIA. Section 12 of the NPPF deals with the requirements of good design. The overarching principle is set out in paragraph 124, which states:

"The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF sets out a number of principles of good design. In order to accord with these principles, it should be ensured that new developments:

a) *"will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
b) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
c) *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."*

All other planning policy referenced within the 2016 assessment remains current.

BASELINE

With regards to the current baseline conditions on site, there have been ongoing restoration works in line with the agreed restoration plan. These have been overseen by Bowland Ecology as part of their ongoing ecological input and advice at the site.

With the exception of the ongoing restoration works, there haven't been any further demolition or construction activities since planning permission was granted for the 2016 outline application.

To ensure a 'worst-case scenario' assessment was undertaken as part of the 2016 LVIA in accordance with the Guidelines[1], the baseline conditions assumed the full implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan which was approved by Staffordshire County Council ("SCC"). This approach ensured that all vegetation and habitat loss as a result of the proposals would be accurately identified and mitigated as part of the EIA. Whilst it is acknowledged that very minor change to the overall site is likely to have occurred as a result of the restoration works and general continuing maturity of on site vegetation, the approach taken in the 2016 assessment ensures that it is still relevant to the site today and no update to the baseline assessment is required.

MITIGATION

It is assumed that the mitigation proposals included within the approved planning permission are still valid, and have been reflected in the subsequent Reserved Matters applications for the site.

POTENTIAL CHANGE TO ASSESSED LANDSCAPE IMPACTS

The 2016 Assessment identified 3 landscape receptor groups. These receptors are listed below alongside an assessment of potential change to the assessed effects at the operational stage.

Landscape Receptor	Summary of Potential Change to Operational Effects
Landscape Character at national and local level	There is no alteration to the overall site character as a result of either the conversion of the laboratory, or construction of the outfall. The building footprint and associated parking areas are consistent with the approved 2016 masterplan. The proposed changes to the building design and its leisure uses more closely align to the aspirations of the wider masterplan. There is potential for a very small, localised change in the local landscape character immediately around the outfall, however this will be so minor as to not alter the assessed impact on the wider Landscape Character Area. Therefore the overall impact of the proposals on landscape character as defined at the national level is predicted to remain as **no change/ negligible,** and the overall impact of the proposals on landscape character at the local level will remain as **no change/ negligible.**
Footpaths, Cycle paths and Bridleways	No change to the proposed movement network is proposed as a result of either application. The overall impact is therefore predicted to remain as **moderate beneficial**.
Topography	There is potential for a very small, localised change in the site topography to construct the outfall, however this will be so minor as to not alter the assessed impact. The overall impact is therefore predicted to remain as **negligible**.

POTENTIAL CHANGE TO ASSESSED VISUAL EFFECTS

The 2016 Assessment identified 17 viewpoints which had the potential to experience significant effects. These covered the entirety of the proposed Moneystone Leisure Village site, and as such are not focused on either the laboratory, or the area of the outfall. Additionally, longer range views of the site from surrounding hills are too distant to make out either area in sufficient detail to be able to assess any level of change due to these minor works. Only view 17 is considered in this report, as it includes a partial view of the laboratory building from the public footpath adjacent to Little Eaves Farm. The photomontage for this view is provided (**figure 1**). An update to this view prepared in February 2020 to support the 2019 Reserved Matters application is also provided (**figure 2**), as it includes a wider angle that includes more of the laboratory building.

[1] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), 3012. IEMA,

Figure 1 – *Viewpoint 17 Photomontage and wireline view (2016 assessment) (laboratory building shown to far right of view)*

Figure 2 – *Viewpoint prepared for 2019 Reserved Matter Application.*

Visual Receptor	Summary of Potential Change to Operational Effects
Views 17	The minor alterations to the façade of buildings are likely to be partially visible from the viewpoint, with the proposed façade treatments of timber slat and black profile cladding fitting comfortably into the rural character of the view. These materials commonly used on agricultural structure could help to reduce the visual prominence of the existing brick building, and also allow it link visually with the proposed new Hub facility. The overall scale and form of the building will remain unchanged, with the small additional extensions unlikely to be visible due to lower level screening from site vegetation. The visual changes associated with the converted laboratory are considered to cause no change/ negligible change to the character of the existing view. The 2016 Assessment identified potential adverse visual impacts due to the scale of the overall development visible from this viewpoint. It is not anticipated that the works associated with the converted laboratory would significantly address or worsen this impact, and therefore the predicted assessment remains as minor adverse.

SUMMARY OF LIKELY LANDSCAPE IMPACTS

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Technical Note seeks to understand whether the proposed works associated with the two full planning applications (SMD/2019/0716 & SMD/2019/0725)are likely to result in a change to the assessed effects identified in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted pursuant to the approved 2016 planning application. A total of 4 landscape and 1 visual receptors were considered as part of this assessment.

Whilst there is some potential for localised landscape effects as a result of the proposed developments, these effects are predicted to be negligible due to the minor scale of change, and their limited impact on overall landscape character and site features. There is a potential for a slight beneficial visual impact as a result of the change in façade treatment of the laboratory building to a more agricultural 'rural' appearance but again, due to the very minor scale of change this is considered negligible. Therefore, there are not predicted to be any changes to the landscape or visual effects predicted in the 2016 assessment as a result of the proposed conversion of existing laboratory buildings and the construction of new water outfall.