

INITIAL LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

FOR

PERSIMMON HOMES

AT

**CLAREL STREET,
PENISTONE
SOUTH YORKSHIRE**

FDA Landscape Ltd
Westleigh Hall
Wakefield Road
Denby Dale
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD8 8QJ

Tel: 01484 861611
Fax: 01484 861616
Email: info@fdalandscape.co.uk

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

FDA Landscape Ltd has been instructed by Persimmon Homes Ltd to carry out an initial landscape appraisal on a parcel of land at Penistone, South Yorkshire with a view to developing it for residential use. Penistone lies at the far west of the Barnsley Metropolitan Borough to the north of Sheffield, the south east of Huddersfield and the south west of Barnsley itself. Penistone is a large rural market town in the centre of an agrarian landscape. The parcel of land is one of 5 sites in Penistone which have been identified as potential residential development sites or have been considered for inclusion in the LDF but have not been allocated.

This particular site reference number is 84.

The purpose of this initial landscape appraisal is to inform Persimmon Homes Ltd, in the first instance, of any landscape issues relating to the existing landscape and any features or designations that exist on the site/outwith the site, which may influence an application for the proposed residential development of the site.

In order to compile this initial landscape appraisal a site visit was undertaken on the afternoon of Thursday 6th September 2012. We were provided with a red line plan with which to identify the site location and boundaries. The weather conditions at the time of the site visit were bright but windy. The site visit involved a driving tour around the edge of Penistone (approximate radius of 2 km from the centre) to assess how visible the site is from surrounding vantage points and a walk around the boundaries of the site itself and immediate area. A location plan, outlining the site boundaries can be found at **Appendix 1**. This outlines the site boundary and references in the viewpoints of a photographic recorded attached at **Appendix 2**. **Appendix 3** is an aerial photograph which shows the site in context to the surrounding land uses and **Appendix 4** is a concept plan supplied by Persimmon Homes Ltd.

In addition to the site walkover, desktop survey work was undertaken into the current status of the site and surrounding areas in terms of development control implications. No consultation was made with the Local Planning Authority, agency or other body.

1.1 THE SITE - Baseline

The site is currently under pasture, being a single field of approximately 4.9ha in size. It lies on the south western edge of Penistone, immediately adjacent to an existing estate of tenanted, senior citizen bungalows on Chapel Field Lane and Clarel Street. To the north west and south west of the site is open pasture and to the south east is Chapel Lane which connects Penistone with the A628 Manchester road.

BOUNDARIES

The south eastern boundary with Chapel Lane is an existing stone wall some 3-3.5m tall from the Chapel Lane side. The wall is in excellent condition and as the road lies at a lower level, it screens the site in its entirety from the road and Newchapel Farm. There is no formal footpath along this road. (Photos 1 & 2)

The boundary to the north east with the existing residential development and Penistone beyond is a simple post and wire fence (Photo 3) along the most southerly section of the boundary up to the kissing gate access (Photo 4). Beyond the gate to the north there is a dense and well managed native hedge, predominantly Hawthorn (Photo 5).

Similarly the south western edge of the site is bounded by a dense and well maintained, predominantly Hawthorn hedge, broken only by the Public Right of way which crosses the site and a field gate (Photos 6 & 7). Beyond this hedge is open pasture and the farmsteads of Schole Hill, Gravels and Syke House (Photo 8). The roof tops of Syke House demonstrate the visual watershed between the site and the surrounding landscape.

The north western boundary runs alongside an existing track which accesses Schole Hill farm. This is bounded on the site side with a well maintained drystone wall approximately 1.2m high. Beyond the track is open pasture (Photo 9).

VEGETATION TYPE AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNATION

Where hedges form the boundaries they are well maintained, predominantly Hawthorn with some Ash and Elder.

To the north west and south eastern corners, beyond the site boundaries there are groups of mature, broadleaved trees and a small copse adjacent to Chapel Lane in a private garden (Photo 10).

There is no vegetation of particular ecological value within the site which has been recently used for hay cropping and grazing. The site, therefore, has no individual merit in landscape terms. The value of the site is more as part of the surrounding rural landscape.

There are no landscape designations on the site. On the southern side of Chapel Lane there is an area identified as **regenerated ancient woodland** and also a small area of **orchard**. There are other areas of **ancient woodland** within 1 km of the site although these will not be affected by any proposals for development of this site.

TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS

The site lies on the north east facing flank of the Don valley, on the edge of the Penistone residential fringe. The site slopes at a steady gradient of approximately 1:14 down from the south western boundary to the north east. There is a slight crowning of the land to the north western corner of the site.

The soils on the site are classified as Grade 4 under the Agricultural Land Classification Scheme, Grades 1-3a being the best and most versatile soils. The site appears to be free draining with no areas of standing water.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

In terms of landscape character, the site falls within The Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe (NCA37). This area marks the transition from the Pennine Uplands to the lower, more undulating landscapes of the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire coalfields to the east. The most striking characteristic of this area is the mixture of predominantly industrial towns and villages with the strong valley forms and pastoral agriculture of the Pennine foothills. Locally, the River Don and its tributaries dissects the landscape creating steep sided and characteristically, wooded valleys. Development has concentrated on the valley floor and later spread up the valley sides.

In contrast the higher ground is characterised by treeless rough grazing in extensive areas of enclosed pasture and remnant moorland. The strong rectilinear enclosure dates back from the Parliamentary Enclosures of the C19th which are particularly strong and characteristic in the Penistone area. The enclosure itself is achieved in the main by drystone walls built from Millstone Grit with occasional stretches of mature hedgerow (largely Hawthorn).

The site itself forms part of this pastoral landscape and does not have any distinguishing features.

HOUSING

The housing style in the immediate area ranges from council built, senior citizens bungalows (Photo 11), detached stone villas, stone terraces and modern detached and semi-detached family housing. To the north west within the rural landscape are isolated farmsteads.

Historically, building materials were almost exclusively sandstone or Millstone Grit with sandstone flags to the roofs, however more modern parcels of development have been built in brick with slate or tile roofs. (Photo 12)

RECEPTOR GROUPS

Pedestrian Receptors

There is a Public Right of Way (PROW) which crosses the centre of the site in a north east to south westerly direction via the kissing gate off Clarel Street. (Photos 4 & 13)

There are direct views throughout the site from this footpath.

There is also an existing access track to Schole Hill which runs along the length of the north western boundary from which uninterrupted views across the whole site can be gained.

The position of the site on the flank of the valley below Schole Hill and Gravels makes views into the site from these farmsteads limited or indeed non-existent.

Cross Lane

Views towards the site from Cross Lane to the west are blocked by the topography as the site lies over the ridge, below Schole Hill. As such the site lies beyond the visual watershed from the majority of vantage points (Photo 14 & 15).

Chapel Lane

As has been stated previously, there are no views into the site from Chapel Lane or the houses on it due to the existing, high boundary wall.

Housing at Chapel Field Lane/Clarel Street

The main receptors for this site are the existing properties on Chapel Field Lane and Clarel Street which back onto the site. These properties lie at a lower level, downslope from the site and the site forms their main view and outlook to the west. Properties to the north of the kissing gate have a more limited and filtered view due to the proximity of the existing hedgerow but the properties to the south of the kissing gate have open and unrestricted views across the site, the boundary at this point being only a post and wire fence and short sections of low hedge (Photo 3). The impact on these residents would be *major adverse*.

Traffic on the A629

There is a view across the valley towards the site from the A629. Traffic travelling along this road has a clear view towards Penistone and the site. However, traffic on this road is fast moving and any views towards the site would be momentary glimpses which would only see the generally setting of Penistone and the rural landscape in which it sits (Photo 16).

2.0 CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

There are no significant constraints from a visual amenity or landscape perspective that cannot be overcome by appropriate mitigation with the exception of the impact on the properties on St John's Close which back onto the site.

There are no landscape designations on the site and the location is such that a sensitively designed layout and landscape strategy could allow the site to be developed for residential use without adverse impacts on the landscape and visual amenity of Penistone and the wider area.

The development of this site would mean an extension to the built edge of Penistone and whilst this could be interpreted as an encroachment into the surrounding pastoral landscape, its position in this visually contained situation makes the impact of any future residential development on this site one of minor significance. When viewed from the A629 as part of Penistone as a whole, the extension of housing into this area is seen to have a negligible impact on the surrounding landscape character.

