



Landscape and Visual Commentary

Edgemoor Farm, Buxton

For: Richard Lomas

Ref: M3640-LVC-02.23-V1



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1.0 Introduction

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| 1.1 | Barnes Walker Ltd has prepared this Landscape and Visual Commentary on behalf of Richard Lomas to accompany the application for prior approval associated with the site at Edgemoor Farm, off Bishops Lane near Buxton. | | reference to industry standard guidelines set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition 2013), by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA 3), and is set at a level that is deemed appropriate to the nature, form and setting of the proposed development in this instance. |
| 1.2 | Our client's intention is to construct an agricultural building, measuring approximately 23m x 15m, adjacent to an existing cluster of farm buildings. The building would have a dual pitched roof to a height of 7.6m (ridge height). The proposals are described within the associated architectural drawings, and Landscape Layout submitted with this pack of information, and in further detail at section 4 of this Landscape and Visual Commentary. | 1.5 | In order to prepare this Landscape and Visual Commentary, desk-top studies were undertaken prior to a site based survey and assessment exercise. |
| 1.3 | Barnes Walker is a registered Practice with the Landscape Institute and this Landscape and Visual Commentary has been undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute. It is intended as a high-level landscape and visual commentary which establishes the nature of the site and the surrounding landscape, describes relevant landscape designations, confirms any relevant landscape character assessments, acknowledges any relevant heritage assets before confirming the key visual receptors and associated viewpoints. The commentary then goes on to consider the nature of the landscape and visual effects via a succinct and appropriate narrative. | 1.6 | The location and context of the site and the study area for the Commentary is described by Figure 1. The study area was ascertained as appropriate through the consideration of the area which could be significantly affected by the development proposals and the extent of the area from which the site is visible. |
| 1.4 | This document has been prepared with | | |

Key:

● Site Location



Figure 1: Aerial View - Site Location

2.0 The Site & Surrounding Landscape

The Site and Surrounding Landscape

- 2.1 Edgemoor Farm is located approximately 1.2km west of the edge of Buxton in the Peak District and circa 0.4km east of the Peak District National Park boundary.
- 2.2 The application site comprises an area of land along the western boundary of, and adjacent to, a large existing agricultural barn on the valley slopes which lead up to the fringes of the Peak District National Park.
- 2.3 The site is surrounded to the south, west and east by fields used for pastoral farming. To the north, a belt of clough woodland runs along the steep slopes between the National Park to the west, and the settled valley slopes to the east. The cluster of buildings at Edgemoor sit at the foot of a slope and as such, the existing farm buildings are set down into the landscape, thus reducing their prominence from elevated locations in the National Park to the west.
- 2.4 The gently sloping landscape between the site and Buxton to the east is predominantly used for pastoral farming with scattered residential and farm buildings. Cavendish Golf Club is located circa. 0.7km to the east of the site and provides a transition between the settled valley landscape adjacent to the site and the urban edge of Buxton.
- 2.5 The position of the site along the western boundary of an existing agricultural barn results in there being minimal visual connection with the surrounding landscape to the east and south. The lower level of the plateau upon which the buildings are located combined with the rising

topography to the west, restricts any views of the site from the higher ground/ National Park/ CROW Access land to the west. Views from locations to the north are limited by an existing barn and existing tree cover.

- 2.6 The application site is not publicly accessible and there are a limited number of public footpaths within the study area. To the west and north of the site, within and along the fringes of the National Park, there are large areas of CRoW Access land which can be accessed from nearby public footpaths. Vehicular access to the site is along an unnamed lane that connects with Bishops Lane to the north-east.

- 2.7 The National Park to the west of the site comprises a semi-natural upland landscape generally covered by heather moorland. The moorland is a treeless, open and exposed. The CRoW land allows people to explore the landscape without following any specific route, however there is a well-trodden path which runs along the eastern boundary of the park. This leads to a local trig point within the National Park which is at circa 500m AOD and approximately 0.5km from the site. This route provides expansive, long distance views towards Buxton and beyond.



Site Photo 1



Site Photo 2

2.0 The Site & Surrounding Landscape

Public Rights of Way

2.8 The study area incorporates a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), all of which are identified on Figure 2 (right). Those from which a meaningful view of the site can be experienced are described and identified later in section 3 of this commentary.

In addition to the above, there is public access (CROW) land in relatively close proximity to the site, also identified in Figure 2.

