

Site specific Landscape and Visual Impact

Construction phase

If planning permission were granted, in say, Spring 2010 the landscaping and wildlife corridors would be fenced off & planted in the first available planting season Winter 2010/11. It is considered important to establish the structure and biodiversity planting at the earliest juncture both to allow it to gain the maximum maturity prior to building occupation and to function as landscape and visual impact mitigation during the construction phase. It is envisaged that the "off A591 line" segments of the roundabout access would be constructed during Summer 2011, with the reworking and connections with the A591 during Winter 2011/2012. The construction of site spine road would be phased through Summer 2011 and Winter 2011/2012. The construction of the site buildings would take place 2012 through to 2014 in structured phases.

In the construction phase it is estimated that there will be circa 50 vehicles with 2 movements per day. There ought not to be much in the way of noise and vibration in either the construction or operational phases of the development. In the construction phase the site is too big to plausibly light & will probably work 07.30/08.00hrs to 18.00hrs or dusk if earlier.

Operational phase

The operations of the site are not envisaged to be industrial operations in the normal sense of the word, nor external activities creating noise and disturbance to others. The early implementation of the structure and biodiversity planting will mitigate the already low landscape and visual impact of the development.

Decommissioning phase

The philosophy of the site Masterplanning is to develop using the pre-existing beneficial topography which has a high builtform landscape absorption capacity. Decommissioning of the buildings and structures from site will effectively return the land to its original form. It is envisaged that the structure and biodiversity landscaping, together with the naturalised culverts would remain due to the enhancements they create.

Roundabout

The off-centre roundabout, aligned in toward the site will create a partially obscured landscape and visual impact. This effect will be enhanced by the line of structure planting alongside the A591 which is necessary both for landscape and visual impact mitigation and as a linear feature for bat foraging.

Opportunity also exists within the margins of the highway boundaries, particularly where the old main road joins the A591 just south of the proposed roundabout and in the nape created by the entry deflection curve for southbound traffic to implement cluster planting. The size of the roundabout would also be available for planting: subject to highway safety considerations.

The phasing of the construction phase of the site access arrangements will be used to bring services across the highway and additional site drainage should this be necessary.

Chapter 8: Site specific Landscape and Visual Impact

Roads

Because of the retained topography of the site and the structure and biodiversity landscape planting it is assessed that the roads (other than the main access of the roundabout) will only be observable from within the site and not from external vantage points.

Buildings

The site topography means that intervisibility on the site itself, and when viewed from externally is relatively restricted. It is assessed that only parts of some roofs or upper portions of buildings will be visible at all and none will be visible against a skyline. The specification of site building palettes will ensure coherence between builtform and landscape.

The northwest to south east topographical alignment dictates that most reflective elements of the buildings, windows and solar panels, will be orientated toward the south west where the site cannot be observed from distance.

Parking

Because of the retained topography of the site and the structure and biodiversity landscape planting it is assessed that generally the parking elements will only be observable from within the site and not from external vantage points. The functional Park & Ride element will be screened by landscape planting.

Boundary features

The site will remain with the distinctive stonewall boundaries, backdropped by structure and biodiversity planting. For longevity of stock control the long northwestern stone boundary wall will be raised to 1.6m for the benefit of the adjoining agricultural holding. Agreement has also been reached with Mr Ellis the farmer of the agricultural holding to expunge the existing access from the adjoining lower field onto the A591 opposite Plantation Bridge Filling Station, a facility to be replaced by a new field access from within the site.

Vegetative land cover

The structure and biodiversity planting specified in the Site Masterplan RH001/01 is designed where practicable to be both holistic with the ecology of the site and its hinterland, and to have best landscape and visual impact potential. Its establishment in advance of any builtform development works commencing will maximise its landscape and visual impact mitigation potential. It is envisaged that the structure planting will comprise mature extra-strong standard specimens to expediently mature the development.

Balancing ponds

The balancing ponds will be established with the structure and biodiversity planting.

Paved areas

Because of the retained topography of the site and the structure and biodiversity landscape planting it is assessed that the paved areas will only be observable from within the site and not from external vantage points.

Chapter 8: Site specific Landscape and Visual Impact

Roofs

The roof on the site will be specified from the site building palette to be slate, sedum or dark roofing material to minimise their landscape and visual impact.

Other significant built forms or features

It is not envisaged the site will have other significant built forms or features: other than a complexity of stone walls as the existing linear metrage is to be reworked into the development.

Mitigation

It is contended that the best possible mitigation measures have been successfully integrated into the development.

Site management and maintenance

It is envisaged that a site community management and maintenance function will be established, professionally advised, to ensure the site land use, particularly the structure and biodiversity planting and wildlife corridors, are appropriately controlled. Explorative discussions have taken place with Cumbria Willife Trust regarding the monitoring and maintenance of the wildlife corridors.