CF LANDSCAPE DESIGN

LAKESIDE VIEW, PENISTONE

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

December 2012

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CF Landscape Design were appointed to carry out a landscape design for a proposed new property on the north-eastern bank of Scout Dike reservoir near Penistone. As a single residential property a full landscape and visual appraisal is not necessary, but due to its sensitive position within the green belt, and also to make the most of its location, a brief appraisal of the landscape and the potential impact upon it has been prepared in this document.

1.2 This appraisal looks at the landscape character in a national and local context, identifies sensitive receptors and analyses the potential impact the development will have on the local landscape and those who use it. The conclusions of the report will also inform the landscape design to ensure the impact is minimised and positive.

2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

2.1 National context

2.1.1 In 1998 The Countryside Commission (now Agency) published a national Countryside Character Map identifying a series of Landscape Character Areas for the whole of England and Wales. The site, situated between the A629 and Scout Dike reservoir, lies within the Landscape Character Area 37, Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe. The study area represents the quieter, rural, broad upland plateau landscape aspects of the landscape character area, where the strong linear patterns of stone walled pastoral fields has a distinctive influence on the landscape. The site is also close to the adjacent Landscape Character Area 38, the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfields. This is a more varied, complex mix of built-up areas, industrial land and farmed open areas overlaid on a rolling landform of hills, broad valleys and escarpments. The A629, running along a ridge above Scout Dike reservoir to the east of the study area marks the start of the transition from the Pennine Fringe landscape to the coalfield landscape towards Barnsley.

2.2 Local context

2.2.1 The site lies within Barnsley Borough Council administrative area. In the Local Development Framework – Preferred Options Oct 2005, the site is located within Green Belt. No other specific designations indicating a particular landscape, ecological or historic value pertain to this site or its immediate surroundings.

2.2.2 From Barnsley Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment of 2002 the site falls within a landscape character zone identified as 'F1: Ingbirchworth Upland Farmland.' The key characteristics identified for this area, described below, are representative of the study area.

- ***Stepped landform*** *rising to 367m at Whitley Edge*
- ***Fields of pasture*** *comprising medium geometric field units strongly defined by distinctive stone walls.*
- ***Beech plantations*** *stand out on the skyline, sometimes enclosed by stone walls*
- ***Unimproved pasture with scrub*** *on steeper slopes*
- ***Scattered farmsteads*** *of sandstone, quarried from the local area.*
- ***Villages of Thurlstone and Millhouse Green*** *on the character area border with the valley of the River Don, both with links to the former fulling mills along the river.*
- ***Windfarm*** *at Spicer Hill is visually prominent on the skyline.*
- ***Single lane rural roads*** *criss-cross the open countryside, bounded by stone walls.*

- ***Disused industrial quarries, shafts and mines*** *indicate the importance of the area for the extraction of coal and stone.*
- ***Man made reservoirs*** *at Broadstone, Ingbirchworth, Royd Moor and Scout Dike.*
- ***Panoramic views*** *over adjacent river valleys and towards the open moorland of the Peak District National Park.*

2.2.3 The study area lies at the eastern edge of this landscape character zone and its typically strong, high quality character is somewhat diluted by proximity to the more varied, lower landscape to the east and also by the traffic noise and movement along the busy A629. However, as the site is located within the Scout Dike valley, facing west towards the upland plateaux of Pennine pastures, it is very much part of this character zone.

2.2.4 Scout Dike reservoir is one of four man-made reservoirs that strongly influence the landscape character of the study area, forming major features of tree fringed water bodies, stepping down the valley bottom towards Penistone. Steep sided slopes rise up from either side of the reservoirs, particularly on the western side towards the high ridge line topped by the Spicer Hill wind turbines and Royd Moor Hill. The broad valley forms a distinctive area within the upland farmland of the Pennine fringe due to its landform and reservoirs. The eastern valley slopes are less high, less steep and more interrupted by roads, small settlements, and woodland. Although still a good quality, open, rural landscape they lack the peaceful harmony of the area towards the west.

2.2.5 The Scout Dike valley landform creates a slightly more enclosed landscape than the large scale open landscape of the tops, to the west, thus views are contained and often directed towards the reservoirs, although the ridge of Royd Moor and the wind turbines form an important backdrop.

2.2.6 Long views from the upper parts of the western valley sides form an important element of the landscape character. Spicer Hill wind turbines, situated just to the south of the Spicer Hill ridge line, are dominant features in most views in this area. This conglomeration of tall wind turbines are a foreign element in an otherwise smooth, open, rural landscape but have become a well known local feature, forming a strong focal point in many of the longer views.

