

## **Proof of Evidence.**

### **Qualifications and Experience.**

1. My name is Edward Paul Beckmann and I am a Chartered Landscape Architect. I have nearly fifty years' experience in all aspects of landscape design and management. I have lived in the Warburton - Lymm area for thirty-eight years and am very familiar with area and the site. I have worked for the City of Salford, the Borough of St Helens, Warrington New Town and other organisations before setting up my own practice in 1992. I am familiar with the landscapes and conditions in the area.
2. In 2008 I prepared, together with a colleague, a 'Landscape Character Assessment' of the Green Belt areas of Warrington for Warrington Borough Council. In 2009 we undertook a similar exercise for Wigan Borough Council. I regularly prepare Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments as well as using them in preparing many landscape schemes for housing developments. I have appeared as an expert witness on a number of occasions and I believe this range of work has given me a great deal of expertise on these issues.
3. I am representing Warburton Parish Council (I have recently been co-opted as a Parish Councillor having previously acted as Environmental Advisor to the Parish Council for some time). My evidence is concerned with Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and with design issues in general.

### **Introduction**

4. This Inquiry concerns an appeal made by Redrow Homes Ltd (Agent WSP Indigo) for non-determination of Planning Application 98031/OUT/19 in respect of '*Residential development of up to 400 dwellings, including the creation of new points of access, provision of formal and informal open space, ancillary landscaping, car parking and highway and drainage works*'.
5. The land comprises of two sites, one to the east and one to the west of Warburton Lane, Warburton, WA13 9TT

### **Appeal site and surroundings.**

6. The sites are two parcels of land, one on each side of Warburton Lane. The land to the east of Warburton Lane (12.21 hectares) is referred to as 'Site1' by Redrow Homes and Trafford Council, while 'Site 2' (12.49 hectares) is to the west of Warburton Lane.
7. Site 1 has Red Brook as its northern boundary, Warburton Lane as its western boundary, Moss Lane as its southern boundary and its eastern boundary is open fields. It comprises of a shallow river valley with the land falling to the north and west and has a number of arable fields along its length. It is subdivided by hawthorn hedges and these also surround to site to the west, south and east. To the north, trees and scrub are located along the edge of the brook, as well as along much of the

steeper northern side of the river valley. There are a number of large trees along the Warburton Lane boundary.

8. To the north of site 1 is the village of Partington, the western side of this being mainly the playing fields of Broadoak School and the Partington Sports Village. To the east and south of the site is a substantial area of mossland, Warburton Moss, which has been subject to agricultural reclamation for centuries. To the south-west is a small area of recent housing, Top Park Close, while to the west is the former Warburton deer park.
9. Site 2 is bounded to the south and west by existing hawthorn hedges while a small wooded copse adjoins the junction between the hedges. To the east, the hawthorn hedge along Warburton Lane is the boundary and there is a large oak tree in the hedge. To the north, the site boundary is formed by the steeper edge of the Red Brook valley and this is fairly well-wooded. The land is relatively high to the north and east and forms a conspicuous bluff when seen from Warburton Lane. It is used as both arable land and occasionally grazing.
10. To the south and west of Site 2 there is a large area of mixed farmland, studded with small copses usually surrounding small ponds. This is the remains of the Warburton Deer Park as is Site 2 itself. It is worth noting that the full extent of the deer park is easily distinguished on a map, (it was considerably larger than indicated on the applicants' Design and Access Statement) and that the present road system defines its eastern, southern and part of its western sides. Evident in Warburton and characteristic of very many deer parks are, for example, the remains of the park pale (a perimeter ditch (and often a bank) with a paling fence and hedge on top) with curved corners (to avoid deer being trapped in angular corners when being chased), the many small copses mainly associated with small ponds and the immediately adjacent ancient woodland to the north. The former manor house, Warburton Park Farm, stands in the centre of the deer park, while Onion Farm (Listed 3797.1.0) was an entrance lodge on the eastern side and almost certainly a keeper's cottage and venison hanging-room. Associated with Onion Farm and a little way to the east is a pinfold, possibly used as a holding pen, prior to releasing deer to be hunted in the park. Monument 2244.1.0 Burial Mound (possible) is probably more likely to be a pillow mound, clearly once moated and the remnant of a warren for keeping rabbits, again very characteristic of a deer park.
11. In his book, 'Warburton. Glimpses of Rural Life: The Archaeology and History of a Cheshire Village' Dr Nevell describes the village of Warburton. *'Warburton lies in an ancient landscape, on the border of East Cheshire and Trafford, Greater Manchester, in North West England. Today it is best known for the busy tollbridge that crosses the now dry river bed of the Mersey, and its two parish churches. Warburton hides a rich landscape history with origins in the late prehistoric and Roman periods.'* Warburton is an extremely rich and very rare landscape, where its medieval roots are clearly visible.