Key:

- Site Location
- - - Study Area
- - - Public Right of Way
- - - Recreational Route
- • • Other public access route
- National Park Boundary
- 📍 OS Viewpoint
- CROW Access Land
- Local trig point
- Listed building

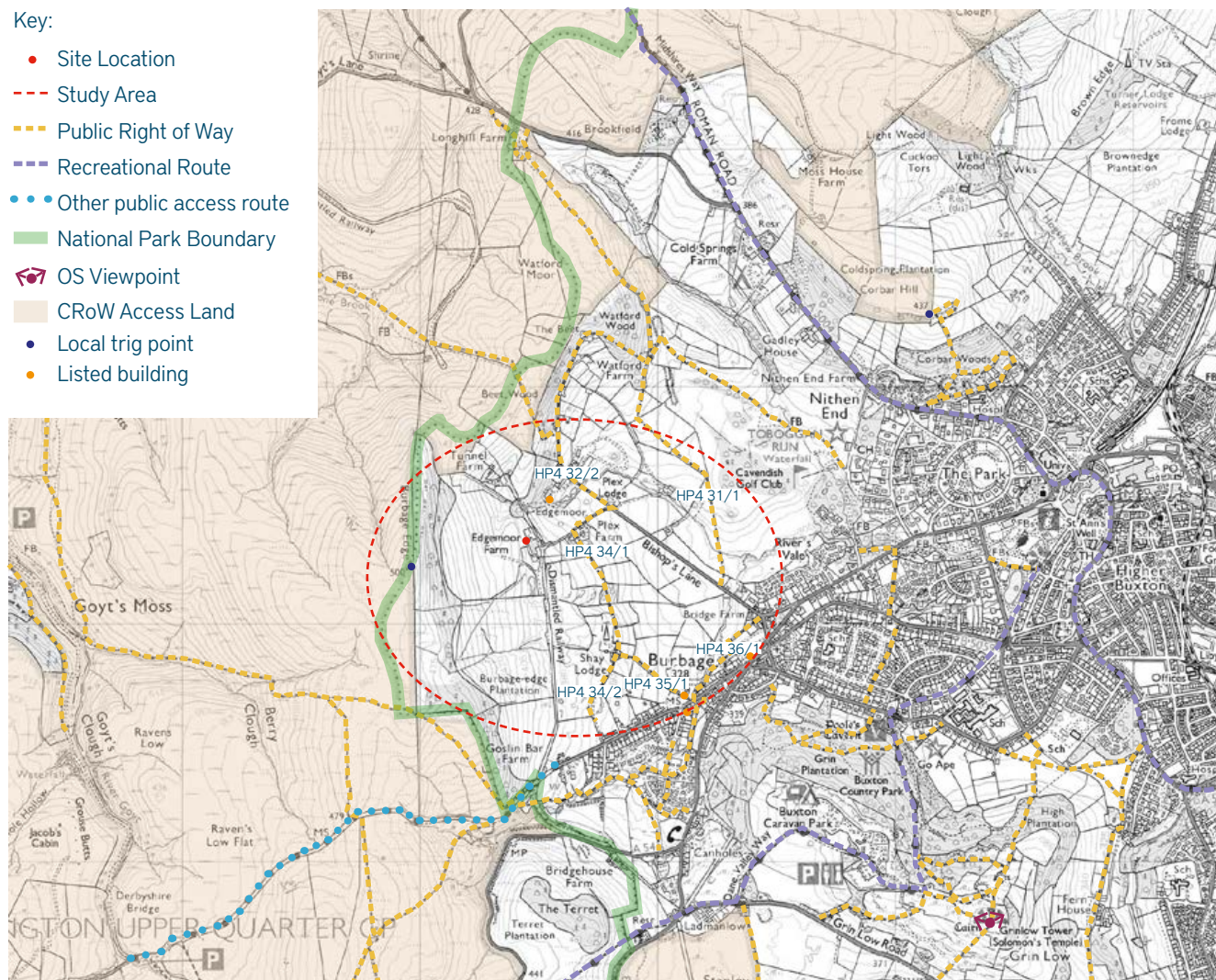


Figure 2: Public Footpaths & CROW Access Land

2.0 The Site & Surrounding Landscape

Landscape Character

National

- 2.9 The diverse characteristics of our broader landscape have, in most cases, been ascertained through the process of landscape character assessment (LCA). LCA is a technique used to develop a consistent and comprehensive understanding of what gives England's landscape its character. Assessments for the landscape in the vicinity of the application site have been carried out at national and county scales as follows:
- 2.10 The application site falls within NCA53: 'South West Peak'. The Landscape Character description summarises as follows:
- 2.11 'The South West Peak is an area of upland and associated foothills in the southwest region of the Pennines. It lies in the south-west part of the Peak District and 65 per cent of the National Character Area (NCA) falls within the Peak District National Park. It is an upland landscape characterised by Carboniferous age Millstone Grit and Coal Measures and is often scenically and distinctly diverse. The area has an open moorland core. Strong ridges such as Morridge run north to south. The moorland core fringes fall away to gentle slopes, dissected by steep wooded cloughs, and fast-flowing streams are found at lower elevations. These open out to form wider upland river valleys, some of which include reservoirs such as Errwood and Tittesworth, and are also characterised by permanent grassland with rushy pasture, species-rich hay meadows and improved productive farmland. This working landscape is dominated by livestock farming; the fields are medium to small in size and bounded mostly by drystone gritstone walls, with some hedgerows at lower elevations. The settlement pattern is dispersed with small settlements, traditional farmsteads and isolated field barns predominantly built of local stone, reflecting the geology, history and local building traditions.'
- 2.12 The size and scale of the areas encompassed by the National Character Areas are vast and can often bear limited relevance to sites of the scale associated with this appraisal. As a result, smaller scale, more detailed assessments carried out by County Councils or Local Planning Authorities will often identify landscape characteristics which offer a better representation of those found within the vicinity of a particular site or surrounding area. Nonetheless the following key characteristics from the NCA 53 document have been set out below as they are considered to be relevant to the application site and its surroundings:
- An upland landscape characterised by Carboniferous age Millstone Grit with isolated basins of Coal Measures, deeply dissected by streams and rivers, resulting in a ridge-and-valley landscape of distinctive pattern and character.
 - Moorland core with a mosaic of landform, vegetation and wooded cloughs.
 - Enclosed farmed landscape with a pastoral character created by semiimproved grassland, hay meadows, rushy pastures which are also marshy with springs and flushes, more productive farmland and small woodlands.
 - Robust architectural style built predominantly of local stone with stone slate or Staffordshire blue clay tiled roofs, reflecting local geology and history.
 - Predominantly dispersed settlement across the NCA.