2.3 Site Landscape Character.

2.3.1 The proposed site is a grassed field sloping downhill from the A629 in the north-east to the edge of Scout Dike reservoir to the south-west. It forms an –L-shaped field around a rectangular enclosure that is part of new housing development known as Lakeside. The new housing occupies the site of an old isolation hospital built some time before 1931. When the hospital was built a tree belt was planted around the perimeter. These trees have

been retained along the boundary with the proposals site, and the southern, lakeside boundary, and now form a block of mature woodland immediately next to the site. This woodland is an important feature in an otherwise open landscape. It screens the new housing and provides some enclosure for the proposals site.

2.3.2 Scout Dike reservoir lies immediately beyond the south-western boundary. The reservoir is fringed with young trees and shrubs although at the boundary of the proposals site tree growth is very sparse and intermittent allowing open views across the lake to Bell Royd Farm on the opposite valley side and the wind turbines on Spicer Hill in the distance.

2.3.3 The boundaries of the site are dry stone walls in reasonable condition, with one holly tree on the north-western wall. The land adjoining to the north-west is pasture land with poorly maintained boundary walls and occasional post and wire fencing. The A 629 runs along the northern boundary. The noise and movement of vehicles on this road is an intrusive urban feature.

3 LANDSCAPE QUALITY AND SENSITIVITY.

3.1 Landscape Quality indicates the value which may be placed on the landscape, based on character, condition and aesthetic appeal. Landscape sensitivity is a measure of the landscape's ability to accommodate change. In many cases the higher the quality of a landscape the higher its sensitivity. However this depends on the nature and magnitude of the change, also on the individual nature of the landscape character under study. In addition a landscape that is highly visible from a number of points is likely to be more sensitive to change.

3.2 The BMBC Landscape Character appraisal describes the Ingbirchworth Upland Farmland as having a "*strong"* character resulting from *"its distinctive stepped topography, intact network of stone walls, rural upland character and panoramic views."* However, its condition is described as *"moderate"* due to the decline of individual features such as stone boundary walls and small woodlands. This appraisal is appropriate to the study area. In particular, around the site itself the increasing traffic on the A629, the new housing of Lakeside and the poor quality of field boundaries confers a reduction in quality.

3.3 The large scale exposed nature of the landscape, the low density settlement and the distinctive field pattern render this landscape inherently sensitive to change of a large scale and/or urban nature. However small scale developments such as conversion of farm buildings to residential property, woodland planting or countryside recreation development could be accommodated without detrimental influence on the landscape character. The precise siting of small scale developments would determine the ease with which it could be accommodated into the landscape. For example new developments in areas of relatively low visibility such as valley bottoms or within or next to woodland or existing residential features could be accommodated without impairment to the landscape quality.

4 THE PROPOSALS

4.1.1 Full details of the proposals are described on the architects drawings and report, but for ease of reading the proposals are described briefly here.

4.1.2 Essentially the proposal is to create a dwelling with artists workshop. The building will be cut into the ground, taking advantage of the sloping site to create a sweeping wildflower meadow from the roadside over the house roof with only the front elevation visible. The front elevation has been designed to create a distinctive sculptural feature from local sandstone. It is not flat, but an open three dimensional structure projecting somewhat from the hillside yet tethered back to it. The sculptor describes it as follows. *"The sculpture will emerge from the landscape in a myriad of undulating surfaces, textures and interplays of light and dark. In the finished building sculptural shapes would appear and dissolve as the sunlight moved across the surface, illuminating and casting shadows in the deeply cut stone."*

4.1.3 Access to the property will be from Lakeside, along the stone walled boundary of the old Isolation hospital. The main access point to the dwelling will be within a sunken courtyard with car parking at the same 'subterranean' level as the courtyard covered, by the green roof. The area between the dwelling and the lake side will be used for occasional sculpture workshops and temporary display of sculptural pieces. The design of this area has not been completed but in principal will retain the natural elements of the current site and surrounding landscape. There will be a small area of hard standing linked to the building and façade, occasional areas for seating or sculpture sunk into the slope and some access routes to link the different elements. Materials used will be based on local stone and styles of any structural elements taken from the local vernacular.