## **Observations.**

### **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.**

12. The two sites occupy especially high quality landscapes within Warburton and materially affect a third. In the case of Site 1, the valley of the Red Brook will be entirely dominated by the proposed housing with the exception of the flood plan on the valley floor. In the case of Site 2, it will occupy some locally high ground within the north-eastern corner of the former deer park and will visually dominate much of the deer park. Site 2 will also dominate Coroners Wood, to the immediate north. Both sites will be clearly seen from specific points at distances of 2 – 3km away to the west, south and east.
13. In general I am confident with the planning policy and methodology of the LVIA, however, I have reservations in respect of issues which I mention below.
14. I have very serious reservations in respect of Table 6.4 (Landscape Value) of the Environmental Statement of March 2019. As this is a ‘baseline’ document for Landscape Assessment, it is of course critically important that it is an accurate and objective reflection of the existing landscape.
15. It is my considered opinion that Site 2, the study area to the south and west and land adjacent to the study area do comprise a valued landscape to which National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 170 applies. In respect of the determination as to whether or not an area comprises a valued landscape, prior to the NPPF the Government favoured criteria-based policies, such as Landscape Character Assessments, without the need for rigid local designations. The NPPF contains no definition as to what constitutes a valued landscape and it has been left to case law to define it. It is a matter of some concern that although the Appellant’s Design and Access Statement refer to the existence of the former Deer Park and there is abundant physical evidence indicating its presence in the landscape, the LVIA does not refer to it.
16. It is noted that Landscape Character Assessments may be undertaken at various levels, such as national character assessments, county character assessments and Council character assessments. The smaller the area of the character assessment generally indicates the higher the detail of the assessment. In their forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan, Warburton Parish Council are proceeding with a Landscape Character Assessment (Map attached as Appendix 2) but this work has stopped as a result of the Covid 19 impacts and the Neighbourhood Plan work is in draft only and as yet not approved.
17. The ‘Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment’ was prepared by LUC in August 2018 and was used in the formulation of the GMSF. It was not used in the preparation of the submitted LVIA. The revised ES states in para 6.3 that there have been no updates to relevant legislation, policy or guidance since the original E.S. was prepared and that therefore the LVIA assessment is unchanged. It is noted that the two key Landscape Character Assessments used for the LVIA are the regional Natural England National Character Area 60: Mersey Valley

(October 2013) and the more local Trafford Council; PG30 Landscape Strategy (September 2004).

18. In June 2019, Christine Tudor of Natural England produced ‘An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management’. In the introduction to this document, a useful description is found. *‘Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value – such as changes to valued attributes of baseline landscape character and the visual resource. Landscape sensitivity assessment is a process that assesses the resilience / robustness of landscape character and the visual resource – and what we value - to a defined change, or changes.’* The ‘Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment’, which was available to Indigo at the time the assessment was commissioned also contains information on sensitivity but was not consulted. It is understood that the Appellant did not consider any further amendments necessary for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments contained in the E.S, including consultation of more recent documents on the subject.

