

Derbyshire Landscape and Placemaking

Independent Landscape and Urban Design Advisors

PUBLIC ENQUIRY REFERENCE: Appeal A, Enforcement Notice Appeal:
APP/H1033/C/22/3297854 & Appeal B, s78 Appeal relating to 184 Taxal Edge
APP/H1033/W/21/3272745

Taxal Edge, 184 Macclesfield Road, Whaley Bridge, SK23 7DR

LANDSCAPE STATEMENT by Derbyshire Landscape and Placemaking, for High Peak Borough Council

Date: 21/10/2022. Our Ref: DL&P/LS/22.10-V1

Anton Cannell and Mary McGuire together offer a service to local government departments across Derbyshire and Staffordshire, offering independent specialist advice based over 25 years of experience within the fields of planning, landscape, and urban design.

Anton Cannell is qualified as a Landscape Architect, previously working for the London Borough of Bromley, Wakefield Groundwork Trust and Hull City Council on a wide range of projects including the design and implementation of Public Realm, Urban Parks, Country Parks, Business Parks, housing estate refurbishment, schools, nurseries and play areas. Between 2018 and 2021, Anton worked for two years at Derbyshire County Council as a Development Control Landscape Architect, funded by MHCLG (Design Quality Fund), specifically for the assessment of new housing developments on the impact on the landscape of Derbyshire. This enabled him to build his skills in LVIA and landscape assessment and gain in depth knowledge and understanding of the Landscape Character of Derbyshire. (Chartered Landscape Institute Member:13806 since 2001.)

This statement relates to:

Appeal A - APP/H1033/C/22/3297854 – Enforcement Case against the existing three storey house/classroom conversion, and;

Appeal B - s78 App APP/H1033/W/21/3272745 - Demolition of existing building known as Taxal Edge and the detached Garage building and the erection of 7no dwellings.

Reason for Refusal:

The scheme would not be well related to the existing pattern of development and surrounding land uses or be of an appropriate scale for this aspect of the Whaley Bridge settlement. In addition, the scheme would constitute poor design and fails to understand the site's defining characteristics. Furthermore, the scheme's design / layout would result in overbearing and shading impacts to an unacceptable level of amenity to be enjoyed by the future occupiers of Plots 1 and 2.

The development therefore fails to comply with Policies S1, S1a, S2, S6, H1, EQ2, EQ3 and EQ6 of the Adopted High Peak Local Plan, the Adopted High Peak Design Guide, the Adopted Residential Design Guide and the Adopted Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document 2006 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

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1 SITE CONTEXT

1.1 Appeal sites A and B are situated next to one another in an elevated position to the west of Whaley Bridge on the slopes of a prominent wooded ridge known as Taxal Edge. They lie outside the Built-up Area Boundary of Whaley Bridge, other than where the shared access track to the appeal sites and a few other properties joins with the Macclesfield Road, as defined on the Policies Map within the Adopted Local Plan. There is a distinct change between the built-up character of Whaley Bridge to the east and the woodland landscape character of the sites. The appeal site B is approximately 350m from the Peak District National Park boundary.

