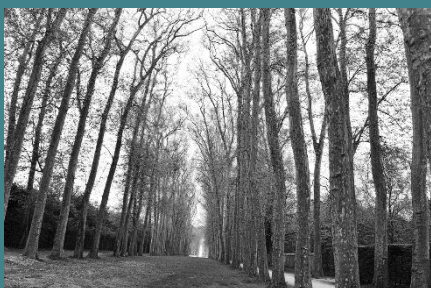


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PROOF OF EVIDENCE

Landscape and Visual Matters

Timothy Jackson BA (Hons), Dip LA, CMLI

APPEAL REF: APP/B3438/W/24/3351035

LPA REF: SMD/2021/0610

Client

Bloor Homes NW Ltd

Project

Land to the east of Froghall Road, Cheadle

Date

January 2025

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APPENDICES (ATTACHED SEPARATELY)

- Appendix A: Curriculum Vitae
- Appendix B: Environmental Constraints and Features Plan
- Appendix C: Photomontages

Rev	Issue Status	Prepared/Date	Approved/Date
C	FINAL	TJ/07/01/25	TJ/07/01/25

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Timothy Richard Jackson. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and a Senior Director in the long established, multi-disciplinary environmental design company FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR). The Practice is a member of the Landscape Institute, the Institute of Environmental Assessment and Management and The Urban Design Group. I have been a partner/ director of the practice for 24 years.
- 1.2 I have over 33 years' experience of landscape and development projects from initial conceptual design through to final completion and long-term aftercare. I am frequently involved in site selection, constraints analysis, environmental impact assessment and detailed landscape design. I have advised on landscape and visual impact issues on a wide range of residential, commercial and mixed use development schemes and have completed landscape character assessment work and landscape capacity studies for local authority and private sector clients.
- 1.3 I have also undertaken Green Belt, Settlement (and Strategic) 'Gap' and Green Wedge studies and presented evidence on these and landscape, visual and design matters at planning appeals and local plan examinations.
- 1.4 In the past year, I have been responsible for the co-ordination and production of a series of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, Landscape and Green Infrastructure Strategies, Landscape Masterplans and Design and Access Statements in support of various planning applications, together with accompanying Environmental Statements. I am currently leading the masterplanning, environmental impact assessment and landscape services on one of the first round of Garden Villages at Grantham in Lincolnshire.
- 1.5 FPCR acts as a consultant to government bodies such as Homes England and Natural England. It also acts as a consultant to many local authorities across the United Kingdom and we have received Landscape Institute Awards for projects carried out on behalf of Cambridge County Council and Hinckley and Bosworth Council.
- 1.6 My curriculum vitae is included at Appendix A.
- 1.7 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal reference is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions irrespective of by whom I am instructed.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 The planning application was recommended for approval by the Case Officer (Committee Report at CD4.2) and went before the Planning Applications Committee on 28th March 2024. The Planning Committee overturned the officer's recommendation and resolved to refuse permission, which the council confirmed by notice on 15th April 2024.
- 2.2 On landscape and visual matters, the Case Officer's recommendation was informed by an external independent review of the Appellants Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (CD2.6), undertaken for the Council by *Derbyshire Landscape and Placemaking* consultants (CD3.13). This independent review confirmed that the methodology, scope and process used in the LVA accorded with the relevant guidelines (GLVIA3) (CD9.1). The review also substantially agreed with the assessed effects of the proposed development as detailed in the LVA, with only very minor points of disagreement. This review fed into the Officer's Report and approval recommendation.
- 2.3 Notwithstanding the recommendation and the LVA Review, the application was refused for three reasons, as detailed on the Decision Notice (CD4.1). I address landscape and visual matters relevant to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's (SMDC's) Reason for Refusal (RfR) No. 2. For ease of reference, this is repeated below:
- "2. In the Councils Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment the site lies within the landscape character type of Ancient Slope and Valley Farmland. Replacing open fields with a suburban housing estate could not be said to respect or respond to key characteristics of this landscape character type. Although the plans show that some existing landscape features will be retained, the proposed roundabout will necessitate the loss of the whole frontage hedge. Furthermore there is no existing landscape feature defining the northern boundary. The landscape is relatively open and on rising ground and the site is visible not only from Froghall Road to the west but also from the south, in particular from Hammersley Hayes Road (also the route of Public Footpath Cheadle 40) and in longer views from Public Footpaths Cheadle 38 and 39. In these latter views Broad Hayes Farm is seen in isolation from the urban area of Cheadle. The proposed development would encroach into the landscape setting of this isolated farmhouse, noting that isolated properties are one of the key characteristics of this landscape character type. Overall the proposal will not respect or enhance local landscape character and will result in a prominent visual intrusion into the countryside. As such there is conflict with Policy DC3 of the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and the NPPF which says that planning decisions should contribute and enhance the natural and local environment by amongst other matters recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside."*
- 2.4 In my evidence I will focus on landscape and visual matters as they relate to the proposed development and the planning application. My evidence will outline the approach which has been adopted by the appellant and I will address relevant policy and design criteria as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), the Development Plan and relevant Design Guidance. I will also consider and address the hierarchy of landscape designations, landscape character assessments and other landscape and design related documents or plans where relevant to this Site and its context.
- 2.5 I will show that the proposal will not be out of character with the existing settlement edge or its landscape context and it will in fact represent an appropriate development solution, in landscape and visual terms. The proposed scheme respects and responds positively to the

existing characteristics and features of its settlement edge location and the visual amenity of the area will not be harmed to any significant degree by the proposal.

- 2.6 I conclude that the Site can be developed in a way that will not result in any significant harm to local landscape or settlement character or visual amenity. The appeal proposal will respect the character and pattern of the surrounding settlement and landscape and will also encompass valuable new public open space, landscape and habitat proposals and be supported by a commitment to its long term management.
- 2.7 Mr Coxon gives evidence covering planning matters and Ms Stoten gives evidence covering heritage matters.

3.0 THE PROPOSED SITE AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (CD2.6) and Design and Access Statement (DAS) (CD2.20) submitted with the planning application describe the key characteristics and features of the Site and local area in terms of landscape, settlement and visual amenity. The key characteristics and features of the Site and local area can be summarised as follows:

Environmental Constraints and Features – Cheadle (Appendix B)

- 3.2 Cheadle occupies an environmental and landscape context with some notable constraints and features surrounding the existing and immediate settlement edge. This includes Green Belt, an area of '*Important Landscape Setting to Settlement*' and other Priority Habitats and Features. To the east and south east, the immediate surrounds to the town include an extensive '*Important Landscape Setting to Settlement*' area. To the north of this area lie three smaller landscape parcels identified as '*Remnant Historic Landscape*'. These generally sit more removed from the immediate settlement edge on the eastern slopes of the Cecilly Brook valley. A single '*Significant View*' is identified some distance to the east of the town. Many of these environmental constraints and features are identified within the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment of Staffordshire Moorlands (LSCASM) (2008) (CD9.4).
- 3.3 The Appeal Site lies outside and beyond all of the identified Environmental Constraints and Features. It occupies one of very few unconstrained settlement edge locations in these terms. It is also not visible from the '*Significant Viewpoint*' identified in the LSCASM.

Context & Land Use (CD2.6 LVA; Figures 1 and 2)

- 3.4 The Site lies adjoining the existing northern settlement edge of Cheadle, Staffordshire, with existing residential development situated adjoining to the western and southern sides of the Site. It also adjoins Froghall Road on its western boundary and a track (and Public Right of Way) also extends alongside the south eastern Site boundary. Broad Haye Farmhouse (Grade II Listed Building) lies immediately to the east of the Site and existing farmland lies beyond to the north and north east.
- 3.5 The existing development to the south of the Site comprises existing houses on Hammersley Hayes Road; the Broad Hayes Park development and the emerging Cheadle North Strategic Development Area (development presently under construction). A small area of Public Open Space also lies bordering the Site, off Hammersley Hayes Road.
- 3.6 The Site itself comprises two fields bound by a combination of the surrounding development, a road/ track and fenced and hedgerow boundaries. The northern extent of the Site stretches across a field between Froghall Road and a hedgerow field boundary to the north of Broad Haye Farm.
- 3.7 A hedgerow field boundary containing a small number of mature trees extends through the Site from Froghall Road in the west to the north east corner of the Site. The Froghall Road boundary comprises a hedgerow and small number of trees. A low voltage power line and posts also cross the south western part of the Site.

Topography (CD2.6 LVA; Figure 5)

- 3.8 The topography of the Site's wider context is undulating and shaped by a series of valleys and ridges, including the Cecilly Brook, which lies to the east of the Site and falls from north to south. More pronounced and prominent landform variations and ridgelines exist within and

surrounding the southern parts of Cheadle. These include the Hillside and Cheadle Park area to the north west of the town centre and further wooded ridgelines to the south west and south east of the town. These all rise to in excess of 230 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Wooded higher ground and hills also lie more distantly to the east of the town, above the River Churnet Valley

- 3.9 The Site lies on sloping ground that falls towards the south and south east, from around 190m AOD on its north western edge alongside Froghall Road to around 175m AOD on its south eastern side adjoining the existing track/ PROW.

Local Character and Appearance

- 3.10 An assessment of the character and appearance of the landscape has been undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) (GLVIA3) (CD9.1) and is included within the submitted LVA (CD2.6). The methodology adopted has been confirmed as appropriate by both the Council's Landscape Advisers on the planning application and by their Landscape Witness for this Appeal (LSCOG paras 4.11 – 4.14).
- 3.11 Published Landscape Character Assessments covering the landscape context of both the Site and Cheadle are included in the LVA and are referenced in the following Landscape Character section.

4.0 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS AND CHARACTER

- 4.1 The LVA (CD2.6) includes an assessment of the baseline landscape designations and character by reference to statutory and non-statutory designations and to relevant published studies. This is summarised below.

Landscape Designations (Appendix B and LVA CD2.6; Figure 4)

- 4.2 The Site and its immediate context is not situated within a landscape that is subject to any national, local or other statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.
- 4.3 In terms of landscape areas of important sensitivity to the setting of Cheadle, the LSCASM (2008) (CD9.4) identifies areas adjoining the town to the west and also to the east and south east (Appendix B). The Site does not lie within or close to these important landscape areas.
- 4.4 It is also agreed with the Council (LSOCG; para 4.17) that the Site is not and does not form part of a 'Valued Landscape' for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 187 a).
- 4.5 In terms of other environmental designations, a Listed Building (Grade II) (Broad Haye Farm) lies close to the eastern side of the Site and a relatively small number of other Listed Buildings lie within the wider context of the Site and Cheadle to the east and west; with a further small concentration of Listed Buildings within the town centre (and Conservation Area) approximately 1km+ to the south.
- 4.6 Green Belt extends around much of the western side of the settlement and covers all of the land directly to the west of the Site and Froghall Road (See Appendix B).

Landscape Character (LVA CD2.6; Figure 3)

National

- 4.7 At this very broad scale, the Site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 64, 'Potteries and Churnet Valley', as defined by Natural England (CD9.3). This area covers a very extensive landscape tract stretching around Stoke on Trent and Newcastle under Lyme and across the landscape to the north, east and south from Biddulph to the edge of Uttoxeter.
- 4.8 Key characteristics of the NCA include the following:
- *'Dissected hills and small plateaux, cut by river valleys and steep ravines, contrast with the industrial and densely settled conurbation of the Potteries.'*
 - *The well-wooded character throughout the Churnet Valley contrasts strongly with the urban, sparsely wooded landscapes of the Potteries. Many of the woodlands in the south consist of conifer plantations managed for commercial forestry.*
 - *Agriculture is predominantly permanent pasture for grazing and stock rearing with some dairying; flatter areas are used for silage production and some arable cropping in the south, mainly cereals.*
 - *There is a rich heritage associated with iron production, coal mining, silk production and, most notably, pottery; the area is characterised by industrial and residential development in the Potteries and waterpowered flint mills and foundries in the Churnet Valley.*

- *Red brick manufactured from the local Etruria Marl and sandstone from the Coal Measures are predominantly used as building materials in lowland areas; Millstone Grit is used in upland areas in farmhouses and drystone walls. Plain clay and large numbers of Staffordshire blue tiles or Welsh slate are used for roofing.*

4.9 The Summary for NCA 64 states;

'Located in North Staffordshire, the landscape of Potteries and Churnet Valley National Character Area (NCA) exhibits a strong contrast between the industrialised landscape of the Potteries and the pastoral, strongly dissected hills and small plateaux that flank the Churnet and Dove valleys....

