



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

FAO Laura Gardner
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Nottinghamshire
NG24 1BY

Your ref: 20/00873/FULM
My ref: G369
Date: 18th August 2020

Dear Laura,

Re: Planning Application Reference – 20/00873/FULM

Location – Eakring Road, Bilsthorpe, Newark On Trent, Nottinghamshire

Proposal - Proposed residential development on existing grassland off Eakring Road, Bilsthorpe, with new access junction onto Eakring Road, associated roads, footways, parking/garaging, landscaping proposals and sustainable drainage design. Proposal will deliver 103 new residential properties, with a mix of private and affordable dwellings, ranging from 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms.

Applicant – Elizabeth Woodhouse, Keepmoat Homes

1.Introduction

The following comments have been prepared by Helen Jones of Via East Midlands Limited, acting as a landscape consultant to Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC). These comments have been formulated on the basis of the submitted information detailed below. A site visit was made to the study area and representative viewpoints by Helen Jones on 29th July 2020

The Environmental Management and Design (EMD) Team have examined the following information to make these comments (only information that is relevant to Landscape and Visual Impact is listed below).

Documents

- Landscape and Visual Appraisal – FPCR - May 2020 Final Rev A – JES 28.05.2020
- Design and Access Statement – Geoff Perry Associates - November 2019
- Arboricultural Assessment – FPCR – May 2020 Final Rev A – SCC 22.05.2020
- Ecological Appraisal – FPCR – May 2020 Rev 1 – RCO 27.05.20

- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment – Nov 2019 – KEE01-01v4
- Application Form dated 27 May 2020
- Comments from LCC Archaeology Matthew Adams to LG NSDC – 11 June 2020
- Comments from tree consultant – Graham Wilson to Laura Gardner NSDC - 12 June 2020
- Comments from NCC Public Rights of Way- Kirsty Curd to LG NSDC - 12 June 2020
- Comments from NCC Highways – David Albans to LG NSDC – 12 June 2020
- Comments from Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust – Elizabeth Cope to LG NSDC – 17 June 2020 and 14/7/2020
- Comments from NCC planning policy - Emma Brook to LG NSDC – 2 July 2020
- Supporting information in response to NWT comments – Nick Law FPCR to LG NSDC – 2 July 2020
- Comments from Bilsthorpe Parish Council – Emma Thorpe to LG NSDC – 15 July 2020
- Comments from NCC Flood Risk Management - Ross Marshall to Matt Lamb NSDC – 23 July 2020

Drawings

- Detailed landscape Proposals sheet 1 of 3 – Drawing C-1704-5 rev A – PDP Associates
- Detailed landscape Proposals sheet 2 of 3 - Drawing C-1704-6 rev A – PDP Associates
- Detailed landscape Proposals sheet 3 of 3 - Drawing C-1704-7 rev A – PDP Associates
- Location Plan – Geoff Perry Associates Ltd – A871 08
- Massing Plan – Geoff Perry Associates Ltd – A871 002 rev B
- Occupancy plan – Geoff Perry Associates Ltd – A871 0003 rev B
- Tenure plan – Geoff Perry Associates Ltd – A871 004 Rev B
- Enclosures plan – Geoff Perry Associates Ltd – A871 005 rev B
- Parking – Geoff Perry Associates Ltd – A871 006 rev B

- External finishes – Geoff Perry Associates Ltd – A871 009 rev B
- Materials – Geoff Perry Associates Ltd – A871 010 rev B
- Street scenes – Geoff Perry Associates Ltd – A871 011 rev B
- Planning layout – Keepmoat Homes – P01 Rev L

2. Background

An outline planning application was submitted to NSDC in 2017 (planning application Reference 17/01139/ OUTM) for 85 houses and was approved in June 2018. This current application is for 103 houses but excludes the area designated for retail development which will be progressed by others.

A landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) accompanies the full planning application. An independent review of this document by a qualified Landscape Architect was requested by NSDC from the Environmental Management & Design (EMD) Team of Via East Midlands and these comments are provided here.

3. The existing site and study area

Study area

A study area has not been defined by the applicant within the LVA report, which would be best practice but is not essential. For the purposes of these comments by the EMD Team, a study area of 2 km from the centre of the proposed site has been considered.

The proposed site is within the administrative district of Newark and Sherwood District Council Council, and within the area of jurisdiction of Bilsthorpe Parish Council. The proposed site is on the north eastern edge of the village of Bilsthorpe, 3 km from the village of Eakring to the north east, 4 km from the village of Kirklington to the south east and 4 km from the village of Farnsfield to the south.

