

## **Landscape & Visual Statement**

RELATED TO

**Outline Planning Application for up to 116no Residential Dwellings with all Matters  
Reserved aside from Access on the World of Pets Site, Thorley Lane, Timperley, WA15 7PJ**

Local Authority Ref: 105905/OUT/21

Barnes Walker Ref: M3095-LVS-22.08-V2

**On behalf of  
Harlex (RLP Timperley) LLP**

by

**NICHOLAS IAIN FOLLAND BA (hons) DIP LA CMLI**

of

**BARNES WALKER LTD  
UNIT 6  
LONGLEY LANE  
NORTHENDEN  
MANCHESTER  
M22 4WT**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Statement is submitted on behalf of Harlex (RLP Timperley) LLP (the Applicant) in support of a planning appeal following the refusal of an application for a residential development at World of Pets, Thorley Lane, Timperley, WA15 7PJ (LPA ref: 105905/OUT/21), which was refused by Trafford Council on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022.
- 1.2 Within this Statement I address landscape and visual matters related specifically to a single reason for refusal (RfR) 1, which is associated with alleged harm to the Green Belt.
- 1.3 I consider matters associated with the Openness of the Green Belt and the coalescence of adjacent settlement areas. Specific planning matters within the RfR are addressed by a separate statement by the Planning Consultant.
- 1.4 The single RfR is as follows:

1. *The proposed development is located within the Green Belt where there is a presumption against inappropriate development. The proposed development provides for the erection of new buildings, but is not considered to be one of the exceptions listed in Paragraph 149 of the NPPF. Moreover, the proposed development would harm the openness of the Green Belt and would fail to safeguard against encroachment into the Green Belt, contrary to the purposes of including land within it. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that there are any very special circumstances which would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm. The development is also contrary to the spatial strategy of the development plan which seeks to direct new development to sustainable locations within the urban area. As such the development is contrary to the Policies L1 and R4 of the Trafford Core Strategy and Policy C4 of the Revised Trafford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.*

## Qualifications and Experience

- 1.5 I am Nicholas Folland. I am a Director of Barnes Walker Limited, a firm of landscape and urban designers with offices in Manchester. I hold a BA(hons) degree in Landscape Design (1990) and a post graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Manchester Polytechnic (1992) and I qualified as a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute in 1998. Having worked for two local authorities (Manchester City Council and Knowsley Borough Council) over a period of approximately three years early on in my career, I gained a further 10 years of experience at 3 large multi-disciplinary consultancies. For the last 17 years I have worked at Barnes Walker Ltd and became a director in 2009.

- 1.6 During my professional career I have provided landscape and urban design-related consultancy services to local authorities, public companies and private clients. I have been called upon for professional advice regarding the assessment of landscape and visual effects and the detailed design and management of a wide variety of developments.
- 1.7 Development projects include high quality residential and conservation related projects, public parks, roads, airports and regeneration projects. I have considerable experience in assessing the integration of various forms of development within the landscape and undertaken projects where new interventions have had to blend subtly and successfully within a variety of landscape and townscape environments.
- 1.8 Over the past 12 years I have gained considerable experience in the design and landscape and visual assessment of residential development in the North West and in a number of cases, have prepared and presented evidence as an expert witness at Public Inquiries and hearings.
- 1.9 I am instructed by Harlex (RLP Timperley) LLP and having visited the application site on a number of occasions, I am familiar with the site and the surrounding landscape.
- 1.10 The statement which I have prepared is true and has been prepared and given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinion.

#### **Content of this Statement**

- 1.11 Initially I provide a landscape and visual baseline of the application site and the surrounding landscape/townscape, which will establish the visual prominence of the site with reference to seven viewpoints from publicly accessible locations.
- 1.12 Thereafter, I provide a description of the development proposals, then consider the potential visual effects associated with the proposed development, in order to inform the overall consideration of the potential effects upon the openness of the Green Belt. In doing so, I set out why I believe that Trafford Borough Council's concerns associated with harm to the visual aspect of openness of the Green Belt (as raised within the single RfR), are unfounded.
- 1.13 In addition, I set out why I believe that the Appeal Proposals will not generate any physical coalescence of the settlement areas of Timperley to the north and Hale to the south, before confirming my stance in regard of landscape/townscape character and defining what I believe Trafford Council's position is, with regards to this matter.
- 1.14 As stated within National Planning Policy Guidance (para 64-001-20190722), 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 usually undertaken when analysing effects upon the openness of the Green Belt. This statement solely addresses the visual aspect in order to inform the overall consideration of the potential effects upon the openness of the Green Belt.

- 1.15 In order to prepare this statement, 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 and the character of the landscape, before ascertaining the key visual receptors and associated representative viewpoints.
- 1.16 The statement then goes on to describe the development proposals before ascertaining any potential visual effects which may result from the implementation of the proposals.
- 1.17 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 who may experience a publicly accessible view of a site may comprise the users of Public Rights of Way, the users of recreational facilities, pedestrians, and users of a variety of forms of transport such as road users or rail passengers.
- 1.18 This statement has been undertaken with reference to, and using aspects of, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition 2013), by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 1.19 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 statement considers the likely visual effects by way of an appropriately detailed narrative.
- 1.20 The application is an outline application with all matters reserved, aside from access and the RfR cites effects upon the 'openness' of the Green Belt', rather than adverse landscape and visual impacts in refusing the application.
- 1.21 The approach taken by this statement was considered to be wholly appropriate in this instance, in that it provides an accurate indication of the nature of the likely visual effects of the scheme, for the purposes of all parties considering and understanding those effects within the context of a planning appeal.