4.1.4 The magnitude of the proposals will be small being within the confines of a single field. Even within the field there will be no visible change within the upper half and very little in the lower half. The only change will occur in the sculptural façade and some minor changes in the creation of external outdoor space linked to the building for amenity use and access.

5 VISIBILTY

5.1 General

5.1.1 Due to the landform and settlement pattern the site is not visible from the north, north-east, east or south-east. The main views of the site are distant ones from the higher land to the west and closer views from the Scout Dike reservoir perimeter footpath.

5.2 ***Individual viewpoints.*** The following viewpoints have been assessed individually.

5.2.1 From Royd Moor. Views 1 and 2.

5.2.1.1 Distant views of the site are obtained from the high land to the west over Scout Dike and Royd Moor reservoirs to the urban area of Barnsley in the distance. The proposals site is a very small part of this wide view and its significance in the view is reduced further by its position tucked against the woodland of the Lakeside housing.

5.2.1.2 There will be a clear, but distant view of the sculptural elevation. From this distance detail will be indistinguishable but the general colour and texture will be similar to other stone features in the landscape such as field boundary walls and farm buildings. Features proposed within the lower slope of the site will also be visible but insignificant due to their scale.

5.2.2 *From Ingbirchwood Lane, near Folly Farm. View Three.*

5.2.2.1 A lower level and closer view of the site, this view is representative of those from Folly Lane, although as the viewer travels east along the lane the site becomes obscured by the Lakeside development with boundary trees. The proposals site sits in the middle distance, as one of the stone wall bounded fields running down slope to the reservoir from the A629 ridge. In this view the strong field pattern has disintegrated somewhat as the Lakeside development, woodland and reservoir edge shrubs dilute their simple form.

5.2.2.2 As for the more distant views, the sculptural elevation will visible, but not prominent in the view. Complex development in the frontage, using materials not found in the locality, could introduce incongruous features to the view but the small scale of the proposals site within the view and its position next to Lakeside would minimise impact.

5.2.3 *From Bell Royd Farm. View Four*.

5.2.3.1 Residents of Bell Royd Farm and users of the Penistone Boundary Walk will have a direct view of the proposals site across the reservoir from this point. (Bell Royd farm house has a large first

floor window facing the site). Currently the Lakeside development is prominent in the view. Despite its surrounding mature trees, the form and height of the Lakeside houses are a disruptive feature in the largely rural view. The stone elevation of the proposed dwelling will be a distinctive feature in the view, but will be of a scale that is much more similar to the existing dry stone walls than the current Lakeside development. Lying centrally in the view the elevation could form an important focal point, with the sculptor's vision of changing light and shadows across the elevation becoming reality in this view.

5.2.4 From Scout Dike Reservoir perimeter walk, west side. View 5.

5.2.4.1 The site is visible from parts of the western side of the Scout Dike reservoir perimeter walk but many potential views are obscured by waterside shrubs and trees. From the dam and the southern parts of the walk it is also obscured by the peninsular running out below the Lakeside development.

5.2.4.2 The sculptural elevation will be a strong, interesting focal point in this view, however, as it is set into the hillside its scale will not be overpowering, with the upper boundary wall still visible. The waterside shrubs will have a good screening effect for the lower part of the site with the building rising above. (In the spring and summer months this will have greater effect.)

5.2.5 From Scout Dike Reservoir perimeter walk, west side (north) -View 6.

5.2.5.1 Walking northwards views are restricted by waterside vegetation both on the west and the eastern banks of the reservoir. An oblique view of the front elevation will be afforded from this viewpoint with the 3 dimensional nature of the elevation being strongly evident. However as the view becomes more oblique the impact of the elevation becomes less, with only the gentle mounding of the grass covered roof being evident.

5.2.6 From Scout Dike Reservoir perimeter walk, east side -View 7 and 8.

5.2.6.1 From the north-eastern part of the perimeter walk the site forms a large part of the view with the trees around Lakeside forming a strong backdrop. The field boundary walls are also prominent in the view and their dilapidated condition contributes towards a slightly degraded landscape quality. An oblique view of the proposed sculptural elevation will be obtained, becoming more direct as the viewer approaches the site. As for View 5 this will form an interesting focal point, but set into the hillside and using local materials will not be disruptive. Whilst this will represent a change to the view it is not deemed a negative one. The boundary walls form dominant features in the view, due to their proximity and will effectively screen much of the detailed design and activity to the front of the house. Features that rise above the walls will be prominent but not necessarily negative, depending on their nature.

