



Visual Appraisal

Cob Kiln Lane
Urmston

For: EBR Designs.com Ltd

Ref: M3328-VA-21.05-V1



CONTENTS:

1.0	Introduction	03
2.0	Planning Policy	06
3.0	Visual Baseline	10
4.0	Design Proposals	15
5.0	Visual Effects	16
6.0	Summary and Conclusion	17

Figures

Figure 1 – Aerial Photograph - Site Location and Study Area

Figure 2 - Aerial Photograph - Viewpoint Location Plan

Figure 3 - Landscape Layout

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Barnes Walker Ltd has prepared this Visual Appraisal on behalf of the EBR Designs.com Ltd to accompany their planning application for a nursery building, areas of parking, open space and associated landscape works upon the application site, which is located on land near Cob Kiln Lane.
- 1.2 This Visual Appraisal has been undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and its key objective is to ascertain the potential visual effects associated with redeveloping the site for residential development, in order to inform a judgement upon the likely effect of the development proposals upon the openness of the Green Belt.
- 1.3 It is generally accepted that the 'openness' of the Green Belt is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects so consideration of both the visual effects and the volume of built form therein, is undertaken when analysing effects upon the openness of the Green Belt. This appraisal solely addresses the visual aspect in order to inform the overall consideration of the potential effects upon the openness of the Green Belt.
- 1.4 In order to prepare this document, desk-top studies were undertaken prior to a site based survey and assessment exercise. This work informed the preparation of a landscape and visual baseline, which confirmed the relevant planning policy, the nature of the site and the surrounding landscape, the character of the landscape, associated planning policy before ascertaining the key visual receptors and associated representative viewpoints.
- 1.5 The report then goes on to describe the development proposals before ascertaining any potential visual effects which may result from the implementation of the proposals.
- 1.6 Visual effects are the predicted changes to a view and the associated effect of those changes upon the relevant visual receptors. Typically, the various visual receptor groups may comprise the residents of properties, the users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), the users of recreational facilities, pedestrians, and users of a variety of forms of transport such as road users or rail passengers.
- 1.7 This appraisal has been undertaken with reference to, and using aspects of, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 1.8 The anticipated visual effects have been ascertained with reference to the baseline information and the development proposals. Rather than utilising a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology, which would normally ascertain the anticipated 'sensitivity', 'magnitude of effect' and resulting 'significance of effect' upon the visual resource, this Visual Appraisal considers the likely visual effects by way of an appropriately detailed narrative
- 1.9 With regards to the visual amenity of the residents of private properties, GLVIA3 recommends that private views can be dealt with separately as in planning terms, residents are not entitled to a view. The presence of residents experiencing a view of the site is acknowledged, however it is not possible to provide photographs from private viewpoints and the existing views cannot be fully known. Predicted visual effects from private viewpoints is a best approximation based on views from the site.



● Application Site Location

Fig 1

Aerial Photograph - Site Location and Study Area

The Site and surrounding landscape

- 1.10 The site adjoins the southern edge of Urmston and is positioned on Cob Kiln Lane at the bottom of Meadow Road. The section of road running southwards from the intersection with Meadowgate is a Public Right of Way (PRoW). The site includes land to the east and west of Cob Kiln Lane. Adjacent to the site the road is unmade and lined with a variety of low fencing.
- 1.11 The area of the site to the east of the road, includes some hardstanding, existing stables, storage areas and an area of grassland. To the west of the road, there is an existing large shed/ barn and various other buildings surrounded by hardstanding used for storage and an outdoor riding arena. The site has an untidy, cluttered appearance due to the stored vehicles and assortment of run-down buildings and fencing.
- 1.12 The Old Eea Brook, a tributary of the River Mersey, runs immediately to the north of the site. The banks of the brook are well vegetated with a tree belt, which separates the site from the back gardens of houses located on Meadowgate and Meadowgate Farm. The land between the farm and the eastern part of the site includes hardstanding, an equestrian shop and other large buildings.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.13 To the east of the site the landscape comprises open areas of grassland with substantial blocks of trees. The Old Eea Brook runs through the land with a number of tributaries all of which are well vegetated. Further east is the M60 Motorway corridor.
- 1.14 To the south of the site there are considerable areas of woodland including Cobkilyn Wood. This land has a PRow and many informal trails running through it. There are also some areas of open grassland. The River Mersey valley meanders through the landscape within a steep valley. The A6144 links to the M60 to the south east of the site and the ambient noise from the roads is perceptible. There are several lines of pylons and overhead power lines crossing the landscape which gives it a slightly urbanised character.
- 1.15 The areas to the west of the site comprise open grassland with trees. The Old Eea Brook skirts around the settlement edge to the north of the River Mersey. Urmston Cemetery is located to the west and has a tall wall running along its eastern boundary, separating it from the adjacent PRow.
- 1.16 Photographs A and B are taken from within the site to illustrate the site character and the relationship between the site and the surrounding land uses.