## 2. The Landscape and Visual Baseline

### Local Planning Policy Context

This section should be read with reference to Appendix 1, Figure 1

- 2.1 The Appeal Site and the landscape to the east and west is located within the Green Belt under the saved Unitary Development Plan Policy C4 - Green Belt.
- 2.2 The southern section of the Appeal Site, in the vicinity of Timperley Brook is subject to the saved Unitary Development Plan Policy ENV10 – Wildlife Corridors.
- 2.3 Land to the south of Timperley Brook, to the east of Thornley Lane and to the west of Green Lane is subject to the saved Unitary Development Plan Policy ENV17 – Areas of Landscape Protection.

### The Appeal Site

This section should be read with reference to Appendix 1, Figures 2 Aerial Photograph and 4 Site Photographs and for further details of the existing tree cover on the site, reference should be made to the submitted Tree Survey by Tyler Grange.

- 2.4 Located on the south-eastern edge of Timperley, the Appeal Site forms an irregular area of land of just under 3ha and is positioned between between the A5144 Thorley Lane (to the east), Green Lane (to the west) and Wood Lane (to the north). To the south, Timperley Brook and its associated mature trees separate the Appeal Site from two small pastoral fields.
- 2.5 The main entrance to the Appeal Site is located on Thorley Lane and to the north of this entrance, the large garden areas of two properties (no's 126 and 128) on Wood Lane offset the site from Thorley Lane. By contrast, to the south of the entrance, the Appeal Site fronts up to Thorley Lane with a low brick wall boundary allowing clear views from the road across an open area of mown grassland beyond which, a large greenhouse structure and an adjacent car parking area is visible within the appeal site.
- 2.6 These site features are accompanied by a backdrop of mature trees and vegetation, with partial views of residential properties on Green Lane to the west.
- 2.7 To the north side of the access driveway, a large linear block of mature conifers forms a robust boundary between the Appeal Site and the extended rear garden areas of no's 126 and 128 Wood Lane. These boundary conifers extend along the west side of the garden of no 126 Wood Lane, thus continuing the robust boundary between the Appeal Site (and the main built form therein) from the adjacent garden area of no 126 Wood Lane.

- 2.8 To the north of the main site buildings, the conifer trees along the boundary merge with a block of mature broadleaf trees, which shroud a further site building. To the north, this building is contained by a further row of large conifers which separate the building from an open grassed area that extends up to Wood Lane (adjacent to no 124 Wood Lane). This open grass area is separated from Wood Lane by a further section of low brick walling that incorporates a secondary driveway into the Appeal Site from Wood Lane. This secondary driveway and its adjacent grassed areas appear to be used as an access and parking area for the adjacent Timperley Veterinary Centre, rather than an access to the Appeal Site as a pair of locked, steel palisade gates prevent access into the Appeal Site (this is the present position. The Appeal Site can be accessed from Wood Lane and indeed, used to be).
- 2.9 To the south of the Veterinary Centre a high conifer hedge defines the boundary with the Appeal Site, which in this location comprises large areas of hardstanding/storage areas, along with a formal garden area containing ponds, paths, rockeries and ornamental shrub borders. This part of the Appeal Site is contained by further blocks of mature conifers, beyond which an area of rough grassland extends to the western boundary, which abuts the rear gardens of properties located on the east side of Green Lane.
- 2.10 To the south, this area of rough grassland extends up to the centrally located parking area and adjacent large area of hardstanding/storage area that is located behind the greenhouses positioned to the south of the main car park.
- 2.11 Beyond the greenhouses, the southern part of the Appeal Site narrows due to the extended rear garden areas of no's 21 and 23 Green Lane and comprises areas of rough grassland, with broadleaf trees and scrub to the west, wrapping around the southern end of the large area of open, mown grassland that extends up to Thorley Lane. This area of rough grassland and trees extends up to the southern boundary of the Appeal Site that is defined by Timperley Brook.
- 2.12 The greenhouses, retail units, ancillary buildings, car park and other areas of hardstanding combine to cover an area of 1.323ha, which equates to circa 47% of the entire Appeal Site area.

### **The Surrounding Landscape**

This section should be read with reference to Appendix 1, Figure 5 General Photographs

- 2.13 The urban edge of Timperley lies to the immediate north, north-east and west of the Appeal Site and comprises a variety of house types and styles including period red brick farmhouses, Victorian terraces/semi-detached cottages, along with a higher number of detached and semi-detached properties that were likely constructed during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In addition, there are also pockets of modern, post millennium residential development such as

the houses on Oldbrook Fold, to the west of Green Lane, The Paddock on Green Lane. In general, the housing stock is predominantly two-storey, however there are properties that incorporate 2.5 and 3 storeys within the surrounding townscape.

- 2.14 Beyond the settlement edges, the fringes of the rural area in the vicinity of the Appeal Site, between Timperley to the north and Hale to the south are far from being free of development. In the case of the area around and including the Appeal Site, there is a noticeable concentration of plant nursery businesses and associated glasshouses as in addition to those on the Appeal Site, there are large greenhouses on nearby land to the east of Thorley Lane and to the north of Clay Lane (the recently developed Oldbrook Fold site was until recently, occupies by a nursery business with large greenhouses).
- 2.15 Timperley Brook crosses the open land between Timperley and Hale and passes along the southern boundary of the Appeal Site. At circa 35m AOD, the brook forms a subtle low point in the local landscape, which rises gently, almost indiscernibly to the north of the brook, whereas to the south, the rise up to the urban area of Hale is slightly more pronounced. The brook is lined with mature tree cover and forms an irregular edge to the urban area to the west of Green Lane.
- 2.16 To the south of the Appeal Site, development continues along Green Lane in the form of a number of converted farm buildings, Dobbies Garden Centre, Altrincham College and an adjacent development of circa 23no houses on Kenmore Drive and Green Lane.
- 2.17 Land to the west of this development on Green Lane is very much more open as it comprises an area of pastoral fields adjacent to the brook, which give way to Altrincham Golf Course further to the west and the sports pitches on Grove Park, to the south of Altrincham College and Kenmore Drive.
- 2.18 Land to the east of Thornley Lane and to the south of Timperley Brook, also comprises open agricultural land with irregular and rectilinear fields (beyond Wellfield Lane), separated by hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- 2.19 To the south-west of the Appeal Site, Public Footpath Altrincham 26 tracks across the open land to the west of Green Lane, wraps around the north and western boundaries of Altrincham College and culminates on Green Lane.
- 2.20 Public Footpath FP27 continues this route on the east side of Green Lane, running alongside the north boundary of Dobbies Garden Centre to link with Thorley Lane, circa 190m to the south of Timperley Brook, which defines the southern boundary of the Appeal Site. This section of the footpath is well contained by hedgerows and trees which significantly restrict views of the land