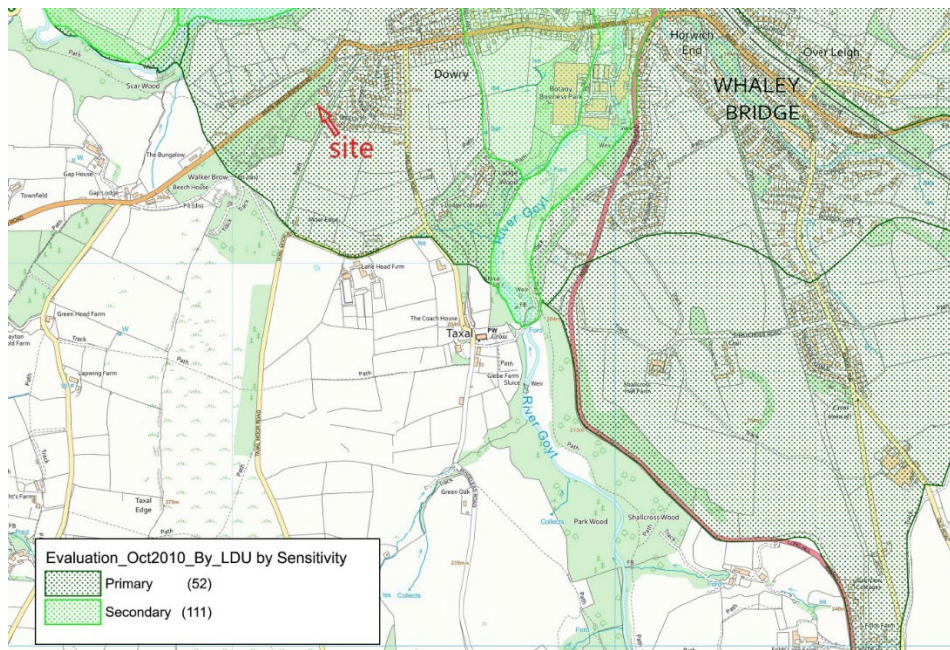
2 SENSITIVITY OF SITE

2.1 The Landscape Character of Derbyshire has been utilised by Derbyshire County Council to evaluate a range of environmental data to contribute to strategic planning considerations including the allocation of land for new development. One piece of work informed by this approach was the mapping of 'Areas of Multiple Environmental Sensitivity' (AMES) which provided a strategic overview of the environmental sensitivity of the county outside the Peak District National Park. AMES are defined as broad areas of landscape identified as being sensitive with respect to environmental datasets relating to biodiversity, the historic environment and visual unity. Within the AMES Technical Support Document 1- Areas of Multiple Environmental Sensitivity 2013 the site is defined as lying within an area of Primary Sensitivity. Page 6 of the document states:

*'Although the remainder of the county has few areas of primary significance, there is a small area around Repton and Bretby Park in the Melbourne Parklands NCA and around Calke Abbey and Ticknall. Other sensitive areas can be seen in the Dark Peak (includes the South West Peak) NCA to the south and west of Chapel-en-le-Frith around the minor settlement of Tunstead Milton, and to the east **and west of Whaley Bridge.**'*

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2.2 The appeal sites are not a designated landscape; however, they are located very close to the boundary of the Peak District National Park which is approximately only 350m away to the south and is part of the wooded ridge of Taxal Edge which I consider to be a landscape of value. Assessment of landscape value is made with reference to environmental designations, distinctiveness and rarity of individual and combinations of landscape features, elements, habitats and overall strength of landscape character, that together may or may not give the site a particular ‘sense of place’. Other considerations of landscape value are the presence of valued natural and historic attributes and recreational value. The fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value. Taxal Edge is a distinctive local natural feature in the landscape with public footpath links to residential areas. The woodland that is adjacent to the site on several sides consists of numerous mature trees of ecological and amenity value, it makes a positive contribution to the local and wider landscape and could be vulnerable to development.

3.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND SETTLEMENT PATTERN

3.1 England is covered by a hierarchy of landscape character assessments at the national, regional and local levels, which generally get progressively more detailed at the smaller scale. The process of landscape character assessment identifies the unique combination of elements and features that makes landscapes distinctive. Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are distinct areas of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character and sharing similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use and settlement patterns, and perceptual and aesthetic attributes. Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are single unique, discrete geographical areas of a particular LCA

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3.2 The Landscape Character of Derbyshire Document places the sites within the **Dark Peak Landscape Character Area** and the **Settled Valley Pastures Landscape Type** and describes it as follows:

'A settled, pastoral farming landscape on gently sloping lower valley sides, dissected by stream valleys. Dense watercourse trees, scattered boundary trees and tree groups around settlement contribute to a strongly wooded character.'