The main employment in Bilsthorpe Village was historically agriculture but Bilsthorpe Colliery opened in the 1920s and continued operating until 1977. The former colliery site has been restored and part of the area developed as the Bilsthorpe Business Park.

The land use of the surrounding area is predominately agricultural, although there are several industrial estates/business parks within the area such as Bilsthorpe Business Park mentioned above and Belle Eau Business Park to the south of Bilsthorpe village. Road infrastructure connects Bilsthorpe to the above villages and through to main roads - A614 running north/south (approx. 1km to the west) and A617 running east/west (just over 2km to the south). A disused mineral railway line runs through the area which is now a multiuser recreational route known as the Southwell Trail. There wind turbines at Stonish Hill, approx. 1.5km to the north east, and on the Bilsthorpe Business Park just to the north of the site. An established solar farm lies approx. 0.5km to the east of the

proposed site, with other established solar farms located to the north & north east of the site at just over 1km distance. Isolated farms in the area include Bogs Farm, Deerdale Farm and Letterbox Farm to the north west; Featherstone House Farm and Inkersall Farm to the west; Crifton Lodge Farm to the south west. Wycar Leys, a former residential home lies to the south, but is currently derelict.

The study area contains several large areas of woodland, including the extensive Sherwood Pines Forest Park to the west, plantation woodlands around the Rufford estate including Cutt's Wood lie to the north, and Eakring Brail Wood is situated on a high point to the east of the proposed site. Redgate Wood/Crowhill Wood are located on a strong ridgeline further to the south east. Closer to the proposed site there is also plantation woodland within the area of the restored Bilsthorpe Colliery immediately to the east & north east.

To the west of the study area is Rainworth Water, a tributary of the River Maun which flows to the north of the proposed site. To the west of the watercourse, the land rises steadily towards Mansfield with the landform reaching around 110m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) within Sherwood Pines Forest Park. Bilsthorpe is located on low-lying land on the eastern valley side at around 70m AOD. The landform to the east of the village rises to a moderate high point of 99m AOD at Mill Hill west of Eakring, with the strong ridgeline mentioned above reaching 115m AOD between Eakring and Kirklington. Within Bilsthorpe village, the land reaches a high point to the west of the site on a plateau of 75m AOD before falling again towards Rainworth Water. In the southern section of the village, land reaches 80m AOD at its easternmost point

Heritage designations

Bilsthorpe Conservation Area (CA) is immediately to the south west of the proposed site and this includes the Grade I listed Church of St Margaret. The villages of Eakring, Farnsfield and Kirklington also have Conservation Areas at their core.

Rufford Abbey Registered Park and Garden is situated approximately 1.5km to the north of the site's boundary. Belts of woodland are situated along the park north, south and western boundaries, resulting in a lack of inter-visibility between the park and the site.

Rufford Abbey also supports the only Scheduled Monument within the local area, the 'Rufford Abbey Cistercian monastery: monastic precinct, water-management works, pre-monastic openfield system and post-medieval building', located approximately 3.5km north of the site's boundary.

Ecological designations

The following Local Wildlife sites are located within the study area:-

Cutt's Wood 2/671
Cilpstone Forest area 1/90
Bilsthorpe Colliery 5/2161
Bilsthorpe grassland 5/3345
Mill Hill Green Lane 5/310
Eakring Brail Wood 2/547

Fox Holes 5/3382
Alder Carr, Inkersall 2/545

The closest site is the Bilsthorpe Colliery LWS immediately to the north east, which contains *"a variety of habitats including: grassland; bare ground; ponds; scrub and developing woodland; and marsh adjacent to a stream. The site is noted for its importance to breeding waders."*

Public Rights of Way

The following Public Rights of Way are within the study area:-

Rufford Bridleway 19 lies to the north west of the proposed site which connects Mickle Dale Lane and Eakring Road. Bilsthorpe FP 5/Eakring FP1 and 2 connect Bilsthorpe village with the high point of Mill Hill to the north east.

Kirklington Bridleway 2 links Kirklington Road to the south of Bilsthorpe village to Eakring

The Southwell Trail follows the route of the disused mineral railway line as Bilsthorpe Footpath 7 and Farnsfield Bridleway 16. Footpaths to the south connect the villages of Bilsthorpe and Farnsfield (Bilsthorpe Footpath 4/Farnsfield Footpath 16).