In the E.S. Main Report 6. ‘Landscape and Visual amenity’ ‘Landscape Sensitivity’ Para. 6.87 states, *‘The landscape of the study area has low susceptibility to change and is of local and community value, and overall the landscape is assessed of being of low sensitivity.’* As my paras. 17 and 18 indicate, The Environmental Statement pre-dates the ‘Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment’ (still a relatively broad-brush approach) giving this Landscape Character Type as having a ‘Moderate’ Sensitivity Rating. The Natural England report ‘An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management’ indicates that other factors than those considered in the Indigo E.S. Vol II should be considered, including, (under Cultural/Social) Historic features and cultural heritage, Enclosure and settlement; and (under Visual Characteristics) Landmarks and other focal points (for example geological features) and intervisibility (for example between important places / sites). While not suggesting that the submitted E.S. on Landscape and Visual amenity is valueless, it is now outdated, but more importantly other factors have not been considered, such as the effects on historic landscape and heritage assets – as specifically excluded in Para. 6.2.13 etc. of the E.S. Appendix 6.1 Assessment Method.

19. I suggest that using the Natural England report would produce a result more reflective of the reality of site 2. In Figure 1, it is suggested that the Assessment of the susceptibility of the landscape and visual baseline to specific change be combined with an Assessment of the values of the landscape and visual characteristics. The result would be to *‘Combine these to assess landscape sensitivity to inform special planning/land management’*. I believe the susceptibility of both sites to be considerably greater to the impact of development than the submitted LVIA indicates. Having looked at this assessment report, it is my belief that the sensitivity of both sites (with slightly greater emphasis on Site 2 – the western site) should be High/Medium (using a five point scale 1. Very High, 2. High, 3. Medium, 4. Medium-low and 5, Low.) in which the *‘Landscape and /or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are susceptible to change and /or its values are medium through to high. It may be able to accommodate the relevant type of development but only in*

*limited situations without significant character change or adverse effects if defined in the relevant parcel summary. Thresholds for significant change are low.'*

20. I consider that the western half of the site specifically is inadequately covered (by reference to GLVIA3) in the E.S. Assessment Method. I note the E.S. Appendix 6.1 para. 6.2.13 in which it states that *'this ES chapter does not consider effects on the historic landscape or heritage assets.'* This is expanded upon in para. 6.2.14 with reference to GLVIA3 para 5.33 which itself also states that the landscape baseline report *'should; identify and describe the individual elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape, particularly emphasising those that are key characteristics contributing to the distinctive character of the landscape'*. Para. 6.2.17 in the Assessment Method refers to the identification of highly valued landscapes. Para. 6.2.18 of the Assessment Method refers to the value of undesignated landscapes, quoting from Para. 5.19 of GLVIA3 *'..the value attached to undesignated landscapes also needs to be carefully considered and individual elements of the landscape – such as trees, buildings or hedgerows – may also have value.'* In para. 6.2.19 of the Assessment Method, GLVIA3 Box 5.1 is also referenced and I note that this specifically refers to a number of factors which relate to archaeological, historical and cultural features in the landscape, as well as 'Rarity' and 'Representativeness'.

GLVIA3 Part two refers to the links to cultural heritage and historic landscape character, para. 5.9 stating *'The history of the landscape, its historic character, the interaction between people and places through time, and the surviving features and their settings may be relevant to the LVIA baseline studies as well as the cultural heritage topic'*. I believe that in excluding the effects on the historic landscape and heritage assets, particularly on a site which is part of a medieval deer park and clearly a 'designed landscape' at the core of a largely intact medieval landscape, the LVIA is fundamentally flawed

### Landscape Value

21. In Appendix 1, I have copied Table 6.4 Landscape Value from the Environmental Statement, which refers to criteria in the extremely important Box 5.1 of GLVIA3. I have added an extra column for my comments. For example, under Rarity, the table states that the characteristics (of the sites) would not be considered rare. I dispute this very strongly, as the characteristic remains of a deer park, (in Site 2) a designed landscape with very clear and strong visible remains are rare. Not only that, but the historic presence of the deer park is a fundamentally important feature in the landscape, dictating the local road layout, the settlement pattern etc. It is the core of the medieval settlement of Warburton, still clearly discernible within the modern landscape. Similarly, the E.S. under Conservation Interests, states that *'There are no features whose historic conservation or nature conservation qualities contribute substantially to landscape character or visual interest'*. This is also open to strong dispute. (see para. 23. below). In the light of these issues, I strongly suggest that the overall judgement of value should be 'Regional' and not local value. Warburton is extremely unusual in that it is an ancient settlement and its medieval landscape is still very much in evidence. The medieval common field is still in evidence to the west of the Conservation Area and the former deer park (of which there is clear evidence that it extended considerably further than the area indicated in the TEP 'Site Location Showing the Location of Known Heritage Assets' in the Revised Heritage Impact