Key Characteristics:

- *Settled landscape of small nucleated settlements and scattered stone farmsteads with stone slate roofs*
- *Stone terraced housing on lower slopes associated with historic mills*
- *Enclosed landscape with views filtered by trees*

Built Environment A well settled landscape containing towns, villages, small groups of cottages, and scattered farmsteads. Most traditional buildings are constructed of the local gritstone with Welsh slate and some surviving stone slate roofs. Much of the build environment has a distinctive architecture relating to the building tradition of the Manchester area and to its industrial heritage, particularly the textile industry.

Many settlements like Chapel-en-le-Frith, Whaley Bridge and New Mills, have spread out along lower valley slopes and owe their origin to the harnessing of water power and their expansion to the industrial age. Terraces of weavers' cottages, some with sloping roof lines, and later Victorian terraces are a characteristic feature of the valley sides.

This is a well settled landscape taking advantage of the natural shelter offered by the lower valley sides, the better agricultural soils and the good communications. There are discrete settlements like Whaley Bridge and Chapel-en-le-Firth, small groups of cottages and industrial terraces, and scattered farmsteads. There is a dense network of lands connecting the villages with the dispersed farmsteads, with main roads and railway lines hugging the lower slopes immediately off the flood plain'

3.3 Whaley urban area and settlement pattern conforms to Landscape Character Type of development on lower slopes with natural shelter. The incremental development of the town has filled in a dispersed linear settlement pattern from the historic core along main routes along the valley. There are distinct character areas due to changes in style and character of the periods of development. For example, a more characteristic area of individual villas within woodland settings is located to the north of Toddbrook Reservoir.

3.4 Development of the site of Appeal B would not be consistent with the settlement pattern along lower slopes and valleys, being high up and exposed development of the site would not be consistent with a Settled Valley Pastures Landscape Character Type.

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3.5 The mature woodland character of the ridge where the site lies is akin to many others within the wider nearby landscape and its character is more closely aligned with open countryside than the urban area of Whaley Bridge.



Photo 0364 above showing the character of Taxal Edge close to the south of the sites showing the rural nature of the landscape of the ridge and the urban area below to the right.



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Photo above from Google Streetview showing the urban character of the housing below Taxal Edge to the east of the site.



Photo above from Google Streetview showing the character of older parts of the urban area below Taxal Edge to the east of the sites.

3.6 The extent of built development is below the ridgeline of Taxal Edge and I would consider the base of the spur to be the perceived settlement edge based on the strong horizontal line of the wall at the base of the ridgeline and the track. The three existing houses are not solid enough as a group to represent the defining edge of the settlement at this point.

3.7 I consider the ridgeline of Taxal Edge to be a defining feature in the landscape that is quite separate to the urban area displaying the key characteristics. The ridgeline itself flows and is repeated by ridgelines beyond in the surrounding landscape.

3.8 I consider the stone wall below PROW FP 56 to the south of the sites to be the defining edge to the settlement and that there is a distinct separation and change in character on either side of it apart from the first part of the entry from Macclesfield Road where it is shared as a driveway.

3.9 Therefore, I conclude that the sites are set back and separate from the rear of the houses at the edge of Whaley Bridge and are within open countryside.

4.0 POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACTS

4.1 Important considerations to establish likely visual sensitivity within the visible area are the nature and type of existing views, the prominence of the site and likely effect on sensitive skylines, scenic quality, the importance of features and elements that enclose and may provide a screening function, intervisibility of the site to and from its urban and rural surroundings, including relationships with adjacent landscape character areas and types, and any potential coalescence of settlements as a result of site development. The elevated

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position of the sites in relation to topography results in the site Appeal B having the potential to be visually prominent and the site Appeal A being visually prominent.

4.2 The visual envelope of appeal sites are primarily dependent upon topography and existing trees rather than built form. The elevated position of the site results in it being highly visible from the east and southeast. The higher land and existing mature trees restrict views from the north and west.

4.3 In views from the east the majority of existing mature trees near to the sites are behind the site as a backdrop therefore they are not in a position where they would effectively screen the proposed development.

