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EXPRESS PARK BUXTON, COWDALE

Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal

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1 Introduction

Purpose of the Document

This landscape and visual impact appraisal has been prepared by Delta Architects on behalf of Express Park Buxton Ltd. in support of the planning application for the development of a new Bottling Plant and Heritage Visitors Centre in part of Cowdale Quarry, Buxton.

The report is therefore intended to consider the potential impact of these proposals, if any, from the surrounding areas and if necessary to recommend appropriate mitigation. Its purpose is to inform and enhance the design of the proposed development and assist the local authority in its consideration of the proposal. This report is not concerned with traffic generation, noise, ecology or other issues that may be under consideration, but only landscape and visual matters. Other issues, including ecology and archaeology are dealt with separately by the client's other consultants.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the full planning application and its accompanying documents including the Design and Access Statement, Environmental Statement, Transport Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment, Planning Statement, Archaeological Report and Water Documentation.

2 Site Description

The Application Area

The 10 ha Application Area (the site) comprises part of the disused Cowdale Quarry and the surrounding areas as indicated on the Site Location Plan (see page 5) and the Application Area plan (see page 6). The quarry is located approximately 1.5km east of Buxton Town Centre, bordered by the A6 to the north, the Staden Lane Industrial Estate to the south-west and a mixture of residential and undeveloped land to the south and east. A disused railway siding also runs to the north of the quarry. The Staden Lane Industrial Estate to the south-west comprises light industrial, retail and other commercial development and some residential units. The site is not in the Peak District National Park. The village of Cowdale lies approximately 200m from the south east boundary of the site and the Staden Lane Industrial Estate 500m to the south west.

Existing land uses

The Application Area is within the disused Cowdale Quarry to the south of the A6 route into Buxton and its immediate enivirons. The northern part of the application site adjoins the existing A6 with the remainder of the application area being various areas of woodland and grasslands. Rockhead Spring lies to the east of the Application Area. Part of the existing quarry, to the north east boundary, contains two large spoil heaps. A disused railway line and small, redundant associated buildings lie to the north alongside the A6. The former quarry is now disused and the quarry floor is generally 20-30m below the top edge.

Topography

The quarry floor has an elevation of 295m AOD and is broadly flat, varying by only 2m across the Application Area. To the west and south, the Application Area is bordered by quarried rock faces that rise 20-30m to the surrounding land. To the north of the quarry floor the land drops away steeply to the River Wye and the A6 which are approximately 255m AOD. To the southeast the quarry faces rise 10-15m to land that slopes gently upwards to Cowdale village. To the northeast the quarry floor is bounded by two large spoil heaps.

Hydrology

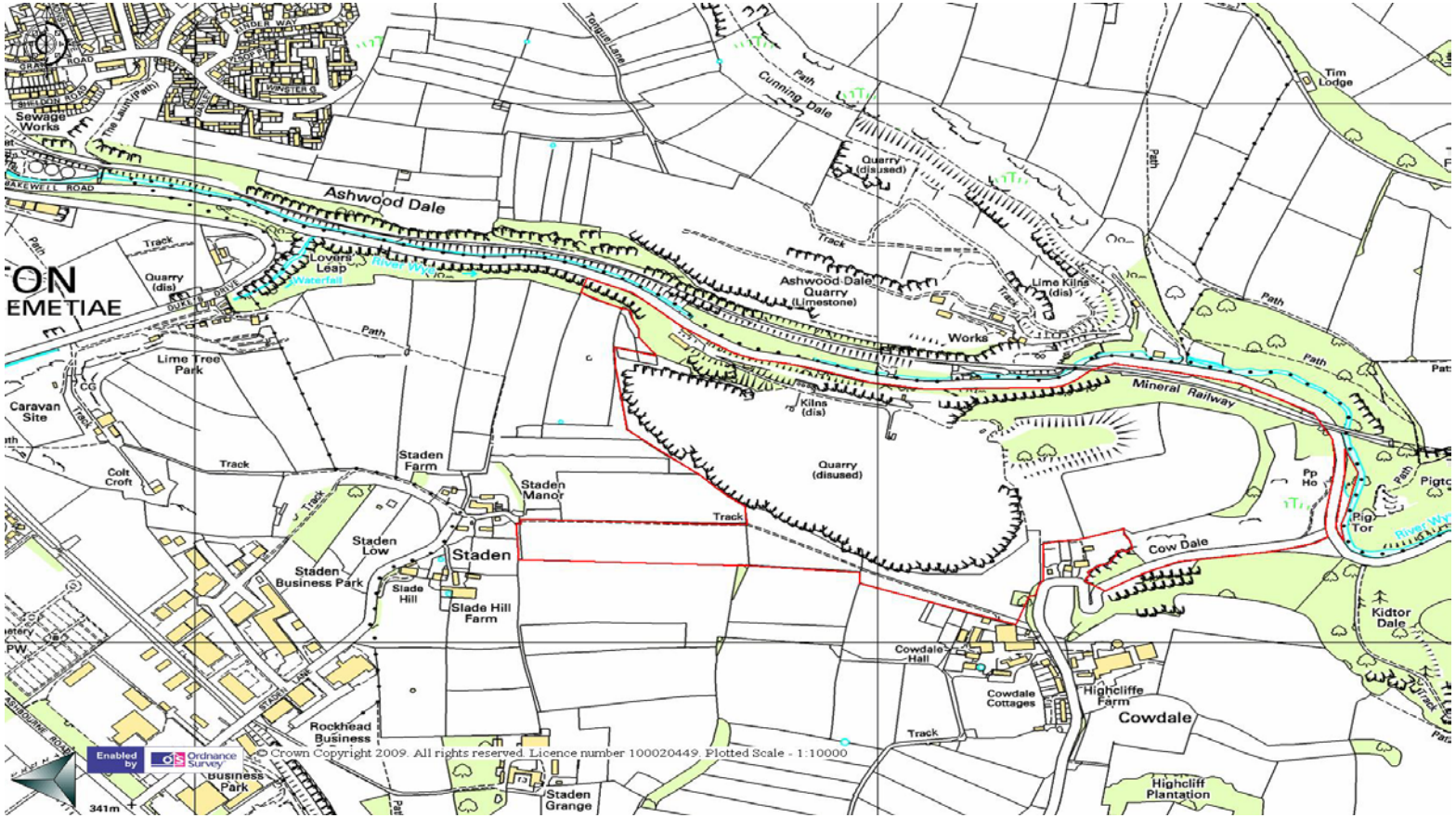
There are no streams or rivers within the site. The nearest watercourse is the River Wye which runs alongside the northern edge of the A6 to the north.

