

CHAPTER 14: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

Introduction

- 14.1 Landscape character in urban areas such as Barnsley Town centre may be considered as a combination of built form, street morphology, planting, topography etc. There are various landscape characters affected by the development described in the following section.
- 14.2 Landscape elements, such as trees, shrubs, street furniture and paving, affected by the development, are described separately but assessed as part of each character area.
- 14.3 This section reviews the landscape character and elements in the vicinity of the development site and assesses the impact of the development on these resources. The landscaping proposals are shown on the Landscape Plan referenced AL(90)002, a copy of which is included in Figure 14.1.

Methodology

- 14.4 The assessment methodology used in the preparation of this section has been developed from guidance given in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) and Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland. In summary the assessment process comprises:
- Establishment of existing or baseline conditions, including identification of Landscape character types and the recording of landscape elements in the vicinity of the proposed development;
 - Description of the development;
 - Assessment of the impact of the development on baseline conditions;
 - Recommendations for mitigation measures to offset or reduce identified impacts; and
 - Reassessment of impact on the assumption of established mitigation measures being in place, to determine residual impacts.

- 14.5 The assessment seeks to identify the magnitude and significance of changes to the character of the existing landscape resources, which would arise from construction of the development. Landscape impacts are changes in the fabric, character and quality of the landscape. These could include direct impacts upon specific landscape elements (such as loss of woodland or hedgerows) or effects on landscape character.
- 14.6 In making the assessment, magnitude of impact is considered alongside the identified sensitivity of the individual receptors to determine the significance of impacts. Magnitude of impact (assessed as substantial, moderate, slight or negligible) predicts the degree to which impact to landscape character or physical impact to landscape elements would occur as a result of the development. There are no impacts on landscape character or elements that would cause statutory objectives to be exceeded.

Table 14.1 Methodology for Assessing Magnitude

Scale of Impact	Description
Substantial	Impact resulting in a considerable change in baseline landscape character or elements with severe undesirable/desirable consequences on the receiving landscape
Moderate	Impact resulting in a discernible change in baseline landscape character or elements with undesirable/desirable consequences on the receiving landscape
Slight	Impact resulting in a discernible change in baseline landscape character or elements with undesirable/desirable consequences on the receiving landscape that can be tolerated
Negligible	No discernible change in baseline landscape character or elements

- 14.7 Sensitivity predicts the degree to which individual receptors will be affected by the change. Sensitivity is considered both in terms of how valued the landscapes are, from international down to local level, how adaptable landscape character is to change and how practicable it might be to replace distinctive elements lost or modified.

Table 14.2 Methodology for Determining Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Examples of Receptors
High	Recreation Area of Borough-wide significance, Landscape character not able to accommodate development, Landscape elements that cannot easily be replaced or are distinctive or in good condition
Medium	Listed buildings and their settings, Conservation Areas, Landscape character able to accommodate a degree of development, Landscape elements that are difficult to replace or are fairly distinctive or are in average condition
Low	Non-designated areas of the town centre, Landscape character that is robust and can accommodate new development, Landscape elements that are replaceable or are not distinct or are in very poor condition

14.8 By combining the assessment of magnitude and sensitivity it is possible to predict the significance of the impact, which may be negligible, minor, moderate or major and can be either beneficial or adverse depending on the nature of the development and the mitigation and enhancement measures proposed.

Table 14.3 Impact Significance Matrix

Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Impact			
	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
High	Major	Major - Moderate	Moderate-Minor	Minor
Medium	Major	Major - Moderate	Moderate-Minor	Minor
Low	Major - Moderate	Moderate - Minor	Minor	Negligible

14.9 The mitigation proposals will be described as 'prevent', 'reduce', or 'offset' measures during, Design, Construction or Operation stages.