 - Intricate and distinctive field boundary patterns often with historic associations; gritstone walls at higher elevations and hedgerows at lower elevations.
 - Long, uninterrupted views from margins to upland areas and vice versa, with contained and intimate views around the foothills and within the valleys.
- 2.13 The NCA profile includes the following Statements of Environmental Opportunity, which are relevant to the study area:
- SEO 2: Protect, manage and enhance the moorland fringes and valleys, with their mosaics of habitats including moorland, heathland,

2.0 The Site & Surrounding Landscape

woodland, meadows and pastures, strong field boundary patterns defined by drystone walls and hedgerows, and small, dispersed settlements, to safeguard water quality, enhance biodiversity and ecological networks and strengthen the distinctive historic landscape character of the South West Peak.

Local

		- enhanced structure and extent of woodland and tree cover in appropriate locations - an approach to restoring distinctive moorland landscapes
2.14 In 2009 the Peak District National Park Authority and Countryside undertook a Landscape Character Assessment which establishes a baseline of the current character of the landscape. From this a Landscape Strategy and Action Plan was created which provides a framework for considering future landscape change in the different landscapes of the Peak District.	2.16 The Overall Strategy for the South West Peak LCA is confirmed as the following: ‘Protect and manage the distinctive historic character of the landscapes through sustainable landscape management, and seek opportunities to value the diverse landscapes of the South West Peak whilst managing recreation opportunities, woodlands, wildness and the diversity of remoter areas. This can be achieved by ensuring that: - a sustainable land management system capable of supporting existing land uses whilst protecting the existing network of habitats - an approach that protects and manages the distinctive dispersed settlement, field patterns and other cultural landscapes	2.17 The resulting Landscape Strategy and Action Plan notes that the Moorland Hills and Ridges LCT is ‘an open, largely unsettled landscape of steep slopes and high hills with extensive semi-natural habitats, enclosed in places with drystone walls. It also includes much of the Goyt Valley plantation woodlands. The priorities should be to protect the open landscape character and vestiges of historic field boundaries, to remove or integrate plantation woodlands into the moorland landscape, and to protect and manage biodiversity.’
2.15 The assessment locates the site within the South West Peak Character Area and within the Moorland Hills and Ridges landscape character type (LCT). The character type is described as a ‘landscape of steep hill slopes and high ridges with heathland vegetation and prominent outcrops of steeply dipping gritstone. This wild, sparsely settled landscape has panoramic views to surrounding hills and over the lowlands to the west. Drystone walls define large enclosures.’		
The key characteristics are identified as follows: Steep hills, slopes and ridges with narrow		2.18 The following priority guidelines are given to help achieve this goal within the Moorland Hills and Ridges LCT and are relevant to the application site and immediate surroundings: - Enhance and restore moorland landscapes (some areas) - Encourage diverse approaches to moorland management - Create clough woodlands (potential for some locations) - Create, extend and link areas of heath/moor
		2.19 The site is located circa 60m from the adjacent