History

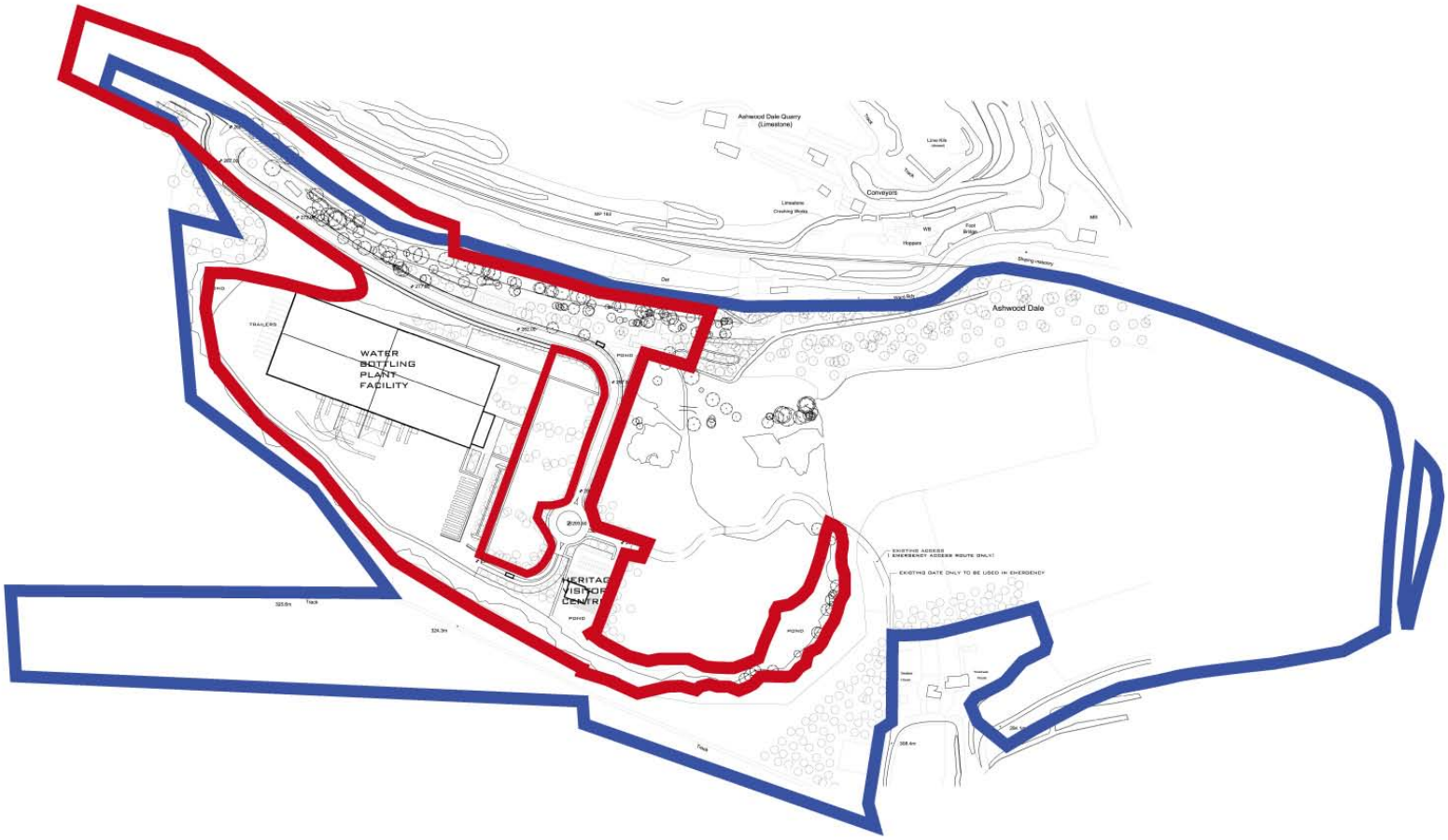
The quarry was last used in the1940's or early 50's and was operated for the production of burnt lime and used hand working methods for the selection of limestone for the vertical kilns. All product transportation was by rail. The site has been left with a level quarry floor and extensive mounds of the quarry spoil.

Public rights of way

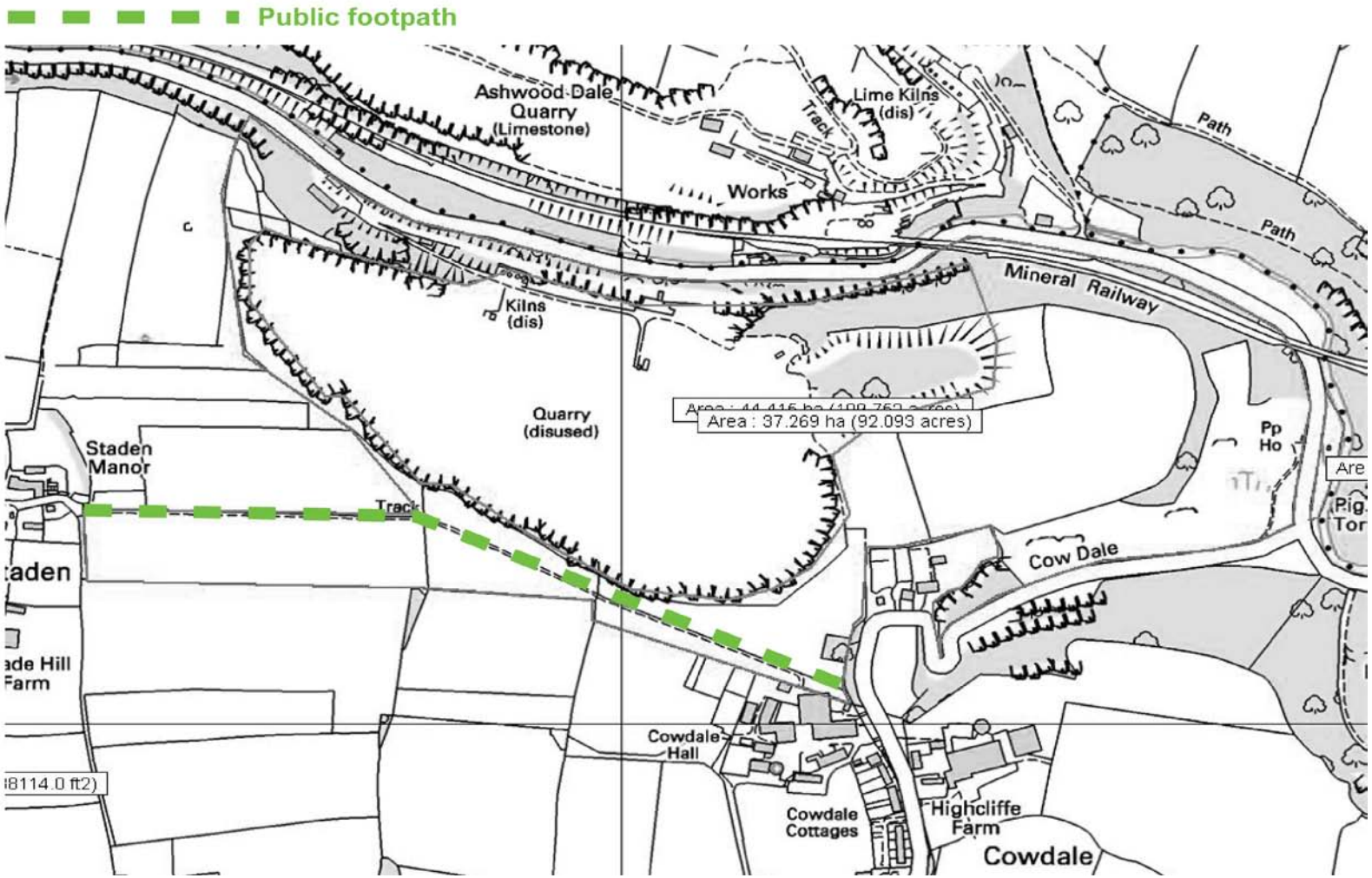
There is one public footpath that runs along the top of the quarry to the southern edge of the site linking Staden Lane to Cowdale (see page 7).



Cowdale Quarry Location Plan : land ownership shown outlined in red



Red line denotes application area, blue line denotes extent of ownership



Public Right of Way footpath

Proposal

The proposed development is a water bottling plant and associated storage areas together with a new access off the A6, internal roads and a heritage visitors centre. The nearby Rockhead Spring is a natural Artesian spring located to the east of Cowdale Quarry on land owned by the applicant. It is intended to utilise the water resource and this site has been identified as the only feasible option in the area. (Further information on the water resource can be found in the Design and Access Statement).

Throughout the preparation of this assessment, consultation has been undertaken with the client and the rest of the design team. This dialogue has been essential in order for all parties to understand the technical aspects of the proposal as the design develops and to highlight the important landscape issues revealed as the design process proceeds.

This assessment is based on the site layout below and the findings have been reported to the project team in order to inform the design process and develop the layout. Therefore, the final submitted master plan (page 9) is a carefully considered response to the technical requirements and the findings of the landscape and visual assessment .

Masterplan for the site

3 Landscape and Visual Assessment Methodology

Scoping

The landscape issues that should normally be covered if scoping advice was available would include the following :

• A full description of the development taking into consideration landscape character, landscape designations, main visual receptors and an assessment of the effects to landscape character and visuals.

• A generic landscape and visual assessment and landscape and visual assessments from each of the selected viewpoints.

• Identification of the elements with the potential to cause an effect on the landscape and visual amenity of the study area.

• A baseline study to establish the landscape and visual context of the study area.

• Recommendation of mitigation measures needed to avoid or reduce these effects, particularly with reference to landscape fabric; landscape quality and visual amenity

• A review of proposed development to assess its visual characteristics.

Method of Appraisal

This assessment has been carried out with reference to the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 2nd Edition', prepared jointly by The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. Following desktop research a landscape and visual baseline has been established against which to assess the proposals. This identifies the landscape elements known as receptors and also the receivers of visual effects, that is, those who will view the development. The potential landscape and visual effects of the development proposal were then assessed.