Photograph A - View from within the site looking north



Photograph B - View from within the site looking north west

2.0 Planning Policy

<p>2.1 National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>Since March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG's) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS's). The NPPF distils the content of these documents into a single comprehensive and concise document and now represents relevant planning policy at a national level.</p>	<p>2.4 Paragraph 127 states that policies and decisions should ensure that developments 'are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting...'</p>	<p>2.9 National Planning Policy Guidance</p> <p>The NPPF is supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance, which incorporates elements of relevance to this LVIA. In addition to design related recommendations, the Planning Policy Guidance also incorporates issues related to the Natural Environment that reinforces the NPPF's commitment to recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding local distinctiveness and the use of Natural England's guidance on landscape character assessment.</p>
<p>2.2 The original version of the 2012 NPPF has been revised since and the latest iteration was published in February 2019. The revised Framework contains 17no sub-sections and the following sections are considered to be of particular relevance to this assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 12: Achieving Well-Designed Places; and • Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment. 	<p>Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment.</p> <p>2.5 Paragraph 170 states 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</p>	
<p>2.3 Section 12: Achieving Well Designed Places</p> <p>Paragraph 124 states 'The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.'</p>	<p>2.6 a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);</p> <p>2.7 b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;</p> <p>2.8 c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate.'</p>	

Local Planning Policy

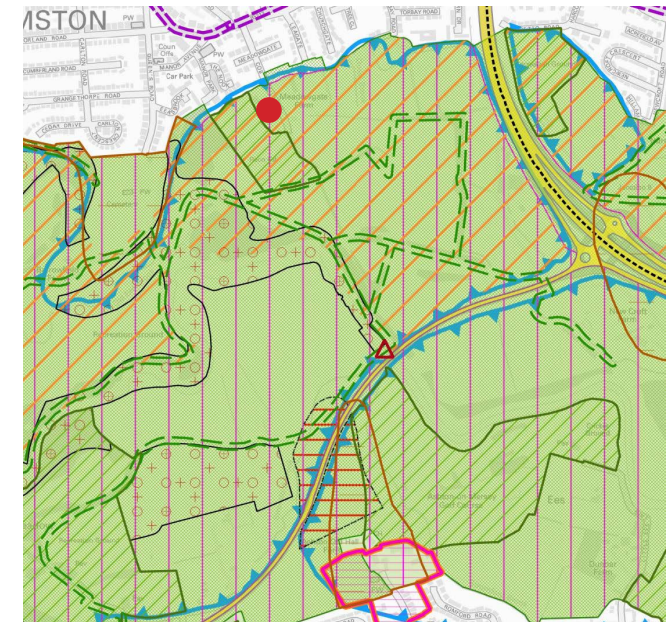
- 2.10 The statutory development plan for Trafford comprises the Revised Trafford Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (June 2006) and the Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy (January 2012). The Core Strategy and Revised UDP are gradually being replaced by the Trafford Local Plan with the emerging Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) providing the overarching framework.
- 2.11 The site and the surrounding Mersey Valley to the south of Urmston, is designated as Green Belt, an area of landscape protection and as a wildlife corridor. The site and much of the surrounding land is also zoned for new open space/outdoor recreation proposals and there are a number of recreational routes which pass through the land to the south of the site.

