### Key Issues

The site lies to the south of Bowburn within the administrative area of Durham County Council. The site is predominately in agricultural use. The land is divided into a number of different fields which are bounded by hedges and fences. The site contains a number of non-designated heritage assets, a watercourse, and a range of protected species and is in the setting of the Durham Cathedral World Heritage Site.

Due to the scale of development proposed there was the potential for significant environmental effects especially in terms of landscape and ecology. The detailed understanding of these potential effects secured through the EIA scoping process informed the design development process meaning that a "mitigation by design" approach could be adopted.

The assessment of landscape and visual constraints, along with the other detailed assessments, informed the preparation of an indicative masterplan and helped define the parameters of the proposed development. Seven parameter plans were then prepared for the outline planning application which allowed the detailed design to be reserved for subsequent approval, whilst defining the key principles of the development in enough detail to allow the likely significant effects of the development to be assessed.

### Purpose of the project

A speculative employment led mixed use development by Citrus Durham Limited.

The application site extends to approximately 83 hectares and is outlined in red on the aerial photograph above.

The scheme includes up to 270 residential units and a range of other commercial uses to assist with the £18 million site infrastructure costs.

### Description of the project

High quality phased business and distribution park (Classes B2/B8) of up to 170,859 sqm, alongside retail and café/restaurant and pub spaces of up to 2,880 sqm, car showrooms of up to 1,860 sqm and a 70-bedroom hotel; together with phased mixed use development of up to 270 dwellings and 710 sqm of other residential garden land, a 60-bed residential home, a GP surgery of up to 400 sqm and a children's nursery of up to 450 sqm; all with new access roundabout onto A688 and associated infrastructure, earthworks and landscaping and a solar farm of up to 3.96 ha.
Lessons learnt

The mitigation by design approach, secured via parameter plans, ensured that the application proposals benefit from significant in-built landscape mitigation including:

1. Retention of key landscape features including important boundary planting, woodland, key trees and the Bowburn Beck Watercourse. Through a landscape parameter plan the proposals sought to retain these landscape features to ensure that the setting of the proposals has a degree of maturity from the outset and that biodiversity opportunities are recognised and wildlife corridors are maintained. This is to be secured via conditioning the landscape parameters plan.

2. The phasing of the proposed development and strategic landscaping - A phased approach was adopted to ensure that works across the site are not all being undertaken at the same time, rather certain phases are remodelled and construction commenced before the next phase is started. This avoids a piecemeal appearance to the site and enables the retention of areas of existing grassland habitat prior to the commencement of that particular phase. This is to be secured through approval of a phasing plan.

3. Comprehensive scheme of proposed planting - A comprehensive scheme of landscaping was prepared enabling the aspiration for the proposed landscape treatment of the site as a whole to be illustrated on a Green Infrastructure Indicative Mitigation Plan to be secured through a condition.

Lessons learnt cont. -

4. Considered approach to the proposed built form - A considerable degree of thought and design went into the emerging masterplan and proposed parameters plans to ensure that the built form can be integrated in this location without significant harm. With reference to landscape character and views, the in-built mitigation measures adopted by the proposed built form include: consideration of height; offset from boundaries; and elevation. The height of the proposals was informed by a careful assessment using ZTV models to gauge the potential extent of visibility based on different building heights above the existing levels within the site. Following on from this, basic wireframe massing models were prepared which illustrated the proposed built form within the wider topographic context. This testing informed the heights parameters plan and it is considered that the heights proposed are appropriate within the context of the receiving visual environment.

Since the scheme already included significant in-built landscape mitigation, to be secured through approval of 7 parameter plans, it was concluded in the ES that no additional landscape mitigation was required.

Contact details

Justine Matchett
Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners
0191 2615685
jmatchett@nlpplanning.com

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