Desktop and site studies have established the zones of visual influence and primary visual envelope within which the effects of the development will be received. Landscape and visual impact assessments are different to most studies carried out as part of an EIA because it is not possible to quantify all aspects. Therefore, in common with any assessment of environmental effects, this includes a combination of objective and subjective judgements. It is necessary to differentiate between judgements that involve a degree of subjective opinion (such as landscape value) and those that are normally more objective and quantifiable (as in the determination of magnitude of change).

This can be outlined as follows:

OBJECTIVE

Measurable Facts Character Assessment
Professional Judgement Quality Assessment
Public Preference Assessment of scenic beauty

SUBJECTIVE

Landscape quality
Landscape Impacts
Magnitude of Landscape Impacts
Significance of Landscape Impacts
Magnitude of Impact on Visual Amenity
Sensitivity of Visual Receptors
Significance of Visual Impact

Approach

Following desktop research, site visits have been undertaken and photographs taken from strategic public viewpoints and other selected points considered as being of importance. The judgements of views are considered alongside the preliminary proposal, a physical survey of the site, its surroundings and the context of the site in the local plan.
It is therefore important to establish the characteristics and setting of the current scene, that is the landscape and visual baseline and fully understand the proposal, to make a judgment about the potential effects of the proposed development. The anticipated effects have been considered for both the construction and post-construction (operational) phases.

Appraisal & Design Stages

It is the preliminary design layout in the feasibility study, which forms the basis of the assessment for landscape and visual impact. The proposed scheme establishes principles of outline external works and landscape design. This is assessed to establish the potential impacts of the scheme and then mitigation proposals made, if deemed necessary.

The methods employed for carrying out this assessment can be summarised as follows:

- Desktop research to establish the physical and planning context of the site.
- Field work to define the physical attributes of the site, its visual character and locations from which the development will be viewed.
- Liaison with the consultant and client team to gain a full understanding of the proposed scheme.
- Site analysis to establish the implications of development using the survey, field work and consultant information.
- Analyse photographs taken from the most prominent and common public viewpoints.
- Feed-back preliminary findings to the client to ensure design proposals are feasible and will reduce impact.
- Summarise potential landscape and visual impact for both the construction and operational phases.
- If deemed necessary, prepare suggestions for mitigation to further reduce potential impacts to be illustrated in concept on the application plans and as a guide for detailed design.

4 Relevant Policy

Extensive details of the planning policy background and also relevant landscape policies in regards to the proposed development are set out in the adopted Statutory Development Plan. These are also discussed in Planning Statement that accompanies this application.

The Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document SPD5

The Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document SPD5 (High Peak Borough Council, March 2006) provides guidance for the design of new developments and alterations to existing development, including associated landscape design. It provides further, Borough specific details regarding the landscape types identified in the County assessment.

The site is within an area described as Plateau Pastures, it is described as follows:

> *"A gentle rolling, upland limestone plateau characterised by nucleated limestone villages, dry stone walls, a pastoral land-use and open expansive views. The landscape is settles, with small hamlets and villages historically evolved from agriculture and quarrying. There are also scattered individual buildings with trees around dwellings, separating them from work buildings. The dominant building material is limestone with gritstone detailing.*
>
> *Properties are enclosed by low drystone walls which are valuable in connecting the built form with the wider landscape, which is characterised by stone wall field boundaries. In some parts of the area, there are non-traditional buildings in the form of rural workers cottages and small-scale industry, these are not sympathetic to the landscape or traditional building style. There is a network of roads, usually straight, throughout the landscape."*

Local Context

The High Peak Local Plan Saved Policies were published in 2008. The policies most relevant to this application are considered below:

Policy 9: OC1- Countryside Development

This policy states that within the countryside, planning permission will be granted for development which is an integral part of the rural economy and which can only be carried out in the countryside provided that:

- the development will not detract from an area where the open character of the countryside is particularly vulnerable because of its prominence or the existence of a narrow gap between settlements;
- the development will not generate significant numbers of people or traffic to the detriment of residential amenity, highway safety, landscape or air quality or otherwise have unacceptable urbanizing influence; and
- the development will not have a significant adverse impact on the character and distinctiveness of the countryside.

The proposed development is in an area classed as Previously Developed Land ("land that was developed but is now vacant or derelict, and land currently in use with known potential for redevelopment"; PPS3) and the area to the north is an active quarry. The surrounding to the east, west and south is classed as Countryside but the development would not be visible from there and hence would not have a significant adverse impact on the character and distinctiveness of that countryside.

Policy 11: OC3- Special Landscape Area Development

This policy is non-statutory and a series of Special Landscape Areas (SLA) are identified in the High Peak Local Plan (2005). This policy states that within the SLA development in accordance with Policy OC1 (Countryside Development) will be permitted, provided that it will not detract from the special qualities and character of the SLA.

- The proposed development is within a SLA, however, no information is provided in the Local Plan as to why the designation is present or what it is trying to protect. Therefore it does not accord with national policy set out within PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004), which requires that local landscape designations are to be based upon a formal and robust assessment.
- The English Heritage Historic Landscape Area classification characterises the site as industrial, which contradicts the SLA criteria. Also no mention of the SLA designation is made in the draft of the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak Core Strategy, which will ultimately replace the Local Plan.

Policy 13: OC5- Development Conspicuous from the Peak District National Park

This policy states that the planning permission will not be granted for development, which due to its use, scale, design, siting, external appearance or landscape treatment, would materially harm the purposes or valued characteristics of the National Park.

The purposes of National Parks are, as defined by the Environment Act in 1995, to *"conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Parks; and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks by the public."*

The Peak District National Park Management Plan 2006-2011 (2006) sets out a number of valued characteristics of the National Park. The Plan sets out to conserve and enhance these characteristics. They are shown below:

- Outstanding natural beauty and character of the landscape;
- Significant geological features;
- Sense of wildness and remoteness;
- Clean earth, air and water;
- Importance of wildlife and the area's unique biodiversity;
- Thousands of years of human influence which can be traced through the landscape;
- Distinctive character of villages and settlements;
- Wealth of historic buildings, gardens and parks;
- Opportunities for quiet enjoyment;
- Opportunities for outdoor recreation and adventure;
- Easy accessibility for visitors from surrounding urban areas;
- Vibrancy and sense of community;
- Customs, legends, traditions and arts;
- Environmentally friendly methods of working the land;
- Craft and cottage industries;
- Special value attached to the National Park by surrounding urban communities.

The centre of the proposed site lies approximately 0.5km away from the Peak District National Park to the east beyond Cowdale and to the north east across the valley.

Various viewpoints have been visited (see Section 9) and it is not considered that the proposed development is contrary to this policy. The southern rock faces of Cowdale Quarry can be seen from a small area of the Park to the northeast (viewpoints 2 and 3). However, the development site has been located at the extreme western end of the quarry and would be barely visible. It is proposed that trees will be planted that will eventually screen the development from view altogether. Hence, the development will not impact on the Peak District National Park.

Overall, it is considered that the valued characteristics of the National Park would be unaffected by the proposed development. The development would not conflict with the statutory purposes of the designation.

5 Landscape and Visual Baseline

Introduction

This section identifies the features and characteristics of the existing landscape scene, site context, surrounding character, site specific characteristics and relevant policies or designations to establish a baseline that defines the unique qualities of the site, against which assessment of the potential effects of the development can be made.

The baseline study includes the identification of those landscape elements and characteristics that are valued or otherwise by viewers of the site. The intention is that the judgment of value is as objective as possible to define 'what matters and why' and those particular characteristics that contribute to a sense of place. However, it is accepted in the landscape guidelines that different assessors will bring some varying subjective judgment to bear, based on their particular professional experience.

Landscape Importance

The following definitions provide a useful summary for the importance of the landscape:

'Landscape is a product of the interaction between a range of physical and biological characteristics and the cultural heritage. It encompasses not only the physical features of landform and surface pattern, but also the way in which these features are perceived and the values, which are attached to scenery by people. This approach recognises that landscape is a fundamental component of the wider environment and is not just associated with a limited number of designated areas of particular scenic value'.
(Preparation of Environmental Statements for Planning Projects that require Environmental Statements; A Good Practice Guide)

Landscape quality can further be defined as 'Natural beauty includes geological and geomorphological formations, vegetation and wildlife, archaeological features, historic and cultural elements, all of which contribute to the present day landscape'
(The South Devon Landscape, Countryside Commission 1993)

Landscape Condition

The condition of the landscape refers to the related landscape in which the proposed site is located and its state. It should be described as objectively as possible. This assessment should not only take into account the conditions of landscape features, such as woodlands, hedgerows, fields and the like, but also structures and built up areas such as Ashwood Dale Quarry, Staden Lane and Cowdale. It may be that a poor rated landscape that is degraded or damaged may still be highly valued, in an area that open space is in short supply.