Existing Situation

- 14.10 The site and immediate surroundings can be divided into various landscape character areas and these comprise certain landscape elements within the public realm.
- 14.11 Cheapside and May Day Green character area comprises two of the principal shopping frontages in the town. They are generous in their width and are paved throughout with concrete block, flag and brick pedestrian pavings with numerous seats, trees, raised planting beds and one formal sitting shelter. Enclosing buildings are generally poor, many with low deep heavy canopies that reinforce a calm but bland character.
- 14.12 Eldon St and Burlington Arcade are streets that form the edge of a larger character area stretching north and west. These are civilised streets with some buildings of character including a Conservation Area to the north of Eldon St. Some vehicular traffic passes through this secondary shopping area where the public realm is made up of traditional concrete paving, street lighting and pedestrian crossing points. Cars and vans park in lay-bys that also accommodate servicing and public transport. Some wider pavements include motorcycle parking and litter bins. Occasional open service yard access points detract from the overall character of traditional urban civilised streets.
- 14.13 Kendray St and Midland St character area is similar to Cheapside and May-Day Green though the shopping is secondary and vehicular traffic passes through. The character is dominated by pedestrian barrier rails, pedestrian crossing lights and high kerbs. There are street trees though no seats or other large street furniture. The character is drab and grey with markedly contrasting areas of congestion and emptiness.
- 14.14 The outdoor market is a hard asphalt and tarmac paved area of steel and timber market stalls in red and silver. Aisles are narrow and the surrounding built form is tall and stark. This area alternates between bustling with people and empty.
- 14.15 Pontefract Road and the new interchange road is an area of open highways, fast criss-crossing traffic and a disintegrating public realm, all dominated by the large

Harborough Hill Road bridge to the east. There are a few street trees and small pockets of shrub planting within the public domain, boundaries are low walls or fences enclosing yards and car parks reinforcing this edge of town slightly derelict feel to the character.

14.16 Harborough Hill Road forms part of the inner ring road and this swings round the site boundary providing slip roads that are car-dominated and approaching motorway-standard with shrub planting borders. These and topographical factors result in isolated places that are not overlooked by surrounding buildings or spaces.

14.17 Rear service yards, private surface car parks, railway and a series of ramps and access roads are the ingredients for a very confused and poor environment of derelict buildings, scrub regeneration to corners, dilapidated fences and a mix of lorries, van, cars and people.

Impact of Development

14.18 The proposals to progressively demolish the local Council offices, shops, indoor market, multi-storey car park, retail warehouse and derelict warehouse, to be replaced with a new indoor and outdoor market, multi-storey car park, shops and cinema, would lead to some radical changes to the landscape character of the area. This assessment is based on the landscape scheme plan for the development, alongside the Landscape Report section of the Barnsley Markets Development Agreement Report produced for the 1249 Regeneration Partnership LLP.

Cheapside and May Day Green

14.19 Cheapside and May Day Green character area would change in extent. Cheapside would become wider in parts.

Elements that would be affected by the development are;

- The total loss of some 13 extra heavy Pyrus trees offset by the gain of 4 new trees on Cheapside (in the May Day Green character area) and 14 in the new Outdoor Market

- The loss of 4 brick-built, multi-level, raised beds containing bedding displays and associated seats, a 4 seat shelter and 10 other seats and benches, offset by the gain of 8 new planters with long benches
- Introduction of natural paving materials alongside quality concrete
- Creation of a venue space to the centre of May Day Green

The magnitude of the impact on the landscape character of Cheapside would be **substantial** and **largely desirable**.

Sensitivity of Cheapside landscape to change

14.20 These are principal shopping streets in Barnsley town centre and so have some sensitivity. There is no designation in the UDP for this area and the character is tired and could do with some positive change particularly in Cheapside. Landscape elements are replaceable though elements in May Day Green are in average condition. The sensitivity of the landscape character is considered **medium** in May Day Green and **low** in Cheapside.

Impact Significance to Cheapside Character Area

14.21 The development would, on final completion, result in a **major** to **moderate positive** impact significance to the character of the street. During construction a large part would be lost to the public realm resulting in a major negative impact significance to the character of the street.