to the north and the garden centre to the south. After crossing Thorley Lane, Public Footpath Altrincham 27 continues through the open fields to the east of Thorley Lane, culminating on Wellfield Lane.

- 2.21 The roads within the vicinity of the Appeal Site primarily include Thorley Lane, Wood Lane and Green Lane. Thorley Lane represents the key route across the Green Belt between Timperley to the north and Hale to the south. Its corridor is lined with good levels of tree cover that intermittently allow views of the adjacent open land, including sports fields and agricultural land (primarily to the east), and areas of developed land. The road corridor itself forms a very wide route that is urbanised by its width, which incorporates cycle ways, highway footpaths to both sides, signage and streetlighting combined with the presence of adjacent intermittent development.

### **Landscape Value**

- 2.22 Given that this Statement does not fully address landscape effects associated with the features and the landscape character of the Appeal Site and the wider area, it does not incorporate any assessment of Landscape Value.
- 2.23 Although the landscape will naturally be valued to some extent on a local basis, given the nature of the Appeal Site and the surrounding landscape/townscape, it is clearly evident that it is not a 'valued landscape' in terms of paragraph 174a.

### **Landscape Character**

- 2.24 The diverse characteristics of our broader landscape have in most cases, been ascertained through the process of landscape character assessment (LCA). LCA is a technique used to develop a consistent and comprehensive understanding of what gives England's landscape its character. Assessments for the landscape in the vicinity of the application site have been carried out at national and county scales as follows:

#### National

- 2.25 England has been divided into 8 regional volumes which comprise a total of 159 areas with similar landscape character, which are called National Character Areas (NCAs); previously known as Joint Character Areas (JCAs). The 'Character of England Landscape, Wildlife and Cultural Features Map' produced in 2005 by The Countryside Agency with support from English Heritage, was an update to a 1996 original. This map subdivides England into 159 NCAs providing a picture of the differences in landscape character at the national scale.

- 2.26 The site falls within Countryside Character Volume 2: North West and is positioned within NCA 55 – Manchester Conurbation.
- 2.27 The size and scale of the areas encompassed by the National Character Areas are vast and often bear a limited relevance to sites of the scale associated with this appraisal. As a result, smaller scale, more detailed assessments carried out by County Councils or Local Planning Authorities, will often identify landscape characteristics, which offer a better representation of those found within the vicinity of a particular site or surrounding area.

#### County

- 2.28 The Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment (August 2018) classifies the site and the wider Green Belt land (not the main settlement areas) as being located within Landscape Character Type 'Urban Fringe Farmland' and Landscape Character Area 41 Altrincham and Hale. The document provides an up to date assessment of landscape character within Greater Manchester and LCT 'Urban Fringe Farmland' Character Area 41 is summarised within a statement of 'Intactness and Condition' as follows:

*'This is a predominantly rural landscape of typically low-grade pasture land and semi-improved grassland associated with stock rearing and rough grazing. The elevated farmland in the north and east is a generally open and exposed containing few settlements, however some areas are strongly influenced by the visual presence of the adjoining urban edge and by numerous tall pylon lines and major road and rail routes which bisect the landscape. Other areas are quieter and host a smaller network of winding country lanes connecting dispersed and isolated dwellings. Woodland is generally sparse, though the lower-lying and flatter south contains tree belts and tall hedgerows which provide pockets of seclusion. The influence of adjoining urban areas has eroded and fragmented some of traditional land uses, with industrial buildings, distribution centres and golf courses detracting from rural qualities. The noise of traffic and activity along the motorways and fast-moving traffic along A and B roads weaken the sense of rural tranquillity, as does the fairly regular noise of planes overhead, particularly closer to Manchester Airport in the south. Field boundaries comprise predominately species poor hedgerows that are often gappy and in some have been replaced by post and wire fencing.'*

#### Local

- 2.29 At the local level, the Trafford Council's SPG 30: Landscape Strategy (September 2004) identifies the site and the surrounding landscape as being located within the 'Wooded Claylands' Landscape Type. Key features of the Wooded Claylands are identified as:

- A gently rolling topography dissected by narrow, often steep sided valleys;

- An ancient wooded landscape characterised by densely scattered hedgerow oaks and irregularly shaped mature woodland;
- A predominantly pastoral landscape;
- Views are typically restricted by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and development, which create the impression of a small to medium scale enclosed landscape;
- Scattered marl pits within field areas;
- A piecemeal enclosure pattern with an irregular pattern of small to medium sized fields and narrow winding lanes; and
- A dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and occasional rural dwellings

2.30 Landscape pressures within the document are identifies as:

- A gradual sub-division and piecemeal encroachment into the rural areas.
- Diversification in agricultural areas.
- Development pressure/poorly designed development.
- Continued loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Severance of links with adjacent areas of similar landscape character.
- Increased recreational pressure on the woodland areas.
- Loss of marl pit ponds within the landscape.

Policy guidelines recommend the general conservation and enhancement of landscape features and ecological assets.