The north and eastern boundary of the NCA rises to meet the limestone landscape of the White Peak and South West Peak NCAs with panoramic vistas of a transitional landscape from lowland to upland....'

4.10 This national scale study sets the very broad landscape context for the Site and Cheadle. There is nothing within the study to indicate that new development on the edge of Cheadle would be unacceptable or uncharacteristic in landscape terms.

District

4.11 Within the '*Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment of Staffordshire Moorlands*' (LSCASM) (2008) (CD9.4), the Site lies within the '*Ancient Slopes and Valley Farmlands*' (ASVF) Landscape Character Type (LCT). This LCT covers a large proportion of Staffordshire Moorlands, including all of the landscape surrounding Cheadle. The Key Characteristics of the ASVF LCT comprise the following;

- *'Strongly undulating or sloping landscape cut by small scale steep sided stream valleys;*
- *Small scale mainly ancient irregular fields bounded by trees and hedgerows Extensive views from higher ground;*
- *Intimate wooded valleys;*
- *Stone buildings and drystone walls towards uplands;*
- *Isolated properties;*
- *Narrow winding lanes;*
- *Parklands;*
- *Quarrying*

4.12 Under the sub heading '*Key Planning and Management Issues*', the study references seven matters, including; '*Expansion of neighbouring settlements and localised industry.*'

4.13 Under the sub heading '*Capabilities and sensitivities of the landscape to accommodate change*', the study states;

'Planning for Landscape Change Supplementary Planning Guidance to Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan, identifies this landscape character areas as an area requiring landscape maintenance although that part of the character type around Cheadle requires landscape enhancement. It is not identified as an area that is particularly sensitive to change.'

- 4.14 A series of Landscape Planning Guidelines are also included for the ASVF LCT. These include the following references;
- *'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. Although this is generally a well structured landscape the impact of urban expansion needs to be monitored.'*
 - *'Planting, both trees and woodlands can be used effectively to reinforce the existing vegetational structure to enable it to more readily absorb new development and to screen the edges of existing settlement and industrial/commercial uses.'*
 - *'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....'*
 - *'The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional local buildings characteristic of this area.'*
 - *'The loss of semi-natural vegetation should be checked and remaining habitats should be protected, managed and where possible extended to create sustainable communities.'*
- 4.15 This study provides a relatively more detailed landscape character assessment than the national scale study. It describes a relatively varied landscape of predominantly undulating farmland yet also smaller scale wooded valleys. It recognises that the landscape is; not particularly sensitive to change; generally, requires a combination of maintenance and enhancement; and although generally well structured should be monitored for urban expansion, with woodland and trees used to absorb new development and screen settlement edges.
- 4.16 No 'important local views' are identified that have views towards the Site (see 'Cheadle' section below) and the guidelines seek landscape and planting proposals to integrate new development. The guidelines do not suggest that this landscape has no capacity for change.
- Cheadle
- 4.17 The (LSCASM) (2008) also includes an appraisal and description of Cheadle, including two figures, illustrating 'Cheadle Setting' and 'Cheadle Constraints' (See CD9.4). The 'Cheadle Setting' Figure identifies various landscape and environmental areas and features. These include areas identified as 'Important landscape setting to settlement' and 'Remnant historic landscapes' and 'Significant Views'. The former comprises two broad landscape areas on the south eastern and western sides of the settlement edge. The accompanying description of Cheadle states; *'The area to the south east of Cheadle is a small scale landscape with strong vegetation along field boundaries it is an area of important landscape setting for the settlement.'* As is evident from the 'Cheadle Setting' figure and this description, the Site lies distant from this important landscape on the northern edge of the settlement.
- 4.18 The 'Remnant historic landscapes' comprise three smaller areas on the eastern slopes of the Cecilly Brook. The Site also lies outside and well beyond these identified areas on the western slopes of the Brook.
- 4.19 A single 'Significant View' is identified for Cheadle (See also my Appendix B and CD9.4), to the east of the town. This is the only important local view identified in the study and is referenced

in the Landscape Planning Guidelines (above at para 4.14; 3rd bullet). Notably, the Site is not visible from this identified significant view.

- 4.20 The 'Cheadle Setting' Figure also includes a general reference to 'Fewer hedgerow trees' close to the east of the Site and identifies the PROW (Cheadle 40) alongside the south eastern edge of the Site and extending across the landscape to the east as one of a series of 'significant public footpaths'.
- 4.21 It is evident from the assessment of Cheadle within this study that the Site occupies a relatively less important landscape adjoining the settlement edge and is not visible from the identified significant view. The collective environmental constraints and features plan at my Appendix B further demonstrates the position in these terms.

Other Published Studies

- 4.22 A number of other studies have relevance to landscape and visual matters and have been appraised as part of the consideration and design of the Appeal Scheme and as part of this evidence. These include:
- *Planning for Landscape Change: Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan, 1996 – 2011;*
 - *Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Impact Study (August 2016);*
 - *Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018);*
 - *Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide Adopted (2018).*

Site and Immediate Context - Landscape

- 4.23 An assessment of landscape character of the Site and its immediate context has been carried out, providing a finer level of assessment than the published studies. This is detailed in the submitted LVA (CD2.6).

Landscape Value

- 4.24 I did not undertake the original appraisal of Landscape Value detailed within the submitted LVA yet in preparing my evidence I have reviewed that detailed within the LVA and undertaken my own analysis. My consideration and analysis of the Landscape Value of the existing Site and immediate context is set out below.
- 4.25 Both the submitted LVA and my appraisal have addressed Landscape Value by reference to the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02-21, "Assessing landscape value outside national designations" (CD9.2). This sets out the factors to consider when assessing Landscape Value. As advised in GLVIA3, a helpful starting point in appraising Landscape Value is to identify the presence or otherwise of any landscape designations, although GLVIA3 is also clear that this is not the determinant of Landscape Value.
- 4.26 Landscape Designations: The Site and its immediate context is not situated within a landscape that is subject to any national, local or other statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.

- 4.27 Other environmental designations do however exist within the context of the Site, including heritage designations, as referenced earlier in my evidence. These have relevance to the landscape, principally surrounding the Site and are considered as part of the criteria below.
- 4.28 Natural Heritage: The Site and its immediate context does not hold any notable ecological or natural heritage features or interest, which contribute significantly to this landscape. The wider landscape does feature two designated Local Nature Reserves, Hales Hall Pool and Cecilly Brook, but these have little influence on the Site or its immediate context. Of most note are the mature trees and hedgerows where present within this local landscape.
- 4.29 I assess the Natural Heritage factor of the Landscape Value for the Site and its immediate context as Medium to Low.
- 4.30 Cultural Heritage: There are no designated heritage assets within the Site itself, although a Listed Building (Broad Haye Farmhouse) does lie immediately to the east of the Site. Other historic/ heritage assets generally lie further afield and principally within the centre of Cheadle approximately 1.5km to the south or more scattered across a much broader area.
- 4.31 The Historic Environment Character Assessment (HECA) (2010) for Staffordshire Moorlands (CD5.5) offers some context and background to this criteria, albeit somewhat dated,. This summarises that the landscape surrounds to Cheadle as a whole, '*retains at least moderate historic environment interest*' (para 7.5.2 pg 34). Within this study comprising 8 separate zones surrounding Cheadle, the Site lies within CHECZ3 (North of Cheadle). This zone is one of four where the study states the integrity of the historic landscape has not survived to the same degree as the other four zones. In these terms it is of relatively lesser value and interest.
- 4.32 The assessment of CHECZ3 (North of Cheadle) advises that '*its historic landscape character is dominated by irregular enclosure comprising quite large fields*' (CD5.5; Appendix 4; para 1.3.1; page 9). It also advises that a number of field boundaries have been removed since the late 19th century. Broad Hay Farmhouse is identified as a Grade II Listed building dating to the early 19th century and constructed of painted brick. The Recommendations for this zone refer to providing Heritage Statements with any planning applications for development that may impact upon the Listed Building or its setting or where archaeological potential exists. It also states that should land be allocated for new development, it should seek to be of a low density and to respect the surviving historic field boundaries.
- 4.33 With reference to the Site itself, this does make a small contribution to the significance of the setting of Broad Haye Farmhouse, as detailed within the Built Heritage Statement (CD2.23). The Site lies to the west of the Farmhouse, which is arranged and orientated towards the south east. The Listed Building is relatively prominent within views generally from the south east yet where visible is seen in the context of the existing modern, open and relatively exposed settlement edge. Within this context the farmhouse does sit separate from the settlement edge yet it is not 'isolated' or perceived in any views as being isolated within this landscape.
- 4.34 Further details on the heritage interest and value of the Site and its immediate context are included within the Built Heritage Statement and the evidence of Ms Stoten and I have also taken this into consideration in my appraisal of this criteria.
- 4.35 I assess the Cultural Heritage factor of the Landscape Value for the Site and its immediate context as Medium.

- 4.36 Landscape Condition: The landscape of the Site and its immediate context is variable in terms of its condition. The Site itself is under improved pasture and is being farmed. The existing planted boundaries are variable, with the existing hedgerows being fragmented in places and of a low quality (ref Arboricultural Impact Assessment CD2.3; para 2.16 and plan page 26). Other trees, hedgerows and landscape features within the immediate context of the Site are similarly variable, albeit generally intact. As noted by the LSCASM, the Site lies within an area of the broader landscape (ASVF) that requires landscape maintenance.
- 4.37 I assess the Landscape Condition factor of the Landscape Value for the Site and its immediate context as Medium.
- 4.38 Associations: There are no known associations with notable historical events; or associations with famous people or other cultural associations that contribute to the perceptions of the landscape of the Site and its immediate context.
- 4.39 I assess the Associations factor of the Landscape Value for the Site and its immediate context as Medium.
- 4.40 Distinctiveness: The Site and its immediate context comprises a relatively varied settlement edge landscape of sloping farmland and built development uses and features. The existing settlement edge is relatively exposed and open to the adjoining farmland and imparts a clear influence over the surrounding landscape. This includes the Broad Hayes Park chalet style development and the houses backing on to the Site on Hammersley Hayes Road and Froghall Road. Beyond this existing development, the immediate landscape includes a farm (with Listed Farmhouse) and medium scale sloping fields.
- 4.41 The Site and its immediate context does include characteristics and features of the broader landscape character type (ASVF); principally, the sloping farmland with irregular fields bound by hedgerows and trees. This is not however an unusual situation given the nature of these characteristics and features that are also prevalent across much of the wider landscape beyond the settlement edge. and are thus recorded as part of the current character of the landscape. As noted in the 'Cultural Heritage' sub section above, I also do not consider Broad Hayes Farm to be an '*isolated property*', with reference to the ASVF characteristics.
- 4.42 Notwithstanding this position in relation to the landscape characteristics, it is recognised that Broad Hayes Farm does contribute positively towards distinctiveness of this settlement edge landscape, as it is recognisable as a separate and relatively prominent building/ feature on the rising valley slopes to the west of the Cecilly Brook.
- 4.43 I assess the Distinctiveness factor of the Landscape Value for the Site and its immediate context as Medium.
- 4.44 Recreational Value: A Public Right of Way (PROW) (footpath) passes along Hammersley Hayes Road adjoining the south eastern boundary of the Site and continues in an easterly direction. Other PROW existing within the wider context of the Site to the south and south east and also generally extend from the existing settlement edge across the landscape to the east of the town. A small area of public open space also existing alongside the Site on Hammersley Hayes Road. There are no recreational uses or activities within the Site itself.
- 4.45 The relatively exposed and open existing settlement edge does detract from the general impression and recreational experience of the landscape for users of the PROW. The existing development backing on to the Site and at Broad Hayes Park is readily apparent from the

stretch of PROW alongside the Site. From further to the west and on the lower slopes of the valley the visual influence of the existing built up edge does reduce as does the visibility of the Site from this PROW.