2.12 The following UDP Policies are considered to be of relevance to the site and its landscape context:

- ENV10 – Wildlife Corridors
- ENV17 - Areas of Landscape Protection
- OSR12 – Country Parks and Informal Recreation Areas
- OSR15 – Integrated Access Network for Trafford
- C1 – Green Belt
- C4 – Green Belt
- C5 – Development in the Green Belt

2.13 The following Core Strategy Policies are considered to be of relevance to the site and its landscape context:

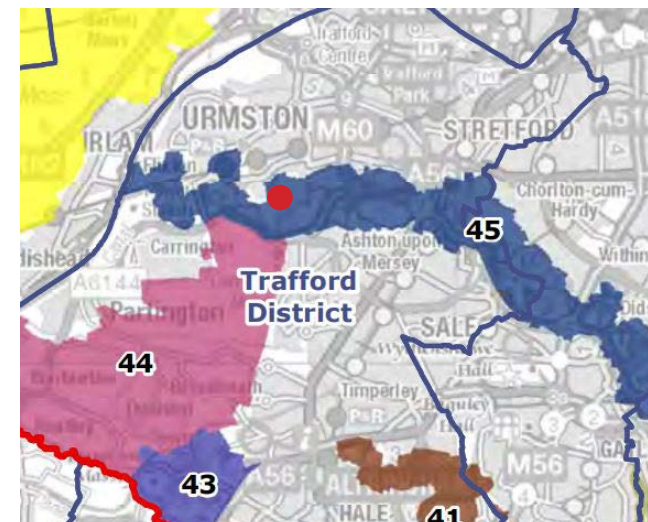
- L7 - Design;
- R2 - Natural Environment;
- R4 - Green Belt, Countryside and Other Protected Open Land



● Application Site Location

Extract from the Local Plan

	Greater Manchester Sensitivity Report	
2.14	LUC was commissioned by Manchester City Council on behalf of itself and the other nine Greater Manchester local authorities, as well as the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in November 2017 to produce up-to-date landscape evidence to support preparation of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.	2.20 Views can be open and distant along the floodplains, but contained by the higher ground and urban edge. There are more restricted views from more vegetated and wooded lower ground.
2.15	The aims of the Greater Manchester Sensitivity Report include:	2.21 Perceptual qualities are significantly affected by the proximity of adjacent urban areas.
2.16	'To provide an evidence base for the landscape character/sensitivity of Greater Manchester which takes account of changes in land use, pressures for change including characterisation of the landscape, identification of sensitive and non-sensitive areas.'	2.22 Large roads including the M60 (Mersey) and M56 (Bollin) sever the visual unity of the rivers' courses and can heavily influence local views and perceptions of tranquillity.
2.17	The site and surrounding area fall within the Broad Urban Fringe Valleys Landscape Character Type and within the Landscape Character Area 45- River Mersey.	2.23 Large electricity pylons traverse the landscape and frequently dominate views, which accentuate an urban presence. The canalisation of the Mersey significantly detracts from its naturalistic character.'
2.18	With regard to views and perceptual qualities of the Broad Urban Fringe Valleys Landscape Character Type the report states:	2.24 The overall assessment of landscape sensitivity for Landscape Character Area 45- River Mersey states:
2.19	'The valleys themselves are not visually prominent due to the flat topography and absence of elevated viewpoints.	2.25 'The River Mersey LCA is judged to be of moderate sensitivity to both development scenarios as it is low-lying and not widely visible from surrounding areas. Surrounding urban and industrial development and the M60 / M61 motorway junction have a strong influence, detracting from the rural qualities of the landscape and therefore reducing overall sensitivity.'



Application Site Location

Extract from the Greater Manchester Sensitivity Report

2.0 Planning Policy

Supplementary Planning Guidance

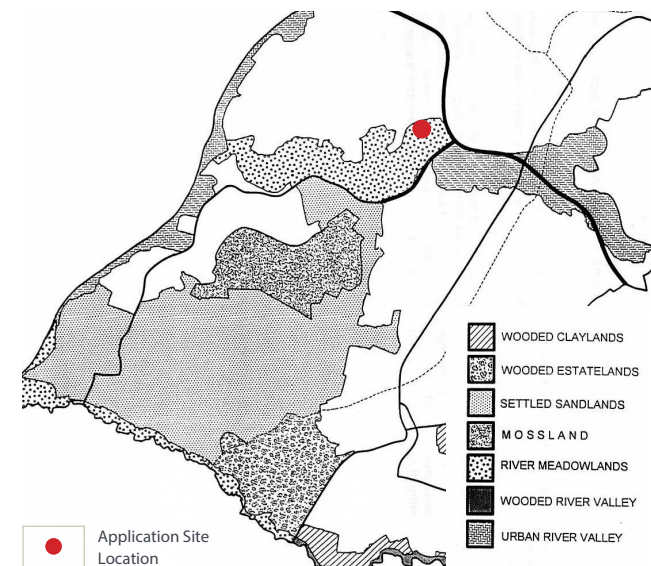
2.26 Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG 30 - Landscape Strategy provides further guidance to that contained in the UDP/Local Plan to help developers and to assist Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council in landscape issues and should be used to promote good practice.

