

Moneystone Quarry, Eaves Lane, Oakamoor, Staffordshire

DESIGN PROOF OF EVIDENCE

Planning application ref: SMD/2019/0646
Appeal ref: APP/B3438/W/24/3344014

Prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of
Laver Leisure (Oakamoor) Ltd
P24-2041 | August 2024



*“The creation of **high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places** is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities...”*

(§131, Framework 2023)

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01

Qualifications and Experience

Colin Pullan BA hons Dip UD

- 1.1 My name is Colin Michael Pullan. I am a Senior Design Director at Pegasus Group. I hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Planning and a Post Graduate Diploma in Urban Design. I am a Recognised Practitioner, member of and former Chair of, the Urban Design Group, a membership charity established in 1978 open to all who care about the quality of life in our cities, towns and villages and believe that raising standards of urban design is central to its improvement.
- 1.2 I have over 35 years' experience as an urban designer in the private sector, covering all design matters. I studied at the Oxford Polytechnic JCUD (now Oxford Brookes), one of the most distinguished urban design universities before moving into private practice as an urban designer/masterplanner at Thamesmead Town Ltd from 1987. From Thamesmead Town Ltd I moved into a private consultancy at Town Planning Consultancy in 1995 and then Chapman Warren Associates in 1999, during which time my experience broadened to take on national projects and more general planning and urban design issues.
- 1.3 From 2000 until 2011 I worked at RPS, a multidisciplinary practice where my responsibility as Urban Design Director was to provide sound urban design advice to public and private sector clients, with an awareness of both current and emerging best practice.
- 1.4 In February 2011 I joined Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (Lichfields).
- 1.5 In January 2019 I joined LSH to head up their Urban Design Team.
- 1.6 In August 2023 I joined Pegasus Group as a Senior Design Director.
- 1.7 I have been the principal urban designer on many residential projects for both private and public sector clients and have very considerable experience in the preparation of layout and masterplans supported by development strategies, development briefs and design statements that undertake a peer review of projects.
- 1.8 I am familiar with the site and surrounding area. I have studied the relevant national, regional and local plan policy background.
- 1.9 I was first appointed by Laver Leisure (Oakamoor) Ltd in July 2024 to independently review the appeal scheme and the Statement of Case - particularly the design related statements as one of the authors - Mr Bunce - would be unable to attend the Inquiry.
- 1.10 Having reviewed the design related statements, the appeal scheme and the original Officer's Report which supported the application; and from seeking clarification on what was proposed for the lodges, I came to the opinion that I was able to support the appeal and thereafter instructed to prepare this Design Proof of Evidence informed by the Statement of Case and Design Statements therein.
- 1.11 My evidence is confined to design related matters. I confirm that, insofar as the facts stated in my statement are within my own knowledge, I have made clear what they are, and I believe them to be true; and that the opinions I have expressed represent my true and complete professional opinion irrespective of by whom I am instructed.

02

Summary & Introduction



Above: View of Quarry 3 looking north west from edge of lake

2.1 This Design Proof of Evidence has been prepared on behalf of Laver Leisure (Oakamoor) Ltd (“the Appellant”). It considers design matters relating to the appeal against the refusal of planning permission for:

Reserved matters application proposing details for the appearance, scale, layout and landscaping for phase 1 of the leisure development comprising 190 lodges; erection of a new central hub building (providing farm shop, gym, swimming pool, spa, restaurant, cafe, games room, visitor centre, hub management and plant areas): reuse and external alterations to the existing office building to provide housekeeping and maintenance accommodation (including meeting rooms, offices, storage, staff areas and workshop); children’s play areas; multi use games area; quarry park; car parking; refuse and lighting arrangements; and managed footpaths, cycleways and bridleways set in attractive hard and soft landscaping. (the “appeal scheme”)

2.2 The appeal site is part of a former sand extraction quarry, known as Moneystone Quarry. Eaves Lane/Whiston Eaves Lane bounds the site to the north (“**appeal site / site**”). In all other directions the site interfaces with rural pastoral agriculture fields and woodland. All mineral extraction in the quarry has now ceased and the majority of plant, equipment and buildings have been removed. Three buildings remain on site, one of which was included in the approved Parameters Plan (CD 1.2) for retention.

2.3 Levels within the appeal site are consistent with that of the former quarry. The site sits below the level of Eaves Lane by at least 20 metres and consists of two excavated quarry hollows (known as Quarry 1 and Quarry 3). A third, Quarry 2, is not part of the appeal site.

2.4 Outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the appeal site (with all matters reserved excepting access) was granted on 26th October 2016 (ref: SMD/2016/O378).

2.5 Planning permission to redevelop the retained building was granted at Committee 23rd October 2023 (ref: SMD/2019/O716 – Moneystone Quarry (Laboratory Building Change of Use)).