This assessment therefore sets out the rating of the landscape and should consider the potential value attached to its restoration or enhancement. It may also be that similarly designated landscapes may be at different ends of the landscape ratings, due to conditions and location.

Excellent

Areas of very high quality landscape, probably within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or National Parks, but not exclusively so, having outstanding scenic values as well as quality managed landscapes. They may be nationally important in historical or cultural terms. Visitors and tourists will make special journeys to view and perhaps stay.

Good

These areas are of particularly outstanding regional or local quality and may have a designated protection by the planning authority. They will also be of high scenic qualities with well-managed landscapes.

Average

Landscapes that have an attractive quality, are unspoilt and are well maintained and enjoyed on a local level. They are unlikely to have any designations.

Fair

These areas are landscapes that have be been changed and are unlikely to match with the local character. Possibly related to urban areas or spoilt by adjacent developments.

Poor

Landscapes that have been neglected or run down that have very little character and may need restoring. Any development may enable an improvement to such a landscape, by giving it a positive use.

Having considered the above matters in the local context, it is concluded that the landscape condition of the proposals site is ‘fair’, that is ‘related to urban areas or spoilt by adjacent developments’. Although the site development is within an area that is identified as a Special Landscape Area (SLA) in the High Peak Local Plan, no information is provided in the local plan as to why the designation is present or what it is trying to protect. In addition it is not clear why the quarry void was included in the SLA since the landscape within the Quarry is dissimilar to that in the surrounding “special” landscape and is in fact artificial and man-made and is seen from most viewpoints as adjacent to an existing working quarry and the built up areas of Staden Lane and Cowdale.

Countryside Agency Character

The Countryside Agency (now Natural England) carried out an assessment, published in 1999, to value all England's landscape and group their character. The site falls within the White Peak character area NCA 52.

- The key characteristics of the White Peak are:
- Elevated limestone plateau dissected by steeply cut dales and gorges with rock outcrops, screes, and cave systems.
- Long, narrow, shelter belts of broadleaved trees on high ground and along lead rakes with semi-natural broadleaved woodland along dale sides.
- Clear, fast-flowing rivers and streams in some dales; others are dry or seasonal.
- Nucleated villages and small towns connected by crest and valley roads.
- Improved farmland for intensive dairy farming characterised by small narrow fields, often of medieval origin, around many villages and large rectangular fields away from the villages, formed by white, limestone, dry stone walls and walled up lead rakes (forming a combination of white walls and green grass).
- Poorly vegetated dew ponds, common over the whole plateau, lined with concrete, limestone or clay.
- Mosaic of herb-rich grassland, woodland and scrub along dales.
- Lack of a unifying style of architecture for buildings and settlements due to the availability of two dissimilar rock types, limestone and 'gritstone' used either singly or in combination in various parts of the area.
- Large-scale limestone quarries creating major scars in limited places in an otherwise attractive landscape.
- Long-disused workings for limestone and ores, particularly lead rakes, provide features rich in ecological, historical and cultural interest.
- Features of special archaeological interest together with strong cultural heritage dating from the earliest prehistoric past.

Landscape Scale

It is generally accepted that the larger the scale of landscape the more easily developments such as industrial and retail parks can be absorbed within the landscape. The scale of the landscape around Cowdale Quarry is dominated by the backdrop of the existing, working Ashwood Dale Quarry and other nearby working quarries and the built up areas of Buxton, Cowdale and Staden. The National Park from the Cowdale area is also a large scale landscape rising into the distance. The local spinneys and woodlands also contribute to the potential for screening and lower the impact of the proposed development from many locations.

Character Assessment of the site

A close inspection of the site itself is important in understanding what comprises the view from further away. It is also an opportunity to understand the landform, elements that can be screened, site layout and opportunities for mitigation, if deemed necessary. The site is well enclosed by the rock faces of the disused quarry and the heavily wooded boundaries with the A6.

Site Description

The quarry void has a floor area of c. 17ha that is bordered by quarried slopes on all but the north-east corner where there is approximately 3.8 ha of mounds containing both waste material and unprocessed limestone. The mounds are prominent and unnatural landforms that detract from the appearance of the quarry void as they are clearly visible from the surrounding area.

The quarry floor consists of limestone bedrock levelled off with a thin layer of soil conditioned with material from a mushroom factory at Harpur Hill. This ground supports grass for grazing but burns off quickly during prolonged dry periods. It is fundamentally different from the soils elsewhere in the area as these have developed on a loessic parent material some 1 to 2m thick over the limestone bedrock.

The heights of the quarried slopes around the flat floor of the void reflect the overall slope of the land surface from southwest to northeast. Thus the highest faces are to the southwest (approximately 25m) while the faces on the eastern and northern boundaries grade down to around 15m. Some of the faces are fronted by piles of blasted but unworked stone while others are sub-vertical to the quarry floor

Current access is via a track which rises alongside the existing buildings adjacent to the A6 and also by a track which comes down from Cowdale. There are a number of redundant structures on the site that were associated with the now disused quarry. All the land is in private ownership and there is no public access.

Site Vegetation

Within the quarry itself, the existing spoil heaps and quarry floor have been populated by poor quality grassland since the quarry became redundant. The boundary with the A6 has a considerable screening of woodland of variable quality although to the west of the site along the A6 there is an area of Ancient Woodland.

Public Rights of Way

The are no public rights of way crossing the site. The closest Public Right of Way is the footpath that connects Cowdale with Staden and runs along the top of the quarry to the south of the site. There are no views into Cowdale Quarry from this footpath but the workings in Ashwood Dale Quarry on the opposite side of the valley are clearly visible (see Viewpoint 6, page 40).

Public perception of change

Public perception of change is directly related to how obvious and visible a site is, as well as the extent and the appropriateness of change. Because the quarry floor, where the proposed buildings are to be constructed, is approximately 25m below the top edges of the quarry faces, and the northern boundary to the A6 is heavily wooded, the nearest point from which the general public can view the site is several hundred metres away across the Wye Valley. Pedestrians using the right of way between Cowdale and Staden will be closer to the development site but even at its closest point the path is over 15m from the quarry edge and as the ground slopes gently upwards it will not be possible for walkers to see the buildings on the quarry floor.

Potential Impacts

Impacts may arise from the elements listed below. Should the assessment conclude that any impact will result, it is these matters that detailed design and mitigation proposals should address to minimise impact from local public vantage points.

- Changes to landform
- Loss of existing vegetation
- Layout of access and colour of hard surface areas
- Features that are prominent in relation to local crest lines or high ground.
- New elements that change, prevent or enhance current views
- Lighting, fencing and signage
- Building design and materials selection.

6 Development Proposals

Introduction

In undertaking a landscape and visual assessment it is essential to fully understand the development proposals so that suggested mitigation, if deemed necessary, is proposed as a unique response to the surrounding character of the landscape, site setting and the development.

Assessment of Landscape Condition

The quarry itself has little landscape value as it is a man made feature that has only become part of the landscape since the quarry was closed down. The woodlands alongside the A6 are of more importance and form a continuous screen to the quarry itself. The top of the quarry on the southern, eastern and western sides are flat grassland leading up to the built up areas of Cowdale and Staden. Ashwood Dale quarry across the A6 to the north of the site is a large working quarry and has a considerable impact on the area.

Because of the man made nature of the quarry the assessment of the landscape is fair.

The Proposal

The development comprises the creation of a Bottling Plant making use of the existing water resource, a Heritage Visitors Centre, and the associated infrastructure network including a new access junction with the A6.

The Bottling Plant is divided into two with the warehouse facility in the taller part of the building (10.6m eaves) and the bottling line plant facility in the other part (6.3m eaves). The Bottling Plant is situated as far to the west of the quarry as possible with the higher part of the building masked from across the valley by the existing promontory which is largely untouched by the development.

The Heritage Visitor Centre is a small single storey building by comparison set further in to the quarry.

A number of water features are also proposed as part of the sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) proposals for the site.