Assessment) is by far the most important feature in the layout of the village. I am unaware of anywhere else in this region having such an assemblage of historic landscape features or ancient buildings in a relatively intact state. Nevell, Dr M. (1997) in 'The Archaeology of Trafford', states, '*Warburton, like Dunham Massey, retains many medieval elements making it the best preserved medieval landscape in the county*'.

If the Rarity and Conservation Interests are considered as high (as I believe) then the 'Overall judgement on value' in Table 6.4 Landscape Value must surely be one of 'Regional Value'? (See 14 above).

22. Under 'Landscape Susceptibility to change' Para. 6.85 states, '*The Landscape is generally able to accommodate the operation (and construction) of the Proposed development without suffering detrimental effects on its character*'. I suggest this is palpably not the case, as the proposed development will be in view from a considerable distance away, will have a visually dominating presence closer to and will permanently and negatively alter the landscape. During construction, scaffolding and cranes will be seen from still further away than the finished buildings.
23. The impact of the development on the historic landscape will have a severely detrimental effect on its character causing substantial harm to a designed landscape (Site 2) and less than substantial harm to the landscape setting for a number of heritage assets (Site 1 and 2). The NPPF glossary broadly defines 'setting' as: '*The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral*'. I submit that the proposed development will effectively destroy the designed landscape as an unscheduled heritage asset (substantial harm) and as this landscape is the setting for numerous other heritage assets (both scheduled and unscheduled), will cause less than substantial harm to them. Site 1, while not itself a heritage asset, is again the setting for other scheduled and unscheduled heritage assets and the proposed development will, I submit, cause less than substantial harm to them.
24. In the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA 3), reference is made under para. 4.14 to the need to provide a clear and concise but also comprehensive description of the development proposal. I suggest this has not been the case. In the Environmental Statement Volume II: Main Report, Paragraph 6.113 of 'Assessing the Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects – Site 1..... Where it states that '*The development would alter the landscape character of the Site from a series of arable fields, to a residential development with buildings up to 2.5 storeys in height,....*' In the original Design and Access Statement (March 2019), reference is made (in Section 5), to buildings from circa 5m to 12 metres with varying widths of buildings. In the Revised Design and Access Statement, (December 2019) the heights of the buildings are indicated with a maximum height of 3 storeys (13.2m?). I suggest the heights of the proposed buildings are a fundamental requirement under para. 4.14 of GLVIA3; further, that the likely locations for such tall buildings relative to the topography is yet another crucially important issue. (Site 2 is generally higher than Site 1 and there is the possibility of dwellings being located on the locally high ground with, I suggest, consequently substantially greater and more extensive landscape and visual impacts. The higher land on the southern side of Red

Brook (in Site 2) is at least 2m higher than the current floor levels of houses on the northern side of Red Brook in Partington, making the proposed 13.2m high houses even more overbearing.)

The LVIA has been described as assessing the ‘worst case scenario’ but this has not, to my knowledge, been described other than in the Case Conference Note of 29/2/20 item 8. *‘The Inspector expressed her concern about the removal of the reference to the size of the development in the ES. It was agreed by the Appellant that this had been based on a worst-case scenario (maximum parameters of up to 400 dwellings, with a maximum height of 3 storeys with 25-30 dwellings per hectare). If that was no longer the case, and the project description was to change, she considered that the current ES was likely to be found inadequate. This point was agreed’.* I share the Inspector’s disquiet, *‘because the decision-maker should be confident that the impacts that have been assessed are those that would arise from the development that would be built.’* Even though this is an outline planning application with all matters except access reserved, the LVIA has surely to make reasonable assumptions if it is to be accorded any value. I believe the failure to adequately describe the proposals and particularly the heights and visual envelope seriously discredits the LVIA.