2.6 The reserved matters application for the appeal site was refused by the Planning Applications Committee on 23rd October 2023 (same committee as the above) against Officer recommendation for approval. Albeit I understand that the reason for refusal only relates to part of the reserved matters submitted – ie the design of the lodges.

2.7 I am aware that if the scheme did not proceed that there would be an obligation to restore the quarry subject to an approved restoration plan.



Above: View of retained building within Quarry (to be the ‘activity building’)



Above: Extract: Landscape Plan (CD 2.54). 1088.4-PLA-00-XX-DR-L-0001 CD



Above: CGI View of Quarry 3 looking north across lake towards proposed lodges, layout and landscape context

2.8 On matters of design and relevant to this appeal the Officer's Committee Report ("OR") stated with regard to the design of the hub:

9.6 Overall the form, scale and appearance of the hub building is considered to be acceptable. Conditions are recommended to secure samples of the proposed materials and also a condition to control any extraction/ventilation/air con units or ducts to ensure that as far as possible they do not break the outline of the hub building.

2.9 And; with regard to the layout and landscaping of the appeal scheme (as illustrated previous):

9.11 ... the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the hub building area is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Polices DC1, DC3 and SS11 subject to conditions as noted above.

9.24 ...the design of the lodges is considered and found to be acceptable, being single storey of simple form and finished in timber cladding with matt tiles effect dark roof and muted tones for windows and doors (see plans and visuals in the DAS).

9.25 ...the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of Q1 west and east is now considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Polices DC1, DC3 and SS11 subject to conditions as noted above.

9.43 ...on balance the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of Q3 is now considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Polices DC1, DC3 and SS11 subject to conditions as noted above.

2.10 And; with regard to the design of the lodges:

9.46 Notwithstanding however that the lodges may or may not fall within the definition of a caravan, this does not prevent the Council from seeking and securing good quality materials and designs for the proposed lodges in order to secure the 'high quality' development which the applicant applied for and in line with the requirements of Condition 14. Table 8.9 of the ES

referred to in Condition 14 sets out the mitigation measures to be adopted to reduce and/or avoid landscape and visual harm. It confirms that in respect of the lodges, these will be built to a high standard in order to achieve a quality development overall. It also refers to the use of timber, timber cladding, glazing and green roofs on the lodges where appropriate. The protection of the character and appearance of the Churnet Valley is in line with Local plan polices. In this respect all reference to 'indicative' and 'composite' timber on the plans has been removed at Officers request and conditions are recommend to secure the elevational detail and samples of the timber cladding and other facing materials. This would also apply to any subsequent replacement unit erected. It is worth pointing out that it was never suggested that the 250 lodges on this site would be of individual bespoke designs. The Design and Access statement at the outline stage indicated simple timber clad lodge type structures, similar to that now proposed.

9.48 The Elevation plans show what each of these lodge types will look like. They are typical 'lodge' structures with either pitch or mono pitch roofs of just under 4m in height (excluding concrete base). The materials are given to be timber cladding for the walls, double glazed windows, composite roof tiles and composite decking...

9.49 The Design and Access Statement describes the proposed materials in more detail at Section 9.2 External walls it says are to be timber clad with dark grey aluminium powder coated windows. It says roofs will be a matt granular -finished pressed metal material which has the appearance of roof tiles. Decking areas and the lodge skirts it says would be dark grey panelling. Some of the decked areas it says would be enclosed with glass balustrades although the submitted plans do not reference any glazing. There is no objection to these materials. Use of timber for the main elevations, dark matt tile effect roofs and muted tones for the windows and skirting is in line with the EIA and will help to assimilate the lodges into their wooded and natural landscaped setting. Any

glass would need to be carefully chosen to be non-reflective. A condition requiring samples to be approved for all proposed materials to be used is recommended as noted above and with this in place the lodge designs are acceptable and there is no conflict with relevant parts of Policy DC1 and SS11.

2.11 The OR followed this reasoned review of the application with a firm recommendation for approval:

9.108 For the reasons set out above and following various revisions to the plans the details are now considered to be acceptable and in accordance with relevant parts of Polices SS11, DC1, DC2, DC3, NE1 and NE2. There is compliance with the Development Plan. There are no material considerations which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the Development Plan.