The proposed buildings will be constructed on the existing quarry floor and the majority of the existing spoil heaps will remain.

A new access to the A6 will be cut into the quarry floor behind the tree screen on the A6 to ensure adequate gradients can be obtained. A new junction on the A6 will also be required to access the development which will require remodelling of some of the existing rock faces and woodland.

7 Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Introduction and Method

The Landscape Institute Guidelines summarise that an impact assessment should:

“describe the changes in the character and quality of the landscape and visual resources that are expected to result from the development. It should cover both landscape impacts, that is changes in the fabric and character of the landscape; and visual impacts, that is changes in available views of the landscape and the effect of those changes on people”

The baseline studies are a record of the existing landscape and visual resources, upon which the appraisal can be based.

Receptors & Receivers

The term receptor is used in landscape and visual impact assessments to mean an element or assemblage of elements, that will be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed development. Receptors are of two types.

Landscape receptors include elements of the physical landscape that may be directly affected by the development or can help to accommodate it, such as topographic and geological features, vegetation, boundaries, coastlines and footpaths. As the term suggests, landscape receptors have a varying ability to receive or assimilate a particular development.

The degree of assimilation is dependent on how sensitively the proposal responds in scale and composition to its surroundings.

The other type is receptors of visual effects (the term receivers is used in preference) include local residents, visitors and tourists who can see the proposals from within the Zone of Visual Influence and especially the primary visual envelope. These can be mobile, e.g. motorists, walkers or static, e.g. local residents or workers in surrounding premises.

Significance

The Landscape Institute Guidelines (7.39 p92) on the significance of a development, read as follows:

“The two principal criteria determining significance are the scale of effect and the environmental sensitivity of the location or receptor. A high degree or magnitude of significance is generally attached to large-scale effects and effects on sensitive or high-value receptors; thus small effects on highly sensitive sites can be more important than large effects on less sensitive sites. It is therefore important that a balanced and well reasoned judgment of these two criteria is achieved”.

Visual Considerations

These considerations have included the quality of views and the sensitivity of visual receptors and receivers of visual effects.

Landscape Considerations

These considerations have included the magnitude of effect of the proposed development on landscape quality, condition, value and character sensitivity.

The objective of this appraisal is to define whether or not the proposal will have landscape or visual impacts and if so, the significance of the impact. It is accepted that there must be a reliance on common sense and reasoned professional judgment, supported where possible by substantiated evidence. Conclusions are based on a combination of factors including:

- The sensitivity of the affected landscape and visual resources.
- Magnitude of the impact
- Whether impacts are beneficial or adverse
- Views of local residents and representative bodies

For reasons of consistency in defining significance of impact, the following criteria have been adopted. The degree or magnitude of the significance of impact ranges as follows:

Significance criteria used to define the scale of visual impact

Major Adverse

Where the scheme would cause a significant deterioration in the existing view. The impact gives rise to serious concern and should be considered totally unacceptable. Unable to mitigate.

Moderate Adverse

Where the scheme would cause a noticeable deterioration in the existing view. The impact gives rise to concern, but it is likely to be tolerable depending on its scale and duration. Mitigation is likely to be able to assist.

Minor Adverse

Where the scheme would cause a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view. The impact is slightly detrimental but of limited concern. Mitigation is likely to be very effective.

Neutral

No discernable change or improvement in the existing view.

Minor Beneficial

Where the scheme would result in a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view. Mitigation will be beneficial.

Moderate Beneficial

Where the scheme would result in a noticeable improvement in the existing view. Mitigation is not essential, but will be very beneficial.

Substantial Beneficial

Where the scheme would result in a significant improvement in the existing view. Mitigation is not essential, but will be extremely beneficial.

Significance criteria used to define the scale of landscape impacts

Major Adverse

Result in effects that cannot be fully mitigated and may cumulatively amount to a severe adverse impact. The effects are at considerable variance to the landscape, degrading its integrity. It will be substantially damaging to a high quality landscape. The impact gives rise to substantial concern and should be considered unacceptable. Mitigation is unlikely to reduce impact to any significant degree.

Moderate Adverse

Be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform. Will leave an adverse impact on a landscape of recognized quality. The impact gives rise to concern, but it is likely to be tolerable depending on its scale and duration. Mitigation is likely to be able to assist.

Minor Adverse

Would not quite fit into the landform and scale of the landscape and affect an area of recognised landscape character. The impact is slightly detrimental but of limited concern. Mitigation is likely to be very effective.

Neutral

Compliment the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and/or maintain existing landscape quality. The impact is of no concern.

Minor Beneficial

Have the potential to fit very well with the landscape character and improve the quality of the landscape through removal of damage caused by existing land uses. Mitigation will assist.

Moderate Beneficial

Have the potential to improve the landscape quality and character. Fit in with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape. Enable the restoration of valued characteristic features partially lost through other land uses. Mitigation will be beneficial.

Substantial Beneficial

Have the potential to significantly improve the landscape quality and character. Enhance the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape. Enable the complete restoration of valued characteristic features partially lost through other land uses. Mitigation will be beneficial, but is unnecessary.

Landscape Character, Condition and Designations

The capacity of a landscape to accommodate development is quite different from the importance or value of the landscape. In preparing a baseline study it is normally assumed that formally designated landscapes are more likely to be sensitive to change than others. However, landscape designation is deemed to be a reflection of value to society and is therefore only one criteria to be considered in identifying the relative sensitivity of the landscape to a proposed development.

Planning Policy Guidance urges priority be given to restraint of development in areas of statutorily designated landscape, but this must be considered case by case. If a development is within or is close to a designated area, it is not necessarily the case that it will cause a significant impact. Understanding the particular landscape character of the development site and its surroundings is fundamental to the baseline study. Landscape character can be defined as the distinct and recognizable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape and how people perceive it. It is the particular combination of landscape elements that creates a sense of place.

The Countryside Agency has established a methodology for providing a concise description of landscape character in the form of Countryside Character Areas. Landscape condition refers to the particular state of the elements within a specific area and the quality of agricultural husbandry is often an indicator of good landscape quality.

8 PHOTOGRAPHIC APPRAISAL

Visual envelope(s)

Extent of potential visibility to or from a specific area or feature.

'Visual envelope' is defined as the area from which it is theoretically possible to see the proposed development, without the intervening obstacles such as walls, fences, hedges, buildings, trees and woodland.

The existing landform is the only screening factor that is taken into consideration. In theory, the visual envelope(s) can extend to the horizon if elevated, but a limit on the impact is then assessed.

Zone of Visual Influence

Area within which a proposed development may have an influence or effect on visual amenity.

This appraisal endeavours to define the primary zone of visual influence. It is defined as that part of the surrounding area that is visually affected by the proposed scheme. That is the area around the site within which any change is deemed to be the most significant. In this case it includes the immediate area within which the viewer will become particularly aware of the development, irrespective of location within that area, rather than from just one viewpoint, but taking into account local features, woodland, hedges and the like. Conversely, it also identifies directions and zones from which the development will not be apparent and will therefore not give rise to influence.

Basis of Appraisal and Technique

In preparing to carry out the photographic appraisal, the scale and nature of the proposed development was assessed, by desktop study, to establish the distances and locations from which it might be distinguished and potentially give rise to visual impact. The landform, dwellings, existing hedges, walls and other structures screen many of the viewpoints. It is considered that a site will begin to lose much of its visual impact, apart from possibly lighting, from more than two kilometres, due to the relative larger scale of the existing buildings, context, intervening features, landform and the clarity of the atmosphere.

The impact on the skyline may be more intrusive than set against existing countryside or buildings. The impact on the visual envelopes will vary from day to day. Land and locations that can be seen from the site, approximate to where views of the site can be obtained.

This appraisal has considered both the construction and post-construction periods. The visual appraisal has been undertaken by analysis of the following photographs all of which were taken with an SLR camera, with a standard 50mm lens (except where stated), which is generally accepted as fairly representing the focal length and perspective of human sight.
(Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment. The Landscape Institute).

In making an assessment of the viewpoints, the various elements that comprise the proposals have been considered and understood. Conclusions have been drawn by undertaking analysis of the existing scene based on existing experience and describing any perceived affect of the proposal on the receiver at that location. That is, what will be seen as a result of the development and will it be detrimental to the view currently enjoyed.

Something that is difficult to see due to distance, size, screening or because it simply does not stand out, will have little impact. Elements that are large, seen at close quarters and are obviously out of context will have significant impact.