- 4.46 I assess the Recreational factor of the Landscape Value of the Site and its immediate context as Medium.
- 4.47 Perceptual (Scenic): The Site and its immediate context comprises a mix of landscape characteristics and features of varying appeal and appearance, in scenic terms. The perception of the landscape is principally derived from the combination of sloping pasture farmland (generally to the south and south east) and the open and exposed settlement edge of this part of Cheadle. Whilst it is not considered low or poor in these terms, this local landscape is relatively limited in its positive contribution, particularly when set alongside the more positive scenic qualities of the wider landscape to the east and also to the west, south and south west of Cheadle.
- 4.48 The immediate influence of the existing settlement edge, particularly given the limited presence of existing trees and planting to filter and integrate these existing development does detract from the landscape in these terms.
- 4.49 I assess the Perceptual (Scenic) factor of the Landscape Value of the Site and its immediate context as Medium, albeit the immediate settlement edge is relatively lower, given its exposure and influence.
- 4.50 Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity): The Site and its immediate context do not possess any particular or notable perceptual qualities. Where visible, the site is perceived as two sloping grassland fields with reasonable hedgerow boundaries, set alongside and closely allied to the existing open settlement edge. It is not perceived as a wild or tranquil landscape.
- 4.51 I assess the Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity) factor of the Landscape Value of the Site and its immediate context as Low/ Medium.
- 4.52 Functional Aspects: The Site and its immediate context provides no strong functional or spatial role in landscape terms. The landscape does include farmland and hedgerow and hedgerow trees that do contribute to the healthy functioning of the local landscape. The landscape is also not identified as a key part of a multi-functional Green Infrastructure (GI) network yet it does contribute in a limited way at a localised scale with the PROW and open space, alongside the Site.
- 4.53 It is not a landscape that has any physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation or to a locally designated landscape. It is also not a landscape that is important to the appreciation of a designated landscape and its special qualities.
- 4.54 I assess the Functional Aspects factor of the Landscape Value of the Site and its immediate context as Low/ Medium.
- 4.55 Landscape Value – Conclusion: In conclusion and having appraised the landscape in accordance with TGN 02-21, it is judged that the landscape of the Site and its immediate context is of Medium Landscape Value. This judgement is agreed with the Council's Landscape Witness for this Appeal as detailed within the LSO CG (paragraph 4.16)
- 4.56 It is also agreed with the Council's Landscape Witness that it is not a '*valued landscape*' in the terms of paragraph 187a of the NPPF (LSO CG; paragraph 4.17).

Existing Landscape Summary:

- The Site landscape and that of its immediate context includes no national, local or other landscape designations. It is also agreed with the Council's Landscape Witness that the Site and its immediate context does not constitute a 'valued landscape' in the terms of paragraph 187a of the NPPF.
- The published landscape character assessment studies describe the broader landscape context of the Site as being principally undulating farmland with more distinctive smaller wooded valleys situated more removed to the north, east and south of Cheadle.
- The district wide study ('*Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment of Staffordshire Moorlands*' (LSCASM) (2008)) (CD9.4) recognises that the landscape is; not particularly sensitive to change; generally, requires a combination of maintenance and enhancement; and is generally well structured yet should be monitored for urban expansion, with woodland and trees used to absorb new development and screen settlement edges.
- In environmental terms, the Site occupies one of the least constrained settlement edge landscapes surrounding Cheadle (See my Appendix B). It lies outside and well beyond the areas defined as 'Important Landscape Setting to Settlement' and is not visible from the only 'Significant View' identified at Cheadle, within the LSCASM study.
- At the more detailed and Site specific scale, a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (CD2.6) has been undertaken (in accordance with the recognised guidelines (GLVIA3) (CD9.1) for the Site and its context and was submitted as part of the planning application.
- The Site lies immediately adjoining the northern edge of Cheadle, with existing housing situated alongside the western and southern Site boundaries and extending to the south. A Listed Building (Broad Haye Farmhouse) lies immediately to the east of the Site, with farmland to the north.
- The Site itself comprises two improved pasture fields that falls towards the south and south east. It includes a number of hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees in varying condition. It is closely related to the existing settlement edge which is relatively exposed and open and imparts a strong influence on the landscape immediately surrounding this northern part of Cheadle.
- The Landscape Value of the Site and its immediate context has been assessed in accordance with recognised guidelines (Landscape Institute TGN 02-21) (CD9.2) to be Medium, as also agreed by the Council's Landscape Witness (LSOCG paragraph 4.16).

5.0 THE APPEAL SCHEME

- 5.1 The Appeal Scheme will deliver new residential development, together with new landscape and public open space proposals (including play/ recreational areas); vehicular access and sustainable drainage measures.
- 5.2 The objective is to create a high quality and sustainable place to live which minimises potential environmental disruption and maximises benefits to the environment. The scheme has been designed to respond to and respect its settlement edge setting and context and the existing landscape features and characteristics, both within and surrounding the site.
- 5.3 In summary, the proposed development will comprise:
- New homes designed and arranged in line with the principles and parameters set out within the DAS (CD2.20) and accompanying Parameters Plan (CD2.12). The Illustrative Masterplan (CD2.14) indicates how these principles could be applied to deliver an appropriate design solution on Site.
 - Vehicular access from Froghall Road on the western side of the Site, with additional cycle and pedestrian links onto Hammersley Hayes Road and to the existing public open space immediately to the south of the Site.
 - Landscape and Green Infrastructure areas extending to approximately 39.5% of the total site area and comprising a mix of native and characteristic planting and habitats. This is likely to comprise circa 5,000+ No. new plants in the structural landscape areas.
 - Proposed development sited and arranged to include a broad swathe of landscape, habitat and public open space proposals extending around the south east, east and north east parts of the Site.
 - Inclusion of a wide, open grassland/ field extending around this side of the Site and comprising conservation (species diverse) grassland to provide a strong degree of visual separation to Broad Haye Farm to the east. As part of this approach, new trees and other native planting will be sited on the western side of the grassland, to also suitably screen and filter the proposed dwellings, in line with the landscape character assessment study (LSCASM) (CD9.4).
 - Further woodland, tree and hedgerow planting to the northern and western sides of the Site to provide a robust and planted edge to these sides of the Site, consistent with the guidelines and characteristics, detailed within landscape character assessment study.
 - Conservation and enhancement of the majority of the existing hedgerow boundaries, with new hedgerows and trees delivering a net overall increase in the number and lengths of trees and hedgerows across the Site.
 - Native and locally occurring species and characteristic planting proposals reflecting relevant guidance and good design practice. The planting and habitat proposals will also provide valuable biodiversity and arboricultural benefits and will be supported by appropriate management and maintenance.
- 5.4 All of the conserved and proposed hedgerows and other new trees, shrubs and landscape areas will be managed and maintained, via the implementation of a comprehensive Landscape and

Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), to ensure the successful establishment and continued thriving of the conserved and new planting and habitats.

- 5.5 The development proposals as outlined will deliver a high quality and sustainable development. Importantly, the proposals have been carefully devised in response to a thorough understanding of the opportunities and constraints presented by the Site and its context. This includes consideration of the limits and edges of the built development areas and the relationship of the proposed development to the surrounding landscape, including to Broad Haye Farm.

6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

6.1 The landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development are described in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (CD2.6). The LVA was undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, third edition (GLVIA3)(CD9.1), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Further details of the methodology are included within the LVA. There has been no criticism by the Council or its advisers on the methodology adopted for the submitted LVA. In fact, the Council's Landscape Advisers confirmed (CD3.13; first para) that the methodology, scope and process adopted for the submitted LVA was consistent with GLVIA3. The Landscape Statement of Common Ground (LSOCG; para's 4.11 – 4.14) similarly agrees the methodology.

6.2 Whilst I did not undertake the submitted LVA, I have reviewed this document and concur with the overall summary and conclusions in landscape and visual terms. The following summarises my assessment of the landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development.

6.3 The LSOCG includes tables detailing the comparative assessed landscape and visual effects, as determined by the LVA and the SMDC's Landscape Advisers (*Derbyshire Landscape and Placemaking (DLP)*) for the planning application and SMDC's Landscape Witness for this Appeal.

Landscape Effects

6.4 Landscape effects will arise from the proposed development at different scales of assessment. At the broad geographic scale and considering the relevant national and district wide landscape character areas, the landscape effect of the Appeal Scheme will be Negligible at the national scale and Minor Adverse for the relevant district landscape character type (ASVF), as detailed within the LVA. The LSOCG confirms agreement to these judgements.

6.5 At a more localised and relevant scale, it is necessary to examine the changes to the landscape most affected by the Appeal Scheme, which is the site itself and its more immediate landscape context. This landscape area comprises a localised area stretching around the existing and emerging settlement edge between Froghall Road in the west and Cecilly Brook to the south east. In line with the method of assessment outlined in GLVIA3, assessing these likely effects requires judgements to be made on landscape value, susceptibility to change and factors influencing the magnitude of effect.

6.6 The site and its context is not recognised by any national, local or other landscape designations and it has been assessed as part of the district wide assessment as being part of a wider landscape that is '*not particularly sensitive to change*'. It is also agreed not to be a '*valued landscape*' in the terms of para 187a of the NPPF.

6.7 The site occupies a settlement edge position, alongside and well related to existing housing. It is a localised and immediate landscape context that is also strongly influenced by the existing relatively exposed and open settlement edge and development, both immediately adjoining and to the south of the Site. This direct and close influence of the existing buildings and dwellings at Broad Haye Park, adjoining the Site and on the lower valley slopes to the south east is an important consideration when appraising the change that will arise from the Appeal proposals.