9.109 A recommendation of approval is accordingly made.

2.12 The OR proposed conditions (4 and 5) to safeguard design quality and afforded the opportunity for future variation subject to written agreement; a sensible precaution to enable the delivery of the application scheme as illustrated whilst safeguarding future changes / subsequent replacements – recognising that the lodges are replaceable. The conditions proposed are as follows:

4. The lodges hereby permitted shall only be erected in the positions shown on the approved Site wide Masterplan 1733/MS-019 Rev T (also shown on the larger scale Masterplans for the Hub area, Quarry 1 West, Quarry 1 East and Quarry 3)

Reason:- In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, land stability and the setting of nearby Listed buildings

5. Any lodge including its decked area (and all subsequent replacement lodges and their associated replacement decked area) shall only be erected in accordance with the design and elevational treatment and using the external facing and roofing material as specified and described in drawing numbers 1733 LV-020 Rev C, 1733 LV-021 Rev C, 1733 LV-022

Rev C and 1733 LV-023 Rev C submitted with the application, with samples of such facing and roofing materials having first been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the agreed details. There shall be no variation to any of these details without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt any glazing proposed to decked areas should be non reflective/anti glare.

Reason:- In the interests of the external finish of the development and to protect the character and appearance of the area and the setting of nearby Listed buildings

2.13 However, members decided to vote against Officer recommendation.

2.14 The decision notice was issued on 14th November 2023 and included one reason for refusal which specifically related to the design qualities of the proposed lodges (as confirmed by Officer's email March 24th 2024 - noted in the appellant's SofC).

2.15 The full reason for refusal is as follows (with my emphasis):

*"This site lies within the Churnet Valley which is an area of significant landscape, wildlife and heritage value. Policy SS11 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (adopted September 2020) sets out the strategy for the Churnet Valley. **It says that all development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area. The consideration of landscape character it says will be paramount in all proposals in order to protect and conserve locally distinctive qualities and sense of place and to maximise opportunities for restoring, strengthening and enhancing distinctive landscape features.***

It is considered that the proposed lodges, which are little more than caravans with cladding, fail to deliver the required high standard of design. Owing to the proposed materials and lack of any green roofs, lack of creativity and detailing the lodges could not be said to be of an appropriate high quality nor do they add value to the local area. They have

not been designed to respect this sensitive site or its surroundings, noting that it is in part adjacent to the Whiston Eaves SSSI.

For these reasons the proposal fails to comply with Policies SS1, SS11, DC1 and E4 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework including but not limited to Chapters 12 which says that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and Chapter 15 which says that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by amongst other matters recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and minimising impacts on biodiversity."

Scope

2.16 This Proof of Evidence has been prepared having visited the appeal site and following a review of the application material. It has also been informed by engagement with the project design team and manufacturers of static caravans/lodges to understand decisions made where necessary.

2.17 To arrive at a balanced judgement as to whether a scheme is well-designed and appropriate to its context, it is necessary to undertake a careful assessment of the scheme as a whole in light of the relevant design related policies and guidance. The National Planning Practice Guidance ("NPPG") establishes that 'good design' can be described with reference to the ten characteristics of the National Design Guide ("NDG") and in accordance with the NDG the criteria can inform judgements of design quality and beauty. The NDG therefore forms the structure for this Proof of Evidence with reference to relevant design policies and guidance.

2.18 I concur with the Case Officer's support for the appeal scheme and I set out below my own supportive views against relevant design policies and guidance within this evidence.

Summary

2.19 This Proof of Evidence appraises the design merits of the appeal scheme in light of relevant national, local planning policy and guidance. It addresses matters of urban design raised within the rfr; and the Council's SofC.

2.20 Having regard to the above, and the Inspector's Case Management Note §9, I consider that the principal urban design matter to be addressed by this evidence are:

- *Whether the proposed design quality of the lodges is harmful to the character and appearance of the local area.*

2.21 The 'bar' for design quality is determined by relevant policies and guidance and the outline planning consent. The site is not within a Conservation Area or within the setting of a listed building or protected landscape of character wherein the design quality and expectation for designs may be higher.

2.22 The appeal site is a visually and physically self-contained quarry and the appeal scheme is for a leisure use. Whilst I agree that design quality and aesthetic appearance are importance, having reviewed the Council's SofC I am of the opinion that 'design quality' centres solely on appearance of the lodges and I find no particular harm to the surrounding context substantiated, nor why the simple aesthetic of the lodges should be harmful. This Proof of Evidence concludes that:

- This is a well-designed and attractive scheme that successfully integrates the lodges into a strong landscape framework that defines the surrounding context; and
- The lodges are of a suitability high quality design (functionally and aesthetically) and the appeal scheme would be appropriately beautiful in its landscape context.

2.23 I find that the criticisms in the RfR and Council's SofC are not made out. The proposals would be compliant with design policies, the Framework, guidance, and the approved Parameters Plan (CD 1.2).

2.24 The appeal ought to be allowed therefore, mindful of the very limited nature of the Council's criticisms.

03

Policy Guidance & Context

National Planning Policy Framework (“Framework”)

- 3.1 Relevant design related paragraphs are summarised below.
- §96: To aim to achieve safe places and beautiful buildings, inclusive places.
 - §102: Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities...
 - §123: Ensuring safe and healthy living condition.
 - §124: Encourage multiple benefits from and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation;
 - §128: Which requires development to make the efficient use of land, promoting regeneration and change (d) and securing well designed and beautiful, attractive and healthy places.