2.0 The Site & Surrounding Landscape

Slopes and Valleys with Woodland LCT. Although the site is located within the Moorland Hills and Ridges LCT, its characteristics resemble those of the Slopes and Valleys with Woodland LCT.

The key characteristics of the Slopes and Valleys with Woodland Landscape Character Type are as follows:

- Undulating topography with incised valleys and rounded summits
- Patches of acid grassland on steeper slopes
- Irregular blocks of ancient woodland along cloughs and valley sides
- Permanent pasture in fields enclosed by hedgerows and trees
- Narrow winding, often sunken lanes
- Scattered farms and loose clusters of dwellings
- Variable shaped, small to medium sized fields of various dates
- Coal mining remains

2.20 The site also falls under the authority of High Peak Borough Council. In 2006 High Peak Borough Council published their Landscape Character Assessment SPD which establishes a baseline for the current landscape character.

2.21 The assessment locates the site within the

Dark Peak LCA within the Moorland Fringe LCT. This landscape character type is described as 'An unsettled landscape on the upper slopes and edges of upland valleys shaped by the underlying gritstone. The steep slopes and hard rock mean that soils are thin, free draining and acidic. There are some distinct rocky edges and outcrops. The main land use is extensive sheep grazing due to the altitude and poor soils. Fields are large scale, regular and enclosed by dry-stone walls. Farmsteads built when the landscape was first divided into fields are sparsely scattered across the area and are built from gritstone, often with a stone roof. Due to the climate and soils this is a largely treeless landscape except for occasional tree groups which shelter the farmsteads. This is an open, largely empty landscape with panoramic views'.

2.22 The key characteristics of the Moorland Fringe LCT are as follows:

- Shallow peaty soils over gritstone
- Exposed rock and scree slopes
- Moderate to steep upland slopes fringing the open moors
- Distinct absence of trees
- Extensive semi-natural habitat of heather with rushes in damp hollows
- Unenclosed moorland slopes grazed extensively by sheep

2.23 The site is located close to the boundary of the Moorland Fringe LCT and its character is therefore impacted by the adjacent Settled Valley Pastures LCT to the east.

2.24 The key characteristics of the Settled Valley Pastures LCT are as follows:

- Open and exposed landscape with expansive views
- Roofs are generally dark slate or stone tile
- Moderate to steep lower valley slopes dissected by stream valleys
- Poorly draining soils over carboniferous shale and sandstone
- Wooded character associated with tree belts along streams and cloughs, scattered hedgerow trees and tree groups around settlement and farmsteads
- Localised bracken in some road verges and rushes associated with damp hollows
- Small, irregular fields enclosed by mixed species hedgerows and occasional dry stone walls
- Settled landscape of small nucleated settlements and scattered stone

2.0 The Site & Surrounding Landscape

farmsteads with stone slate roofs

- Stone terraces on lower slopes associated with historic mills
- Network of winding lanes with irregular verges, sometimes sunken on steeper slopes
- Pastoral farming with extensive improved pasture
- Enclosed landscape with views filtered by trees
- Roofs are generally dark slate or stone tiles

2.25 It is clear that the landscape character type/s which are most consistent with the application site and its immediate context are the Moorland Hills and Ridges (Peak District National Park Authority) and Moorland Fringe (High Peak Authority);

Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments

2.26 There are three grade II listed obelisks within the gardens at Edgemoor. There is no visual connection between the obelisks and the application site itself. There is considered to be no impact on the setting of those as a result of the proposals subject of this application.