Eldon St and Burlington Arcade

14.22 Eldon St and Burlington Arcade character area would remain largely similar with some significant improvements. Burlington Arcade would lose its parked vehicles and the paving would be made pedestrian, removing barbed wire from the service yard and the existing wall of Burlington Arcade will act as a backdrop to a row of new mature trees along the open Outdoor Market. Eldon St would become more pedestrian dominated. One service yard would be closed off from the street and the curve of the street would be re-established in the layout of the paving.

Elements that would be affected by the development are;

- Reduction of tarmac roadway
- Total loss of disused toilets

- Removal of barriers and retaining wall
- Increase in cycle racks
- Introduction of 9 trees and planters
- Introduction of natural paving materials alongside quality concrete

The magnitude of the impact on the landscape character of Eldon St would be **moderate** and **largely desirable**.

Sensitivity of Eldon St landscape to change

14.23 The north side of Eldon St is part of a conservation area and so this part of the development is the setting for these buildings. The Conservation Area is weakened by a poor landscape character where Eldon St meets Kendray St. Landscape elements are replaceable and generally in poor condition. There would be the addition of two new trees. The sensitivity of the landscape character is considered **medium**.

Impact Significance to Eldon St Character Area

14.24 The development would, on final completion, result in a major to moderate positive impact significance to the character of the street. During construction some of the area might be taken out of the public realm and the major pedestrian route would have to switch from May Day Green to Burlington Arcade, resulting in a **major to moderate negative** impact significance to the character of the street.

Kendray St

14.25 Kendray St and the lower part of Midland St character area would extend to include a new part of Midland St to the south. The visually dominant barriers and kerbs would go and be replaced with pedestrian street furniture. A part of the street would become exclusively pedestrian. Steps and a ramp up to the outdoor market would be replaced with a series of steps, sitting steps and a ramp down to the new Market Square. Elements that would be affected by the development are;

- Loss of barriers to both sides of a defined carriageway
- Loss of pelican crossing
- Intended retention of 4 semi mature trees, loss of 3 others and possible gain of 4 new trees
- Loss of one raised bed of shrubs

- Loss of ramp and steps up to outdoor market but gain of new steps, sitting steps and ramp to lower Market Square
- Gain of dedicated pedestrian space and pedestrian dominance over vehicles in a new service and taxi route
- Introduction of quality concrete paving to the street

The magnitude of the impact on the landscape character of Kendray St would be **substantial** and **largely desirable**.

Sensitivity of Kendray St landscape to change

- 14.26 This street has no special designation; its character is tired and grey and most landscape elements are replaceable but generally in average condition. The sensitivity of the landscape character is considered **medium** for trees and pedestrian paving and **low** for the carriageway.

Impact Significance to Kendray St Character Area

- 14.27 The development would, on final completion, result in a major to moderate positive impact significance to the character of the street. During construction much of the area would be lost to the public realm though the major disruption would occur in the first phase only, resulting in a **major** to **moderate negative** impact significance to the character of the street.

Outdoor Market

- 14.28 Outdoor market character area would be completely replaced with a new outdoor market experience. The magnitude of the impact on the landscape character of outdoor market would be **substantial** and **largely desirable**.

Sensitivity of Outdoor market landscape to change

- 14.29 The character is poor but the idea of an outdoor market being retained is a strong historical reference. The sensitivity of the landscape character is considered **low**.

Impact Significance to Outdoor Market Character Area

- 14.30 The development would, on final completion, result in a major to moderate positive impact significance to the character of the area. During construction much of the area would be lost to the public realm and only return in the later phase, resulting in a major to moderate negative impact significance to the character of the street.