- §129: Which seeks the optimization of sites; c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in the Framework.
- §131: Which states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- §135: Which sets six qualitative design criteria.
- §137: Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests.
- §139: Which states that significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design and/or development that helps raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.
- §140 Which states that local planning authorities should ensure that the quality of approved development is not diminished between permission and completion.

3.2 In 2021, The Framework was initially revised to implement policy changes in response to the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission “Living with Beauty” Report. The report defines beauty as everything that promotes a healthy and happy life, and everything that makes a collection of buildings into a place. Indeed, **“beauty should be an essential condition for the grant of planning permission.”** Further, **“beautiful placemaking should be a legally enshrined aim of the planning system. Great weight should be placed on securing these qualities in the urban and natural environments.”**

3.3 The Governments’ response to the report published on 30th January 2021 proposed changes to the Framework, a draft National Model Design Code and the creation of an ‘Office for Place’. The importance of good, ‘beautiful’ design was further cemented into the December 2023 update to the Framework.

3.4 Good quality design is not subjective, there are many measures against which a scheme can be judged. But beauty is, by definition, concerned with the perception of the viewer. The Framework does not provide a definition for the term “beautiful”; however, the Government response to the Framework consultation proposals (updated July 2021) indicated that the term should be read as a **“high-level statement of ambition rather than a policy test”**

3.5 The appeal decision **APP/A5270/W/21/3268157** (51–56 Manor Road and 53–55 Drayton Green Road, West Ealing, London W13 0LJ) adds further clarity on the application of the term ‘beauty’ when considering design matters and which reflects this higher level statement of ‘ambition’. The Inspector’s decision states at §23:

“...There is I believe something of a tension between identifying a building as an exemplary piece of design which is an objective finding based on established architectural principles, and adorning a building with the epithet ‘beautiful’, which is a subjective one. To my mind, my finding that the building would attain a very high (or exemplary) standard of design is sufficient to justify a conclusion that the proposal does not fall foul of Government advice on the subject in the Framework, the National Design Guide, and the National Model Design Code.”

3.6 And, the more recent Secretary of State’s DL 9th February 2024, approving the redevelopment of the Former London Television Centre, 60 – 70 Upper Ground, London SE1 9LT (**APP/N5660/V/22/3306162**), lends further guidance. At IR§ 6.109, on determining whether a building is beautiful or not, the Inspector noted the need to appropriately analyse **context**, (my emphasis) stating:

“If the Government is indeed concerned that high quality design and beauty come through the planning system, then that kind of analysis has to be done properly”.

3.7 This Evidence has regard to the contextual analysis in the various DASs and supporting material to the outline planning consent and appeal scheme.

3.8 I note in the Secretary of State’s DL (**APP/N5660/V/22/3306162**) that in terms of the ‘aesthetic’ appearance of buildings (or ‘beauty’ perhaps), he took a different view to the Inspector stating at §22.

“...Unlike the Inspector at IR14.116 he does not consider that the proposed palette of materials and the aesthetic appearance of the building is appropriate for what is a very sensitive site. He disagrees with the inspector that an attractive development would be delivered (IR14.116)”

3.9 Notwithstanding the above, this disagreement of whether a scheme was beautiful or not was not sufficient to refuse planning permission. I draw from the above that aesthetic and materials are important within a sensitive context.

Consultation Draft National Planning Policy Framework 30 July 2024

3.10 Relevant to design matters, the proposed changes seek to remove a number of references to ‘beautiful’ that were introduced into the Framework, December 2023. There are also proposed changes to paragraph numbers.

3.11 The relevant changes are summarised below.

- Section 12 – deletion of word beautiful
- Current §96 Proposed §94: Deletion of word beautiful
- Current §96 (b) Proposed §94(b): Deletion of word beautiful
- Current §102 Proposed §100
- Current §123 Proposed §121
- Current §124 Proposed §122
- Current §128(e) Proposed §126(e): Deletion of word beautiful
- Current §129 Proposed §127
- Current §131 Proposed §128
- Current §132 Proposed §129
- Current §135 Proposed §132
- Current §139 Proposed §136
- Current §140 Proposed §137

3.12 The deletion of references to ‘beautiful’ does not wholly address the underlying ambiguity of such a subjective matter. However, as summarised above there have been a number of Inspector’s decisions that have assisted in relating the term to more objective matters of context.

3.13 Given that the previous 2021 Framework was informed by the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission, and that the term beautiful is still proposed to be maintained in a number of paragraphs of the July 2024 Consultation Draft, I still consider that the imperative for well-designed and attractive / beautiful buildings is important.