6.8 Hedgerows with hedgerow trees generally define the field boundaries beyond the settlement edge.

- 6.9 A Listed Building (Broad Haye Farm) lies immediately to the east of the Site and the landscape surrounding the Listed Building, including the Site does contribute to its immediate landscape context. The Listed Building has informed the assessment of landscape value, as detailed earlier in my evidence. It has also been carefully considered and appraised as part of the design of the Appeal Scheme, which has been informed by the characteristics and features of the landscape.
- 6.10 The Site and its immediate context has been assessed as having a Medium 'Susceptibility to Change', to the proposed development. This is an indication of the capacity of this landscape to be able to accommodate the change proposed. The level of 'Susceptibility to Change' is informed by the presence and influence of the existing adjoining housing and settlement edge and the capacity of the Site to be able to accommodate new residential development without significant losses or consequences to existing landscape features and characteristics.
- 6.11 The Sensitivity of the Landscape is determined by combining the judgements on Landscape Value (Medium) and Susceptibility (Medium). The resultant level of Landscape Sensitivity is assessed as Medium. The Council's Landscape Witness (LSOCG; Appendix A) agrees with each of these judgements.
- 6.12 In terms of the magnitude of landscape change that will arise from the proposed development, this will comprise both adverse and beneficial changes. The direct loss of the majority of the two fields to new built development will result in some localised adverse change. This is inevitably the case where development is proposed on a greenfield site. It is important to recognise however, that this is a landscape closely allied with and influenced by the existing exposed settlement edge. This immediate and open influence on the Site and its immediate context will moderate and lessen the resulting magnitude of change arising from the Appeal Scheme.
- 6.13 As a landscape of medium value, its importance is not elevated (Note: It is also not a 'valued landscape' as agreed in the LSOCG), albeit that there are features to carefully consider, respond to and address as part of the development solution eg, Listed Building. The layout and design of the Appeal Scheme has appropriately addressed the Listed Building and its relationship to the existing adjoining developments and the landscape beyond.
- 6.14 Further to this, the landscape character studies seek developments that are absorbed or integrated through positive landscape and planting solutions. Again, the Appeal Scheme responds appropriately to these guidelines or approaches, as illustrated on the Parameters Plan (CD2.12) and Illustrative Site Layout (CD2.14).
- 6.15 The Appeal Scheme will deliver a positive landscape solution and setting to not only the development but also this part of the settlement edge. In contrast to the existing open and somewhat stark developments, the landscape and planting proposals for the Appeal Scheme will establish a green and filtered development edge, in line with good design practice and the relevant guidance. Whilst the landscape proposals will take some time to mature they will nevertheless have an ongoing and increasing effect and presence from the outset. By year 15, the proposed wooded planting areas and trees will be typically 7 – 10 metres high (subject to species selection, management practices etc). This will be broadly comparable with the height of a two storey dwelling and will thus provide an effective planted foil/ filter to the development in the local landscape.

- 6.16 As a result, the proposed development will sit well related to the existing settlement edge and will reflect the type and pattern of development already present immediately to the south of the Site. Importantly, it will also present an improved landscape solution to this part of the settlement edge, with a more positive and appropriate relationship to the landscape beyond.
- 6.17 The landscape and Green Infrastructure (GI) proposals will establish a characteristic and well-connected landscape structure to the new development and this part of the settlement edge. It will relate positively to the adjoining Listed Building and to the surrounding landscape. These landscape proposals will realise some beneficial albeit localised landscape improvements.
- 6.18 Overall and upon completion of the proposed development the magnitude of change upon the landscape of the site and its immediate context will be Medium. Combined with the Medium Sensitivity of the landscape, the resultant effect of the proposed development upon completion will be Moderate Adverse. This is an initial and localised level of landscape effect and will reduce over the medium and longer terms to a Moderate/ Minor Adverse landscape effect, as the proposed trees and other planting, particularly within the outer landscape areas matures and is suitably managed.

Visual Effects

Visual Receptors

- 6.19 The visual receptors and the effects of the proposed development upon these receptors is described in the LVA (CD2.6). A number of visual receptors will experience views towards the proposed development. These principally comprise:
- Residents of properties immediately adjoining or close to the west and south of the Site, including properties on Hammersley Hayes Road (including Broad Hayes Park) and Froghall Road. These are private receptors and views.
 - Users of Public Rights of Way (PROW) (footpaths) principally stretches of routes alongside the southern side of the Site and more distantly to the south east (References Cheadle 38, 39 and 40 (including Kingsley 94).
 - Users of Froghall Road alongside and close to the site.

Other distant and/ or more restricted views towards the proposed development will be possible from other positions and receptors yet these are limited.

- 6.20 The Visual Appraisal plan within the LVA (CD2.6; Figure 6) illustrates the potential visible extent of the proposed development by reference to the '*Approximate Visual Envelope*'. This shows the representative area within which views towards the proposed development are likely to be possible.

Photo Viewpoints and Photomontages

- 6.21 A range of Representative Photo Viewpoints are included within the LVA (CD2.6; Figures 7 – 15). These support the visual appraisal and the description and assessment of the existing views and the resultant visual effects.
- 6.22 The Photo Viewpoints have been prepared in accordance with Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19 '*Visual Representation of Development Proposals*'.

- 6.23 In addition to the Photo Viewpoints, three Photomontages are included within the LVA (Figures 16 – 24). These have been prepared illustrating the proposed development within views from the PROW (38 and 39) to the south east of the Site. The Photomontages have been prepared in accordance with TGN 06/19 as a 'Type 3' Visualisation.
- 6.24 In line with good practice, the Photomontages depict the proposed development at two stages, namely;
- Upon completion; and
 - 15 years post completion.
- 6.25 The 15 years post completion photomontage is used to convey the residual effect of the landscape and planting proposals after 15 years of growth and appropriate management.
- 6.26 In addition to the Photomontages included within the LVA, updated versions of these are attached at Appendix C. These have been updated to include the development proposals presently under construction for the Cheadle North Strategic Development Area, situated to the south of the Site.

Residential Visual Amenity

- 6.27 Residential Visual Amenity covers views from private properties and is a separate matter to the assessment of visual effects as detailed in the following sub-section below. The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 2/19 sets out the approach to specific Residential Visual Amenity Assessments (RVAA's) (CD9.6) where these are required. This states at paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6:

'1.5 Changes in views and visual amenity are considered in the planning process. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely known that, no one has 'a right to a view.' This includes situations where a residential property's outlook / visual amenity is judged to be 'significantly' affected by a proposed development, a matter which has been confirmed in a number of appeal / public inquiry decisions..

1.6 It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before.'

- 6.28 GLVIA3 (para 6.17) (CD9.1) also advises;

'In some instances, it may be appropriate to consider private viewpoints, mainly from residential properties. In these cases, the scope of such an assessment should be agreed with the competent authority, as must the approach to identifying representative viewpoints since it is impractical to visit all properties that might be affected. Effects of development on private property are frequently dealt with mainly through 'residential amenity assessments'. These are separate from LVIA although visual effects assessment may sometimes be carried out as part of a residential amenity assessment, in which case this will supplement and form part of the normal LVIA for a project. Some of the principles set out here for dealing with visual effects may help in such assessments but there are specific requirements in residential amenity assessment.'

- 6.29 For the Appeal Scheme, it is agreed with the SMDC (LSOCG paragraphs 4.29 and 4.30) that there is nothing within the submitted planning application to indicate any unacceptable effects on Residential Visual Amenity will arise as a result of the Appeal Scheme proposals. It is also agreed that a detailed layout and scheme could be devised at the reserved matters stage that would suitably address and protect residential visual amenity; including with regard to the Council's space standards. This is also confirmed at paragraph 7.88 of the Committee Report.
- 6.30 No unacceptable affects on Residential Visual Amenity arising from the Appeal Scheme have been alleged by any other parties.
- 6.31 The assessment of visual effects below and contained within the LVA nevertheless appraise the visual effects upon the private views of residential properties to provide a comprehensive overall assessment of visual effects on both public and private views.

Visual Effects

- 6.32 The following summarises the nature of the visual change and effects that will arise from the proposed development.

Settlement and Residential Properties

- 6.33 Views towards the proposed development from residential properties will largely be limited to those immediately adjoining and nearby properties, to the east and south. For those properties on Hammersley Hayes Road and Froghall Road that back on to the Site, the Appeal Scheme will be closely and clearly evident in the immediate views from the rear of these properties. The Appeal Scheme will result in a notable change in these views, as is inevitably the case with new development sited alongside existing development. This is commonplace and not unusual for new settlement edge housing, as will also be the case for those existing properties adjoining the emerging Cheadle North Strategic Development Area, to the south.
- 6.34 The visual change and effect arising from the Appeal Scheme for these existing adjoining properties has been assessed to be Major/ Moderate Adverse upon completion and Moderate Adverse after 15 years. This reflects both the nature and value of the existing views and the resulting magnitude of the change. At the detailed design and reserved matters stage, further consideration will be given to the intervisibility of existing and new properties as part of the design process. Typically, new boundary and garden trees and other planting will be sited and incorporated to filter and soften these immediate private views.
- 6.35 Views towards the Appeal Scheme from other properties to the south and south east of the Site will also be possible but generally limited by the presence of other intervening dwelling and buildings. For those properties with more limited and restricted views towards the southern edge of the proposed development, new dwellings will generally be seen set back into the Site beyond the outer landscape proposals and within the context of other existing dwellings.
- 6.36 Some limited and distant views towards the Appeal Scheme will also be possible from other generally elevated positions, including from some parts of Cheadle to the south. Within these limited views, the Appeal Scheme will generally be seen sitting alongside and as a small part of the northern edge of the settlement. The resultant visual effect for these receptors will be no more than Minor Adverse.

- 6.37 In the context of these identified visual effects upon private residential 'views' it is important to note that no unacceptable effects upon Residential Visual Amenity will arise from the Appeal Scheme as agreed with the Council.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

- 6.38 Views towards the proposed development will be possible from stretches of a number of PROW. PROW Cheadle 40 (and Kingsley 94) follows Hammersley Road alongside and immediately to the south of the Site. PROW Cheadle 40 also continues eastwards from Broad Haye Farm across farmland. This PROW route and user experience changes along its length from being within the existing settlement area to crossing farmland more removed from the settlement edge.
- 6.39 The Appeal Scheme will be relatively closely and clearly evident for a short stretch of PROW 40 on the existing settlement edge. This stretch of the route adjoining the south eastern site boundary already includes close clear views of existing development, including open views towards existing properties on Hammersley Hayes Road and Broad Hayes Park.
- 6.40 The Appeal scheme will sit alongside or close to these existing properties. The landscape and public open space on the southern and south eastern sides of the site will however form a good set back and visual filter to the closest views from PROW Cheadle 40. As a result, the existing settlement edge development will remain closer and more open in these views for users of the PROW to the south west of Broad Hayes farm. The resultant visual effect of the Appeal Scheme for users of this immediate stretch of PROW Cheadle 40/ Kingsley 94 route will be Moderate Adverse upon completion, reducing to Moderate/ Minor Adverse at Year 15.
- 6.41 The broad swathe of landscape and planting proposals in the south and east of the Site will be particularly effective in assimilating the proposed development and filtering these closer views and over time the new dwellings will increasingly only be seen beyond an attractive and maturing landscape of mixed habitats. This will include an effective foil of trees and other plants set back from the PROW and surrounding the built development area.
- 6.42 From east of Broad Haye Farm, views towards the Appeal Scheme from PROW Cheadle 40 will be markedly more restricted due to the nature of the rolling landform and presence of hedgerows and trees. Approaching towards the settlement edge and the Site along this route from east of the farm, the existing settlement edge and in particular the Broad Hayes Park development and existing housing to the south of this will be more readily visible. The Appeal Scheme will be largely restricted in these more distant approaching views by existing trees and hedgerows and the buildings and structures at Broad Hayes Farm. The resultant visual effect of the Appeal Scheme for users of this stretch of PROW Cheadle 40 route will be Minor Adverse.
- 6.43 The Appeal Scheme will be seen from stretches of PROW (Footpath Refs Cheadle 38 and 39) (See also Photomontages at Appendix B) approximately 520 – 920m to the south east of the Site. These footpaths similarly stretch from within the settlement eastwards across farmland on the edge of Cheadle.
- 6.44 From these stretches of PROW, existing development on the north eastern edge of Cheadle is readily evident and is perceived as largely open to the adjoining farmland. The Appeal Scheme will be seen relatively distantly from these PROW sitting alongside and beyond the existing development. It will be seen well connected and related to the existing settlement edge and with a clear, open and undeveloped surround maintained to Broad Haye Farmhouse (Listed

Building). At year 15, the landscape and planting proposals will have assisted in assimilating the dwellings within these more distant views and the Appeal Scheme will be perceived set within a maturing landscape.