There are other PRoWs within the built area of Bilsthorpe such as Bilsthorpe Footpath 1 and Bilsthorpe Footpath 14 which emerges on Eakring Road close to the site.

The National Cycle Network Route 645 runs adjacent to the site's western boundary along Eakring Road from the route of the dismantled railway line to the west. There are no formal recreation activities associated with the site itself, however it does appear to be used as an informal walking area.

The proposed site

The site consists of the majority of a 3.9 hectare rectangular shaped agricultural field on the eastern settlement edge of Bilsthorpe, to the east of Eakring Road (the remaining section of the field is subject to a separate application for a retail development).

A mature, well-maintained hedgerow defines part of the site's western boundary. An area of higher landform with mature broadleaved woodland encloses the site to the east. The northern boundary is shared with the route of the former dismantled mineral railway line which previously serviced Bilsthorpe Colliery. The multi-user route mentioned above ends at Eakring Road. This part of the route of the dismantled railway is overgrown with vegetation and used as an informal footpath route which also allows for pedestrian access into the site.

The internal landform is relatively flat, with a level change of approximately 3m north to south across the site. The ground at the southernmost boundary lays at around 70m AOD and rises to approximately 73m AOD in the north western corner. Adjacent to the site's north western corner, a bank of landform rises to the road where it crosses the dismantled railway, at approximately 77.5m

AOD. There is a dry field ditch outside of the site adjacent to the eastern boundary, otherwise there are no watercourses. Proposed access to the site is from Eakring Road.

To the west of the site, 2 storey residential properties along Eakring Road front onto the site where the road runs adjacent to the boundary, and a number of commercial units are situated to the immediate south. Also on Eakring Road are bungalows set back from the road with green space to their frontage – the landform rises up to the railway bridge across Eakring Road and houses become screened behind this landform.

4. The proposed development

The proposed development is a residential scheme for approximately 103 dwellings and associated infrastructure, with vehicular access off Eakring Road. The houses will be 2 to 2.5 storey in height and the boundaries to the properties will be formed by 1.8 metre close boarded fences. There are 222 allocated private parking spaces. The development will be set within a network of green infrastructure including the retention and enhancement of the existing hedgerow to Eakring Road. The scheme includes the creation of an attenuation basin as a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS), and the provision of informal public open space within a central 'green' space.

5. Physical Landscape Impact

An arboricultural assessment has been provided by the applicant (Arboricultural Assessment – FPCR – May 2020 Final Rev A – SCC 22.05.2020). This identifies 6 trees, 5 tree groups and 1 hedgerow, which other than Tree group 5 are all of poor quality. This indicates that the only vegetation that will require removal in order to construct the scheme is a section of hedgerow to the Eakring Road frontage of approximately 17 metres. The NCC highways response (Comments from NCC Highways – David Albans – 12 June 2020) has not indicated that the length of the proposed visibility splay is underestimated. All other trees and tree groups are able to be retained. Therefore, the physical landscape impact as a result of the proposed development is **negligible** (although this is not stated by the applicant).

6. Impact on the landscape character

At a national level the proposed site is located in Natural England National Character Area 49 – Sherwood. The NE Natural Character Area 48 Trent and Belvoir Vales is located immediately to the east.

At a regional level the site is located in Regional Landscape Character Type group 5 Village farmlands and division 5a wooded Village farmlands, of the East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment. It is immediately adjacent to Regional Landscape Character Type group 10 Wood and Forests and division 10b Sandstone Forests and Heaths. The proposed site is in an area of transition between the Sherwood LCT and the Mid Nottinghamshire Farmlands LCT.

At a local level the application site itself is partially in the Mid Nottinghamshire Farmlands Landscape Character Area - Policy Zone 24 – Rufford Park Estate Farmlands with Plantations, and partially in Policy Zone 27 – Kirklington Village farmlands.

For the Policy Zone Mid Nottinghamshire Farmlands 24 - Rufford Park Estate Farmlands with Plantations - the landscape condition is assessed as **poor**, and the landscape sensitivity as **moderate**. This is largely because this Policy Zone contain the former Bilsthorpe Colliery area. The Policy Zone Landscape action is **Create**

The Policy Zone has the following characteristic features:-

- Gently undulating rounded topography
- Connecting belts of mixed woodland and plantations
- Highly intensive arable land
- Numerous agricultural buildings (chicken sheds etc.)
- Industrial units, sewage works, electricity substation.