21. The Appellant’s position regarding the above, according to Trafford Council, is that it is unnecessary to update the LVIA in line with the revised parameters plan or indicative site layout, since the LVIA has already assessed a worst-case scenario. I disagree with the Appellant’s position as I believe the LVIA clearly does not cover a worst-case scenario and indeed, as mentioned above, fails to adequately describe the heights of the proposed development. For example, 13.2m high properties will clearly be seen from Dunham Road (1.5km from Site 2) and from a footpath across Warburton Moss (1km from Site 2) as well as from much of the Moss Brow hamlet (1km from Site 2). Such visually overbearing properties would stand out well above the existing properties to the north of the site (in Partington) and those in Top Park Close (adjacent to Site 1) when viewed from the west, south and east and quite possibly when viewed from various points in Partington to the north.

Para. 6.2.35 of Appendix 6.1 of the Indigo Environmental Statement Volume II refers to the Size or Scale of the landscape effect taking *‘account of the loss or the addition of features in the landscape and the changes anticipated in its composition as a result of the Development’* This is not reflected in the Main Report 6. ‘Landscape and Visual amenity’ section (although there is a material on mitigation etc.). GLVIA 3 Chapter 8, entitled ‘Presenting information on landscape and visual effects’ refers to the need for drawings and maps etc. but also refers to the ‘Zone of Theoretical Visibility’ (ZTV) which does not appear to be in the Indigo submission? The ‘Landscape Study Area’ indicated on Figure 6.5 ‘Landscape Study Area and features’ does not, I suggest correlate in any way with a ZTV. There are no photomontage or visualisations indicating what the appearance in the surrounding landscape of the proposed housing would have at the various stages when mitigation is described. These are not mandatory requirements, but in my experience do very considerably assist in assessment, particularly for the layman.

25. I believe the LVIA substantially understates the impacts on landscape character; partly because it does not adequately assess the sensitivity and landscape value of the sites, but also (leaving aside the ‘worst-case scenario’) because it does not

determine any ‘significant’ landscape effects during construction and post-implementation. I suggest that this totally unrealistic.

#### Assessment of Effects on Views.

26. As WPC noted in the SoCG, I disagree on the cumulative effects assessment in respect of High Speed Two (HS2) in paragraphs 6.308 – 6.314 on pages 71 - 72 of the E.S. Despite two public consultations HS2 has latterly withheld all information on the proposed height of the embankments and viaducts in the vicinity. WPC has been informed on the latest HS2 consultation that the track bed throughout the whole route from Crewe northwards will be 2m higher than the previous iteration. I suggest that the cumulative effects of HS2 with the proposed development can only be speculative in the light of HS2 withholding of information and suggests that it should be ignored for the purposes on the Inquiry.
27. I note, for the purposes of the Inquiry that it is perfectly possible and indeed normal to have some Visual assessment viewpoints where the Magnitude of effect and the Significance of effect are recorded as ‘High Adverse’ but these judgements need to be made to ensure objectivity. Such judgements can be used to inform the need for mitigation measures. ‘High Adverse’ assessments often occur where footpaths are enveloped within a development; in these cases it is also frequent that such assessments are recorded but that no mitigation is possible and the development still gains planning permission. I suggest that the fact that the LVIA records no ‘High Adverse’ Magnitude of effect and Significance of effect in the long term where footpaths are indeed enveloped within the scheme, this does reduce the objectivity of the LVIA.
28. I agree with the assessment of views presented in Table 6.11 on pages 62 and 63 of the E.S. (Construction, Short-Term and Medium-Term) and in Table 6.12 on pages 67-69 of the E.S. (Residual Effects) – as mentioned in the SoCG. However, I disagree with the assessment of effects on:
- Viewpoint 1.
  - Viewpoint 2.
  - Viewpoint 3.
  - Viewpoint 5.
  - Viewpoint 6.
  - Viewpoint 10.