- 6.45 The resultant visual effect of the Appeal Scheme for users of these stretches of PROW will be at most, Moderate Adverse upon completion, reducing to Moderate/ Minor Adverse at Year 15.
- 6.46 For reference and context, the Photomontages included at Appendix B, also indicate the relative visual 'presence' of the emerging Cheadle North Strategic Development Area in these views. This emerging development area is likely to be more prominent in views from these PROW, particularly from PROW Cheadle 39, between the existing settlement edge and Woodhead Hall Farm.
- 6.47 With the increasing presence of the Cheadle North Strategic Development Area in these views, there will inevitably be an increased influence of development over the landscape on this north eastern edge of the town. For users of PROW 39, this emerging development area will increasingly dominate views as users approach the settlement edge from the east. As demonstrated in Viewpoint C (C1 – C4), on nearing the existing edge of the settlement this allocated development area will dominate the view and obstruct any views towards the Appeal Scheme or Broad Hayes Farm beyond.
- 6.48 Whilst it is acknowledged that further away from the settlement edge, the dominance of this emerging development area will lessen, it will nevertheless still have an increased influence on these views and the local landscape character.

Roads

- 6.49 Views towards the proposed development for road users are principally confined to users of Froghall Road, alongside the Site and on the immediate road approach. The nature of the views for road users over this short stretch of road will inevitably change as a result of the proposed development and new access into the Site. This will include a new roundabout arrangement and will require the removal of a stretch of the existing roadside hedgerow.
- 6.50 Whilst the removal of a stretch of hedgerow to one side of the road and the formation of a new roundabout access in the site will represent an obvious visual change for road users, this will only be perceived from the immediate stretch of road passing the Site and in the context of the existing settlement edge and Froghall Road development. Immediately to the south of the Site and the proposed entrance, there is presently no continuation of the roadside hedgerow in front of the Froghall Road houses. These houses are set back beyond a grassed verge and a number of small trees.
- 6.51 The existing hedgerow on the western side of the road will be unaffected and will maintain the continuity of this hedgerow as this stretches into the town along this side of the road. The Appeal Scheme will include for the planting of new native hedgerows and hedgerow trees to the Froghall Road frontage and this will ultimately present a landscape solution that reflects that existing and appropriate for this stretch of the road. New dwellings will be set back into the site and beyond the landscape frontage to this road.
- 6.52 As a consequence of these factors, the Appeal Scheme will result in some immediate yet localised visual change for these road user views, resulting in an initial Moderate Adverse visual effect. This will reduce over time as a result of new roadside hedgerow, trees and other planting to the road frontage.

Additional Viewpoint 13 (from SMDC) (Road Users on A552)

- 6.53 I have visited and assessed the visual effect of the Appeal Scheme from the additional viewpoint and visual receptor identified as Viewpoint 13 by SMDC and confirmed in the LSOCC. From this position and stretch of the A552, the Appeal Scheme will be partially visible approximately 1.0km to the north east.
- 6.54 The existing view is relatively varied and settlement fringe in character, comprising a mix of rolling farmland, woodlands and built development. The Appeal Scheme will be perceived as a minor element of this view in the middle distance, alongside and beyond existing residential properties on Froghall Road. The majority of the proposed development will be visually screened from this direction by the rolling nature of the landform and the existing Froghall Road properties.
- 6.55 To the extent that the Appeal Scheme is visible, it will be perceived extending slightly further to the north on the gradually rising land to the left of the Froghall Road properties in this view. Only a limited number of the new dwellings generally sited closest to the Froghall Road frontage and closest to the western side of the Site will be visible. It will be perceived as a relatively modest extension to that development already visible and it will remain sitting well below the more distant skyline. There will be a very limited change to the overall nature of the view.
- 6.56 At most, the Appeal Scheme will result in a Minor Adverse visual effect at each assessed stage of the project development. This is consistent with the SMDC assessment included within the LSOCC, with the exception of the construction stage judgement where SMDC assess this to be Moderate/ Minor Adverse. In my opinion, the construction activity will be substantially screened from this view and therefore will not result in any increased visual effect at this stage.
- 6.57 Notwithstanding this slight difference, neither I or SMDC identify any significant or even marked visual change or effect upon to the views from this receptor

Overall Visual Effects Summary

- 6.58 In respect of the visual effects of the Appeal Scheme, these will principally relate to immediate views from the adjoining and nearby properties, PROW Cheadle 40 (and Kingsley 94) and Froghall Road; and more distant views from stretches of PROW Cheadle 38 and 39 to the south east of the Site. Some other more distant and restricted views will also be possible yet these will be limited and will give rise to no more than a Minor Adverse effect. Thus, the visual effects will not arise over an extensive area or for an extensive number of receptors.
- 6.59 Inevitably, there will be some obvious visual change and effects arising for the properties and PROW users adjoining and alongside the Site. However, the 'private views' of the adjoining residential properties have been appropriately considered and assessed and it is agreed with SMDC (LSOCC paragraphs 4.29 and 4.30) that there will be no unacceptable effects upon the residential visual amenity of these properties. Notwithstanding this, subsequent attention to the detailed site layout and to the boundary and garden planting proposals at the reserved matters stage will enable the visual effects for those existing properties backing on to the Site to be further addressed.
- 6.60 In relation to the views for users of PROW 40 where it adjoins the Site, the landscape and public open space proposals on the southern and eastern sides of the Site will be effective in visually filtering and screening these views, which presently include close and clear views to the

existing Broad Hayes Park and Hammersley Hayes Road properties. The broad swathe of open landscape and planting proposals around the eastern and southern parts of the Site will maintain clear visual separation to Broad Haye Farmhouse (Listed Building) to the east of the Site. This outer swathe of landscape and open space will also assist in assimilating and filtering the more distant views towards the Appeal Scheme from the PROW (Cheadle 38 and 39) to the south east.

- 6.61 In overall terms, the visual effects of the Appeal Scheme are not extensive or unusual and are generally confined to a relatively limited number of receptors. Where visible, the proposed development will be seen alongside the existing relatively open settlement edge and will not be perceived as an uncharacteristic or discordant development within the views. In fact, the new landscape and planting proposals that form an important part of the Appeal Scheme will, increasingly over time, filter and screen views and will provide a positive landscape design solution and improvement to the existing settlement edge.
- 6.62 With the exception of slight differences in two visual effects judgements (LSOCG; Appendix B Table) , the Council's Landscape Advisers (CD3.13) agreed with the visual effects assessment in the LVA. This confirmed that with the exception of the private views of the properties immediately backing on to the Site, no other visual effects will be any more than Moderate Adverse, with others being more limited. This indicates a relatively limited overall visual effect. I address the subsequent differences presented by SMDC's landscape witness in the following section.

7.0 REASON FOR REFUSAL NO.2, OFFICER'S REPORT, COUNCIL'S STATEMENT OF CASE AND OTHER CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 7.1 Reason for Refusal (RfR) 2 (CD4.1), the Officer's Report (OR) (CD4.2), the SMDC's Statement of Case (SoC) and other relevant correspondence relating to matters of character, appearance and visual amenity have all been carefully appraised. I address the concerns and matters raised of most relevance below.
- 7.2 The most relevant matters relate to the following:
- Landscape effect of the Appeal Scheme upon the 'Ancient slope and valley farmlands' (ASVF) character area and its characteristics and features (OR paras 7.41 – 7.43);
 - Visual effect of the Appeal Scheme, with particular reference to views from adjoining properties; Hammersley Hayes Road (Ref Kingsley 94/ Cheadle 40) and PROW (footpaths) more distantly to the south east of the Site (Ref Cheadle 38 and 39) (OR paras 7.46 – 7.51);
 - Other Landscape concerns and considerations raised; including those arising from the loss of the existing roadside hedgerow and trees and the northern boundary and limits of the Site (OR paras 7.52 – 7.55).
- 7.3 I consider each of these matters in turn, with reference to the OR, the Council's Landscape Advisers response and other relevant correspondence.
- 7.4 Officer comments on 'Landscape and visual impact' matters is included at paragraphs 7.41 – 7.56 of the OR. This confirms (at 7.45) that the SMDC have been advised on these matters by external consultants, 'Derbyshire Landscape and Placemaking'. A copy of their response and comments on the application and the submitted (and updated) LVA is included at CD3.13. This response detailed very few differences in terms of the assessed landscape and visual effects.

Landscape effect of the Appeal Scheme upon the *Ancient slope and valley farmlands* (ASVF) character area and its characteristics and features

- 7.5 The Site lies within the 'Ancient slope and valley farmlands' (ASVF) character type. As acknowledged in the 2008 District wide study, this character type covers a large proportion of the District, including all of the landscape surrounding Cheadle and much of the north west of the District. It is a strongly undulating landscape and includes small valleys and large areas of pasture farming. It is also a landscape that includes and adjoins settlements of varying sizes. Within this extensive landscape character area, the published study also states that there are 'numerous isolated properties' and that the landscape 'can feel urbanised in places due to the high population density of the scattered farms, the expansion of nearby settlements and previous mining activities'.
- 7.6 The 2008 study also references a 'Planning for Landscape Change' SPG prepared by Staffordshire County Council, which identifies this broad landscape type as requiring landscape maintenance and the area around Cheadle requiring enhancement. It also advises that the area 'is not identified as an area that is particularly sensitive to change'.
- 7.7 The 'Landscape Planning Guidelines' within the study do not seek to preclude development yet do advise that although generally 'a well structured landscape', the 'impact of urban expansion should be monitored'. It further advises 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'.

- 7.8 The design and layout of the Appeal Scheme has carefully considered and appraised the landscape characteristics and features, not only of the Site and its immediate context but also the characteristics and features of the wider landscape.
- 7.9 The Site boundary adjoins Broad Haye Farm, including the Listed Farmhouse. This farm is not in my opinion an 'isolated' property' yet it does sit separated from the existing housing and development on the northern edge of Cheadle. The farm is perceived and experienced in the context of the existing relatively exposed and open settlement edge, including the Broad Hayes Park chalet style development and the existing housing on Hammersley Hayes Road and Froghall Road. These existing developments do impart a strong influence over this settlement edge landscape, including the Appeal Site and the land particularly to the west, south and south east of the Farm
- 7.10 Careful design consideration has been given to the relationship of the Appeal Scheme to the landscape beyond the Site, including the farm and Listed Building. The Appeal Scheme will maintain an open and undeveloped landscape 'field' / meadow (shown on the Parameters Plan (CD2.12) as 'Broad Haye Green') between the Farm and the proposed development. This will be a minimum of 100m wide between the existing farmhouse and the edge of the development area. This proposed open landscape swathe will extend from the south eastern part of the Site (alongside the existing Public Open Space on Hammersley Hayes Road), around the eastern side to the northern edge of the Site (extending for circa 300m).
- 7.11 This proposed landscape will comprise a large open area ('field') of conservation (species diverse) grassland, with an edge of native trees, shrubs and hedgerow planting stretching around the western side of this open area. This will provide a visual filter/ 'buffer' to the proposed built development area. Native tree and shrub planting will also be sited to the northern extent of this area and along the northern Site boundary. The existing hedgerow to the farm access track (and PROW) will be enhanced with infill native planting and new native hedgerows and hedgerow trees will be planted across other parts of the Site and around the development area. There will be an overall site wide increase in the quantum of native trees, hedgerows and planting and all of this will also be supported by a comprehensive landscape management and maintenance regime.
- 7.12 As a result of the design approach adopted, Broad Haye Farm will retain its separation from the built up settlement edge and the landscape and planting proposals adopted will deliver an improved and appropriate solution reflecting the relevant guidelines. Inevitably, built development will be perceived relatively closer to the farm than is currently the case yet nevertheless it will remain perceived as a separate standalone property, set beyond a broad open area of grassland. Over time, the proposed native tree, hedgerow and other planting, particularly on the western side of the proposed open area will increasingly filter and 'soften' views towards the proposed development.
- 7.13 Any adverse landscape effects upon the ASVF landscape character type will be Minor Adverse and no more than limited and localised. There will be no significant landscape impact in these terms.
- 7.14 In the context of appraising these particular landscape character matters, the OR also helpfully acknowledges the following in relation to the Site itself at para 7.43;

- The Site 'is not considered to be a 'valued landscape' as per Para 174a) of the Framework' [now Para 187 a of the current NPPF]; and
- The Site 'does not hold distinctive features or cultural links to set it above other landscapes in the area'.