The Policy Zone has the following Landscape actions:-

Landscape Features

- Maintain management of existing woodlands, plantations and pit planting.
- Utilise existing industrial nature of site and create suitable agricultural/industrial developments.
- Create new hedgerows and restore existing, seek opportunities to recreate historic field pattern were feasible.
- Enhance tree cover and landscape planting generally, in particular, towards the north within Rufford Park and around the industrial estate to the south, to create increased visual unity and habitat across the Policy Zone.

Built Features

- Create new industrial economy within the area, such as creation of a wind farm (proposed).

The proposed site is also partially in Mid Nottinghamshire Farmlands Policy Zone 27 – Kirklington Village Farmlands - the landscape condition is also assessed as **very poor**, and the landscape sensitivity as **moderate**. The Policy Zone Landscape action is **Create**

The Policy Zone has the following characteristic features:-

- Gently undulating rounded topography, with some flat areas.
- Medium distance views to frequently wooded skylines.
- Numerous small linear blocks of mixed deciduous woodland.
- Predominantly medium scale arable field systems.
- Part of settlement of Eakring.

The Policy Zone has the following Landscape actions:-

Landscape Features

- Create new hedgerows and restore existing, seek opportunities to recreate historic field pattern where feasible, contain new development within historic boundaries.
- Maintain management of existing woodlands, plantations and pit planting, whilst enhancing tree cover and planting generally to create increased visual unity and habitat across the Policy Zone.
- Utilise existing industrial nature of site and create suitable agricultural/industrial developments.

Built Features

- Create new industrial economy within the area.
- Create new areas of planting in order to minimise impact of industry on character of Policy Zone.

Landscape impact

Landscape baseline - The landscape value of the site and its immediate surroundings is assessed by the applicant as **medium – low value**. This is assessed by considering factors such as landscape designations, landscape quality, conservation interest, heritage interest, recreational value and perceptual aspects. Landscape values of low, medium and high are defined in Appendix A. The EMD Team are in agreement with this assessment

The applicant then considers the impacts on the landscape of the site itself at the construction stage and on the wider surrounding landscape. The LVA goes on to consider the landscape impact on the national, regional and local landscape character types at the operational stage. Finally the LVA considers the landscape impact on the site itself at year 1 and at year 15.

A **major/moderate adverse** landscape impact is identified at the construction stage on the site itself. A **minor adverse/negligible** on the wider landscape is identified at the construction stage. At year 1 the landscape impact on the site itself is **moderate/minor adverse**. At year 15 the landscape impact on the site itself is **minor adverse**. Only **negligible** impacts are identified on the landscape character types at all stages of the project. The EMD Team agree with these conclusions, which are fully summarised in in Appendix C of the LVA

Discussion

As shown on Figure 6 Rev A of the LVA, the proposed site is very visually contained by land form and surrounding built settlement (see below) therefore the EDM Team agree that landscape impacts will not extend any great distance from the site and will not influence the adjacent landscape character types such as the Sherwood Landscape Character Area. The Policy Zone in which the proposed site is located already has industrial areas and built development therefore the development of the site will not have significant adverse landscape impacts within this area.

7. Landscape Mitigation Proposals

The landscape and Green Infrastructure proposals for the scheme are detailed in the Design and Access Statement (Design and Access Statement – Geoff Perry Associates - November 2019) and the LVA accompanying the planning application. Landscape masterplans are also provided (Detailed Landscape Proposals sheet 1 or 3 – Drawing C-1704-5 rev A – 7 rev A – PDP Associates)

In summary these proposals include:-

- The provision of approximately 0.6 hectares of land dedicated to landscape, green infrastructure, public open space and habitat related proposals – representing approximately 17% of the total site area.
- An area of informal open space and naturalistic planting centred around a proposed attenuation basin in the site's south western corner.
- A central green with additional tree planting.
- Additional planting around the boundary of the site, including planting of new hedgerows and infill of existing hedgerows along the site boundary.
- Hedgerow and shrub planting within front gardens throughout the development.

All of the landscape areas and public open space features will be managed and maintained. This will be achieved through the implementation of a Landscape Management Plan (LMP), to ensure the successful establishment of the landscape proposals.

8. Visual Impact

The applicant has selected 10 representative viewpoints to analyse the visual impacts of the proposed scheme. The baseline viewpoints are described in paragraphs 4.74 – 4.84 of the LVA and are illustrated in Figures 7 – 15. These viewpoints were not agreed in advance with NSDC. None of the viewpoints are recognised OS viewpoints, historic buildings, or historic parks and gardens.