Comparisons are made with elements on or near the site to assess relative size, such as cars, mature trees, lighting columns and buildings.

Viewpoint selection

A representative selection of viewpoints has been chosen to give a fair reflection of public views from the surrounding area. More emphasis is placed on where a higher density of people is likely to view the site, for example from the adjacent footpaths and roads. Whether these people are mobile for example, walkers or motorists or static for example, residents, may also be a consideration. The locations of viewpoints are fine tuned during the site visit. The most extensive and intrusive viewpoint is generally chosen to illustrate the worst potential impact of the proposed development that deliberately sets out a biased impression of the intrusive qualities of the proposed buildings. There are usually a number of locations from which any new development can be seen and views are chosen to give a balanced picture of the impact. There are several locations where the site cannot be seen, due to vegetation and topography.

Viewpoints

It is considered that the following viewpoints provide a fair representation of views in relation to distance, direction and elevation. Whilst it is not possible to access all private viewpoints, certain assumptions are made about the effect on views from private property. However, these are very limited as the areas looking towards the site comprise relatively isolated dwellings within the countryside. Photographs can never replace the quality of sight obtained by visiting a viewpoint in person and the photographs are therefore an ‘aid memoir’ during consideration of the proposal. The comments made on each viewpoint accompany the photographs directly to assist their consideration in preference to separate text. Each viewpoint is shown on the viewpoint location plan and information on direction, elevation and distance of view from the centre of site is provided. Mitigation of the site from each viewpoint is also considered. Some of the photographs included are taken adjacent the site to illustrate the character of the site.

Seasonal Change and View clarity

In visual assessment, there is often considerable debate about seasonal change. Commonly claims are made about the extent of screening based on summer views in relation to vegetation, only to be countered by arguments that in the winter the screening is lost. It is considered that such a straightforward premise is ill founded.

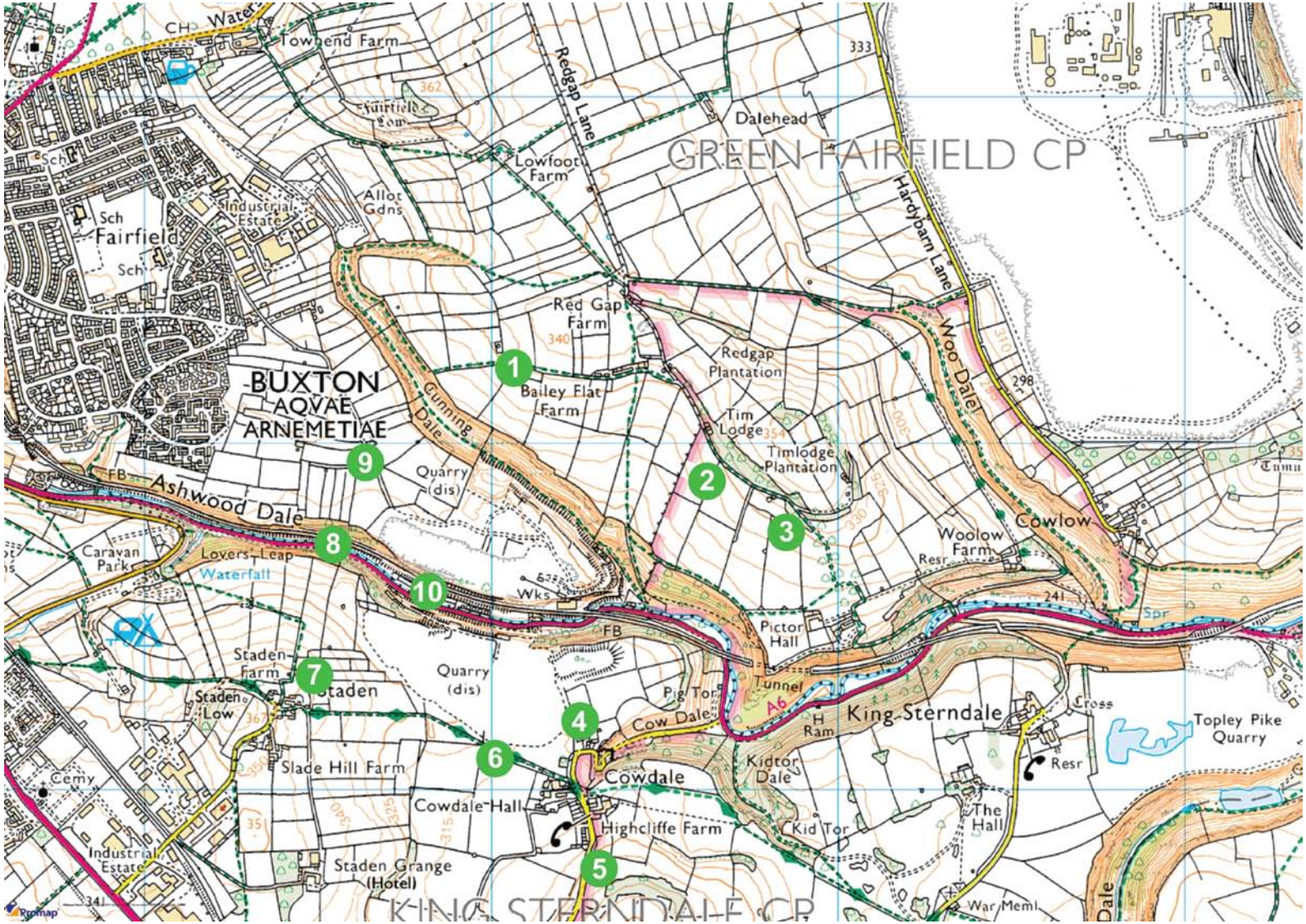
Perhaps a development will often be less well naturally screened in the winter than the summer. However, that development is most often within a scene where all elements are similarly revealed or disguised as the seasons change. One particular development is not revealed in isolation; therefore developments are viewed in a screened or exposed context in association with one another.

Visual access is therefore relative and not focused on one element. Even with foliage absent, vegetation has a bulk, mass and tracery that can still provide substantial visual foil, if not total screening. Foil or screening remains generally constant throughout the year only with evergreen species.

In this case, because of the special nature of the site which lends itself to almost totally obscuring the proposed development from its surroundings, seasonal change is not seen as a particular factor.

9 VIEWPOINTS

The location map below indicates the location of the photographs referred to in the document below.



Delta Architects 1 Batemans Row London EC2A 3HH T:020 7613 5702

1 West of Bailey Flat Farm

Delta Architects 1 Batemans Row London EC2A 3HH T:020 7613 5702

View Point 1 : From public footpath about 250m west of Bailey Flat Farm

Direction of Site :	South
Distance from Centre of Site:	0.8km
Elevation :	30m above Cowdale Quarry floor
Location :	This view is south across Cunning Dale and the Wye valley. This view would only be apparent to walkers using the footpath from Bailey Flat Farm to Cunning Dale.
Landscape :	The quarry rock face that is immediately obvious in the foreground is part of Ashwood Dale Quarry that has broken into the side of Cunning Dale. The roof of one of the buildings in Ashwood dale Quarry is visible to the left of the photo. The south face of Cowdale Quarry is visible in the mid-distance together with part of the quarry floor and a waste mound. Former and active quarries are just visible on the far skyline. The foreground is poor quality grazing land but the view beyond Cowdale Quarry shows many of the qualities of the area including the elevated limestone plateaus and the shelter belts of broadleaved trees along the high ground and dale sides. The landform and mature trees act as effective screening.
Site Assessment :	The quarry floor is only visible through the gaps created by the existing landform that encircle the site and the buildings proposed are likely to be marginally viewed. The extent of the site is very limited in the wider landscape view.
Mitigation :	Substantial planting adjacent to buildings in copses and irregular patterns to match existing vegetation. Use of man-made landforms including bunds etc. to break up the views of the buildings. Consider heights of building in exposed part of the site and careful choice of colours and materials for buildings. Only allow downward pointing low glare lighting. Allow for substantial planting around car park to reduce glass reflections and screen cars.
Potential Degree of Impact :	Minor adverse reducing to neutral.