3.14 I am advised by Mr Suckley that only limited weight can be afforded to draft policy – nonetheless it is noteworthy that the new Secretary of State has produced changes to this part of National Policy which informs the discussion set out above.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (SMLP September 2020)

3.15 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (SMLP) was adopted in September 2020. Relevant policies include:

- SD1: Sustainable Use of Resources
- SD3: Energy
- SS1: Development Principles

3.16 Policy SS1 emphasises the importance of delivering healthy, safe, active, well-designed and well-maintained environments that maintain the local distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands and its settlements.

- SS11: Churnet Valley Strategy

3.17 This policy emphasises the requirement for all development to be of an appropriate scale and nature, and high quality of design, as well as preserving the area’s landscape, heritage and biodiversity.

- E4: Tourism and Cultural Development

3.18 Policy E4 further emphasises the importance of development being of an appropriate quality, scale and character which is compatible with the local area, as well as enhancing heritage, landscape and biodiversity.

- DC1: Design Considerations

3.19 This policy places particular emphasis on all new development reinforcing local distinctiveness, setting out criteria for new development that includes, inter alia, being of a high standard of design, adding value to the area through creativity, detailing and materials, being designed to promote a positive sense of place and incorporate sustainable building techniques. This policy

references the requirement to use the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide (SMDG) as part of this assessment.

- T1 - Development and Sustainable Transport

Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD (CVM 2014)

3.20 The Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD (“CVM”) was adopted by the Council in March 2014. It identifies key opportunity sites, including Moneystone Quarry and provides an overview of the site, the constraints and opportunities and a development strategy.

3.21 The CVM encourages high quality design in all new development which respects the valued characteristics of the Churnet Valley in terms of its site context, including the wider setting, density, massing and scale and materials.

3.22 The concept statement for the Moneystone Quarry Opportunity Site sets out (4th bullet point) that:

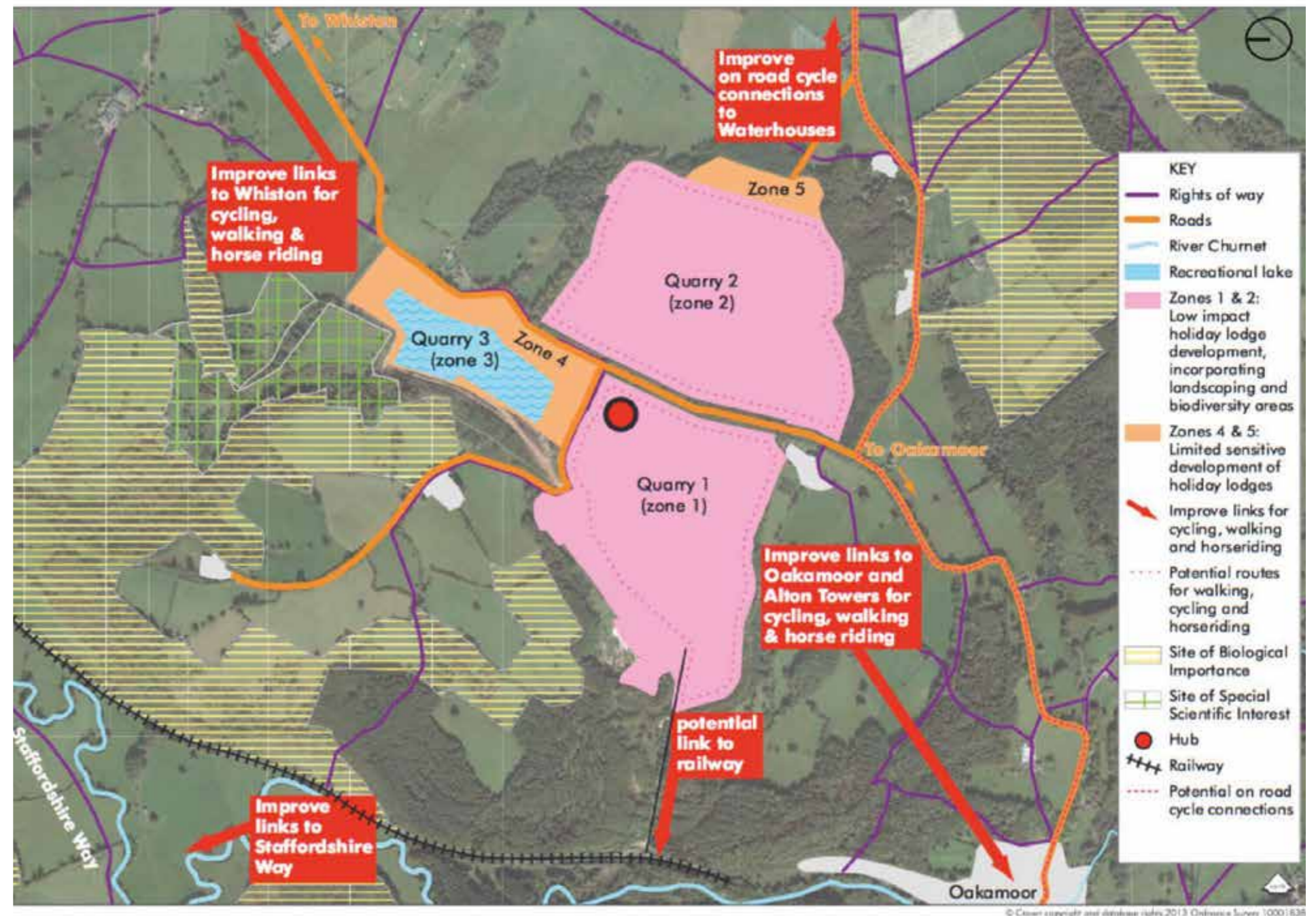
The site represents an opportunity to create a high quality leisure venue to complement other recreational and leisure attractions and enhance the area, but needs to be of a scale which does not undermine the tranquillity and character of this sensitive part of the Churnet Valley and other businesses.