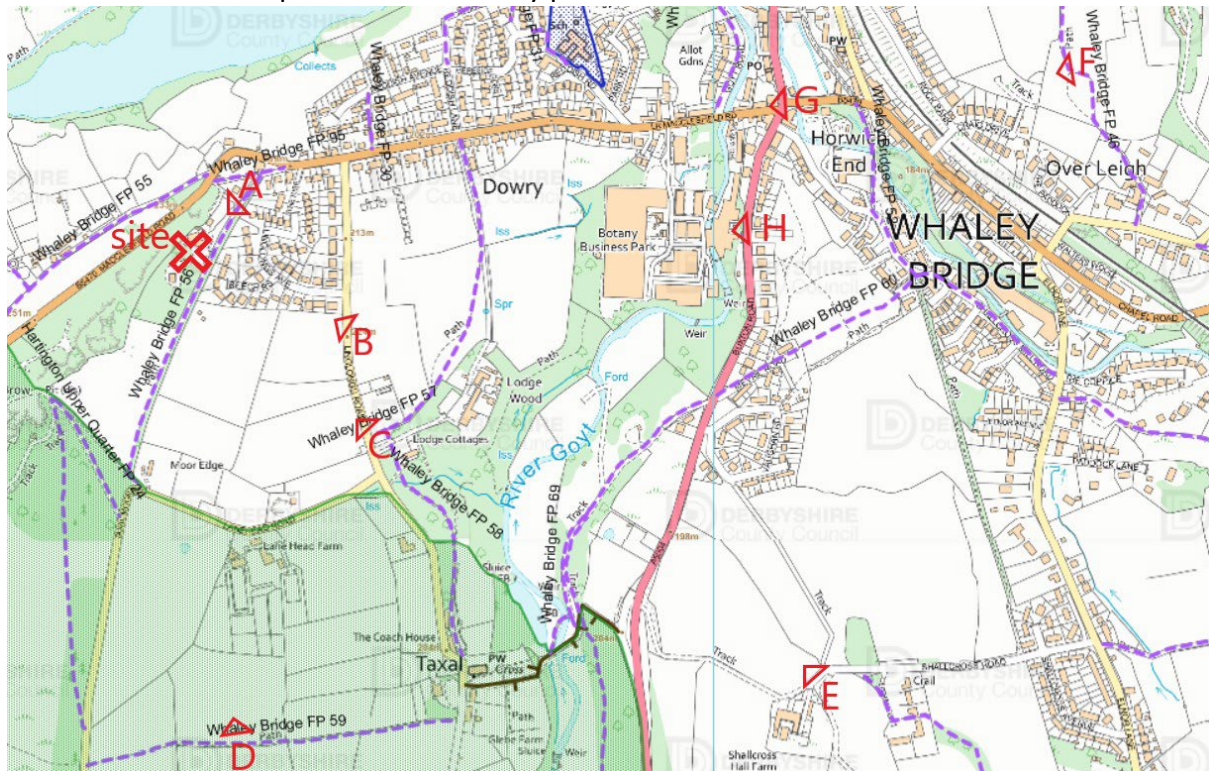
4.4 The publication by the Landscape Institute 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition', states on Page 113 that: those most susceptible to change are:

- residents at home.
- People engaging in outdoor activities including PROWS,
- Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents of the areas'

In particular, Whaley Bridge is one of those settlements where the landscape setting is part of the experience of the place. Therefore, a diverse range of receptors could experience visual impacts of development of the site.

5.0 VIEWPOINTS

5.1 In order to ascertain likely visual impacts of development of both Appeal sites several viewpoints within the visual envelope were investigated, the locations of these are illustrated on the map below followed by photos of these views:



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Viewpoint A



5.2 View from the northern section of the PRoW Whaley Bridge FP56 Taxal Beeches (between VP1 and VP2 in the Barnes Walker Landscape Statement). There are clear views of the main building of the former Bridge College and associated garage. Further south along the footpath the wall is higher and only upper parts of the buildings are visible along with the upper part of the former classroom building, the subject of Appeal A, with intermittent vegetation screening in parts completely. The stone walls, unmade footpath surface, mature trees and development pattern of individual spaced out buildings all combine to create a character that relates more to the countryside rather than the urban area of Whaley Bridge.