7.15 I concur with these points, which are relevant in assessing the Landscape Value and Sensitivity of the Site and its immediate context and the resulting effects of the Appeal Scheme. The LSOCC also confirms that SMDC do not consider the Site to be or form part of a 'valued landscape' in NPPF terms.

Visual effect of the Appeal Scheme, with particular reference to views from adjoining properties; Hammersley Hayes Road (Ref Cheadle 40) and PROW (footpaths) more distantly to the south east of the Site (Ref Cheadle 38 and 39)

7.16 The OR (at para 7.45) references the response of the Council's Landscape Advisers (*Derbyshire Landscape and Placemaking (DLP)*) (CD3.13) on these visual matters.

7.17 DLP accept the assessment of visual effects and conclusion of the LVA in respect of all the representative viewpoints, with the exception of viewpoints 1 (Visual Receptor A), 9 and 10 (Visual Receptor G). Having reviewed the DLP response to the LVA on the visual effects of the Appeal Scheme, there is a broad level of agreement on the level of visual effects detailed within the LVA. DLP summarise this in their Conclusions. This states;

'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.'

7.18 The overall difference is thus; one visual receptor assessed as Moderate Adverse in the LVA but Major Adverse by DLP; and one visual receptor assessed as Moderate/ Minor Adverse in the LVA but Moderate Adverse by DLP. This indicates a good degree of consistency and agreement. It also indicates that the overall level of visual effects are not extensive or significant.

7.19 The respective differences relate to the visual effects for residents of properties adjoining the Site on Hammersley Hayes Road and Froghall Road (Viewpoint 1) (Visual Receptor A); and for users of PROW footpaths Cheadle 38 and 39 (Viewpoints 9 and 10) (Visual Receptor G).

7.20 In preparation for the Appeal, SMDC have subsequently indicated a number of other visual effects differences as summarised at paragraph 5.2 of the LSOCC. These differ from those originally advised by the Councils Landscape Advisers. The additional differences comprise;

- Visual Receptor group C - Users of footpath Cheadle 40
- Visual Receptor group E - Users of footpath Cheadle 31
- Visual Receptor group H - Road users of Froghall Road
- Visual Receptor group I - Road users on Froghall Road

7.21 Thus, in total, differences for six visual receptors at Year 15 are now confirmed at paragraph 5.2 of the LSOCC.

Viewpoint 1 (Visual Receptor A)

- 7.22 For residents of properties adjoining the Site on Hammersley Hayes Road and Froghall Road, the LVA has assessed the visual effect of the proposed development at Year 15 as Moderate Adverse. The Appeal Scheme will inevitably result in an initial notable change in these adjoining views. This is inevitably the case with new development sited alongside existing development. However, further consideration would be given at the detailed design and reserved matters stage to the relationship and intervisibility of the existing and new properties,. Typically, new boundary and garden trees and other planting would be sited and incorporated to filter and soften these immediate views.
- 7.23 Albeit indicative at this stage, the Illustrative Masterplan (CD2.14) does indicate how boundary trees and other planting could be incorporated along the boundary to provide some visual filtering to these immediate views, as the planting matures. This is an appropriate design and mitigation solution for a common situation.
- 7.24 SMDC have assessed the visual effect at Year 15 to be Major Adverse on the basis that the Parameters Masterplan does not show any proposals that are likely to significantly reduce effects by Year 15.
- 7.25 Notwithstanding the likely extent of the future boundary planting, it is acknowledged that the Appeal Scheme will result in some initial notable change to views for those properties backing onto the Site. This is the inevitable consequence of new development on an undeveloped site and is typical for the majority of new developments on settlement edge sites. Seeing other houses from an existing one is, however, normal in these situations.
- 7.26 In respect of the visual effects of the Appeal scheme upon these adjoining properties, GLVIA3; other Technical Guidance and many Appeal Decisions are clear that there is 'no right to a view'. This is addressed earlier in my evidence at paragraph 6.28 and it is agreed with the SMDC (LSOCG paragraphs 4.29 and 4.30) that there is nothing within the submitted planning application to indicate any unacceptable effects on Residential Visual Amenity will arise as a result of the Appeal Scheme proposals.
- 7.27 It is further agreed that a detailed layout and scheme could be devised at the reserved matters stage that would suitably address and protect residential visual amenity; including with regard to the Council's space standards. This is also confirmed at paragraph 7.88 of the Committee Report. In addition, no unacceptable effects on Residential Visual Amenity arising from the Appeal scheme have been alleged by any other parties.
- 7.28 Thus, whilst there may be a difference in the respective assessed levels of visual effect of the Appeal Scheme on these immediate 'private' views, it is nonetheless evident that despite the inevitable and obvious visual change, the resultant visual effects will not be unacceptable or uncommon.

Viewpoint 2 (Visual Receptor group C - Users of footpath Cheadle 40)

- 7.29 I address the visual effects of the Appeal Scheme on users of this stretch of the PROW bordering the Site at paragraphs 6.39 – 6.43. SMDC's original Landscape Advisers (DLP) agreed with the LVA assessed visual effects for users of this stretch of the PROW as Moderate Adverse (upon completion) and Moderate/ Minor Adverse (at 15 years). However, SMDC's Landscape Witness for the Appeal considers the visual effects will be Major/ Moderate and Moderate Adverse respectively.

- 7.30 In the context of this visual receptor and in addition to my earlier assessment of this Receptor, it is relevant to note from Viewpoint 2, the open 'presence' and influence of the existing houses from this gap in the trackside hedgerow. Moving along the PROW towards the settlement, the existing development becomes increasingly dominant in these PROW views.
- 7.31 The Appeal Scheme (including the landscape proposals) will inevitably dominate this particular viewpoint position looking towards the north west. The proposed dwellings will, however, be set back circa 30 – 50m from this boundary position and beyond the outer swathe of planting and open space proposals. This outer landscape area will occupy a large part of the immediate view and will increasingly over time filter and screen views towards the new dwellings.
- 7.32 As part of the landscape proposals, it would be appropriate to restore the existing trackside hedgerow with new native hedgerow planting to enhance the existing hedgerow. As can be seen from Photo Viewpoint 2, infilling of the existing gap and restoring this hedgerow would be effective in further restricting and limiting these immediate views towards the Appeal Scheme from the PROW. This can be addressed as part of the detailed landscape proposals at reserved matters and then the subsequent management practices.

Viewpoints 6 and 7 (Visual Receptor group E – Users of footpath Cheadle 31)

- 7.33 This PROW lies within the valley to the west of the Site and Froghall Road. Views will be possible to a limited part of the Appeal Scheme in the north west of the Site. It will however only be partially seen along the northern part of this PROW and where visible will be seen in the context of the other existing Froghall Road houses and with other parts of the town more visible and evident.
- 7.34 SMDC's original Landscape Advisers agreed with the LVA assessed visual effects for users of this as Minor Adverse (upon completion) and Minor Adverse/ Negligible (at 15 years). However, SMDC's Landscape Witness for the Appeal considers the visual effects will be Moderate/ Minor Adverse and Minor Adverse respectively.
- 7.35 Notwithstanding the difference, this remains a limited residual visual effect of Minor Adverse/ Negligible (LVA and original SMDC Adviser) or Minor Adverse (SMDC Landscape Witness).

Viewpoints 9 and 10 (Visual Receptor group G – Users of footpaths Cheadle 38 and 39)

- 7.36 I address the visual effects of the Appeal Scheme on users of this stretch of the PROW bordering the Site at paragraphs 6.44 – 6.49. The LVA assessed the visual effects for users of these stretches of the PROW as Moderate Adverse (upon completion) and Moderate/ Minor Adverse (at 15 years). The original SMDC Landscape Advisers concurred with Moderate Adverse (upon completion) yet did not consider this would reduce by Year 15. SMDC's Landscape Witness for the Appeal considers the visual effects will be Major/ Moderate (upon completion) and Moderate Adverse (at 15 years).
- 7.37 The Photomontages for Viewpoints 9 and 10 (See Appendix C; C.5 – C.12) are informative on this matter. Within both Viewpoints, the Appeal Scheme will be seen set within and alongside the existing settlement edge. This existing built development presents a rather exposed and open edge to the landscape beyond in these views. By contrast, the Appeal Scheme will be set within a broad landscape and planted setting and will deliver an enhanced relationship to the surrounding landscape.

- 7.38 At this distance and within this existing open settlement edge, the visual effect of the Appeal Scheme is fairly and appropriately assessed to be Moderate Adverse (upon completion) and Moderate/ Minor Adverse (at 15 years). The half point increase on these visual effects levels by SMDC's Landscape Witness are not justified. However, notwithstanding this slight difference in the visual effect of the Appeal Scheme upon users of these PROW, the resulting residual visual effect will not be significant.

Viewpoints 4 and 4A (Visual Receptor group H – Road users of Froghall Road)

- 7.39 I address the visual effects of the Appeal Scheme on users of this stretch of Froghall Road at paragraphs 6.50 – 6.53. SMDC's original Landscape Advisers (DLP) agreed with the LVA assessed visual effects for users of this short stretch of the road as Moderate Adverse (upon completion) and Moderate/ Minor Adverse (at 15 years). However, SMDC's Landscape Witness for the Appeal considers the visual effects will be Major/ Moderate and Moderate Adverse respectively.
- 7.40 Whilst the removal of a stretch of hedgerow to one side of the road and the formation of a new roundabout access in the site will represent an obvious visual change for road users, this will only be perceived from the immediate stretch of road passing the Site and in the context of the existing settlement edge and Froghall Road development. Immediately to the south of the Site and the proposed entrance, there is presently no continuation of the roadside hedgerow in front of the Froghall Road houses. These houses are set back beyond a grassed verge and a number of small trees.
- 7.41 This is a localised visual change and effect experienced by road users over a short stretch of the road entering or leaving the settlement. It is also a change and effect that will reduce relatively quickly as the new roadside hedgerows and planting establishes and matures. The half point increase on these visual effects levels by SMDC's Landscape Witness are not justified given the localised extent and nature of this change; the Medium Sensitivity of the road users; the relatively poor quality and contribution of this hedgerow; the absence of an existing continued hedgerow frontage to the south; and the inclusion of new native hedgerows, hedgerow trees and other planting to the road frontage and entrance.

Viewpoint 5 (Visual Receptor group I – Road users on Froghall Road)

- 7.42 This viewpoint is taken from a gap in the Froghall Road roadside hedgerow to the north of the Site. The Appeal Scheme will be partially and briefly seen in this approaching view by road users.
- 7.43 SMDC's original Landscape Advisers (DLP) agreed with the LVA assessed visual effects for users of this road approach as Minor Adverse (upon completion and at Year 15). However, SMDC's Landscape Witness for the Appeal considers the visual effects will be Moderate Adverse (upon completion) and Moderate/ Minor Adverse (at 15 years).
- 7.44 This increased visual effect by the SMDC appears to stem in large part from the assessed heightened susceptibility of the road users at this point. The SMDC Landscape Witness considers these road users to be High, which also results in an increased level of Visual Sensitivity. I do not consider these increased levels to be justified and it does not reflect that set out within GLVIA3 or in fact the judgements by the SMDC Landscape Witness for the same road users a short distance to the south (Visual Receptor H above).

- 7.45 Notwithstanding the difference, this remains a brief and limited residual visual effect of Minor Adverse (LVA and original SMDC Adviser) or Moderate/ Minor Adverse (SMDC Landscape Witness).