2.31 The wider agricultural landscape between Timperley and Hale that is located within the Wooded Claylands Landscape Type is generally consistent with its key features as set out within SPG 30. However, the Appeal Site and the other fringe areas that are located within the swathe of land associated with Thorley Lane and Green Lane (see Appendix 1, Figure 3) are not so consistent due to the increased presence of built form/hardstanding and the relative absence of agricultural activities.

### **Green Belt**

The Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment (2016)

2.32 The assessment locates the Appeal Site within Green Belt parcel TF44, which covers a narrow area to the north enclosed by Green Lane, Wood Lane and Thorley Lane and a larger area of

land to the south and west which incorporates Dobbies Garden Centre, Altrincham College, housing on Kenmore Drive, the pastoral fields to the north and west of the school and the Grove Park sports pitches. Thornley Lane defines the eastern boundary of the Green Belt parcel (see Appendix 1, Figure 3).

2.33 The Green Belt beyond TF44 is located within parcel TF40 to the west and TF45 to the east.

2.34 The assessment includes the following 'Parcel Description' of Green Belt Parcel TF44:

*'This parcel is located between urban areas Timperley in the north and Hale in the south, within the east of the Trafford Borough area. The parcel contains relatively flat land comprising sports fields, parkland of Grove Park, and a number of small fields and paddocks. Built development includes a number of commercial properties, a garden centre, Altrincham College of Arts, a number of residential properties including block of houses along Kenmore Drive. Green Lane runs through the parcel and Thorley Lane defines the eastern boundary.'*

2.35 The Green Belt Assessment then goes on to assess Green Belt Parcel TF44 against the five purposes of the Green Belt and concludes as follows:

Purpose 1a – Moderate

Purpose 1b – Strong

Purpose 2 – Strong

Purpose 3 – Moderate

Purpose 4 – Weak

Purpose 5 – n/a

The Greater Manchester Green Belt Study Stage 2 (2020)

2.36 The study locates the Appeal Site within Sub Area GM46-1, which covers an area of land that incorporates the Appeal Site and borders Wood Lane and Ridgeway Road to the north, field boundaries and Shay Lane to the east, Timperley Brook to the south and Green Lane to the west (see relevant GM46 extract within Appendix 3).

2.37 The study provides the following Area Description for Sub Area GM46-1:

*Area of land adjacent to the southern edge of Timperley. The sub-area contains scattered urbanising uses including small-scale commercial uses and residential development, interspersed with tree cover, however sizeable areas remain undeveloped, allowing for some relationship with adjacent open land. The settlement edge of Timperley and surrounding washed over development create a degree of urbanising containment within the sub-area. The inset edge to the north and west is bound by minor roads (Green Lane and Wood Lane), providing*

*some limited distinction from the urban edge of Timperley, however residential development has breached these boundaries in both cases and the scale of development within the inset settlement limits any sense of separation. The outer boundary with retained Green Belt land is defined by the tree-lined Timperley Brook, field boundaries and a stretch of minor road.*

- 2.38 The Green Belt Study Stage 2 then goes on to assess Sub Area GM46-1 against the five purposes of the Green Belt and concludes as follows:

Purpose 1 – Relatively Limited

Purpose 2 – Relatively Limited

Purpose 3 – Relatively Limited

Purpose 4 – Limited/No

Purpose 5 – Equal Contribution

### **Visual Receptors and Viewpoints**

#### **Public Views**

- 2.39 The main visual receptors experiencing a view of the appeal site predominantly comprise road users passing the site on Thorley Lane (Receptor Group 1), Wood Lane (Receptor Group 2) and Green Lane (Receptor Group 3). Road users include pedestrians, cyclists and people travelling in vehicles.
- 2.40 I have selected 7no Viewpoints, 5no from Thorley Lane, 1no from Wood Lane and 1no from Green Lane – see Appendix 1, Figure 6 - Viewpoints 1 to 7. I believe these viewpoints are representative of the visual prominence of the Appeal Site from publicly accessible locations.
- 2.41 Public Footpaths Altrincham 26 and 27 are located to the south of the Appeal Site. Walkers experience a view towards the Appeal Site from Public Footpath Altrincham 27, which is located on the agricultural land to the east of Thornley Lane, however views of the Appeal Site itself are prevented by the intervening mature tree cover located within the fields, along Timperley Brook and within the Thornley Lane road corridor. When this intervening tree cover is free of any leaf cover, views towards the Appeal Site may, to an extent, open up, as may views of the existing built form in and around the Appeal Site.
- 2.42 This Landscape and Visual Baseline identifies where people may experience both publicly accessible views of the Appeal Site and private views of the Appeal Site (private views comprise the views experienced by the residents of nearby properties).

Receptor Group 1 - Viewpoint 1 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6a)

- 2.43 Road users travelling in a southerly direction on Thorley Lane begin to experience a sequence of views of the Appeal Site located to the right-hand side of the road. Viewpoint 1 is taken from a location circa 110m to the north of the existing access into the Appeal Site. The large conifers on the Appeal Site's eastern boundaries are visible, as are a number of trees located along the verge within the road corridor. These trees combine to restrict any clear views of the Appeal Site from this location, however the existing site entrance is visible at some distance. The prominence of the structures/buildings on the Appeal Site and within the surrounding area may increase when there is an absence of leaf cover on the intervening broadleaf trees.

Receptor Group 1 - Viewpoint 2 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6b)

- 2.44 This viewpoint is located circa 20m to the north of the existing entrance into the Appeal Site. Passing road users experience a clear view of the entrance to the Appeal Site, a partial view of the green houses therein, the open area between the greenhouses and the front boundary with the road, the low brick boundary wall and screening trees which are located within the verge along the road corridor. In addition, road users also experience a glimpsed view of existing built form located beyond the Appeal Site, to the south. The prominence of the structures/buildings on the Appeal Site and within the surrounding area will likely increase when there is an absence of leaf cover on the intervening broadleaf trees.