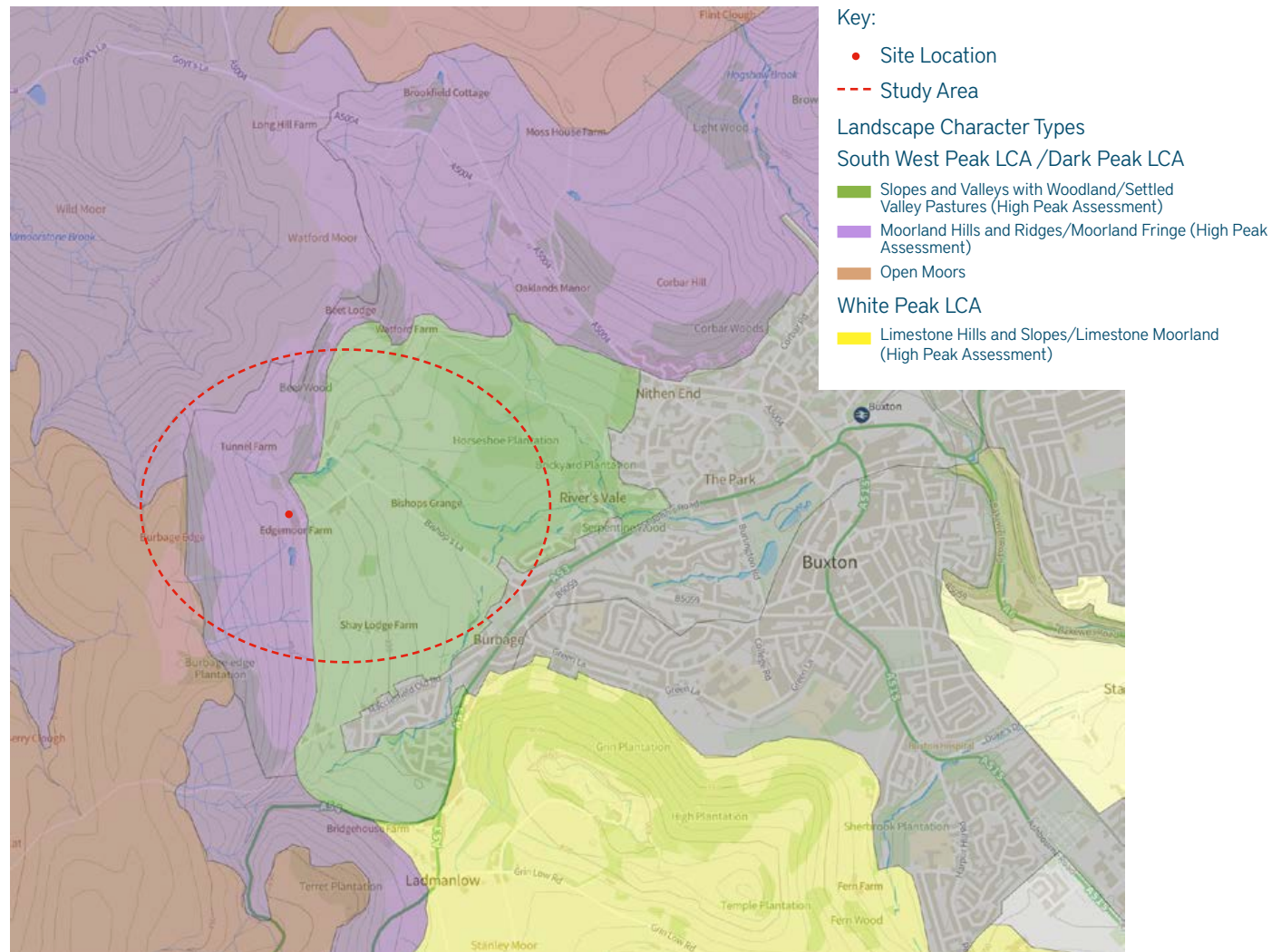


Figure 3: Landscape Character Areas & Designations

3.0 Visual Receptors & Viewpoints

Visual Receptors - Public Views

- 3.1 The main visual receptors experiencing a publicly accessible view of the application site comprise the users of surrounding Public Footpaths and the publicly accessible CRoW Access land to the west.
- 3.2 Due to the nature and location of the site, set behind an existing agricultural barn, it is particularly discrete in visual terms, with only 4 viewpoints identified. Viewpoint 4, which falls outside the study area, has been included for completeness as it is an OS viewpoint and is therefore a popular destination for people to experience views of the local area.
- 3.3 The viewpoint locations are described by Figure 4 - Viewpoint Location Plan (right). The footpath reference numbers used are consistent with Derbyshire County online mapping and those published by the 120 authorities in England and Wales, which have been released with an open licence and are available within online Public Rights of Way mapping.
- 3.4 The site visit and photos were undertaken in January when the screening provided by vegetation was at its least effective (deciduous trees are not in leaf).