5.2.7 *From Scout Dike perimeter walk, directly below site. View 9.*

5.2.7.1 A close view of the site the proposed dwelling front elevation will be visible with the gentle mounding of the green roof above. This will form a strong point of interest to the viewer. The front of the site is quite open to views, thus any structures, sculptures, paths or activities on the frontage will have a strong impact on this view. Due to the proximity to the viewer and the gently sloping landform, relatively small changes near the boundary could reduce the visible area.

6 IMPACT ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL AMENITY

6.1 In broad terms the character of this upland farming landscape will not be significantly affected by the proposals. The scale of the development is insignificant when compared with the broad scale of the wider landscape.

6.2 The landscape is of good quality and of medium sensitivity to changes of a scale that is larger than the current farmstead dwellings, and of a form, material or colour not already represented in the landscape. However, notwithstanding the scale of individual developments, a cumulative increase in urban elements within this largely rural landscape will negatively affect the landscape character.

6.3 The proposals are for a single dwelling, but one of exceptional design. The potential impact of the dwelling is significantly reduced by being built into the landform and covered with grassed roofing. In addition, access and car parking are also set into the hillside. Thus the majority of the building and associated features will not be visible, leaving only the front elevation visible to the south-west as a feature in the landscape. The position of the site in the landscape also decreases its potential impact on landscape character. The site is not completely open, but enclosed by woodland along one boundary and proximity to existing housing renders its impact less than an individual dwelling in open countryside.

6.4 Due to the small scale, and its position on the lower eastern slopes of the Scout Dike valley the impact on landscape character is mainly restricted to the area around Scout Dike reservoir, arising up to Belle Royd and the line of the Penistone boundary walk footpath on the western valley sides.

6.5 The distinctive elevation will have an impact on landscape character within this area but its scale and use of local stone render its impact very minor. The elevation will provide a feature of interest that is likely to be a positive addition to the landscape, as an individual unique element that nonetheless provides reference to the natural landform and geology. (In the same manner, but on a much greater scale, the Royd Moor wind turbines are unique features in the landscape that have now become an acceptable local landmark)

6.6 The treatment of the area in front of the elevation, between the dwelling and the reservoir will be important in influencing local landscape character. Change that reflects the simple, bold character of the current landscape will have little impact. However, as for

the front elevation of the building, there is also scope for a design that involves minor new structures and features that will produce a positive change to the landscape character, providing the scale, materials and form reflect local landscape elements. For example, drystone walling, stone flag or crushed stone areas, arranged in a new format that could further link the sculptural elevation with the natural and man-made elements of the landscape.

6.7 The impact of the proposals on the distant views from the west will be insignificant, the proposals playing only a very small part in a very wide view. As the viewer moves closer and lower, the site takes a more significant role in the views. The building elevation will form a feature of interest, drawing the viewer's eye. However, seen against a hillside and comprising elements that make up the landscape, it will not have a strong impact. The impact is likely to be positive in providing a focal point of interest.

6.8 The impact on close views is greater although closer views are easily disrupted, in this case by shrubs and trees around Scout Dike reservoir as well as minor folds in landform. Where the proposals are visible from the Scout Dike perimeter walk they will have a strong impact on the views. The sculptural elevation will provide a focal point of interest. A walk around the reservoir provides a changing range of close views of the water and waterside shrubs as well as medium distance views across the reservoir and to the higher hills beyond. The proposed sculptural elevation will become part of this changing mix of views, bringing a positive change. In the very close views on the eastern side of reservoir the area in front of the elevation will dominate a large part of the views. Again the proposals will provide positive features of interest, but excessive, inappropriate or cluttered development will be detrimental to these views.

APPENDIX A

Drawing No - CF/S/348/1 **–** Landscape Character and Photo Key

APPENDIX B

Photographic views

View 1. *From Spicer House Lane*

Site shaded in red

View 2. From Royd Moor Road

View 3. From Ingbirchworth Lane, near Folly Farm

Site shaded in red

View 4 From Belle Royd Farm

View 5. From Scout Dike Reservoir perimeter walk, west side.

View 6. From Scout Dike Reservoir perimeter walk, west side (north)

View 7. From Scout Dike Reservoir perimeter walk, east side

View 8. From Scout Dike Reservoir perimeter walk, east side

View 9. From directly west of site on lakeside.

drawing title

Development at Lakeside View, Penistone.
Landscape character and photo key.

drawing no

S/P/348/1

scale

As shown @ A4

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