Visual Effects - Overall

- 7.46 Notwithstanding the relatively limited differences in judgements between the LVA and those of SMDC's original Landscape Advisers and subsequent Landscape Witness, there remains a good degree of agreement and consistency on a number of visual matters, namely;
- There will be no unacceptable visual effects on the 'private' views of those residential properties backing on to or adjoining the Site;
 - Beyond these adjoining 'private' views, the Appeal Scheme will not give rise to any more than a Moderate Adverse level of visual effect at Year 15;
 - The number and extent of visual receptors is limited;
 - Where the Appeal Scheme will be visible it will typically be seen alongside and in the context of the existing settlement edge and other existing adjoining and nearby residential development
 - The visual effects of the Appeal Scheme will reduce over time with the maturing and management of the conserved and new trees, shrubs and hedgerow planting.
- 7.47 Overall, the relatively limited number of visual receptors and generally Minor to Moderate levels of visual effect arising from the Appeal Scheme will not result in either an extensive or a significant degree of visual impact.

Other Landscape matters and considerations raised; including those arising from the loss of the existing roadside hedgerow and trees and the northern boundary and limits of the Site

- 7.48 Paragraph 7.53 of the OR refers to the landscape effects arising from the proposed development. It references the effect of the proposed access works on the existing Froghall Road hedgerow and states that the loss of this hedgerow would *'initially have a substantial adverse impact on local landscape character'*. In my opinion, this is not a fair characterisation or assessment of the loss of this existing roadside hedgerow in landscape terms. The hedgerow is assessed (in the AIA (CD2.3) ref H5) as being of Low Quality (Category C) and referred to as a *'flailed road side hedge scrubby undergrowth with significant damage and weak points in places'*. Its loss will constitute no more than a limited and localised effect in landscape character terms and the new replacement native hedgerow and tree planting will provide an enhanced feature and frontage, particularly as it matures.
- 7.49 On this matter, it should also be noted that the Council's Trees and Woodlands Officer raises no objection in principle to the Appeal Scheme (OR para 7.74). The Trees and Woodlands Officer's response to the application (CD3.28; page 3; second para) acknowledges that the layout submitted with the planning application is indicative yet in this regard also notes;
- '...there is evidently ample opportunity to accommodate a significant amount of residential development and associated infrastructure within the application site boundaries without any encroachment and harmful impact within the RPAs of trees which must be retained. On this*

basis, I have no objection in principle to this application at outline stage on the grounds of likely or potential impact on existing trees....'

- 7.50 The Officer does recommend a number of tree protection conditions yet these are non-contentious and agreeable.
- 7.51 Paragraph 7.54 of the OR alleges that the Appeal Scheme '*does not provide for a natural 'rounding off' of Cheadle.*' Notwithstanding that there is no guidance or policy or applicable references to the '*rounding off*' of Cheadle or settlements more generally, the Appeal Scheme does incorporate an appropriate and characteristic landscape framework within which the built development will be assimilated. This outer landscape framework will include new native hedgerow, trees and boundary planting to its northerly edge, with further native trees and planting and open grassland extending around the north eastern and eastern sides of the Site. This will provide a robust and effective landscape surround to the new development.
- 7.52 Thus, the Appeal Scheme will provide a positive and well designed solution to this particular part of the settlement edge and will represent an improvement to the current more open and exposed edges to Cheadle, within the vicinity of the Site.
- 7.53 Paragraph 7.56 of the OR indicates that the proposed development; '*is considered to conflict with Policy DC3 and the NPPF because the development could not be said to be in keeping with the wider pastoral landscape character of the Ancient slope and valley farmland.*' This broad judgement does not fairly reflect the contents of the published landscape character study (CD9.4). Whilst the study does recognise that expanding settlements and industry is one of a number of key planning and management issues, it also recognises that the landscape is not identified as an area that is particularly sensitive to change. The '*Landscape Planning Guidelines*' for the ASVF also includes the following references;
- '*Planting, both trees and woodlands can be used effectively to reinforce the existing vegetational structure to enable it to more readily absorb new development and to screen the edges of existing settlement and industrial/commercial uses.*
 - '*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....'*
- 7.54 The Appeal Scheme does adopt a landscape and planting framework that will integrate and visually filter and screen the proposed built development; and has appropriately addressed and taken account of the nearby Listed Building.
- 7.55 Paragraph 7.56 also alleges that the Appeal Scheme would '*result in a prominent intrusion into the countryside*'. Similarly, this is not justified or substantiated. The Appeal Scheme will sit alongside existing residential development on its southern and western edges and where visible will be seen alongside and in the context of this and other existing residential development, including the ongoing Cheadle North Strategic Development, close to the south of the Site. Whilst the Appeal Scheme will extend the existing settlement edge slightly further to the north, it will remain closely allied with and well related to the existing adjoining development. It will be readily perceived as part of this edge of Cheadle, with an enhanced landscape structure and good proportion of open space and habitats.
- 7.56 The Appeal Scheme will deliver an enhanced and appropriate landscape solution to this part of the settlement edge, in contrast to the exposed and open nature of the existing adjoining developments and settlement edge.

8.0 POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

- 8.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's commitment to delivering sustainable development. Throughout the document the aspirations are generally positive. A holistic approach is encouraged, balancing benefits with impacts across all aspects of the development process. The NPPF is dealt with in the overarching planning policy evidence of Mr Coxon, so my evidence only draws attention to the specific sections relevant to landscape and character and appearance.

11. Making effective use of land

- 8.2 Paragraph 124 states that planning decisions, *'should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions'*. The appeal scheme would provide effective use of land for housing, with a sizeable area (approximately 39.5% of the total Site) of new greenspace extending around the built development.
- 8.3 Section 11 also covers *"Achieving appropriate densities"*. Paragraph 130 states;
"Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places. Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site".
- 8.4 The proposed density has been determined based upon the *'optimal use of the potential'* of the Site, taking into account the existing densities within the settlement and the environmental features and constraints of the Site. Conservation and enhancement of the existing trees and hedgerows and the provision of broad landscape and planting surrounds to the built development area are important features of the overall scheme.

12. Achieving well-designed places

- 8.5 Paragraph 135 advises that proposed developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area; be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; be sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; and create places that are welcoming, safe, inclusive and accessible.
- 8.6 The DAS summarises how the proposed development fulfils many of these objectives and will deliver a suitably high quality and site specific scheme. Landscape and visual considerations have been to the fore in informing the design and layout of the proposals. The landscape proposals will be appropriate in character terms and effective in assimilating and mitigating the scheme. The landscape proposals will comprise significant new native tree, hedgerow and other planting and open conservation grassland areas and will increase and enhance the existing planting, reflecting the relevant guidelines
- 8.7 Paragraph 136 notes that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. It notes that

decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined and, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments.

- 8.8 The proposed development will include a significant number of new native and locally occurring trees, shrubs and hedgerow plants, reflecting the guidelines within the Landscape Character Assessment study and providing a valuable site wide gain in the number of trees, hedgerows and other plants. New streets will be tree lined with species similarly selected that are appropriate to their location and the relevant guidelines.

15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 8.9 Paragraph 187 states;

'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;.....'*

- 8.10 The Site and its context lie within an undesignated landscape with no statutory or protected status for reasons of landscape character or value. It is also not identified as being of any recognised or defined landscape quality or interest within the development plan.
- 8.11 Both the submitted LVA and I have suitably appraised whether the Site and its immediate context forms or lies within a '*valued landscape*', as referenced at paragraph 187a of the NPPF. My appraisal of landscape value as detailed in section 4.0 of this evidence confirms that it is not a '*valued landscape*' in these terms. SMDC agree with these judgement (LSOCCG; paragraph 4.17)
- 8.12 The LVA, DAS and my evidence also consider and demonstrate how the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside have been recognised. The dedication of a sizeable proportion (approximately 39.5%) of the total Site area for combined Green Infrastructure (GI), planting and other habitats and public access proposals, coupled with appropriately defined extents for the built development area are direct responses to the characteristics and features of the Site and its immediate context, including the Listed Building and views from the south east,
- 8.13 Paragraph 188 states that Plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of designated sites and allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value. In this context, it is relevant to note that the Site and its immediate context does not include any designated landscapes or Green Belt and as referenced in the SPG and Landscape Character Assessment study, is located in a landscape of lesser 'sensitivity'.
- 8.14 In addition, the more localised landscape context of the Site is not 'valued' in accordance with paragraph 187 a. Thus, in these broader terms, the Site does occupy a location to which future development should be directed.

- 8.15 In conclusion, the NPPF design and landscape aspirations have been taken into account by the Appeal Scheme.

National Design Guide

- 8.16 The proposed development has been considered against the Government's National Design Guide (2019). This includes the characteristics that contribute towards good design as referenced in the NPPF. It is considered that the proposed development has positively addressed the relevant National Design Guide characteristics, including; Context; Nature; and Public Spaces.

Local Planning Policy

Staffordshire Moorlands Adopted Local Plan 2014-2033 (Adopted 2020)

- 8.17 The following policies are of most relevance in landscape, visual and character and appearance terms.

- Policy DC3 – Landscape and Settlement Setting;
- Policy C3 – Green Infrastructure; and
- Policy NE2 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows.

- 8.18 Policy DC3 states:

'Landscape and Settlement Setting

The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

- 1. Resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence;*
- 2. Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence;*
- 3. Supporting developments which conserve or enhance the biodiversity qualities of any natural or man-made features within the landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, walls, watercourses or ponds;*
- 4. Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;*
- 5. Ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the Peak District National Park.*

- 8.19 Addressing each of the numbered points above:

1. The Appeal Scheme will not form or lead to a 'prominent intrusion' into the countryside as explained at paragraphs 7.55 – 7.56 of my evidence. It will remain closely allied and well related to the existing adjoining development and will be readily perceived as an integral part of this developed edge of Cheadle.

The Appeal Scheme will also not result in a significant adverse impact on the character or setting of the settlement or upon any important views, as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence.

The Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment of Staffordshire Moorlands (LSCASM) (2008) includes an assessment of the settlement of Cheadle (CD9.4). This assessment identifies various landscape areas and features within the setting of the town, including areas assessed as '*Important landscape setting to settlement*' and '*Significant Views*'. These are shown on the '*Cheadle Setting*' plan within the LSCASM and on the Environmental Constraints and Features plan included at my Appendix B.

The Appeal Site lies outside and well beyond the areas defined as '*Important Landscape Setting to Settlement*' and it is also not visible from the '*Significant View*' identified in the LSCASM study. Thus, the Appeal Scheme will have no significant impact or even any discernible upon these identified areas and views.

Notwithstanding this position, the Appeal Scheme will also not have a significant adverse effect upon the character of the settlement edge landscape.

I have assessed the landscape effect of the Appeal Scheme on the Site and its immediate context to be Minor/ Moderate Adverse at Year 15, and whilst the SMDC Landscape Witness considers this localised effect will be relatively greater, by half a point, at Moderate Adverse; neither judgement in my opinion indicates a significant adverse impact upon the character of this settlement edge landscape.

2. The Appeal Scheme has been appropriately considered and designed in response to many environmental and technical factors, including importantly in relation to the landscape characteristics and features of the Site and its local context. The Appeal Scheme will extend and enhance the existing trees and hedgerows, with considerable new trees, hedgerows and planting, plus conservation (species diverse) grassland. This planting will comprise native and locally occurring species and it will reinforce existing planting. It will also assist in absorbing and screening the proposed development, in line with the Landscape and Settlement Character guidance.
 3. Existing trees and hedgerows will be largely conserved as part of the Appeal Scheme. Those to be removed to facilitate safe access to the proposals will be replaced by a substantially greater number of new native tree, hedgerow and other plant species. These will be native and will enhance the biodiversity value of the Site. All of the planting and other associated grassland areas will also be underpinned by a long term management plan that will support these landscape and biodiversity enhancements in the longer term.
 4. All of the landscape and related habitat and green infrastructure areas will be supported by a comprehensive management plan and appropriate and sustainable building techniques and materials will be adopted by the proposed development.
 5. The Appeal Scheme will have no impact of the Peak District national Park or its wider setting.
- 8.20 Policy C3 (Green Infrastructure) seeks to develop a network of high quality and multi-functional green infrastructure. The Appeal Scheme incorporates a good proportion of multi-functional green infrastructure and this integrates positively alongside the existing public open space and Public Right of Way (PROW) alongside the southern and eastern edges of the Site. The scheme

also include a green corridor running through the development, encompassing the conserved hedgerow and trees within the Site.