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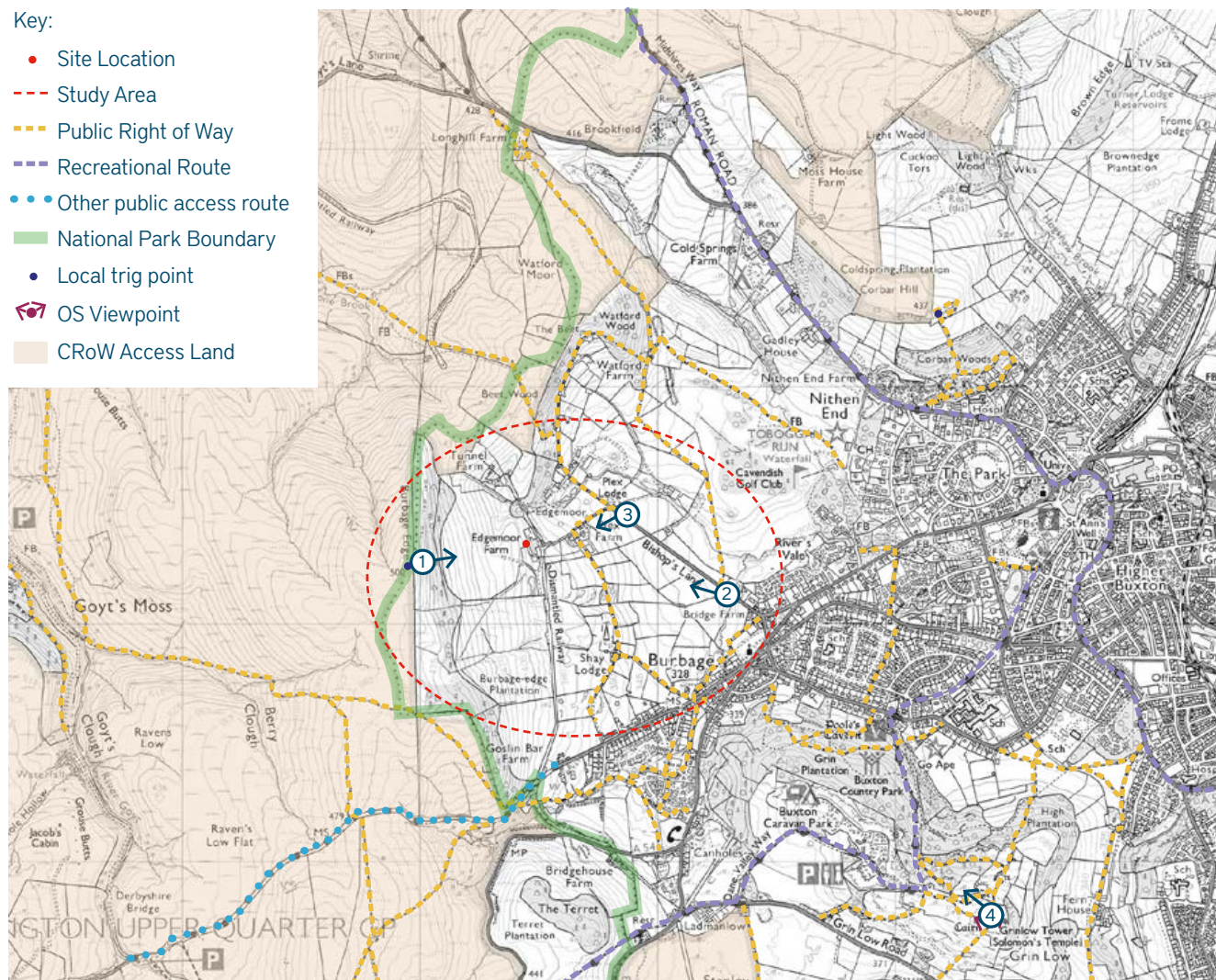


Figure 4: Viewpoint Location Plan

3.0 Visual Receptors & Viewpoints

Site location



Viewpoint 1 - View looking east from local trig point on the fringe of the National Park. Intervening vegetation partially screens the application site and will be more effective at doing so when in leaf.

Site location



Viewpoint 2 - View looking north-west towards the site from the southern end of Bishops Lane. The site cannot be seen from this viewpoint as it is located behind an existing agricultural barn.

3.0 Visual Receptors & Viewpoints

Site location



Viewpoint 3 - View looking south-west towards the site from Bishops Lane/Public Footpath HP4 32/2. Intervening vegetation partially screens the application site and will be more effective at doing so when in leaf.