2.27 The SPG provides landscape character assessment for all areas of open land outside the built-up area. It divides this land into seven landscape character types. The site and surrounding landscape fall within the River Meadowlands Landscape Character Type which includes the low-lying areas of the River Bollin and Mersey. The description within SPG 30 states:'

2.28 'The River Meadowlands describes two areas within the Borough, the western sections of both the River Mersey in the north and the River Bollin in the south. These two areas demonstrate similar characteristics, albeit that the Mersey Valley is larger than the Bollin and is located within a more urban context.

2.29 The Mersey Meadowlands are enclosed in the north by the urban areas of Urmston and Flixton; in the east by the M60 motorway; in the west by the Ship Canal corridor and the industrial and rural areas of Carrington; and in the south by the urban area of Ashton-on-Mersey. The Carrington Spur Road marks the boundary between the River Meadowlands and the Urban River Valley.'

2.30 The key characteristics, pressures and policy guidelines are set out in the extract below.



Extract from the SPG 30

LANDSCAPE TYPE	KEY FEATURES	PRESSURES	POLICY GUIDELINES
River Meadowlands	<p>Low-lying topography associated with a flat alluvial floodplain</p> <p>Meandering watercourse, not visually prominent due to the slightly sunken position within the flat topography</p> <p>Medium scale pastoral landscape with patches of wet grassland</p> <p>Semi-regular enclosure pattern marked by thorn hedgerows and post and wire fences</p> <p>Open often distant views along the floodplain, views north and south controlled by the rising ground beyond the floodplain</p> <p>Secluded character with the occasional building</p> <p>Marginal aquatic vegetation with occasional fringing trees and scrub</p>	<p>Urban encroachment particularly the scale of change in land uses, adversely affecting the landscape pattern.</p> <p>Development severing the visual unity of the river meadowlands.</p> <p>Changes to topography resulting from development affects the intrinsic landscape character of the floodplain.</p> <p>Loss of hedgerows resulting in changes to the enclosure pattern and ecological diversity.</p> <p>The spread of invasive species particularly along watercourses, due to a lack of management.</p>	<p>Conserve and enhance the landscape character by encouraging agricultural land use. Formal recreation use is inappropriate but enhancement of access should be encouraged.</p> <p>Conserve, restore and enhance hedgerows and hedgerow trees encouraging new planting with traditional species and traditional management.</p> <p>Conserve the river channel and its ecological diversity enhancing meandering river channels, aquatic and marginal habitats and eradicating alien species</p> <p>Conserve and enhance the visual unity of the river valley corridors</p> <p>Conserve desirable built features for heritage value</p>