The effect on the pedestrian receptors for the development of this site can be mitigated against as shown in the attached Concept plan prepared by Persimmon Homes. This involves the accommodation of the existing PROW into a central linear Public Open Space (POS) within the development and the retention of the links to the wider footpath network beyond the site. The POS will also serve to compartmentalise the development and reduce its impact when viewed from the A629. Measures to mitigate the impact of the scheme on residents on St Johns Close can be achieved during the design of the site layout.

The proposed development plan shows the access to the site being gained from Chapel Lane. There would be an opportunity during the creation of this access to strengthen the landscape buffer along this interface. In addition the high stone wall on this boundary could be returned into the site as the road gains height to access the internal area. This would serve to screen the views into the housing development from Chapel Lane in both directions.

3.0 LANDSCAPE, PLANNING AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

In terms of design of the site there are several landscape factors to consider. These are in line with national and landscape planning and nature conservation policy in terms of retaining and enhancing the landscape character and visual amenity of the area and improving biodiversity.

- Existing mature trees and hedgerows on the site boundaries should be retained wherever possible and protected during the course of works on site in accordance with BS5837 Trees in relation to construction. The landscape design strategy for the site should seek to extend the wildlife corridor provided by these hedges, further into the development through the central open space.
- The boundary with the properties to the rear of St Johns Close should be planted with a mixed native hedgerow which will, in time, provide screening for these off site properties and extend the wildlife corridor through to the existing copse in the south east corner of the site. Public consultation feedback suggests that these residents would wish to see a close boarded boundary fence in this position to give them privacy. Further consultation would be advised at detailed design stage.
- The majority of new tree planting, particularly to the boundaries along wildlife connectivity routes and at the interface between the rural and built environment, should be native, reflecting the locally occurring species and including with a good percentage of long lived trees.
- Eco friendly building materials and practices should be considered.
- Bat and bird boxes should be introduced – built into the design/fabric of buildings.
- Internally, the layout should reflect the predominant character of the immediate area. Groups of houses should be broken up by blocks of new tree planting to visually reduce the scale of the development and reflect the farmstead grouping of buildings beyond the site boundaries.
- Materials should reflect the local vernacular.
- There is scope for incorporating sustainable drainage into the scheme – this could include some form of landscaped balancing pond feature within the area of open space.
- The boundary wall along Chapel Lane should be retained and returned into the site on both sides of the access in order to retain the existing character of the lane and to provide some screening of the new development.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The development of the site for residential purposes would not have any long term impact on the visual amenity or landscape character of the area with the exception of the existing residences on the north eastern boundary which can be mitigated to a degree by the planting of a length of native buffer planting along this boundary. The incorporation of a central POS and retention of the line of the existing PROW would preserve views through the site towards Schole Hill for these residents and break up the width of the development.

A residential development on this site would be relatively concealed and make only a minor modification to the urban edge of Penistone which would be easily absorbed by a well-designed landscape scheme.

Reference Material

Barnsley Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009: 5 Year Housing Land Supply 2009-2014 Report
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council 2009