Approximate site location



Viewpoint 4 - View looking north-west from Solomons Temple at Buxton Country Park, a popular local viewpoint. The site is not visible from this location.

4.0 Development Proposals

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|--|
| 4.1 | Prior Approval is sought for the erection of an agricultural building at Edgemoor Farm. The building would be sited along the western elevation of, and immediately adjacent to, an existing barn. The building will be set into the hillside, minimising any visual impact. | 4.6 | The existing vehicular access will be utilised with no need for any additional engineering works to support access. The track and hardstanding already support and serve the existing barn and wider farmstead. | drawings by P4 Architects and the Landscape Layout Plan, which are included on the next pages. |
| 4.2 | The proposals seek the erection of the agricultural storage building to support ongoing operations at Edgemoor Farm. | 4.7 | In order to mitigate loss of the trees, it is proposed that a native species hedge will be planted along the top of the slope to the western boundary of the site, and extending to both the north and south along the boundary of the existing agricultural barns. This will result in the introduction of approximately 165m of native species hedge. The hedge will be interspersed with a number of native species trees to replace those lost. A stock proof fence will run along the western boundary of the planting to protect from livestock in the adjacent field. | |
| 4.3 | The proposed building is of a simple agricultural form, measuring circa 18m x 12m in footprint and with a shallow dual pitched roof rising to 7.2m at ridge level. The eaves will be set at circa 5.5m. | 4.8 | In addition to mitigating the loss of existing trees, the proposed hedgerow and tree planting will provide a visual foil between the farm buildings and the elevated CROW Access land within the National Park to the west. As such the proposed vegetation will in time, help to improve the assimilation of the built form on the farmstead into the views experienced from sensitive, elevated locations to the west. | |
| 4.4 | Appropriate materials have been chosen for the building in order to be consistent with other agricultural buildings within the local area. The base of the building (lower 2m) will be finished in local natural stone, to match surrounding buildings. The roof and remaining sections will be made up of moorland green plastic coated steel sheeting. | 4.9 | For more information see the submitted | |
| 4.5 | Due to the presence of higher ground to the immediate west of the existing agricultural building, an area will need to be excavated in order to create an appropriate plateau upon which to construct the new building. This will result in the removal of a number of mature birch trees and areas of laurel shrub planting located on the higher ground to the west side | | | |