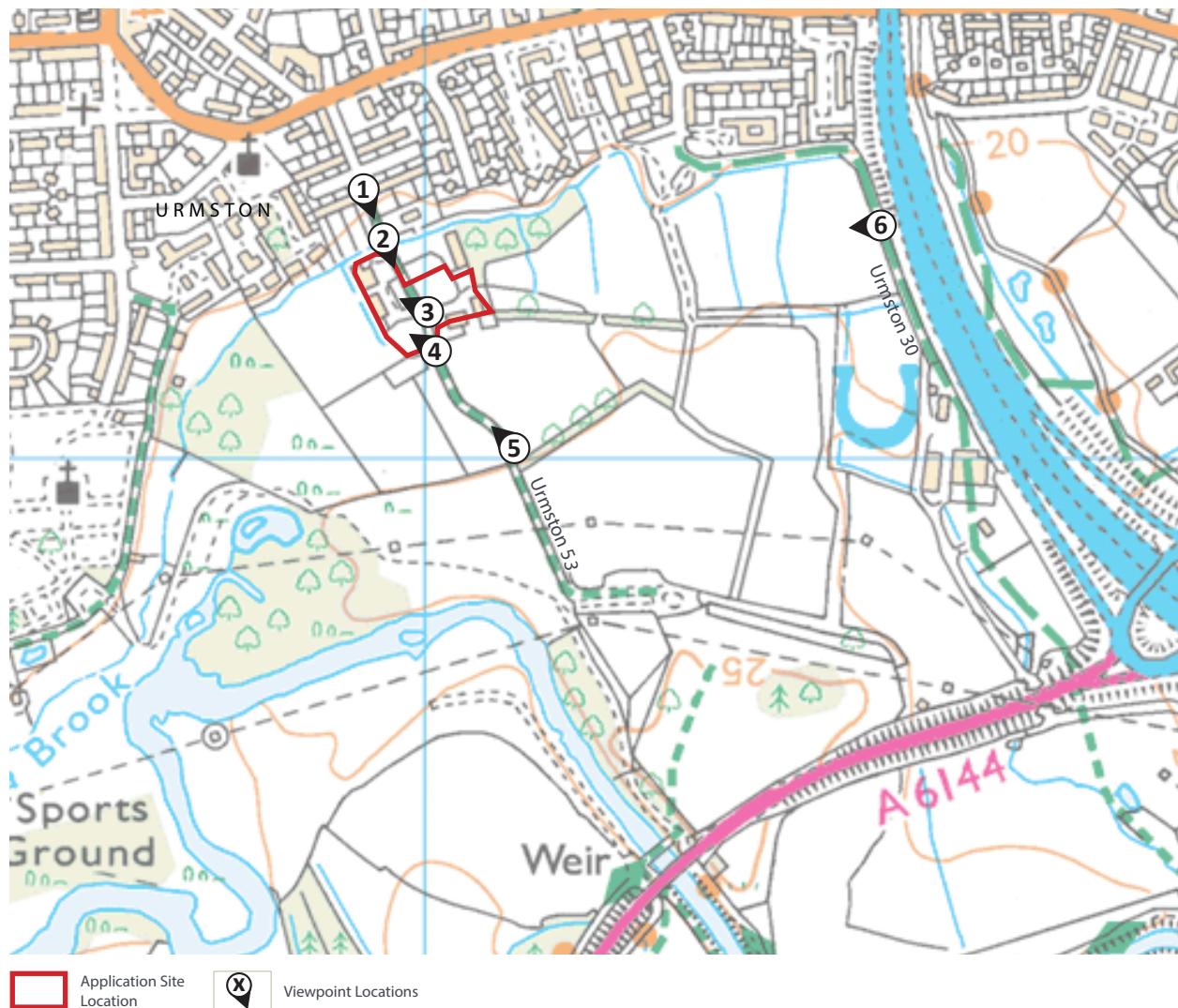


Fig 2

Aerial Photograph - Viewpoint Location Plan

Visual Baseline

Visual Context

- 3.1 The site lies within the low-lying valley and is well enclosed by existing trees. To the north, a significant tree belt provides separation between the site and the houses located on Meadowgate.
- 3.2 As well as the existing trees along the boundaries of the site, there are also significant blocks of trees and woodland within the immediate vicinity of the site. As such, the site is very discreet and its visual envelope is confined to an area within less than 100m distance from the site.
- 3.3 Given the enclosed nature of the landscape, views of the site are only available from a short section of a single PRoW. There are no other publicly accessible locations from which the site is visible.
- 3.4 Viewpoints 1 to 5 are photographs taken from PRoW Urmston 53. The site is not visible from all of these viewpoints. Some photographs have been included to demonstrate that intervening vegetation would screen views of the site.