Viewpoint B



5.3 Viewpoint B - photo 0391 above, approx. 250m southeast of the site on Linglongs Road. The former classroom building, the subject of Appeal A, can be clearly seen on the skyline

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above the nearby housing with prominent dormer windows appearing out of character. The photo also demonstrates the impact on the skyline with a change to an urban skyline if development of the site subject to Appeal B site were to go ahead and the resulting landscape harm.

Viewpoint C



5.4 Viewpoint C -photo 0384 above approx. 380m southeast of the site showing how cumulative impact on the skyline of development creeping up the hill would be a result of development of the site of Appeal B. The photo was taken at the junction of PRoW Whaley bridge FP57 and Whaley Bridge FP58 and Linglongs Road.

5.45 Linglongs Road is a quiet lane to the south east of the site that is a dead end and is well used by dog walkers and local residents for recreation, it is also the link to numerous Public Rights of Way and local walks. At several points along the lane there are clear views toward the site where the eye is drawn to the wooded skyline and the site. Development of the site has the potential to dramatically impact on the view of a wooded skyline.

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Viewpoint D



5.5 Viewpoint D - photo 0370 above, approx. 730m south of the site from PRow Whaley Bridge FP59 located within the Peak District National Park Boundary. From this aspect the gable end of the former classroom, Appeal A is visible set amongst woodland and the site of Appeal B is also visible. However, due to topography this is only for a very short section of the PRow and not part of the wider experience of using the PRow. Therefore, I would consider visual harm of the proposals to the Peak District National Park to be minimal.

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Viewpoint E



5.6 Viewpoint E - photo 0412 above illustrates the view from Shallcross Road approx. 1.1km to the southeast of the site (close to VP5 in the Barnes Walker Landscape Statement). Shallcross Road is a quiet road used by a good number of walkers to link several PRow including PRow Whaley Bridge FP86, PRow Whaley Bridge FP62 and PRow along the River Goyt to the west. Taxal Edge is seen at a wooded ridge within this well wooded landscape. The view shows existing development low down and set amongst a well wooded landscape.

5.65 The former classroom building, Appeal A, can be clearly seen dominant on the wooded ridge of Taxal Edge above the nearby housing with prominent dormer windows in a position that stands out above existing housing. Development of the site of Appeal B would create a prominent line of development from the former classroom building along the ridge at a high level that is out of character with the existing settlement pattern and would result in landscape harm.

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Viewpoint F



5.7 Viewpoint F - photo 0421 above illustrates the view from approx. 1.4km east northeast of the site along PRow Whaley Bridge FP46 (close to VP7 in the Barnes Walker Landscape Statement). This view is similar to several views available from PRow on high ground nearby. The main area of existing development is seen confined to the lower valley slopes below Taxal Edge ridge.

5.75 Again, the former classroom building, Appeal A, can be clearly seen on the skyline above the nearby housing with prominent dormer windows in a position that stands out above existing housing. Development of the site of Appeal B would create a prominent line of development from the former classroom building along the ridge at a high level that is out of character with the existing settlement pattern and would result in landscape harm.

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Viewpoint G



5.8 Viewpoint G - photo 0425 above illustrates the view from the junction of Buxton Road and B5470 approx. 875m east of appeal site B (close to VP9 in the Barnes Walker Landscape Statement). The dormer windows of the former, classroom building, Appeal site A can be seen above the trees, and appear out of character with the other buildings in the view. In the distance and along the skyline the view is dominated by trees, development of the site of Appeal B would have an urbanising effect to this aspect of the view which I would consider harmful to the landscape setting of Whaley Bridge.