Receptor Group 1 - Viewpoint 3 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6c)

- 2.45 Road users travelling in a northerly direction also experience a sequence of partial and clear views of the Appeal Site. Viewpoint 3 is located circa 140m to the south of the Appeal Site and incorporates screening trees located along the road corridor and along Timperley Brook on the Appeal Site's southern boundary. Despite the presence of these trees, there is a partial view of the existing structures/buildings on the Appeal Site. The prominence of the structures/buildings on the Appeal Site and within the surrounding area will likely increase when there is an absence of leaf cover on the intervening broadleaf trees.

Receptor Group 1 - Viewpoint 4 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6d)

- 2.46 This viewpoint is located further to the north on Thorley Lane, close to the Appeal Site's southern boundary (where Timperley Brook passes under Thorley Lane). Road users experience partial views of the eastern parts of the site and the existing glasshouses therein. Views are significantly restricted by intervening trees, however the prominence of the structures/buildings on the Appeal Site and within the surrounding area will likely increase when there is an absence of leaf cover on the intervening broadleaf trees.

Receptor Group 1 - Viewpoint 5 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6e)

- 2.47 Road users passing the Appeal Site experience clear and partial views of the Appeal Site from a distance of circa 5m+. Views include the trees located within the roadside verge, the Appeal Site's low boundary brick wall, with the open grassed area, car park, the existing glasshouses and site buildings/structures and a partial view of the white rendered Green Lane Farm beyond the Appeal Site to the south. Existing mature tree cover on the western side of the Appeal Site creates a backdrop to the views experienced. Views are to an extent restricted by intervening trees, however the prominence of the structures/buildings on the Appeal Site and within the surrounding area will likely increase when there is an absence of leaf cover on the intervening broadleaf trees.

Receptor Group 2 - Viewpoint 6 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6f)

- 2.48 Road users on Wood Lane experience a view of the Appeal Sites secondary entrance on Wood Lane. The view experienced includes sections of low brick walling with grassed areas flanking the entrance. A section of galvanised steel security fencing contains a pair of gates, which are set back circa 30m from Wood Lane. These gates allow a very limited view of the Appeal Site beyond, however adjacent trees which include both conifer and broadleaf species, restrict any views of the main body of the site from this location. As a result, the prominence of the structures/buildings on the Appeal Site and within the surrounding area may increase when there is an absence of leaf cover on the intervening broadleaf trees.

Receptor Group 3 - Viewpoint 7 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6g)

- 2.49 Road users on Green Lane, travelling in a northerly direction experience a partial view of the Appeal Site, when passing no.25 Green Lane (Green Lane Farm). The view experienced incorporates the driveway entrance to the property and adjacent trees in the foreground, the adjacent field in the middle ground, with the mature trees along Timperley Brook forming a backdrop. A gap in the tree cover allows a clear view through to the site, which incorporates the existing tall conifers on the Appeal Site's boundary between the car park and the southern boundary of no's 126 and 128 Wood Lane.

Private Views

- 2.50 A limited number of residential receptors are likely to experience a partial view of the Appeal Site, that are likely to change due to seasonal variations in leaf cover on the intervening trees. Residents who are likely to experience such a view include those within the following properties:

- Receptor Group 4 - Delahays Lodge (no's 1-20 Wood Lane);
- Receptor Group 5 - No's 113, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123 and 124 Wood Lane; and

- Receptor Group 6 - No's 1, 3, 3a, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 56 Green Lane.



### 3. The Development Proposals

This section should be read with reference to the submitted Parameter Plans.

- 3.1 The proposals comprise an outline planning application for up to 116no residential dwellings, with all matters reserved aside from access. Two vehicular accesses are incorporated, one on Thorley Lane and one on Wood Lane (both access points utilise the existing access arrangements into the Appeal Site).
- 3.2 Detailed planning approval for access is sought, however detailed consent is not being sought for the following:
  - Appearance;
  - Landscaping;
  - Layout; or
  - Scale.
- 3.3 The proposals fix the upper quantum of development and commit to the key parameters set out within the parameter plans.
- 3.4 The proposals also commit to the delivery of a development incorporating high quality design and landscaping by committing to a condition which requires a design code to ensure that the final scheme design achieves the high standards set out within the Design and Access Statement and other documents which supported the planning application, such as the Landscape Strategy.
- 3.5 These commitments include proposals for the retention of much of the boundary trees and hedgerows and a number of the key trees within the site and include significant quantities of new tree and hedgerow planting both internally to the site and to supplement retained existing boundary vegetation - see Landscape Masterplan Appendix 1, Figure 7.
- 3.6 The southern extents of the Appeal Site, adjacent to Timperley Brook, could also incorporate a SUDs attenuation pond located within an area of open space with associated areas of grassland and tree planting, with other features such as a board walk linked to footpaths which track through the open space and link into the development to the north. This waterbody could also be linked to a series of swales located within the development, which will flow north to south.
- 3.7 The Landscape Strategy also suggests that the proposals could also include 4no pocket parks, areas of species rich meadow grass, swathes of bulb planting, native species tree planting, with tree lined street, incidental trees within the carriageway, grass and planted verges and hedgerows to property frontages.

- 3.8 As such, the scheme could prioritise pedestrians through the careful consideration of the proposed hard and softworks associated with the road corridors through the development.

#### 4. Visual Effects

- 4.1 As the application is in outline, the exact layout and nature of the scheme is not being formally approved at this stage, however the submitted Parameters Plan, Illustrative Masterplan and Landscape Strategy all provide a clear indication of the intent to retain key existing trees and hedgerows and the commitment to implementing a robust and comprehensive scheme of landscape works.
- 4.2 The following anticipated changes to the views experienced therefore take account of indicated proposed built form and the implementation of the suggested Landscape Strategy, both in the shorter and longer terms.