3.0 Visual Baseline

Visual Receptors

- | | | | |
|-----|--|------|---|
| 3.5 | <p>PRoW Urmston 53 runs from the intersection with Meadowgate southwards. The site is visible from a section of this route, approximately 100m long, as it passes adjacent to or through the site. The PRoW continues southwards into woodland where views become enclosed.</p> | 3.9 | <p>There are partial, filtered views of the site for a small number of private residents which live within houses located directly to the north of the site.</p> |
| 3.6 | <p>Photographs 1-5 below show the sequential views from PRoW Urmston 53.</p> | 3.10 | <p>Residents of 2 storey houses located on Meadowgate, which back onto the western part of the site, have some partial and filtered views of the site. As photograph 3 illustrates, intervening vegetation provides substantial screening of the views, particularly from the ground level. The existing shed/barn is well screened by existing evergreen trees. Views of the areas of hardstanding and stored vehicles may be more evident in the winter when there is no leaf on the intervening trees.</p> |
| 3.7 | <p>During the site visit, the PRoWs and informal routes in the vicinity of the site were walked. Footpaths which lie to the south of the site are generally enclosed by trees or where they cross through open fields, views towards the site are screened by intervening trees. In views from the PRoW which runs to the west, near to the cemetery, the substantial vegetation along the Old Eea Brook and to its east enclose views. Viewpoint 6 is the view from Bridleway Urmston 30 which lies to the east of the site, near to the M60. Longer views are possible from this route but as photograph 6 shows, the site would not be visible due to the intervening tree cover.</p> | 3.11 | <p>Residents of private houses located on the eastern side of Meadowgate and Meadowgate Farm have some partial and filtered views of the eastern part of the site. Views are partially screened by intervening trees and include the existing buildings located to the north of the site.</p> |
| 3.8 | <p>As such there were no other views of the site from publicly accessible viewpoints due to the flat topography and screening effects of the surrounding woodland which enclose views.</p> | 3.12 | <p>Some residents of houses at the southern end of The Nook and Manor Park are likely to have oblique and partially filtered views of the western part of the site. The site would largely be screened by intervening vegetation, but the top of the existing shed/barn may be visible.</p> |



VP 1 - View from Urmston 53 looking south towards the site

- 3.13 Photograph 1 is taken from the northern section of PRow Urmston 53 looking south. It is a channelled view down the road which is lined by fencing and hedgerow. A small part of the western area of the site, near to the road, is partially visible and a stored JCB and vehicle can be seen.



VP 2 - View from Urmston 53 looking south towards the site

- 3.14 Photograph 2 is the view looking south as the PRow emerges into the more open areas to the south of the tree belt which runs along the Old Eea Brook. The existing large shed/barn which lies within the western part of the site is a prominent feature and stored vehicles can be seen in the yard.



VP 3 - View from Urmston 53 within the site looking north west

- 3.15 Photograph 3 is the view from the PRoW within the central area of the site. Looking northwards, views of the backs of houses located on Meadowgate are substantially filtered by trees. The shed/barn within the western part of the site is a noticeable feature and the stored vehicles give the area an untidy appearance.



VP 4 - View from Urmston 53 on the southern site boundary looking north into the site

- 3.16 Photograph 4 is taken from the PRoW near to the southern end of the site, looking north westwards. There is a view across open grassland towards the buildings within the western part of the site. Housing to the north of the site is substantially screened by trees.



VP 5 - View from Urmston 53 looking north towards the site

- 3.17 Photograph 5 is the view from the PRow further south and shows that when looking north the buildings and structures within the site are entirely screened. Those buildings which are partially visible do not lie within the site.



VP 6 - View from Urmston 30 looking west towards the site

- 3.18 Photograph 6 is taken from Bridleway Urmston 30, near to the M60 motorway. There are long views across grassland with trees in the background. The trees completely screen the site. The top of the church is just visible above the tree canopy and provides a visual marker.

4.0 Development Proposals



Fig 3 Landscape Layout - see separate, submitted Landscape Layout M3328-PA-01-V4 for full details

Development Proposals

- 4.1 The proposals involve the demolition of all existing buildings within the site including the large shed/barn and stables. The outdoor riding area would also be removed as well as some areas of existing hardstanding.
- 4.2 The proposed children's nursery building is a single storey building which sits partially within the footprint of the existing shed/barn, within the western part of the site. EBR Designs.com Ltd drawings show the details of the building.
- 4.3 The building is accessed from Cob Kiln Lane and there is hardstanding in front which includes parking. Open space associated with the nursery wraps around the building to the north, south and west.
- 4.4 Within the western parcel of the site, to the south of the proposed building, an area of recreational open space is proposed. This comprises wildflower meadow, enclosed by native woodland, trees and hedgerows.
- 4.5 Within the eastern parts of the site, the stables and areas of hardstanding would be removed, and the land would be restored to soft landscape. Native woodland and hedgerow would enclose areas of wildflower meadow and a community orchard would be created.
- 4.6 Native woodland planting would be in keeping with the surrounding landscape.