- 8.21 There is no allegation of conflict with this policy.
- 8.22 Policy NE2 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows) seeks to protect and retain trees. It states that the Council will in general seek to retain as many trees and as much hedgerow on site as possible. The Appeal Scheme has been designed to maximise tree and hedgerow retention and to maximise opportunities for new tree and hedgerow planting in line with the relevant guidelines and as part of a comprehensive site wide design solution.
- 8.23 The Council's Tree and Woodland Officer recognises that there will be some inevitable losses on the Froghall Road frontage yet that these losses can be mitigated. The Officer states in the response to the application;
- '...there is evidently ample opportunity to accommodate a significant amount of residential development and associated infrastructure within the application site boundaries without any encroachment and harmful impact within the RPAs of trees which must be retained...'*
- 8.24 The Officer raises no objection to the proposed development on these grounds and there is no allegation of conflict with this policy.
- 8.25 Policy SS11 (Churnet Valley Strategy) states that the Churnet Valley is identified as an area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration. The site falls within the Churnet Valley area, as does all of the built-up area of Cheadle and much of the surrounding land and the entirety of Leek and all of the surrounding land.
- 8.26 Policy SS11 states that particular support will be given to forms of development and measures that include enhancing, protecting and interpreting the landscape character of the Churnet Valley and that any development should be of a scale, nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area.
- 8.27 The Appeal Scheme has had careful regard to the landscape character of the site and its context; including that of the wider landscape encompassing the Churnet Valley and the ASVF Landscape Character Type. The proposals are of a scale, nature and high standard of design that have been informed by this landscape character and represent a positive design response to these matters.
- 8.28 The Officer raises no objection to the proposed development on these grounds and there is no allegation of conflict with this policy.

Policy Context Conclusion

- 8.29 In my opinion, the proposed development addresses and responds positively to the relevant policy context and any effects upon landscape character and features or visual amenity are at most moderate, localised and not unacceptable in these terms.

9.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

- 9.1 My name is Timothy Richard Jackson. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and a Senior Director in the multi-disciplinary environmental design company FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR). I have over 33 years' experience of landscape and development projects from initial conceptual design and assessment through to final completion and long-term aftercare.

Scope of Evidence

- 9.2 An external independent review (for SMDC by consultants *Derbyshire Landscape and Placemaking* (CD3.13)) of landscape and visual matters at the planning application stage substantially agreed with the landscape and visual effects assessed and described in the LVA submitted with the planning application. Despite this and a comprehensive and well considered approach to the design and layout of the proposed development and an Officers recommendation to approve the planning application, the Planning Committee overturned the recommendation and refused permission. I address landscape and visual matters relevant to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's (SMDC's) Reason for Refusal (RfR) No. 2.

The Appeal Site – Landscape Context and Character

- 9.3 A summary of the landscape baseline analysis confirms:
- The Site landscape and that of its immediate context includes no national, local or other landscape designations. It is also agreed with the Council's Landscape Witness that the Site and its immediate context does not constitute a '*valued landscape*' in the terms of para 187a of the NPPF (LSOCC para 4.16).
 - The published landscape character assessment studies describe the broader landscape context of the Site as being principally undulating farmland with more distinctive smaller wooded valleys situated more removed to the north, east and south of the settlement.
 - The district wide study ('Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment of Staffordshire Moorlands' (LSCASM) (2008) (CD9.4)) recognises that the landscape is; not particularly sensitive to change; generally, requires a combination of maintenance and enhancement; and is generally well structured yet should be monitored for urban expansion, with woodland and trees used to absorb new development and screen settlement edges.
 - Within the '*Cheadle Setting*' appraisal of the LSCASM study, the Site lies outside and well beyond the areas defined as '*Important Landscape Setting to Settlement*' and it is also not visible from the '*Significant View*' identified in this study.
 - In landscape and environmental terms, the Site occupies one of the least constrained settlement edge landscapes surrounding Cheadle (See my Appendix B).
 - The Site itself comprises two improved pasture fields that fall towards the south and south east. It includes a number of hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees in varying condition. It is closely related to the existing settlement edge, which is relatively stark, exposed and open and imparts a strong influence on the landscape immediately surrounding this

northern part of Cheadle. A Listed Building (Broad Haye Farmhouse) lies immediately to the east of the Site, with farmland to the north.

- The Landscape Value of the Site and its immediate context has been assessed in accordance with recognised guidelines (Landscape Institute TGN 02-21) to be Medium and this is also agreed by the Council's Landscape Witness (LSOCG para 4.16).

The Appeal Scheme

- 9.4 The Appeal Scheme will deliver new residential development, together with new Green Infrastructure (GI), landscape, public open space, vehicular and pedestrian access and sustainable drainage measures. Taken together, the Parameters Plan, Illustrative Masterplan and DAS provide the decision maker with clear information about the scale, nature and design quality of the proposed development and associated landscape proposals. The scheme has been designed to respond to and respect its settlement edge setting and context and the existing landscape features and characteristics, both within and surrounding the site.
- 9.5 The majority of existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees will be conserved and managed and the removal of the existing hedgerow and limited trees to the Froghall Road frontage will be more than offset by the new native hedgerow and tree planting to be undertaken. This will deliver a notable increase in the number of new native trees, hedgerow, and other plants across the site, in line with the LSCASM guidelines. The Council's Tree and Woodland Officer raised no objection to the Scheme and recognised that; *'there is ample opportunity to accommodate a significant amount of residential development on the Site without impacting upon the trees which must be retained'* (CD3.28; page 3; second para).
- 9.6 A proposed broad open landscape swathe in the east and south of the site will maintain a suitable stand off and separation to the Listed farmhouse. The strategic landscape and GI proposals will extend to approximately 39.5% of the total site area.

Landscape and Visual Effects

- 9.7 It is agreed with the Council's Landscape Witness that the landscape effect of the Appeal Scheme at the national ('Potteries and Churnet Valley' NCA) and district ('Ancient Slopes and Valley Farmlands' Landscape Type) scales will be respectively Negligible and Minor Adverse.
- 9.8 At the localised scale, comprising the Site and its immediate context, the Appeal Scheme will result in a residual Minor/ Moderate Adverse landscape effect, at Year 15. This reflects a number of factors, including the agreed value of this landscape (medium); the ability of this landscape to be able to accommodate new development, also taking into account the strong open influence of the existing adjoining development; and the well-considered layout, parameters and design of the Scheme, which includes a significant, robust and respectful landscape solution.
- 9.9 The Council's Landscape Witness considers this residual landscape effect of the Appeal Scheme on the Site and its immediate context to be Moderate Adverse. In either judgement, this does not in my opinion indicate a significant adverse impact upon the character of this settlement edge landscape.
- 9.10 In respect of the visual effects of the Appeal Scheme, these will principally relate to immediate views from the adjoining and nearby properties, PROW Cheadle 40 (and Kingsley 94) and

Froghall Road; and more distant views from stretches of PROW Cheadle 38 and 39 to the south east of the Site.

- 9.11 For those properties immediately backing on to the Site there will inevitably be obvious visual change arising from the Appeal Scheme yet there is '*no right to a view*' and it is agreed with SMDC (LSOCG paragraphs 4.29 and 4.30) that there will be no unacceptable effects upon the residential visual amenity of these properties.
- 9.12 In relation to the views for users of PROW 40 where it adjoins the Site, the landscape and public open space proposals on the southern and eastern sides of the Site will be effective in visually filtering and screening these views, which presently include close and clear views to the existing Broad Hayes Park and Hammersley Hayes Road properties. The broad swathe of open landscape and planting proposals around the eastern and southern parts of the Site will maintain clear visual separation to Broad Haye Farmhouse (Listed Building) to the east of the Site. This outer swathe of landscape and open space will also assist in assimilating and filtering the more distant views towards the Appeal Scheme from the PROW (Cheadle 38 and 39) to the south east.
- 9.13 In overall terms, the visual effects of the Appeal Scheme are not extensive or unusual and are generally confined to a relatively limited number of receptors. Where visible, the proposed development will be seen alongside the existing relatively open settlement edge and will not be perceived as an uncharacteristic or discordant development within the views. In fact, the new landscape and planting proposals that form an important part of the Appeal Scheme will, increasingly over time, filter and screen views and will provide a positive landscape design solution and improvement to the existing settlement edge.
- 9.14 With the exception of slight differences in two visual effects judgements (LSOCG; Appendix B), the Council's Landscape Advisers (CD3.13) agreed with the visual effects assessment in the LVA.
- 9.15 Overall, the effects of the Appeal Scheme on landscape and visual resources and receptors will not lead to any significant harm in these terms.

Policy Context

- 9.16 The proposed development addresses and responds positively to the relevant policy context and any effects upon landscape character and visual effects are limited, localised and not unacceptable in these terms.
- 9.17 In respect of Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan policy DC3 (*Landscape and Settlement Setting*), the Appeal Scheme will not lead to a 'prominent intrusion' into the countryside. The Appeal Scheme will remain closely allied to the existing adjoining development and settlement edge and will be readily perceived alongside and as an integral part of this development edge of Cheadle. The Appeal Scheme will also not result in a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence.
- 9.18 In fact, the Appeal Scheme will have no discernible impact on the areas identified as being '*important to the landscape setting*' of Cheadle or to the important ('*significant*') views as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence (see 'Cheadle Setting' plan; CD9.4 and my Appendix B).

Conclusions

- 9.19 The Site occupies a settlement edge position, strongly influenced by the relatively exposed and open existing housing and development; with further ongoing development close to the south. It does not lie within a designated landscape or a landscape recognised as being of any particular value or interest. It also lies outside and well beyond those areas identified in the Council's Landscape and Settlement Character evidence base as being important to the landscape setting of Cheadle. In landscape and environmental terms, it occupies one of the least constrained areas surrounding Cheadle.
- 9.20 It is agreed with SMDC, that the Site and its immediate context is not a 'valued landscape' in NPPF paragraph 187a terms. It is further agreed that the Site and its immediate context is of Medium landscape value.
- 9.21 Further to this, there was also a very good level of agreement between the Council's Landscape Advisers and the submitted LVA on the effects of the Appeal Scheme at the application stage and this informed the Officers recommendation to approve the scheme. Despite there being some further differences in the levels of effects with the Council's Landscape Witness for the Appeal, these remain relatively limited.
- 9.22 Inevitably, in order to meet development needs, greenfield sites are required for new homes and it is therefore implicit that some degree of adverse effect and harm will arise in landscape and visual terms. In this instance, it is evident from the published studies; the site specific analysis; and the response of the Council's Landscape Advisers, that this Site does have the capacity and is capable of assimilating new residential development, whilst mitigating and minimising the degree of harm to an acceptable level.
- 9.23 I conclude that the proposals will result in limited and localised adverse landscape and visual effects and will deliver other medium and longer term landscape and GI benefits. The proposed development will establish an appropriate development and landscape solution and it will not cause significant and demonstrable harm in landscape or visual terms.
- 9.24 I conclude on landscape and visual grounds that there are no justifiable or valid reasons to withhold planning permission for this proposed development.

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