3.23 And, the development strategy proposes:

Holiday accommodation – low impact holiday lodges in Zones 1 and 2. Limited development in Zones 4 and 5. Maximum of 250 holiday lodges in total.

3.24 Figure 7.4 of the CVM (reproduced right) sets out a Concept Plan. The Concept Plan identifies a number of Zones for potential development. These are indicative and are as follows:

- Zone 1 - Quarry 1 Low impact holiday lodge development, incorporating landscaping and biodiversity areas.
- Zone 2 - Quarry 2 Low impact holiday lodge development, incorporating landscaping and biodiversity areas.
- Zone 3 - part of Quarry 3 Recreational lake.



Above: CVM Figure 7.4 Moneystone Quarry Concept Plan

- Zone 4 – part of Quarry 3 Limited sensitive development of holiday lodges to be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- Zone 5 – part of Quarry 2 Limited sensitive development of holiday lodges to be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

3.25 Within the CVM, the appeal site falls within Zones 1 and 4 (Quarry 1 and 3).

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide (SMDG) 2018

3.26 At §1.2 the guidance states:

Because of Staffordshire Moorland's high quality natural environment, historic towns and villages, there is an emphasis on respecting traditional built forms. This should not rule out high quality contemporary design and innovative solutions that respond to the context.

3.27 The guidance states as points to remember:

- In rural areas use ground hugging forms of development.
- Respect the existing roofscape in term of pitch, materials and details.
- Large buildings are often difficult to accommodate so consider a low profile, shallow roof and the use of recessive colours.
- Plan for good landscaping at the outset.
- Incorporate boundary and paving features that are locally distinctive.
- The retention of existing landscaping can help assimilate a building into its setting.
- Local species of planting can engage the building into the landscape.

3.28 The guidance focuses generally on buildings and structures

and whilst some of this material can be drawn upon for the design of 'lodges' – not of all of the guidance will be relevant or appropriate.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

3.29 The NPPG establishes that 'good design' can be described with the ten characteristics of the National Design Guide.

National Design Guide (NDG)

3.30 This document illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. The NDG advises that a well-designed place comes about through making the right choices at all levels, including, inter alia, the form and scale of buildings.

3.31 It confirms at §8 that the underlying purpose for design quality of new development at all scales is to create well-designed and well-built places that benefit people and communities.

3.32 Paraphrasing §53, the NDG states that well-designed new development is influenced by:

- an appreciation and understanding of vernacular, local or regional character, including existing built form, landscape and local architectural precedents;
- the characteristics of the existing built form;
- the elements of a place or local places that make it distinctive; and
- other features of the context that are particular to the area. This includes considering the composition of street scenes, individual buildings and their elements.

3.33 The NDG states at §65 and §66 that well-designed new development makes efficient use of land with an amount and mix of development and open spaces that optimises density; relates well to and enhances the existing character and context; and that built form is determined by good urban design

principles that combine layout, form and scale in a way that responds positively to the context.

3.34 At §68 the NDG states that the built form of well-designed places relates well to the site, its context and the opportunities they present.