Visual Effects

- 5.1 The proposals would only be visible from a short section of PRoW Urmston 53, as it passes next to or through the site. Given the low-lying, flat topography and enclosed nature of the landscape, there would be no other views of the proposals from publicly accessible locations.
- 5.2 PRoW Urmston 53 runs from the intersection with Meadowgate southwards and initially the views are contained by fencing and hedgerows with a channelled view. A small part of the western area of the site, near to the road, is partially visible. The current view of the unmade road, fencing and stored vehicles would be replaced with views of improved road surfacing, native hedgerow boundaries and roadside tree planting resulting in noticeable improvements to the amenity of the view and no deterioration in the openness.
- 5.3 As the PRoW runs alongside and through the site, there would be open views in all directions. Views looking down the road would be improved by the roadside tree planting and native hedgerows.
- 5.4 Looking west, the removal of the large shed/barn as well as the other buildings and the replacement with a lower, more attractive building would be beneficial. Areas of hardstanding and parking would be visible, but the existing view contains these elements
- and the better planned proposals, with views of built form filtered by proposed tree planting, would be an improvement. To the south of the proposed building there would be views across the recreational open space which includes wildflower grassland and trees. Native woodland planting would frame this open space. There would be an improvement to the appearance of this area to the west of the PRoW as a result of the proposals, and the openness of the views would not be affected.
- 5.5 Looking east from the PRoW, as it runs alongside and through the site, the views would include the existing retained buildings which are located to the north of the site. The removal of the existing stables within the eastern part of the site and restoration of this area as open space, would enhance the views and render them more open. Native woodland would frame this open space and the trees within the community woodland would be visible. This tree planting would assist in filtering views of the existing buildings when looking in a north-easterly direction from the route.
- 5.6 Looking north from the PRoW, immediately to the south of the site, the views would include open space and substantial areas of tree planting. The removal of the taller shed/barn, stables, other buildings and stored vehicles within the site would be beneficial to the views. The removal of the structures and clutter within
- the site would enhance the openness of the views. The tree planting would mature to filter views of the proposed nursery building and tree planting along the northern boundary would in time also screen the current views of the backs of houses located on Meadowgate.
- 5.7 Beyond the southern boundary the views from the PRoW become enclosed by existing vegetation. The proposals within the site would be entirely screened.
- 5.8 The proposals would not be visible from any other public viewpoints as intervening woodland provides screening.
- 5.9 A small number of residents of houses located on Meadowgate, Meadowgate Farm, The Nook and Manor Park have partial and filtered views towards the site. Existing views of the site are substantially screened by trees. The removal of the existing buildings and structures within the site and replacement with a lower single building would enhance the views. In time proposed tree planting along the northern boundary would provide further screening and privacy for residents.

6.0 Summary and Conclusion

Summary

- 6.1 The site lies within the low-lying Mersey valley and is well enclosed by existing trees. To the north, trees growing along the Old Eea Brook provide separation between the site and the adjacent housing. The landscape to the east, south and west comprises significant blocks of trees and woodland which means that the site is visually very discreet.
- 6.2 The proposals would only be visible from a short section of PRoW Urmston 53, as it passes next to or through the site. There would be no other views of the proposals from any other publicly accessible locations.
- 6.3 The removal of the taller shed/barn, stables, other buildings and stored vehicles within the site would have a beneficial effect on the views from PRoW Urmston 53. The proposed building sits partially within the footprint of the existing shed/barn and is not as tall. Proposed tree planting would mature to filter views of the proposed nursery building and tree planting along the northern boundary would, in time, also screen the current views of the backs of houses located on Meadowgate. On balance, there would be improvements to the amenity of the views from PRoW Urmston 53 with less built form visible which would have beneficial effects on the openness of the views.
- 6.4 A small number of residents of houses located to the north of the site have partial and filtered views towards the site. Existing views are substantially screened by intervening trees. The removal of the existing buildings and structures within the site and replacement with a single lower building, as well as the landscape proposals, would enhance the views from the properties. In time, proposed tree planting along the northern boundary would provide further screening and privacy for residents.
- 6.5 Overall, there would be improvements to the amenity of the views from both public and private viewpoints and the openness of the views would also be enhanced.

