



Unit 1, Hunters Way, Harpur Hill Business Park

HPK/2023/0110 – Change of use of field to allow for additional concrete block storage and associated new unit

Visual Impact Assessment

Context

In January 2021, a full landscape and Visual Impact Assessment¹ was undertaken for application HPK/2021/0020 which sits 50 metres to the east of this application site. Application HPK/2021/0020 was subsequently approved by planning committee in October 2021 and remains extant.

This is relevant to the current application because both sites are seen within the same context and from largely the same viewpoints. The approval of HPK/2021/0020 will also serve to fundamentally alter the baseline landscape character in this area. If this much bigger and more prominent industrial facility, less well related to the existing industrial site, is considered to be acceptable in landscape terms, then it follows that this smaller yard extension must also be considered to be acceptable unless the cumulative impact is significantly harmful.

Visual Impact of the Proposals

Due to local topography, the site will only be seen from the north and west, with the elevated viewpoints of Grin Low and Countess Cliff (fig 1) affording the clearest vistas of the site. There is little opportunity to view the site from the north because of the existing concrete business infrastructure and operation.

¹ 'Landscape and Visual Appraisal for Avanti Conveyors, Morland Way, Harpur Hill' Robinson Chartered Landscape Architects (Jan 2021)

The following viewpoints have been selected as they are considered to be those most significantly impacted by the development. Whilst the site will also be seen from the road and glimpsed from within the settlement of Harpur Hill itself, these viewpoints are less sensitive to change, and the site is seen within or through the context of other infrastructure or built form. The views from the north and west are more open, are taken from the public footpath network, and the site is seen in the foreground.

In the following photographs, the proposed yard extension is shown in red, whilst the approved industrial development under HPK/2021/0020 is shown in yellow.

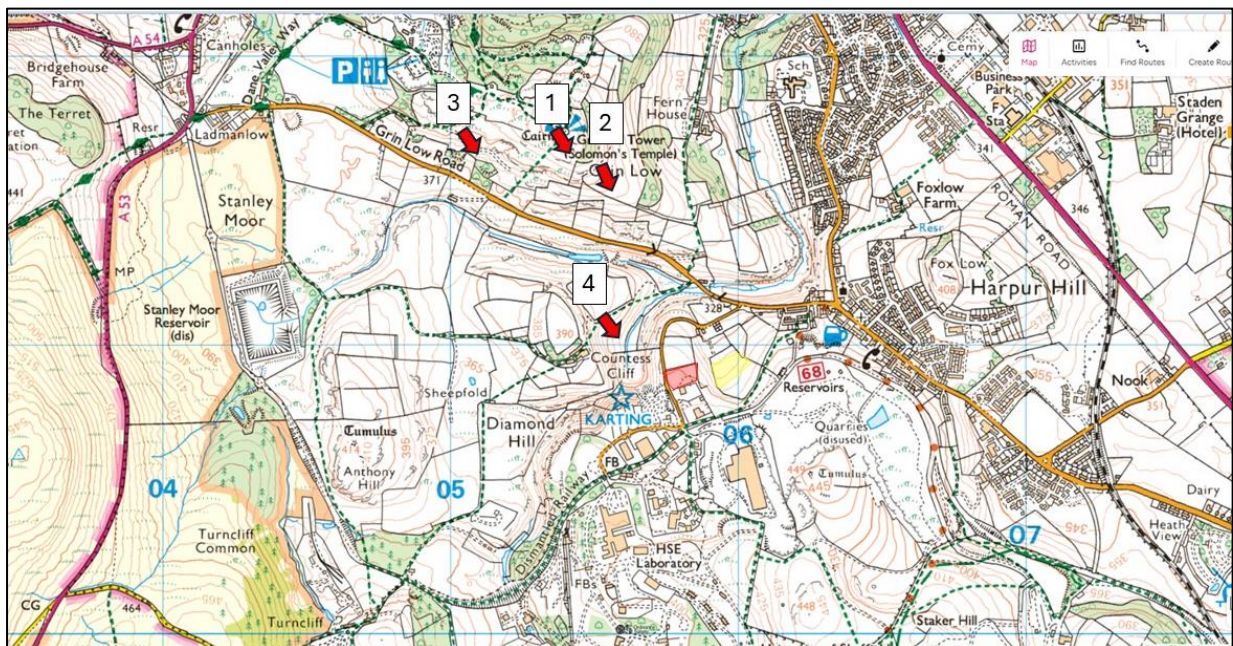


Fig 1: Viewpoint locations (Source: OS data Crown Copyright)

Viewpoint 1



This viewpoint is from Solomon's Temple, a grade II listed building and a designated heritage asset on the public footpath network. This is one of the few viewpoints from where the proposals and the approval 50m to the east are not seen in the same vista due to the belt of trees to the east of Solomon's Temple.

In this view, the proposed site is seen projecting into open countryside against a backdrop of the Harpur Hill Industrial Estate. To the west, the feature with greatest visual impact are the bright white tufa deposits.

There will be adverse visual impact from this viewpoint as a result of extending the current line of development north from the industrial estate.

Viewpoint 2



Dropping 50m south east of Solomon's Temple, on the other side of the belt of trees, both sites come into clear view side by side. From here, the impact of the current proposal will be ameliorated by its positioning adjacent to the existig industrial estate. Conversely, the development approved under HPK/2021/0020 will appear isolated and prominent on the hillside. Both sites are, however, viewed against an overall backdrop of industrial development and quarrying legacy, a landscape overall less sensitive to change.

Viewpoint 3



Soith west of Solomon's Temple along the public footpath network of Grin Low, the site can be seen in the same context of the listed temple structure. The perspective view from this point, and the slight slope of the application site towards the east, means that the current application will be much less prominent than HPK/2021/0020, and will appear as an unobtrusive continuation of the existing industrial estate.

Viewpoint 4



Views of the proposal are obtained from the public footpath that runs from Grin Low Road to Leap Edge along Countess Cliff. Clear views of the site can be obtained for a length of approximately 150m but it is, again, seen against the industrial development at Harpur Hill and the quarry workings to the east. Conversely HPK/2021/0020 will be seen as a separate parcel of development detached from the existing estate. In the foreground, attention is focussed on the bright white tufa terraces.

Further west, from the footpaths around Ladmanlow and Stanley Moor, the site cannot be seen.

Conclusion

This document briefly assesses the proposals from those elevated viewpoints where visual impact has the potential to be most significant. From viewpoint 1, Solomon's Temple, there will be some adverse visual impact as the development will clearly be seen extending north from the existing industrial estate. However, this impact should be balanced against the wider public benefits of the scheme including providing enhanced employment opportunities for local people and allowing the continued development of a local, well-established business.

Overall, and from viewpoints 2, 3 and 4, landscape impact can be seen to demonstrably less harmful than that of the development approved under HPK/2021/0020, which in all viewpoints is seen visually divorced from the existing line of development at Harpur Hill Business Park.