The points of disagreement are mentioned at length in Appendix 3.

#### Embedded Mitigation

29. The embedded mitigation (Para. 6.103 in the E.S.) refers to drawings contained in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. The last sentence of this paragraph states that these drawings ‘...*demonstrate that the proposed built development would be set in a robust landscape framework containing pockets of new woodland planting, groups of and individual tree planting, and hedgerow planting.*’ I believe the proposals signally fail to address many of the issues which arise from the Assessment of Effects on Views, in particular the views from the south, from PRow and from highways not just within the study area, but from a considerable distance further south and west, outside the ‘study area’. I refer to these issues under ‘Landscape Design’ later in my evidence.



## **Landscape Survey Works.**

### **Tree Survey Report.**

30. The Tree Survey Report by TBA Landscape Architects is noted as is 4.0 Technical Assessment, Arboriculture in the Revised Design and Access Statement. I am concerned that a number of category 'A' trees will be adversely affected with the proposed access roads construction off Warburton Lane.

### **Historic Hedgerow Gazetteer and Figure.**

31. The Historic Hedgerow Gazetteer and Figure (Appendix 15.2) has a number of serious errors and inconsistencies within it. All of the hedges are associated with the Warburton Estate and all of them are indicated on the 1757 Warburton Estate Map (which of course means that they are associated with an Estate). H2 is associated with a heritage asset as it is along the line of the former Warburton Deer Park Pale and therefore is a heritage asset in its own right. I have attached a further Appendix (4) with what I believe is the corrected gazetteer. It is noted that another hedge has not been recorded in the Gazetteer and Figure, this is the hedge running along the western boundary of Site 1 along the eastern side of the old route of Warburton Lane. It has been subject to a tree survey and is recorded as 77G – Remnants of Hawthorn hedge as well as 73G – Row of sycamore (self-seeded). Despite the fact that it has been neglected for some years, this is an important hedge and I have included it as H15 in my Appendix 4. It is associated with the heritage asset of the old Warburton Lane bridge. As with the tree survey above, I am concerned that at least two historic hedges, both heritage assets will be severely damaged as a result of developing these sites. The proposed construction of a 'village green style entrance' to site 2 off Warburton Lane (as indicated in the Design and Access Statement under 5.0 Design Evolution) I suggest is completely unacceptable as it implies the destruction of a long length of hedge (H2) and the associated deer park pale (both heritage assets) together with possible archaeology behind the hedge.

## **Landscape Design.**

32. The indicative layout shows an exceptionally inadequate screening of Site 2 from the south, east and the west. Screening appears to comprise of the existing hedges (approximately 1.5m high) supplemented by a very narrow margin of soft landscaping – estimated at 5 – 10m width. Based on my own experience I suggest that 20m should be a minimum width for such screen planting and that 30m would be considerably more effective. This is not simply an issue of planting a visually impenetrable screen, but of achieving substantive height in the planting, sufficient to screen buildings of up to 13.2m in height, standing in some cases in Site 2 on locally higher ground and with higher density. This would suggest trees of up to 20m in height, effectively large trees such as oak, lime, beech etc. which will require significantly large areas in which to grow to full effect.
33. The Design and Access Statement states that '*Natural open space along the southern and western boundary of Site 2 provides a sensitive transition to the wider countryside and Warburton Park, which respects the character of the historic deer park.*' I suggest it does nothing of the kind, it merely imposes itself on the historic deer park while destroying a considerable part of the landscape character and

archaeology of a designed landscape. The ‘transition’ is minimal and the adverse impact substantial.

34. In addition to the lack of screening to the south and west, there is no indication of any screening to Site 2 from Warburton Lane. Viewpoint 5 partially covers this view, this viewpoint is from and across relatively high ground with open views only slightly screened from the road by a hedge. There is no indication of any additional screening to the west of the hedge, so the view will be directly into the housing, with no mitigation. Further north along Warburton Lane looking west, when viewed from close to the proposed access to Site 1 this housing will be still more dominant, standing on what is effectively a low knoll. Again there is no indication of additional screening behind the existing hedge.
35. Site 1, like Site 2, is also exceptionally inadequately screened from the south. As with Site 2, I suggest a 20m margin of soft landscaping would be a minimum width for such screen planting. This could be all the more effective because of the valley form, housing having less impact if set down the slope.