2 Tim Lodge

View Point 2 : From Tim Lodge

Direction of Site :	South West
Distance from Centre of Site:	1 km
Elevation :	30m above Cowdale Quarry floor
Location :	This view is south west from Redgap Lane across the Wye valley. The viewpoint is just inside the Peak District National Park but the view would be only apparent to people accessing the small number of properties along the lane and also walkers who may also be using the lane.
Landscape :	The silver building that stands out is one of the Ashwood Dale Quarry buildings. Cowdale Quarry is in the distance with the Staden Lane buildings and disused quarries on the horizon. The view shows many of the qualities of the area with the elevated limestone plateaus and the shelter belts of broadleaved trees along the high ground and dale sides. The foreground shows small fields formed by dry stone walls. The landform and mature trees act as effective screening.
Site Assessment :	The quarry floor is almost totally concealed by the existing landform and the site and buildings proposed are likely to be totally obscured. The extent of the site is very limited in the wider landscape view.
Mitigation :	Substantial planting adjacent to buildings in copses and irregular patterns to match existing vegetation. Use of man-made landforms including bunds etc. to break up the views of the buildings. Consider heights of building in exposed part of the site. Careful choice of finished colours and materials for buildings. Only allow downward pointing low glare lighting. Allow for substantial planting around car park to reduce glass reflections and screen cars.
Potential Degree of Impact :	Minor adverse reducing to neutral.

3 North of Pictor Hall

View Point 3 : From North of Pictor Hall

Direction of Site :	South West
Distance from Centre of Site:	1.2 km
Elevation :	25m above Cowdale Quarry floor
Location :	This view is west from Redgap Lane across the Wye valley. This location is within the Peak District National Park but the view would be only apparent to people accessing the small number of properties along the lane and also walkers who may also be using the lane.
Landscape :	The silver buildings that stand out are some of the Ashwood Dale Quarry buildings and quarry workings are visible to the right. Cowdale Quarry is in the distance with the Staden Lane buildings on the horizon. The view shows many of the qualities of the area including the elevated limestone plateaus and the shelter belts of broadleaved trees along the high ground and dale sides. The foreground shows small fields formed by dry stone walls. The landform and mature trees act as effective screening.
Site Assessment :	The Cowdale Quarry floor is totally concealed by the existing landform and the site and proposed buildings will be totally obscured. The extent of the site is very limited in the wider landscape view.
Mitigation :	Substantial planting adjacent to buildings in copses and irregular patterns to match existing vegetation. Consider heights of building in exposed part of the site. Careful choice of finished colours and materials for buildings. Only allow downward pointing low glare lighting.
Potential Degree of Impact :	Neutral.

4 Swallow House

View Point 4 : From Swallow House

Direction of Site :	West
Distance from Centre of Site:	0.6 km
Elevation :	15m above Cowdale Quarry floor.
Location :	This view is from the access lane adjacent to Swallow House on the edge of Cowdale Village. This view would be only apparent to the occupiers of Swallow House and anybody visiting the property.
Landscape :	The southern faces of Cowdale Quarry are to the left with the spoil heaps to the right . The view shows the elevated limestone plateau leading to Staden Lane on the left and copses of broadleaved trees along the high ground. The foreground shows small fields formed by dry stone walls with a chain link fence to the quarry edge.
Site Assessment :	Only a small part of the quarry floor is visible and the site and buildings proposed will be partially obscured by the existing landform. The existing spoil heaps dominate the view.
Mitigation :	Planting on edge of quarry ahead of development. Substantial planting adjacent to buildings in copses and irregular patterns to match existing vegetation. Use of man-made landforms including bunds etc. to break up the views of the buildings. Consider heights of building in exposed part of the site. Careful choice of finished colours and materials for buildings. Only allow downward pointing low glare lighting. Allow for substantial planting around car park to reduce glass reflections and screen cars.
Potential Degree of Impact :	Minor adverse reducing to neutral.

5 View over Cowdale

View Point 5 : View over Cowdale

Direction of Site :	North West
Distance from Centre of Site:	0.8 km
Elevation :	25m above Cowdale Quarry floor.
Location :	This view is from Cowdale Lane across Cowdale Village. This view would be only be apparent to the traffic and pedestrians accessing Cowdale from the A515. This view is taken from just outside the National Park.
Landscape :	The village of Cowdale is on the right and copses of broadleaved trees occur intermittently. The foreground shows small fields formed by dry stone walls. The faces and floor of Cowdale Quarry floor ae not visible but the top of the spoil heaps can be seen over the top of the houses in Cowdale Village. The prominent quarry face in the middle distance is part of Ashwood Dale Quarry on the opposite side of the River Wye. To the left of the quarry faces, buildings on the Tongue Lane industrial estate and a housing estate are visible.
Site Assessment :	The quarry floor is totally concealed by the existing landform and the site and proposed buildings will be totally obscured. The extent of the site is not visible in the wider landscape view.
Mitigation :	Only allow downward pointing low glare lighting.
Potential Degree of Impact :	Neutral.

6 Footpath

View Point 6 : Footpath along southern edge of Quarry

Direction of Site :	North West
Distance from Centre of Site:	0.3 km
Elevation :	20m above Cowdale Quarry floor.
Location :	This view is from the footpath (right of way) along the top of the quarry on the southern edge. This view would be only be apparent to the pedestrians using the footpath leading from Cowdale to Staden.
Landscape :	Ashwood Dale Quarry and its buildings dominate the view across the valley with small fields formed by dry stone walls leading away to the horizon.
Site Assessment :	The quarry floor is totally concealed by the existing landform and the site and proposed buildings will be totally obscured. The extent of the site is not visible in the wider landscape view.
Mitigation :	Only allow downward pointing low glare lighting.
Potential Degree of Impact :	Neutral.

7 Staden Farm

View Point 7 : Staden Farm

Direction of Site :	North East
Distance from Centre of Site:	0.3 km
Elevation :	45m above Cowdale Quarry floor.
Location :	This view is from the footpath (right of way) adjacent to Staden Farm. This view would be only be apparent to the pedestrians using the footpath leading form Staden to Cowdale..
Landscape :	Ashwood Dale Quarry and its buildings dominate the view across the valley with small fields formed by dry stone walls and copses of broadleaved trees leading away to the horizon. The prominent chimney on the left horizon is part of the recently constructed cement plant in Tunstead Quarry.
Site Assessment :	The quarry floor is totally concealed by the existing landform and the site and proposed buildings will be totally obscured. The extent of the site is not visible in the wider landscape view.
Mitigation :	Only allow downward pointing low glare lighting.
Potential Degree of Impact :	Neutral.

8 A6 Layby

View Point 8 : A6 Layby

Direction of Site :	South East
Distance from Centre of Site:	0.3 km
Elevation :	25m below Cowdale Quarry floor.
Location :	This view is from across the road from the existing lay-by on the A6 to the North West of the site. This view would be only be apparent to traffic using the A6.
Landscape :	There has recently been extensive vegetation clearance from the limestone rock faces which have been stabilised using steel netting to prevent rock falls. Lines of broadleaved trees bordering the A6 leading away to the horizon.
Site Assessment :	The quarry floor is totally concealed by the existing landform and the site and buildings proposed will be totally obscured. The extent of the site is not visible in the wider landscape view. The entrance road to the site would be visible to the right.
Mitigation :	Substantial planting adjacent to new road access in copses and irregular patterns to match existing vegetation. Only allow downward pointing low glare lighting.
Potential Degree of Impact :	Moderate adverse reducing to minor adverse.

9 Tongue Lane

View Point 9 : Tongue Lane

Direction of Site :	South South East
Distance from Centre of Site:	0.6 km
Elevation :	25m above Cowdale Quarry floor.
Location :	This view is south-south east from Tongue Lane across the Wye Valley. This view would only be apparent to walkers who may be using the lane.
Landscape :	The quarry rock face in the middle distance is Cowdale Quarry with Cowdale village to the left. The yellow sign in the foreground is at the margin of Ashwood Dale Quarry. The view shows many of the qualities of the area including the elevated limestone plateaus and the shelter belts of broadleaved trees along the high ground and dale sides. The foreground shows small fields formed by dry stone walls. The landform and mature trees act as effective screening.
Site Assessment :	The quarry floor is not visible. The site and the buildings proposed will not be viewed because they are hidden at the western part of the site.
Mitigation :	Only allow downward pointing low glare lighting.
Potential Degree of Impact :	Neutral.