##### Public Views

Receptor Group 1 - Viewpoint 1 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6a)

- 4.3 Road users travelling in a southerly direction on Thorley Lane may experience a subtle, seasonal change to the views they experience on approaching the Appeal Site. The existing trees along Thorley Lane provide an effective visual foil as does the row of mature conifers located along the Appeal Site's eastern boundaries with the adjacent rear gardens of no 126 and 128 Wood Lane. As a result, a very limited, partial view of the rooftops of some of the proposed dwellings may be visible when the trees are in leaf, however the change is expected to be very subtle. The visual prominence of the proposed dwellings may increase slightly when there is an absence of leaf cover on the intervening broadleaf trees (levels of screening provided by the conifers will remain constant throughout the year). As a result, the anticipated changes to this view are expected to be negligible with leaf cover present, with a more tangible, low to moderate adverse visual effect during the winter months. In the longer term, the establishment of the proposed tree and hedgerow planting would be expected to reduce the prominence of the built form on the Appeal Site at all times of the year, so in the longer term, the residual visual effect, would be expected to reduce.

Receptor Group 1 - Viewpoint 2 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6b)

- 4.4 Road users will experience a discernible, seasonal change to this view at all times of the year as the new dwellings located along the Appeal Site's eastern boundary with Thorley Lane will be visible amongst the existing tree cover. As a result, the proposed development of the site would generate some low to moderate levels of adverse visual effect through the introduction of the houses into the view, particularly when there is no leaf cover present on the intervening broadleaf trees. In the longer term however, the establishment of the proposed tree and hedgerow planting would be expected to reduce the prominence of the built form on the Appeal

Site at all times of the year, so in the longer term, the residual visual effect, would be expected to reduce.

Receptor Group 1 - Viewpoint 3 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6c)

- 4.5 Road users travelling in a northerly direction will likely experience a relatively subtle, seasonal change to the views they experience as they approach the Appeal Site. At times when the intervening trees have good levels of leaf cover present, limited, partial views of the roofs of the proposed dwellings located on the southern edge of the Appeal Site may be visible amongst the existing trees, however the level of change is expected to be subtle and the visual effect low and adverse. The visual prominence of the proposed dwellings may increase slightly when there is an absence of leaf cover on the intervening broadleaf trees. As a result, the anticipated changes to this view are expected to be negligible/low with leaf cover present, with a more tangible, low to moderate adverse visual effect during the winter months. In the longer term, the establishment of the proposed tree and hedgerow planting would be expected to reduce the prominence of the built form on the Appeal Site at all times of the year, so in the longer term, the residual visual effect, would be expected to reduce.

Receptor Group 1 - Viewpoint 4 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6d)

- 4.6 Road users travelling in a northerly direction will likely experience a discernible, seasonal change to the views they experience as they approach the Appeal Site. At times when the intervening trees have good levels of leaf cover present, partial views of the proposed dwellings located on the eastern edge of the Appeal Site, adjacent to Thorley Lane, may be visible between and amongst the existing trees. The visual prominence of the proposed dwellings will likely increase when there is an absence of leaf cover on the intervening broadleaf trees. As a result, the anticipated changes to this view are expected to be low to moderate adverse with leaf cover present, with a more tangible, moderate adverse visual effect during the winter months. In the longer term however, the establishment of the proposed tree and hedgerow planting would be expected to reduce the prominence of the built form on the Appeal Site at all times of the year, so in the longer term, the residual visual effect, would be expected to reduce.

Receptor Group 1 - Viewpoint 5 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6e)

- 4.7 Road users travelling in both a northerly and southerly direction will likely experience a discernible, seasonal change to the views they experience as they pass the Appeal Site. At times when the intervening trees have good levels of leaf cover present, partial views of the proposed dwellings located on the eastern edge of the Appeal Site, adjacent to Thorley Lane, may be visible between and amongst the existing trees. The visual prominence of the proposed

dwelling will likely increase when there is an absence of leaf cover on the intervening broadleaf trees. As a result, the anticipated changes to this view are expected to be low to moderate adverse with leaf cover present, with a more tangible, moderate adverse visual effect during the winter months. In the longer term however, the establishment of the proposed tree and hedgerow planting would be expected to reduce the prominence of the built form on the Appeal Site at all times of the year, so in the longer term, the residual visual effect, would be expected to reduce.

Receptor Group 2 - Viewpoint 6 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6f)

- 4.8 Road users on Wood Lane experience a discernible change to the view of the Appeal Sites secondary entrance on Wood Lane. The proposed dwellings located to both sides of the Appeal Site access on Wood Lane would be clearly visible, however views of the main body of the development to the south will likely be relatively limited. Given the residential context of Wood Lane, the changes to the views experienced by road users when passing this part of the Appeal Site are expected to be negligible to low adverse in the short term, however in the longer term, the establishment of the proposed tree and hedgerow planting would be expected to reduce the prominence of the built form and improve its assimilation into the streetscene at all times of the year, so in the longer term, residual visual effect, would be expected to reduce.

Receptor Group 3 - Viewpoint 7 (see Appendix 1, Figure 6g)

- 4.9 Road users travelling in a northerly direction on Green Lane will likely experience a discernible, seasonal change to the views they experience as they pass no.25 Green Lane (Green Lane Farm). At times when the intervening trees have good levels of leaf cover present, limited, partial views of the roofs of the proposed dwellings located on the southern edge of the Appeal Site may be visible amongst the existing trees, however the level of change is expected to be relatively subtle and the visual effect low and adverse. The visual prominence of the proposed dwellings may increase slightly when there is an absence of leaf cover on the intervening broadleaf trees. As a result, the anticipated changes to this view are expected to be low and adverse with leaf cover present, with a more tangible, low to moderate adverse visual effect during the winter months. In the longer term, the establishment of the proposed tree and hedgerow planting would be expected to reduce the prominence of the built form on the Appeal Site at all times of the year, so in the longer term, the residual visual effect, would be expected to reduce.