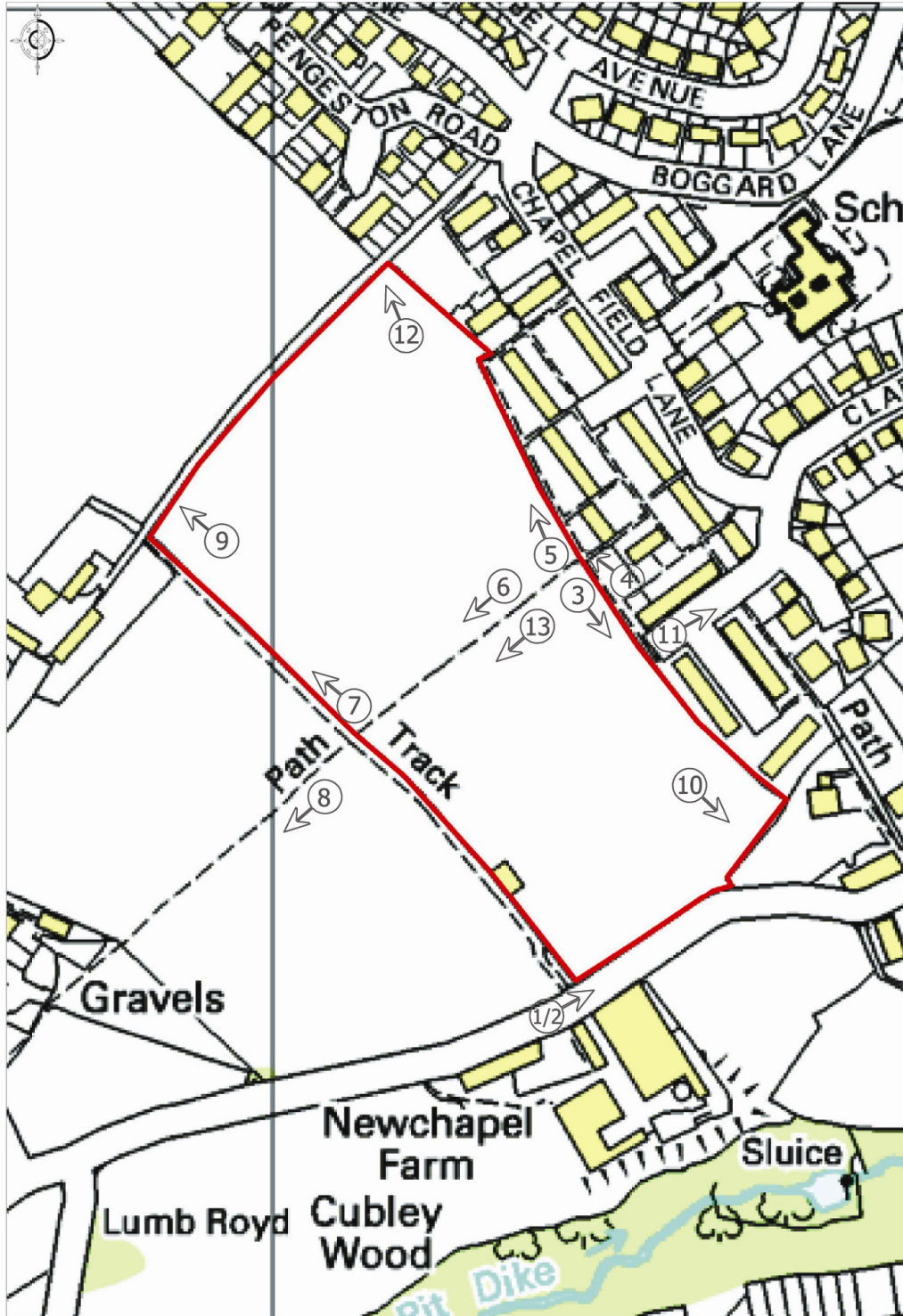
NCA 37 Yorkshire and Southern Pennines Fringe
Natural England

Coal Measures Natural Area Profile
Natural England (English Nature 1997)

APPENDIX 1

SITE LOCATION- Showing Photograph positions

Chapel Lane, Penistone



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APPENDIX 2
PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



Photo 1: Existing stone boundary wall on Chapel Lane



Photo 2: Existing stone boundary wall on Chapel Lane with copse of trees in adjacent garden at south east corner of site at the end of the road



Photo 3: Post and wire fence to southern section of north easterly boundary



Photo 4: Kissing gate access to Public Right of Way crossing the site



Photo 5: Northerly section of north eastern boundary with existing mature hedge and new houses in distance.



Photo 6: Looking towards the south eastern boundary and the mature native hedge **on** the boundary



Photo 7: Looking north along the south eastern boundary



Photo 8: Looking north into the field beyond the site with Schole Hill to the right and Gravels in front (roof top and chimney visible only)



Photo 9: Looking towards the north western boundary wall with the track to Schole Hill and off site trees



Photo 10: Looking towards copse of off-site trees in south eastern corner of the site



Photo 11: Adjacent properties on Clarel St



Photo 12: More recent residential scheme to the north east of the site



Photo 13: Public Right of Way crossing the site from north east to south west



Photo 14: Looking towards the site from Cross Lane. Site sits downslope behind the belt of trees



Photo 15: Looking towards the site from Cross Lane. Site sits downslope beyond the hedge and trees as shown



Photo 16: Looking towards Penistone from the A629. Position of site marked with arrow

APPENDIX 3
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH



APPENDIX 4

Persimmon Homes Proposed Masterplan