10 A6 East of site entry

View Point 10 : A6 East of Site Entrance

Direction of Site :	South
Distance from Centre of Site:	0.2 km
Elevation :	25m below Cowdale Quarry floor.
Location :	This view (taken with a wide angle lens) is west along the A6 from a location about 20m east of the existing access to Cowdale Quarry (gate on left). This view would be only apparent to traffic using the A6 as there are no footpaths.
Landscape :	The area to the right (north) of the wall is a former sewage treatment works and the cliff face beyond was formed during construction of a railway cutting. The broadleaved vegetation has all grown in the past century.
Site Assessment :	The quarry floor is totally concealed by the existing landform and the site and buildings proposed will be totally obscured. The extent of the site is not visible in the wider landscape view. The entrance road to the site would be visible to the left.
Mitigation :	Substantial planting adjacent to new road access in copses and irregular patterns to match existing vegetation. Only allow downward pointing low glare lighting.
Potential Degree of Impact :	Moderate adverse reducing to minor adverse.

10 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

Introduction

The landscape and visual impact assessment has been carried out by analysing the photos taken from the selected locations, identifying the site, if visible and considering the effect of the proposed development.

Visual envelope

This theoretical exercise is achieved from desktop work and testing in the field. The visual envelope is very 'lop' sided in shape due to the quarry ridges that prevent views to the south, west and to a large extent the east. To the north, however, the area is quite extensive, although obscured by existing landforms. The site is only visible from a very small area in the National Park.

Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI)

The ZVI, within which the development is considered will have influence or effect on visual amenity, is relatively restricted due to the existing Ashwood Dale quarry development and the generally concealed nature of the site. Land form, vegetation and planting on the A6 borders considerably restrict views to the proposed site.

Landscape Receptors & Visual Receivers

The landscape receptors for the proposed development are:

- Topography that provides a backdrop or obscures views
- Existing vegetation that is part of the backdrop or provides screening
- The existing Ashwood Dale quarry

The potential visual receivers are:

- Walkers and motorists along Cowdale Lane
- Footpath users along the adjacent public right of way on the southern ridge of the quarry
- Motorists using the A6.
- Residents in nearby houses in Cowdale
- Users of footpaths across the valley to the north.

Site Assessment

Cowdale Quarry has been excavated so that the floor is surrounded on three sides. As the proposed development is in the western part of the quarry, it is particularly well screened by the natural landforms and consequently not visible from all viewpoints that can be accessed by the public. Consequently the proposed buildings on the quarry floor will have little or no effect on the surrounding landscape.

The only visible effect of the proposed development would be the new entrance to the site on the A6 which would necessitate a structural remodelling of the existing landscape alongside the A6 where the new junction would be formed. However it is to be noted that users of the A6 will only view the entrance for a few seconds as they drive past.

Landscape Impacts During Construction

As already noted, the site of the proposed development within Cowdale Quarry is only visible from distant viewpoints and even then the site is seen in the context of quarrying in the foreground and background. Hence, the landscape impacts during construction within the quarry will be negligible. It is planned to commence construction of the access road from within the quarry which will minimise the amount of time that construction activities will be visible to drivers on the A6. This section of the road has no footpath and is not used by pedestrians and drivers will pass the site entrance in a few seconds. In addition, the nearby landscape along the A6 has recently been subject to substantial works undertaken by the Highway Authority to stabilise the existing rock-faces and the results of this are being absorbed by the landscape. Initial works at the entrance will obviously have a temporary impact but will be rapidly assimilated as has happened with the highway works

Visual Impacts During Construction

As with any development there will inevitably be some landscape disturbance, but the feedback from this assessment is that it will be acceptable. The A6 is a busy road but the site entrance works will only be visible for a few seconds as traffic passes. There are no footpaths along this section of highway and hence no pedestrians. In addition, past human impacts are visually apparent on both sides of the highway. To the north the River Wye flows in an artificial channel and beyond it a railway line is routed through cuttings into the rock face. A few metres to the east of the proposed entrance the derelict remains of a former sewage treatment works abut the north side of the road. The south side of the road has been subject to extensive rock stabilisation works that included vegetation removal, rock anchors and netting. As there is only one nearby residential property with views into Cowdale Quarry, the impact of construction is minimal.

Landscape Impacts During Operation

This will have a similar assessment to impacts during construction. The buildings will not be seen from the majority of viewpoints and even the new road junction with the A6 will, over time and with suitable mitigation, become part of the landscape in a similar way to that of the Ashwood Dale Quarry and Topley Pike Quarry entrances further east along the A6. The impact will be further reduced as planting matures.

Visual Impacts During Operation

As the installation is a single operation and there is no progressive development, it is considered that the impact will be the same as during construction, initially moderate to minor adverse. However, as the peripheral planting matures and screening is developed, the change to the site will be much less obvious. As such it is considered that the impact will reduce to minor adverse and in the longer term be neutral.

Overall Impact

The unusual nature of the site with extensive screening by existing quarried rock faces means that the overall impact of the development if carried out in accordance with the recommendations will be minor adverse, reducing in time to neutral.

Public perception to change

With the exception of walkers on certain paths to the north of the site, and those who visit the site, the public will be unaware that any change has actually taken place inside Cowdale Quarry. Those who are able to view the site will perceive a change from brownfield to commercial uses but over time the impact will decrease as planting matures and people get used to the new use. The existing development will have considerably less impact on the landscape than the adjacent Ashwood Dale Quarry. Normally very large buildings take longer for the public to accept but because of the concealed nature of the site the impact of the new bottling plant will be negligible.

Lighting

The lighting of the development has the greatest potential impact on the surrounding countryside. However, the quality of lighting has improved over the past few years particularly with regard to light ‘spillage’. Care should be taken to ensure that this is kept to a minimum.

11 POTENTIAL EFFECTS AND MITIGATION

Introduction

"Mitigation: measures including any process, activity or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse landscape and visual effects of a development project".

Potential effects

In making an assessment of the impact, both physically and visually, of the proposal, it is clear that mitigation is important for successful assimilation and to reinforce the natural cover and screening of the site. The effects of the development are a change from brownfield use to commercial, albeit surrounded by considerable visual influences. The large quarry to the north of the site has a considerable impact on the visual context of the site.

Proposed Mitigation

Most development schemes demand some mitigation measures to help assimilate built development into the local landscape setting. This varies in scale depending on location and nature of development. Mitigation measures in this case are directed at improving and managing the landscape structure as well as considering earthworks. Very few trees are currently present on the quarry floor but with appropriate measures new trees and landscape features can be designed to screen the proposed development.

In general the aspirations of mitigation can be summarised as follows:

- Keep buildings below the height of existing landscape features
- Careful consideration of roof finishes particularly on the more visible parts of the site.
- Plant copses of indigenous trees along the more exposed edges of the quarry
- Provide some bunding to use existing spoil and improve immediate impact.
- Plant copses, trees and shrubs of native species, throughout the site
- Consider the colour and texture of materials to be recessive against the backdrop of existing ground and buildings
- Allow for low glare downward pointing lights
- Car parks to have planting within the areas
- During construction, protect retained existing vegetation in accordance with BS:5837 "Trees in relation to construction"

These objectives have been focused into specific mitigation suggestions for the proposed development on this site. By applying the above considerations, specifically in relation to establishing a landscape framework, mitigation will have a substantial contribution to reducing any perceived impact.

12 CONCLUSIONS

General

This report has followed accepted good practice in trying to make as objective an assessment as possible of the potential impact of the proposal. The development site within Cowdale Quarry will be visible from certain locations to the north, the nearest being several hundred metres away on the opposite side of Ashwood Dale Quarry and is totally or partially concealed from other locations.

Impact

The impact of the development in Cowdale Quarry is considered to be less intrusive on the skyline than that of Ashwood Dale quarry. However, the construction of a new entrance will have some impact on the current A6 boundary although it is noted that the Highways Authority have recently made considerable landscaping intrusions into the adjacent woodland areas which are presently being absorbed.

Mitigation

The mitigation measures are aimed at trying to assimilate the development by maximizing the benefits of the natural resources and setting of the site, combined with enhancements that aim to create an appearance in context with surrounding landscape. It will be the intention to provide a robust landscape structure that over time will reduce any perceived visual impact.

Benefits

In landscape terms, because of the secluded nature of the site, any benefit is negligible as is any detrimental impact.

Summary

This is a significant development to the east of Buxton. If the recommendations are followed then this could be considered an asset to Buxton. This study has shown that, because of the unusual nature of the site, the visual impact of the proposed development is minimal whereas the economic benefits to Buxton could be considerable.