#### Private Views

- 4.10 I note that the development proposals for the Appeal Site will ensure that minimum amenity distances between proposed and existing dwellings are achieved and residents do not have a right to a view in planning terms.

#### Receptor Group 4 and 5

- 4.11 A limited number of residents may experience changes to the views they experience from their properties. Receptor Groups 4 and 5 include the residents of properties on Wood Lane, which are located opposite the existing/proposed entrance into the development. The indicative proposals maintain the access and introduce three new properties to the east side of the access and one new property to the west. As a result, these residents will experience changes to the views they experience, however given the urban character of the road corridor in this location, these changes are not expected to adversely affect these resident's views to any great extent.

#### Receptor Group 6

- 4.12 This receptor group includes the residents of a number of properties on Green Lane. The residents of these properties are likely to experience views of the Appeal Site, which are likely to be to an extent limited by the presence of screening vegetation along their rear boundaries, however a number of trees will be removed from the western parts of the site to facilitate the construction of the proposed dwellings. Some of the residents are therefore likely to experience views of the new dwellings within the western parts of the Appeal Site, where there was previously tree cover. As a result, the anticipated changes to these resident's views are expected to be low to moderate and adverse with leaf cover present, with a more tangible, moderate adverse visual effect during the winter months. In the longer term, the establishment of the intervening proposed tree and hedgerow planting along the western boundaries of the Appeal Site would be expected to reduce the prominence of the built form therein at all times of the year, so in the longer term, the residual visual effect, would be expected to reduce.

#### Overview of Visual Effects and the Openness of the Green Belt

- 4.13 The limited number of visual receptors is representative of the contained nature and associated low visual prominence of the Appeal Site. In addition, the visual receptors experiencing a publicly accessible view of the Appeal Site is limited to road users only.
- 4.14 Road users are not usually considered to be of a higher sensitivity (the users of Public Footpaths would normally be of a higher sensitivity) and given the nature of the urban fringe landscape, the views experienced are not considered to be of a higher sensitivity.

- 4.15 As a result, the anticipated visual effects that may be generated by the development proposals upon publicly accessible views, are somewhat limited, with lower levels of adverse visual effect occurring in the short term, and reducing in the longer term as the proposed softworks become established.
- 4.16 These anticipated levels of visual effect are expected to translate into some perceived loss of openness, that will likely diminish in the longer term and these effects will be very much localised as they will only be experienced by people using and living within the road corridors in close proximity to the Appeal Site.

## 5. Green Belt - Coalescence

Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment 2016

- 5.1 As set out within Section 2 of this statement, the GM Green Belt Assessment (2016) locates the Appeal Site within Green Belt parcel TF44, which covers a narrow area to the north enclosed by Green Lane, Wood Lane and Thorley Lane and a larger area of land to the south and west which incorporates Dobbies Garden Centre, Altrincham College, housing on Kenmore Drive, the pastoral fields to the north and west of the school and the Grove Park sports pitches. Thornley Lane defines the eastern boundary of the Green Belt parcel – See Appendix 1, Figure 3.
- 5.2 The Green Belt beyond TF44 is located within parcel TF40 to the west and TF45 to the east.
- 5.3 Although the assessment determines that Green Belt Parcel TF44 performs in a moderate to strong manner in relation to purposes 1, 2 and 3, this is primarily down to the areas of open land to the west of Green Lane. Areas to the east of Thorley Lane are also open, however they are assessed separately within TF45.
- 5.4 The existing intermittent development which includes residential, commercial and other built form such as that of the Appeal Site and Altrincham College (amongst other built form), creates a north/south swathe through the Green Belt along the route of Green Lane and to the west of Thorley Lane, that distinctly contrasts with the open agricultural land to the west and east and sports fields to the south-west as these areas are completely devoid of built form.
- 5.5 As a result, when travelling between Timperley and Hale on Green Lane and/or Thorley Lane, this swathe of intermittent development significantly reduces any perceived levels of openness and degrades the physical and perceived gap between Timperley to the north and Hale to the south. As such, if the area comprising Green Lane and Thorley Lane were to be assessed independently, its performance in terms of the five purposes of the Green Belt would be significantly weaker than that assessed for the wider Parcel TF44.
- 5.6 These issues are raised within the assessment notes as follows:
  - Purpose 1a – *‘There are existing urbanising features within the parcel; features includes detached and terraced residence to the north, commercial development to the north-east, Timperley High School, Altrincham College of Arts, a garden centre and detached residence to the south. The extent of existing built development within the parcel has almost compromised the sense of openness...’*
  - Purpose 3a – *‘There is a sense of urban encroachment within the parcel as a result of a commercial development, Timperley High School, Altrincham College of Arts, a garden*



*centre and a number of houses. The parcel displays some of the characteristics but lacks a strong rural character.'*