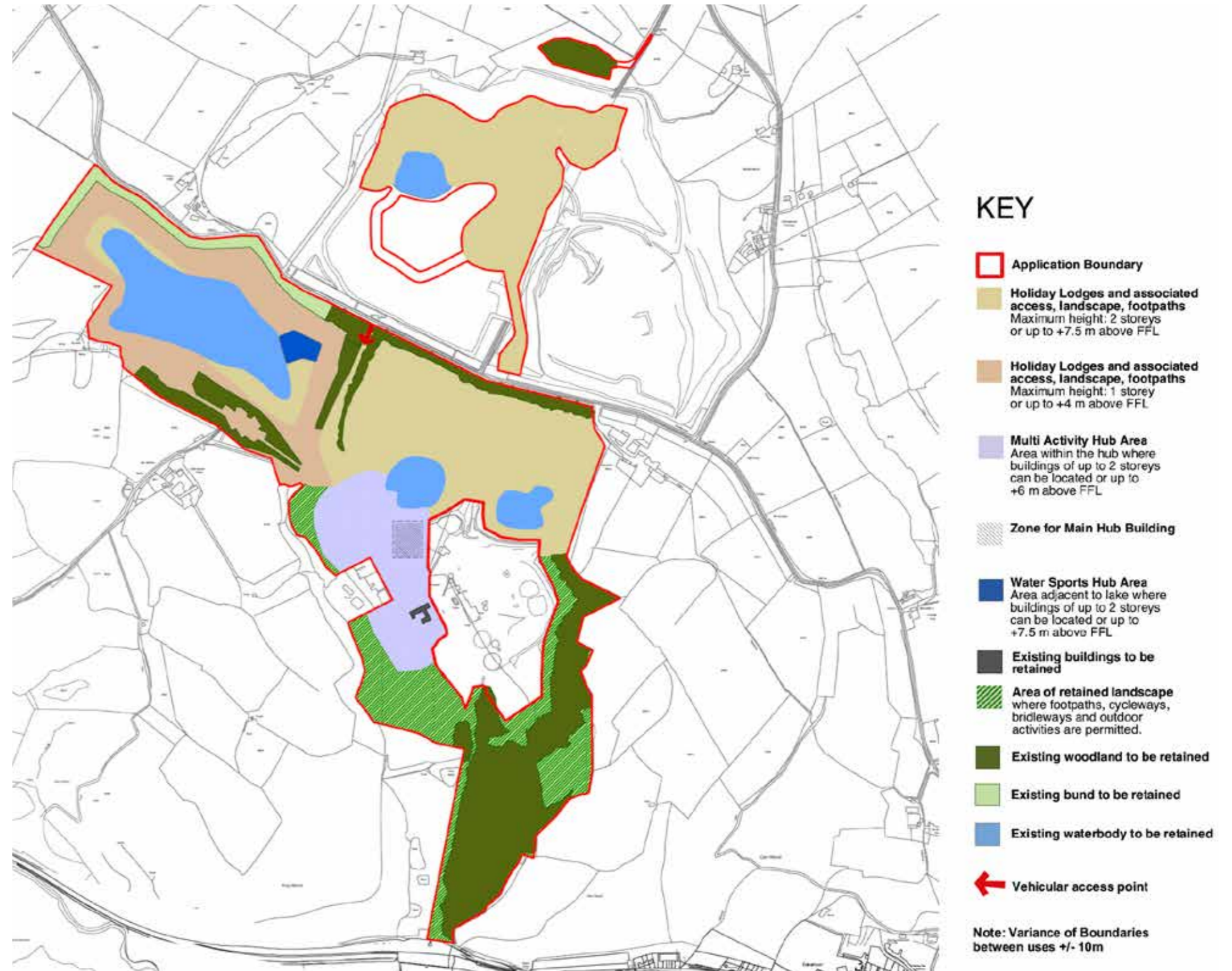
3.35 And at §128 the NDG states that good design promotes quality of life for the occupants and users of buildings. This includes comfort, amenity and privacy.

04.0

Outline Planning Consent

Outline Planning Consent (ref: SMD/2016/0378)

- 4.1 The appeal scheme benefits from an outline planning consent which was prepared by members of the appellant design team.
- 4.2 The approved Parameters Plan (CD 1.2) sets out the broad disposition of land uses and maximum height (of up to two storeys for the hub area and Quarry Area 3 (See Figure opposite). As described within the outline DAS (CD 5.3) there were a number of iterations of the layout which have been refined by the appeal scheme.
- 4.3 Condition 14 of the outline consent states:
All future reserved matters applications for any phase agreed under Condition 5 and particularly those relating to layout, scale and appearance shall be in accordance with the principles contained within the submitted Design and Access Statement and incorporate the Mitigation Measures set out in Table 8.9 of Chapter 8, Landscape and Visual of the Environmental Statement.
- 4.4 I note that this condition that does not place undue emphasis on aesthetic design.



Above: Approved Parameters Plan (CD 1.2)

Moneystone Quarry

4.5 Having regard to Condition 14, I draw out key elements from the outline DAS (CD 5.3) and the Landscape and Visual Chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement (“ES CD 1.37”).