Pontefract Road

14.31 Pontefract Road character area would be improved including the introduction of more tree planting and a pavement with few vehicular crossings, bringing the Trans Pennine Trail to a more fitting and complete finish in Barnsley town centre. Wider, more generous pavements either side of the taxi and service route would replace the present congested vehicular railway crossing. To the south the character area would become more enclosed by the car park urbanising the edge of town character. Elements that would be affected by the development are;

- Loss of barriers to carriageway
- Newly laid out car parking
- Widening of pavement to south side and railway crossing (not within development)
- Possible retention of some trees to base of Harborough Hill Road bridge slip-road though loss of shrubs
- Introduction of new trees to the frontage of, and within, the new car park

The magnitude of the impact on the landscape character of Pontefract Road would be **moderate** and largely **desirable**.

Sensitivity of Pontefract Road landscape to change

14.32 The character is poor and confusing and would benefit from appropriate new development. There would be no loss of any significant landscape elements. The sensitivity of the landscape character is considered **low**.

Impact Significance to Pontefract Road Character Area

14.33 The development would, on final completion, result in a **moderate** to **minor positive** impact significance to the character of the area. During construction little of the pavement would be lost to the public realm, resulting in a **moderate** to **minor negative** impact significance to the character of the street.

Harborough Hill Road

14.34 Harborough Hill Road slip roads character would remain largely the same as before though there would be more overlooking of the slip roads, this would not be for 24 hours a day. Elements that would be affected by the development are;

- Possible loss of some birch scrub to the rear of the CEAG Lighting Building

The magnitude of the impact on the landscape character of Harborough Hill Road would be **slightly positive**.

Sensitivity of Harborough Hill Road landscape to change

14.35 The character is highway dominated and an increase in planting will assist in humanising the character. The sensitivity of the landscape character is considered **low**.

Impact Significance to Harborough Hill Road Character Area

14.36 The development would, on final completion, result in a minor positive impact significance to the character of the area. During construction the character of the road will be little changed; a **minor negative** impact.

Rear Service Yards

14.37 Rear service yards character area would reduce substantially in size. Existing surface car parking between Carpet World site and existing multi-storey car park will be part of the internal arrangement of the new scheme. Public access would not be possible through the Alhambra yard. It is proposed to improve the area along the railway corridor. Elements that would be affected by the development are;

- Shrub bed decreased in size
- Loss of scrub and remnant shrubs to substation surround
- Loss of invading grass, scrub and shrub roses to rail corridor
- Loss of small shrub bed in raised brick surround to front of Carpet Warehouse

The magnitude of the impact on the landscape character of the service areas would be **substantial** and **positive**.

Sensitivity of Service areas landscape to change

- 14.38 The character is poor and a proposed reduction and simplification will be a benefit. Loss of landscape elements that are in very poor condition would be a **positive** outcome. The sensitivity of the landscape character is considered **low**.

Impact Significance to Service areas Character Area

- 14.39 The development would, on final completion, result in a major to moderate positive impact significance to the character of the area. During construction the character would become a building site presenting a major to **moderate negative** impact during the latter phases.

Mitigation Measures

- 14.40 Mitigation measures can occur in the design stage, construction phases or after completion and are therefore described in that order.
- 14.41 During the design stage the markets building floor level was changed to improve the relationship to Market Square and reduce access problems reducing the number of steps and lengths of ramps. This was a design change that would reduce a negative impact on the character of the Square and has been included in the assessment on impacts.
- 14.42 Earlier designs presented a direct route for the north-east winter wind possibly to funnel into the market canopy. The scheme has been altered to reduce the likelihood of a wind tunnelling effect and, during detail design, a model will be tested to be sure that wind will not create an unpleasant experience in the markets. This was a design change that reduces a potential negative impact on the market environment and has been included in the assessment on impacts.
- 14.43 Kendray St slopes down to the railway and meets a set of steps rising up from Market Square. There is a danger of trip-hazards where steps meet a slope. The design has been carefully considered to avoid diminishing steps to prevent trip hazards occurring.