#### Greater Manchester Green Belt Study Stage 2 2020

- 5.7 Subsequent to the 2016 Green Belt Assessment, the GM Green Belt Study Stage 2 2020 provides further evidence as to the nature and function of the part of the Green Belt that the Appeal Site is located within – See Appendix 3.
- 5.8 The 2020 Study locates the Appeal Site within Green Belt Sub Area 46-1 and the area description therein states:
- *'The Sub Area contains scattered urbanising uses...'*
  - *'The settlement edge of Timperley and surrounding washed over development create a degree of urbanising containment within the sub-area.'*
  - *'...residential development has breached these boundaries in both cases and the scale of development within the inset settlement limits any sense of separation.'*
  - *'The outer boundary with retained Green Belt land is defined by Timperley Brook'.*
- 5.9 In addition, the assessment also provides a narrative regarding the 'Impact on the Green Belt
- 5.10 Appendix 1, Figure 3 describes this swathe of land between Timperley and Hale, where intermittent development/urbanising features diminish the sense of openness, the perceived gap and the rural character.
- 5.11 The Appeal Site is also located in a peripheral location within the Green Belt, within a corner of Green Belt parcel TF44 (Green Belt Assessment 2016) and Sub Area GM46-1 (Green Belt Study Stage 2 2022), that adjoins the urban area on two of its boundaries (with Wood Lane and Green Lane).
- 5.12 The GM Green Belt Study Stage 2 2020 states that the release of the Sub Area GM46-1 would only have a minor impact on the adjacent Green Belt and that its release would constitute a minor weakening of retained Green Belt land.
- 5.13 Given the above conclusions of the GM Green Belt Study Stage 2 2020 and the fact that the Appeal Site covers just under 10% of the total area of Sub Area 46-1, it is clearly evident that the development/release of the Appeal Site alone, will result in a significantly less than '*minor*' impact on the adjacent Green Belt and its release would result in significantly less than a '*minor weakening*' of retained Green Belt Land.

- 5.14 I therefore consider that the proposed development of the Appeal Site will not materially affect the perceived sense of openness (in visual terms) associated with the wider Green Belt, the perception of an undeveloped gap and will not cause any levels of physical coalescence between Timperley and Hale.

## **6. Landscape Effects**

- 6.1 As set out within the Baseline (Section 2) of this Statement, the wider agricultural landscape between Timperley and Hale is located within the Wooded Claylands Landscape Type and is generally consistent with its key features as set out within SPG 30.
- 6.2 By contrast, the Appeal Site and the other fringe areas that are located within the swathe of land associated with Thorley Lane, Green Lane (see Appendix 1, Figure 3) are not so consistent due to the increased presence of built form/hardstanding, the relative absence of agricultural activities and their proximity to the settlement edge.
- 6.3 I therefore believe that development within the swathe of land between Thorley Lane and Green Lane (which incorporates the Appeal Site) is likely to result in significantly lower levels of adverse landscape effect than the development of the nearby open agricultural landscape that is wholly consistent with the key characteristics of the Wooded Claylands Landscape Type.
- 6.4 Furthermore, there are no concerns raised regarding potential adverse effects upon the character of the landscape within the Officer's Report to Committee, or within the single RfR (although the Officer's Report to Committee identifies Core Strategy Policy R2 Natural Environment, there are no associated concerns within the report associated with Landscape Character and the single RfR does not cite the policy).
- 6.5 As a result, I believe it is clearly evident that the Council do not have any particular concerns regarding the development proposals potential to adversely affect the character of the landscape ie the Wooded Claylands Landscape Type as defined within SPG 30.

## 7. Summary and Conclusion

### Summary

#### Openness of the Green Belt

- 7.1 Having undertaken a visual appraisal, I believe the anticipated visual effects that may be generated by the development proposals are somewhat limited, with lower levels of adverse visual effect occurring in the short term, and reducing in the longer term as the proposed softworks become established.
- 7.2 These anticipated levels of visual effect are expected to translate into some perceived loss of openness of the Green Belt (in visual terms), that will likely diminish in the longer term due to the establishment of proposed landscape works.
- 7.3 These anticipated visual effects will be very much localised as they will only be experienced by people using and living within the road corridors in close proximity to the Appeal Site and as such, current levels of openness associated with the wider Green Belt in this location (within the parcels identified by the GM Green Belt Study 2016 ie TF40, TF41, TF44 and TF45 and the areas identified by the GM Green Belt Study Stage 2 2020 ie GM46 and adjacent areas and sub-area), will be maintained.

#### Perceived and Physical Coalescence

- 7.4 Appendix 1, Figure 3 describes a swathe of land between Timperley and Hale, where intermittent development/urbanising features diminish the sense of openness, the perceived gap, the physical gap and the rural character.
- 7.5 The effects of these features upon the Green Belt within this location are acknowledged by the Green Belt Assessment 2016, in that there are '*urbanising features*', '*a compromised sense of openness*' and it '*lacks a strong rural character*.'
- 7.6 Similar issues are also identified latterly within the GM Green Belt Study Stage 2 2020, which locates the Appeal Site within Area GM46 and Sub Area GM46-1. These issues include '*The Sub Area contains scattered urbanising uses...*', '*The settlement edge of Timperley and surrounding washed over development create a degree of urbanising containment within the sub-area*.' and '*...residential development has breached these boundaries in both cases and the scale of development within the inset settlement limits any sense of separation*.'
- 7.7 The Appeal Site is also located in a peripheral location within the Green Belt, within a corner of Green Belt parcel TF44 (2016 GB Assessment) and GM46 (2020 GB Study Stage 2) that adjoins the urban area on two of its boundaries (with Wood Lane and Green Lane).

- 7.8 I therefore consider that the proposed development of the Appeal Site will not materially affect the perceived sense of openness associated with the wider Green Belt, the perception of an undeveloped gap and will not cause any levels of physical coalescence between Timperley and Hale.

Conclusion

- 7.9 I believe that due to the peripheral location of the Appeal Site within a swathe of Green Belt land, where its function in terms of the five purposes of the Green Belt and its openness, is heavily compromised by existing built form and hardstanding, its proposed development will only result in a very much localised, diminished sense of openness (in visual terms) that will only be associated with the Appeal Site and its immediate environs.
- 7.10 As a result, I believe that the development proposals will not materially affect the perceived sense of openness (in visual terms) associated with the wider Green Belt or the perception of an undeveloped gap, and will not cause any levels of physical coalescence between Timperley and Hale.
- 7.11 I therefore believe that Trafford Council's concerns regarding potential harm to the integrity of the Green Belt as a result of the proposed development of the site, are unfounded.