#### **The Revised Design and Access Statement and NPPF Part 12.**

36. The revised Design and Access Statement by TEP refers to NPPF Part 12 (paragraph 127 quoted below).

*‘127. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*

*(a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*

*(b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*

*(c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*

*(d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*

*(e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*

*(f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users 46 ; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience’.*

I suggest that the Design and Access Statement then manifestly proceeds to ignore almost all of these eminently good suggestions, as detailed below;-

37. The development will not function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. It has major issues regarding connectivity to Partington, being limited to one busy road, two footways

and one footpath, being very much at variance with Manual for Streets. It is approximately 1.7km from the western site to Partington village centre, comparing extremely badly with the 800m generally seen as appropriate for pedestrian links, (quoted in Manual for Streets). It is absolutely clear that this site will generate more vehicle movement than pedestrian or cycle movement. Manual for Streets states, ‘ *A development with poor links to the surrounding area creates an enclave which encourages movement to and from it by car rather than by other modes.*’ Para 4.2.5.

38. The development as proposed does not indicate good architecture, it merely proposes standard house types which ignore the local vernacular and perpetuate the plethora of bland, characterless estates which ultimately destroys any sense of place all over the UK. The Trafford Landscape Strategy SPG refers (among other things) to the need to retain the style of the local vernacular buildings of the area and the need to utilise traditional details. Warburton P.C. has produced its own Village Design Statement (VDS) setting out design guidance in order to preserve the distinctive local vernacular. These recommendations are, I suggest, ignored in the indicative design and layout. References are made to the terraced properties which are proposed, citing the terraced properties in Partington. The site is not in Partington, it is in Warburton, where terraced properties are rare and where the local vernacular architecture is manifestly distinctive. Simply because a proposed development is on or close to the boundary of a parish containing a distinctive local vernacular architectural style is no excuse to suggest that the buildings of the surrounding area ‘*are varied in styles, age and materials*’ and to consistently refer to Partington rather than Warburton.
39. The development design tries to accommodate the suggestion of paragraph (c) of the NPPF and in doing so, I suggest it fails miserably. Instead of concentrating on the Parish of Warburton or of Partington, it attempts to draw on the townscape character of both and even brings Dunham into consideration. The result is a mishmash of townscape character which is used to justify the use of Redrow Homes standard house types, which certainly are not ‘*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting*’. The scheme is not sympathetic to the local history of the area and the former deer park of the western development is not reflected in any way in the design. Similarly, although the late C19th John Douglas architecture of much of Warburton is mentioned in the D&A statement, it is not reflected in the design. The characteristic architecture of Warburton, Dunham and Partington are widely different and I find it extremely disturbing that the characteristics of all three should be considered for a site which is clearly in Warburton and is the gateway to Warburton from the north.
40. The layout appears particularly dense and while the use of street trees and the general internal landscaping appears adequate, the boundary landscaping to the south is woefully inadequate, especially given the height of the development. At present, in Site 2, the trees in Coroner’s Wood create a reasonably good screen between the open fields of Warburton and the housing in Partington. This screen is a minimum of 20m thick and extends to nearly 30m thick. This was for many years the Green belt boundary and is the current visual boundary. Even this currently does not provide a full screen when viewed from the south (Warburton) side. The proposed boundary to Site 2 appears to be a mere 5 – 10m deep and incorporates the existing hawthorn hedge as a boundary. I suggest that this is inadequate, particularly when the houses behind may be up to 13.2m high.