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Viewpoint H



5.9 Viewpoint H - photo 0406 above illustrates the view from Buxton Road approx. 800m east of appeal site B with Clover Chemicals Factory in the foreground. This view is mostly relevant to residents along and above Buxton Road. The view is from a lower level than the ridge of Taxal Edge, any development along the ridge or below the ridge of sufficient height would form part of and change the wooded nature of the skyline. The former classroom subject of appeal A stands dominant above and out of character with the built development below highlighted by the dormer windows and large amounts of glazing on the facade. Development of the site of Appeal B would change the nature of the view of a wooded skyline to a more urban skyline which I would consider harmful to the landscape setting of Whaley Bridge.

6.0 VISUAL BASELINE

6.1 The above viewpoints above demonstrate the prominent position of appeal site B in views from the east and that the former classroom building is highly visible and prominent, although separated from other development along the ridge. When assessing the visual baseline for any proposed development it should be noted that in the event that the former classroom building is considered unlawful, the visual baseline relating to appeal B would shift in such that further development needs to be considered in the context of a wooded ridge with a much less conspicuous building in place. Therefore, the visual impacts of

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proposed development would appear heightened against a more natural existing appearance.

6.2 The Barnes Walker Landscape Statement includes photos from various viewpoints (see appendix). Whilst these are useful in exploring the visibility of the appeal sites it should be noted that these photographs were taken when the trees were in full leaf. During winter months appeal site B will be much more visible and prominent in the landscape and site A is already very visible and prominent in the landscape. A further important consideration in relation to existing trees is that in views from the east the majority of existing trees near to the sites are behind the site as a backdrop rather than in a position where they would effectively screen the proposed development.

6.3 The Barnes Walker Landscape Statement does not appear to discuss or assess the proposed development appeal B in relation to these viewpoints or the likely visual impacts. I would consider that the relevance of these views to be important and would describe the views from these locations as below (noting that at the time of writing Mr Folland of Barnes Walker was only considering Appeal site B):

6.4 VP5- existing development is low down and set amongst a well wooded landscape, the majority of existing development of Whaley Bridge is not dominant in the view and recedes nestled amongst the woodland. The proposed site is seen as a wooded ridge within this well wooded landscape, however the former classroom building, Appeal A is dominant on the ridge. The addition of a line of development as per the proposals of Appeal B would be visible and stand out well above the main area of existing development below.

6.5 VP6, VP7, VP8 and VP10 - existing development forms a prominent part of the foreground of the view with the wooded ridge of Taxal Edge as a backdrop which links to other woodlands in the right side of the view. The existing development adjacent to the site is clearly visible with the former classroom building, Appeal A dominating the higher ground as a standalone building set amongst woodland. The addition of a line of development as per the proposals of Appeal B would be create a visual link with the development below and interrupt the continuity of the wooded ridge.

6.6 VP9-the wooded ridge of Taxal Edge dominates the skyline and creates a pleasant backdrop to the Town softening the built environment. The northern end of Taxal Edge is prominent in the view as a wooded ridge. Except for existing development in the foreground much of the existing development is set amongst trees and it is the trees that dominate the higher distant views. However, the dormer windows and roof of the former, classroom building, Appeal site A can be clearly seen at a high level amongst the trees, and appears out of character with the other buildings in the view. Visibility of this building would be increased during winter months.

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7.0 LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

7.1 The Barnes Walker Landscape Statement states that tree planting within the site will in time, restore and enhance the wooded character of the site and as they become established, that the trees will subtly interrupt the elevations of the buildings in views from locations to the east, thus improving the assimilation of the development into the existing woodland and that trees have been positioned in order to maintain framed views experienced by the future residents of the new houses. The proposals are illustrated on a Landscape Layout Plan drawing no. M3414-PA-01-V2 dated 07/21 and included in the appendix.