4.0 Development Proposals



Figure 5: Landscape Layout Plan

4.0 Development Proposals

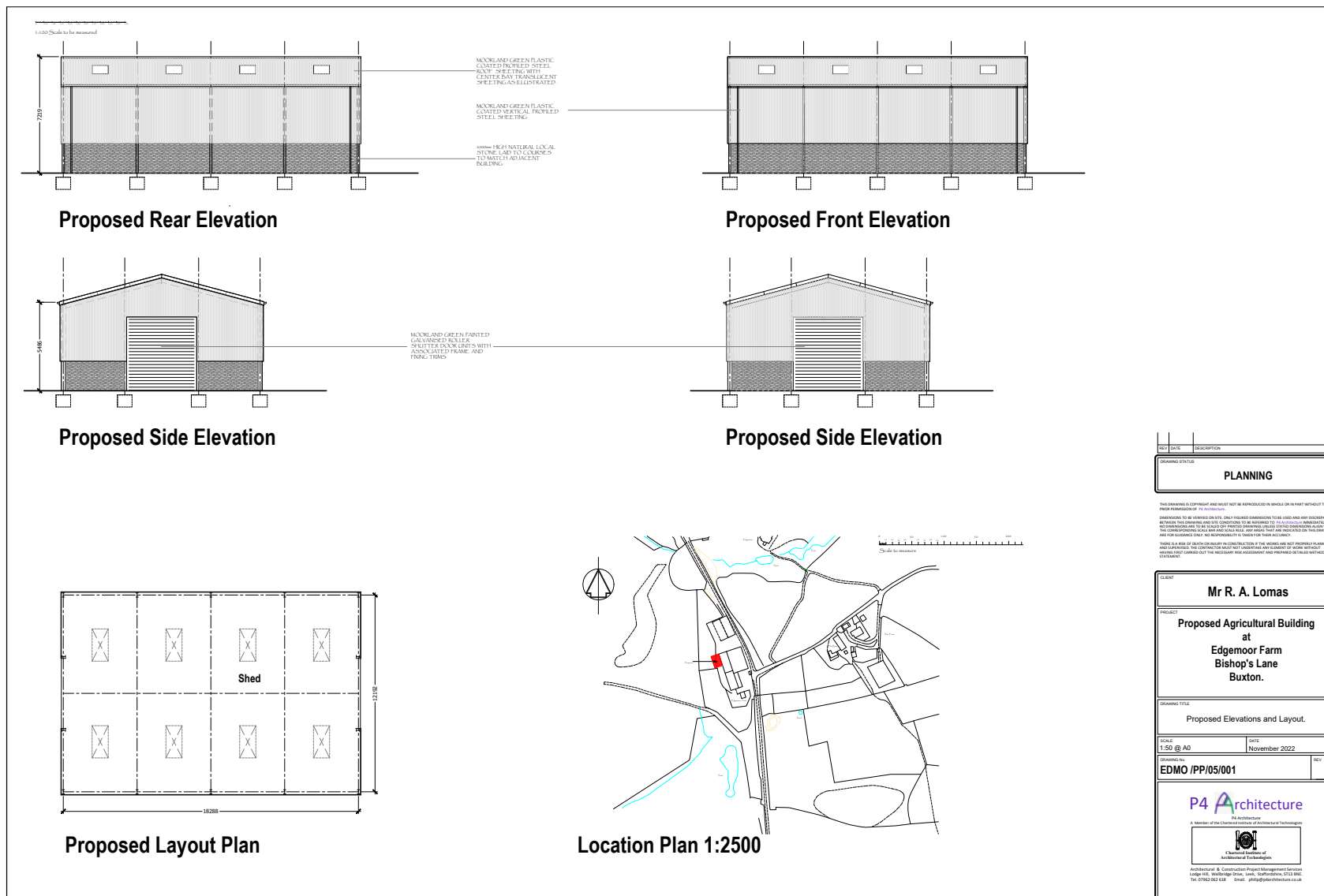


Figure 6: Development Proposals, Building Plans & Elevations (P4 Architects)

5.0 Summary and Conclusion

Summary- Landscape Effects

- 5.1 The proposals include the erection of an agricultural storage building measuring 18m x 12m x 7.6m (to ridge). The construction of the building will require cutting into the slope which currently rises from the western boundary of the existing barn. This will result in the loss of the existing vegetation along this boundary.
- 5.2 Dispersed farmsteads such as Watford Farm, Cold Springs Farm, Plex Farm, Edgemoor Farm and Goslin Bar Farm are commonplace within the study area. In general they comprise a farmhouse that is often accompanied by a number of older period and more modern outbuildings, some of which are similar in appearance and scale to that proposed.
- 5.3 The planting of a native species hedge (circa 165m) and native species trees to the west of the building will mitigate the loss of existing vegetation and will help to assimilate the proposed building and the wider existing farmstead into their landscape setting.
- 5.4 The proposed simple barn structure is considered to be consistent with the overriding pattern of development within the study area. This is reiterated by the fact that the proposed building will be located adjacent to an existing agricultural barn, and close to an existing cluster of residential and farm buildings.

- 5.5 As a result, the development proposals are not expected to be detrimental to the existing character of the landscape and will therefore not result in any adverse landscape effects.

Summary- Visual Effects

- 5.6 The consideration of a number of publicly accessible views from Public Footpaths, roads and popular local viewpoints has ascertained that the site is partially visible from relatively short to moderate distance views (circa 500m) located upon higher ground to the west, along a short section of the fringes of the National Park (See Viewpoint 1).
- 5.7 Due to the local topography, only the upper section of the proposed building would be partially visible and intervening vegetation located closer to the viewer filters views in some instances. The level of filtering will naturally vary on a seasonal basis and as such, the proposed building and the existing farmstead will have a reduced level of prominence when vegetation is in full leaf.
- 5.8 As they become established, the proposed hedgerow and associated tree planting will in time, help to improve the assimilation of the proposed and existing built form on the farmstead into the views experienced from sensitive, elevated locations to the west.
- 5.9 The site is not visible from the east due to its location along the western elevation of the

existing barn. Existing woodland to the north of the site screens views looking south towards the site. There is no publicly accessible land to the south from which a meaningful view of the application site can be experienced.

- 5.10 As outlined within this commentary, the proposed building is considered to be of an appropriate form and materiality and will be sited adjacent to an existing barn, connected with an existing farmstead cluster. As a result, the proposed building will be visually discrete and will be consistent with the visual character of the surrounding landscape.

Conclusion- Landscape & Visual Effects

- 5.11 The development proposals are not expected to result in any tangible adverse landscape or visual effects. In the longer term, the proposed hedgerow and tree planting will improve the assimilation of the proposed and existing farm buildings into their landscape setting.