- 14.44 The taxi route was originally proposed to go through the centre of Market Square conflicting with pedestrians and affecting the proposed character of the space. The route for taxis has been changed at the design stage to avoid the central space, calm any possible speeding and make a clearer crossing point for pedestrians. The design change reduces a potential traffic hazard and enhances the character of the streetscape.
- 14.45 Loss of trees to May Day Green has been mitigated by offsetting this loss with new planting proposed for Cheapside, and the Outdoor Market.
- 14.46 To avoid loss of all the trees on Kendray St, the design now retains four within the scheme. It is also proposed to plant 4 new trees to offset the loss of the others. If trees can be retained then impact significance reduces to **moderate** at completion.
- 14.47 During construction there would be a loss of pedestrian access from Eldon St to Cheapside as May Day Green would be closed. It is proposed that an early completion of improvements be made to Burlington Arcade by others so that large numbers of pedestrians can make use of this route. This would be mitigation during construction, reducing a direct impact on the pedestrian circulation of the town from major to moderate.
- 14.48 During construction the east side of Cheapside, a principal shopping street, will disappear. This would be a major negative impact to the character of the street. Special attention to the location and design of the hoardings to reduce the impact must be considered. A successful layout for the hoarding would reduce the major negative impact during construction to a **moderate** one.
- 14.49 Early completion of Kendray St landscape scheme from Eldon St to Midland St., extending to include a pedestrian plaza to the railway and the taxi route as phase one market is complete, would help reduce the impact to the street character during construction from major to **moderate**.
- 14.50 During operational or completion phase, there would be generally a positive impact significance requiring no mitigation proposals at this stage.

Monitoring Programme

14.51 A monitoring programme is not required for impacts on landscape character and elements.

Alternative Scenarios

14.52 Several alternative landscape scenarios were considered at the outset of design work on this project.

14.53 One consideration was to create the new internal street on existing ground conditions so that streets all sloped down to Market Square, which would open up at the level existing on Kendray St. This would have created a series of elevated balconies on fairly steep gradients to echo the ground below, reduced underground service room and caused difficulties in creating level entries to each retail unit. The resulting landscape character would have been cluttered and ramp-dominated where some gradients would have exceeded health and safety guidelines.

14.54 A second scenario was to raise the lower floor to avoid having the lower level to Market Square. Difficulties in level would then have arisen at the higher entry points on Cheapside and Eldon St. A compromise was arrived at where the lower level was raised a little to reduce the severity of the ramp and steps in Market Square, whilst retaining comfortable entry points at the higher elevations. This was a reduction mitigation proposal that entered the design phase.

Robustness of Analysis

14.55 The analysis that has been carried out has been based on a sufficiently detailed examination of the existing landscape character of the Cheapside, Kendray Street, Pontefract Road, Midland Street North and South, May Day Green, Eldon Street and surrounding area to gain an accurate reflection of the impact in landscape terms of the proposed development. Lack of information about services within certain streets and detailed levels in some parts of the site are not considered to affect the robustness of the assessment.

- 14.56 Although the final details of the mitigation scheme would need to be agreed with the Council, a positive assessment of the contribution of such a scheme is being forecast. However, the Council would be in a position to require the implementation of the proposals set out in the landscape strategy drawings attached and on this basis, the assessment of the benefits arising as shown on these drawings, would be robust.
- 14.57 Furthermore, detailed negotiations have yet to be undertaken with Network Rail on the treatment of the railside and paving to the rail crossing point. Results of these discussions could have a bearing on the final treatment to these spaces but on the basis the Council would require to approve such proposals that they would be acceptable in landscape terms.

Summary and Conclusions

- 14.58 All negative impacts of significance occur during construction and as this would be over a period of time; this has to be given serious consideration. Of particular importance, there is the need for careful design of the boundary hoardings along Cheapside during this period.
- 14.59 Some negative impacts to the character of the streets need to be addressed by others, namely the enclosure to the end of Kendray St, the improvements to Burlington Arcade and closure of the right hand turn across Pontefract Road into the Bingo car park.
- 14.60 Once construction is completed, this project would result in significant improvements to the landscape character of Barnsley Town Centre. These positive impacts would range from **major** in Cheapside to **minor** in Harlborough Hill Road.