7.2 I consider that there are likely to be conflict of interests between screening the houses from the public footpath, maintaining the woodland character of the site, ensuring amenity spaces have sunlight and views, and residents wishing to impose their own character on the landscape. I do not consider that the landscape proposals would be reliable in mitigating the effect of the scale and the magnitude of the development and that there is a fundamental conflict between maintaining views for residents and limiting views towards the development. There is a history of topping and tree felling on and close to the site in recent years, including to the front elevation of the classroom building appeal site A, presumably to enhance views which is testament to such conflicts. Therefore, I consider that the proposed mitigation would be ineffectual.

8.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

8.1 The key Planning Policies relevant to landscape impacts are discussed below, additional relevant Policy is referred to in greater detail within the HPBC Planning Proof and Derbyshire Landscape and Placemaking Urban Design Statement.

HIGH PEAK LOCAL PLAN 2016

Policy H 1 Location of Housing Development:

The Council will ensure provision is made for housing will give consideration to approving sustainable sites outside the defined built-up area boundaries, taking into account other policies in this Local Plan, provided that:

- *The development would adjoin the built-up area boundary and be well related with the existing pattern of development and surrounding land uses and of an appropriate scale for the settlement;*
- *and the development would not lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character of the countryside;*

8.2 The Local Plan defined edge of settlement lies to the western boundaries of the existing built-up area to the east of the Appeal sites. This existing urban area has a distinct edge defined by rear walls and fences of the gardens, west of these is PRoW Whaley Bridge FP56 Taxal Beeches with verges, belts of trees and a prominent stone wall which all provide separation from the Appeal sites. Therefore, I would not consider that the Appeal sites adjoin

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the built-up boundary other than where the shared access track to the Appeal sites and a few other properties join with the Macclesfield Road.

8.21 The Appeal sites are set within the wooded landscape character of Taxal Edge, as demonstrated by photo viewpoints above in section 5 of this Statement, Appeal sites A and B are prominent in the landscape and the proposed development would represent a dominant intrusion into the countryside setting.

Policy EQ 2 Landscape Character.

Seeks to protect, enhance and restore the landscape character of the Plan Area for its own intrinsic beauty. This will be achieved by:

- *Requiring that development has particular regard to maintaining the aesthetic and biodiversity qualities of natural and man-made features within the landscape, such as trees and woodlands, hedgerows, walls, streams, ponds, rivers, ecological networks or other topographical features;*
- *Requiring that development proposals are informed by, and are sympathetic to the distinctive landscape character areas as identified in the Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document and also take into account other evidence of historic landscape characterisation, landscape sensitivity, landscape impact and the setting of the Peak District National Park and where appropriate incorporate landscape mitigation measures.*
- *Requiring that development proposals protect and/or enhance the character, appearance and local distinctiveness of the landscape and landscape setting of the Peak District National Park*
- *Resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or the setting of a settlement as identified in the Landscape Impact Assessment.*
-

8.3 The wooded character the Appeal sites and Taxal Edge relate to open countryside. The urban area and settlement pattern of Whaley Bridge conforms to the Settled Valley Pastures Landscape Character Type with development on lower slopes with natural shelter.

8.31 Development of the site of Appeal B would not be consistent with the settlement pattern along lower slopes and valleys, being high up and exposed development of the site would not be consistent with a Settled Valley Pastures Landscape Character Type and would be detrimental to landscape character and the setting of the settlement of Whaley Bridge and therefore contrary to policy EQ 2.

Policy EQ 3 *Rural Development Outside the settlement boundaries and sites allocated for development as defined on the Policies Map, including the Green Belt, the Council will seek to ensure that new development is strictly controlled in order to protect the landscape's intrinsic character and distinctiveness, including the character, appearance and integrity of the historic and cultural environment and the setting of the Peak District National Park*

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whilst also facilitating sustainable rural community needs, tourism and economic development. This will be achieved by:

- *Ensuring that all development is of a high-quality design and protects or enhances landscape character and the setting of the Peak District National Park*

Allowing the following forms of new residential development:

- *Re-use of redundant and disused buildings and/or the redevelopment of a previously developed site, where it does not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside. Where the existing building is in an isolated location the development should lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting.*
- *Limited infilling of a small gap capable of accommodating no more than 2 dwellings of a similar size and scale to the surrounding dwellings in an otherwise continuously built frontage*