41. I suggest that the Redrow Homes standard house types certainly do not ‘*maintain a strong sense of place*’ (as is suggested for new housing in NPPF paragraph (d)) as they are alien to the neighbourhood. As previously mentioned, the introduction of 3 storey buildings, many with massive truss raftered roofs reaching up to 13.2m high will dominate the skyline for a considerable distance around the site, particularly to the south and west. The introduction of terraced houses does not accord with the strong sense of place which is Warburton. They may establish a strong sense of place, but I think that there is a very strong possibility that this will be a powerful negative factor, almost a ‘gated community’ considerably isolated from the surrounding communities and yet hugely visually and numerically dominating the Parish of Warburton in which it is set.
42. While the site optimises the potential to accommodate development, it does so without fully addressing the issue of a mix of development as suggested in paragraph (e) of the NPPF, no affordable housing being indicated. While relatively well-provided for in terms of green and other public space, the site certainly does not support local facilities and transport networks as the ‘gated community’ comment (above) suggests. The Warburton Village Design Statement (VDS) is referred to in the Design and Access Statement, but is otherwise also ignored.

**The revised Design and Access Statement and The National Design Guide ‘Planning practice for beautiful, enduring and successful places’**

43. The National Design Guide ‘Planning practice for beautiful, enduring and successful places’ was published by the ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in 2019 and is quoted in the Revised Design and Access Statement. As with the NPPF Part 12 (quoted above in paras 29 -35), I believe the design of the scheme fails on almost all aspects of the ten characteristics of good design, as follows-

**Context.** There is no demonstrated understanding of the context, (a rural village), history (part of it a medieval deer park) and cultural characteristics of the site.

**Identity.** I suggest a new identity here is not appropriate given the strength of the existing identity.

**Built Form.** These are alien to the context; access to services is limited and confined to vehicular use. Some of the properties are likely to be double the height of existing properties.

**Movement.** There will be limited accessible Green Infrastructure and transport is likely to be confined to only cars.

**Nature.** There is scope to integrate existing and new natural features into a network, but damage to existing natural features considerably off-sets this.

**Public Space.** There is scope for public space, but as it likely only to serve the new housing social interaction is likely to be limited. The frequent flooding of Red Brook introduces a degree of risk.

**Uses.** I do not believe that this scheme is sustainable. The lack of affordable housing and types will not '*support people at all stages of life and be socially inclusive*'. I believe it is far more likely to end as a 'gated community' in all but name.

**Homes and buildings.** These building may be well-designed from a developer's viewpoint, but this is conflicted by the lack of identity, built form etc.

**Resources.** This development will not conserve natural resources. It's carbon footprint, even when occupied is likely to be considerably more than many other developments in better locations

**Lifespan.** No comment.

### **Potential direct damage to the landscape.**

44. The damage that this development will potentially directly inflict on the landscape is substantial. The former deer park pale (hedgerow H2 in the Historic Hedgerow Gazetteer) in Site 2 will be damaged through the construction of the proposed site access road and the necessary setting back of the existing hedge to create visibility splays. This hedgerow clearly has landscape, historic and archaeological value and is a heritage asset in its own right. This will also almost certainly involve the felling of a high quality oak tree within the hedge. Similarly, the construction of the site access to Site 1 will result in the destruction of most of another historic hedgerow (which I have numbered as 15 in the 'Corrected Historic Hedgerow Gazetteer' in Appendix 4.) together with a number of high quality trees.
45. It is assumed that all surface water will be via a number of proposed balancing ponds into Red Brook, in the case of Site 2 this will mean excavating and laying pipes through an area of ancient woodland. Similarly, it is assumed that foul drainage will be through the woodland to the sewage plant to the north of the woodland. Both operations would inflict severe damage on the woodland. Excavating for pipework through the scarped deer park pale to the woodland would also inflict substantial damage on this feature.

### **Potential indirect damage to the landscape.**

46. To the south of Site 2 and outside the site a characteristic feature of the former deer park is a collection of small ponds and an associated copse of trees. In my opinion there is a substantial risk that both the water feed to these ponds and the drainage from them will be damaged as a result of this development. None of these features are in a particularly good state and it would take very little impact on them to make them effectively derelict. As the copse is a fundamental part of the proposed screening, its loss would be a further blow and the landscape and visual impact of the housing would be increased. Substantially increased footfall in the areas of ancient woodland and adjacent landscapes will have a deleterious effect on those landscapes, further adding to the direct damage mentioned above.

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