The visual impact of the proposed development has been assessed at a height to represent the level of the highest level of the proposed buildings. A hand drawn Visual Envelope drawing has been prepared rather than a computer generated ZTV drawing. This has then been refined following site investigation and is shown on Figure 6. It would be best practice to produce a computer generated ZTV but in this case the Visual Envelope is confined, as observed on the site visit of 29th July, by built form to the south and west, and topography and vegetation to the north and east, the production of a ZTV will not provide any additional information.

The applicant has considered visual impact at the construction stage, and at year 1 and Year 15 of the development. The impact is described for residential receptors, recreational receptors on PRoWs, Cycle users including on the National Cycle Route, road users and people at their places of work or using Sports Facilities. Visitors to the Bilsthorpe Miners Memorial are also considered.

Appendix C details the visual impact on 14 types of identified receptors, rather than on each individual viewpoint, but cross references to the representative viewpoints.

In summary, the only significant visual impact identified is for residential receptors (Receptor 1- properties fronting onto the site including Eakring Road and Mickledale Road - approximately 16 dwellings), this effect is assessed as a **major/moderate adverse visual impact** at the construction stage, reducing to **moderate adverse** at Year 1 and **minor adverse** at year 15. This view is illustrated in the photographs from Viewpoints 2 – View north east from pavement along Mickledale Lane and viewpoint 3. View from pavement along Eakring Road adjacent to field access point into the site.

As the visual envelope of the site is contained the EMD Team is in agreement with this conclusion. Night-time Visual Impact will only be slightly increased from the current situation of an adjacent residential area with street lighting. The only cumulative impact will be as a result of the future development of the retail facility which is likely to involve removal of additional hedgerow to the Eakring Road frontage.

9. Conclusions

- The LVA has been carried out to the accepted best practice which is the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLIVA3) Third Edition published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Managers and Assessment (April 2013), and the photography practice note – Landscape Institute 2019 Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19.
- A hand drawn visual envelope (VE) has been identified, and this has been refined as a result of site investigation. It is accepted by the EMD Team that this VE is confined by topography, mature vegetation and built development within the village of Bisthorpe.
- The landscape assessment has referred to national, regional and local landscape character assessments. Only negligible landscape impacts have been identified on the surrounding landscape character types, which is agreed by the EMD Team.
- **Landscape impact** - A major/moderate adverse landscape impact on the site itself at the construction stage has been identified which is significant in terms of the EIA Regulations. A minor adverse landscape impact/ negligible has been identified on the wider landscape at the construction stage. At year 1 the landscape impact is assessed as moderate/minor adverse and at year 15 minor adverse. Landscape Impacts are reduced due to the development of the landscape provision, particularly to the site frontage and around the attenuation basin to the south west corner of the site. The EMD Team agree with these conclusions
- The landscape proposals fulfil some of the requirements of the Policy Zone landscape actions such as *'Enhance tree cover and landscape planting generally, in particular, towards the north within Rufford Park and around the industrial estate to the south, to create increased visual unity and habitat across the Policy Zone.'*

- **Visual Impact** - the only significant visual impact identified is for housing directly opposite the site (receptor 1) on Eakring Road and the eastern end of Mickledale Lane. This is assessed as a major/moderate adverse visual impact at the construction stage, reducing to a moderate adverse impact at Year 1 and a minor adverse impact at year 15, the EMD Team is in agreement with this conclusion. There would be no significant visual impacts on residential areas or traveller receptors more than 500 metres from the site.
- No significant night-time visual impacts have been identified and no cumulative visual impacts.

The following information should be provided as a condition of the application should this be approved at a later stage:-

- A detailed landscape proposal drawing with full planting schedules, showing species, specification and density of plant material should be provided.
- Tree protection measures shown in the Arboricultural Report (Arboricultural Assessment – FPCR – May 2020 Final Rev A – SCC 22.05.2020) should be conditioned and as detailed in the tree consultants' comments (Comments from tree consultant – Graham Wilson to Laura Gardner NSDC - 12 June 2020)

10. Summary

The EMD Team support the proposed residential development for 103 houses on existing grassland off Eakring Road, Bilsthorpe, with a new access junction onto Eakring Road, associated roads, footways, parking/garaging, landscaping proposals and sustainable drainage design. it is confirmed that the EMD Team are in agreement with the conclusions of the assessment and that significant impacts in terms of the EIA regulations are limited to the area of 500 m from the proposed site boundary and these have been clearly identified by the applicant in their Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal.

Yours sincerely



Helen Jones
Landscape Architect