8.4 It has been established in greater detail in section 2 of this Statement that I consider the Appeal sites are within a landscape of value and in addition they are defined as areas of Primary Sensitivity by the Derbyshire County Council study, Areas of Multiple Environmental Sensitivity 2013. The Appeal sites are visually prominent, and I consider that Appeal site A does, and Appeal site B would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and therefore fail to conform to policy EQ 3 to protect the landscape's intrinsic character and distinctiveness.

Policy EQ 9 Trees, woodland and hedgerows

The Council will protect existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows, in particular, ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows from loss or deterioration. This will be achieved by:

Requiring that existing woodlands, healthy, mature trees and hedgerows are retained and integrated within a proposed development unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh their loss

Requiring new developments where appropriate to provide tree planting and soft landscaping, including where possible the replacement of any trees that are removed at a ratio of 2:1

Resisting development that would directly or indirectly damage existing ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows.

8.6 The proposed development of Appeal site B is in close proximity to existing trees and woodland that form an important part of the character of the wooded Taxal Edge ridge which is characteristic of the wider landscape. I consider that there would be conflicts between the existing trees and ensuring that proposed amenity spaces and dwellings have

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sufficient sunlight, that there will be a desire to enhance the potential long views the position of the site offers and that existing vegetation limits. In addition, residents will have a desire to impose their own character on gardens and the landscape. There is a history of topping and tree felling on and close to the site in recent years, including to the front elevation of the classroom building appeal site A. For all these reasons I consider that the existing trees would be under threat from direct and indirect damage and in order to comply with policy EQ 9 to protect existing trees, woodland and hedgerows development should be resisted.

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL DESIGN GUIDE (SPD)2018

Landscape and Settlements

Para 2.1 Towns and villages in the High Peak have a locally distinctive character which has been defined by their high-density form and their architectural and historic development, as well as by the use of natural and traditional materials such as stone and slate.

Para 2.2 It is important therefore that any new development is capable of achieving a high standard of design

Para 2.4 The High Peak landscapes provide some of the defining characteristics of the area and have been instrumental in shaping local settlement patterns.

The landscape character, development should assimilate itself into the landscape and avoid adverse impact on landscape quality

Setting:

Para 3.2 In the countryside or on the edge of settlements, buildings should sit comfortably in the landscape. This is best achieved by emulating the horizontal, ground-hugging form of traditional buildings with their strong eaves and ridge lines and simple, low silhouettes parallel with the contours.

8.6 It has been demonstrated in the viewpoints shown in the photos above within section 5 of this Statement that the Appeal sites are visually prominent and from several viewpoints are conspicuous on the skyline. I consider that the Appeal site A and the development proposals for Appeal site B fail to sit comfortably in the landscape or form ground-hugging forms or would assimilate itself into the landscape and therefore fail to satisfy this policy.

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9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 As detailed above Taxal Edge (including the Appeal sites) is visually part of the wider landscape. It is considered a sensitive landscape by the Areas of Multiple Environmental Sensitivity (AMES) study carried out by Derbyshire County Council. Taxal Edge is also a distinctive local natural feature in the landscape forming an important wooded backdrop to Whaley Bridge and a recreational resource. For these reasons I would consider it to a landscape of value and development would not be consistent with the characteristic existing settlement pattern along the lower slopes and valleys of Whaley Bridge.

9.2 Taxal Edge is visually prominent from the east and southeast. The Appeal sites are visually prominent for a good number of receptors many of which are of high sensitivity.

9.3 I would consider the design and scale of the former classroom building, Appeal A and the proposed development, Appeal B to be of such a scale as to give a dominant affect in the surrounding landscape; that the proposed mitigation would not be sufficient and effective in remedying this and would result in visual harm to the character of the settlement of Whaley Bridge.

9.4 Therefore, I conclude that Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.