Summary Landscape and Visual

4.6 Chapter 8 Landscape and Visual (“LV”), of the ES assessed the Parameters Plan (CD 1.2) which accompanied the outline planning application. At **Table 8.9** (§8.132), the LV sets out the following relevant mitigation measures:

- Location of lodges within areas identified with potential for least visual impact. Integration into site to utilise existing levels and therefore retain existing landscape features around lodges with potential for visual screening.
- One-storey high lodges have been proposed in potentially more visually prominent and/or sensitive locations.
- The proposed lodges will be designed to a high standard in order to achieve a quality overall development.
- The use of timber, timber cladding, glazing and green roofs on the lodges where appropriate, along with sensitive positioning of lodges with careful consideration of topography.
- Incorporation of new structure planting around lodges.
- Integrate built form into the existing topography wherever possible in order to minimise further regrading works which could result in loss of valuable areas of woodland and/or planting.
- And at table 8.10 (§8.133) with regard to construction:
- Lodges will primarily be prefabricated off site, which will help to minimise the duration of the construction period on site.

Summary Outline DAS (CD 5.3)

4.7 And, with reference to the outline DAS I draw out the following key elements for the design of lodges.

General Lodge Design Principles (page 57)

- Dependant on Lodge design and size, it is anticipated that units will either be delivered as a complete structure by lorry, or assembled on site utilising smaller prefabricated sections.
- Typical site preparation for a lodge would be construction of a level concrete slab with integrated service connections, however in sensitive site locations consideration might also be given to smaller pad/beam foundations or lodges positioned on driven pile/ stilts.
- Given the sensitivity of the location, the lodges within the park should utilise a limited material pallet that reflects the local architectural character. Use of timber, stone, slate, or metal cladding and roofing in a muted colour range could be a suitable mix, that would allow the units to blend with the surrounding context. Selected use of grass/sedum roofing systems could also help in areas of particular visual sensitivity, as well as promote biodiversity and habitat links within the lodge areas themselves.

Character Areas: Quarry 1

- Predominantly single storey lodges. Where two storey lodges are illustrated or referred to, the use is limited and subject to visual containment affording the opportunity for them (Quarry 1, DAS page 62).

Character Areas: Quarry 3

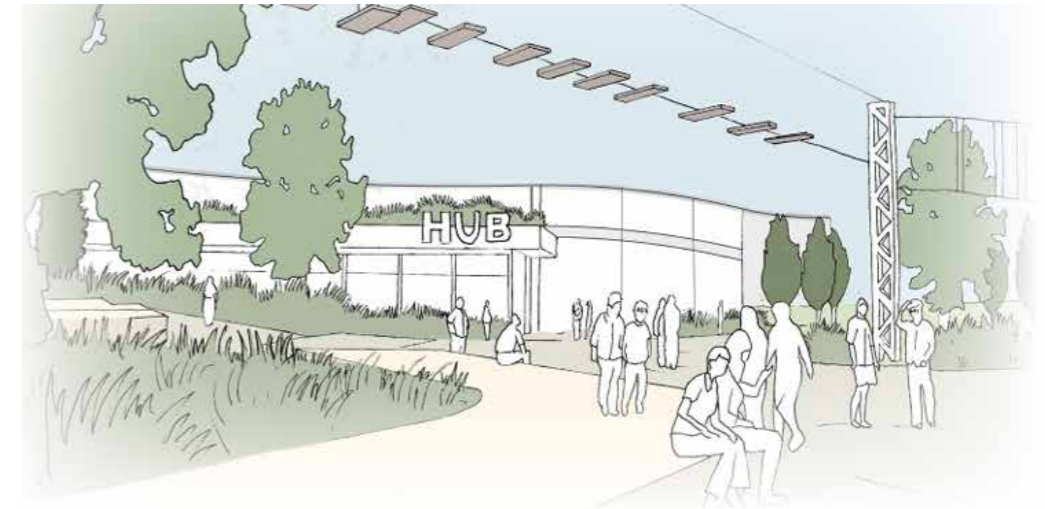
- Potential for sedum roof can be used to reduce the visual effects of the lodges for some views (DAS page 73).

Sustainability

- Potential to explore an intelligent and sensitive design of the lodges to include sustainable features such as PV panels on roofs, green roofs and rain water harvesting tanks (DAS page 86).
 - All proposed buildings and lodges, will where possible use low impact materials, typically of A+ to B Greenguide standard (DAS Page 86).
- 4.8 Opposite are images of single storey lodges, illustrating the following:
- Simple rectilinear form.
 - Simple roof form (nor green roof or PV panels).
 - Plain elevations (generally flat with no projections such as bays)
 - A balcony.
 - Raised above a plinth or base with a ‘skirt’.
 - Limited / no variation of form, a cohesive approach.
 - Single storey lodges (acknowledging that a conceptual 2 storey lodge is provided in the outline DAS).



Above: Extract outline DAS page 73



Above: Extract outline DAS page 70



Above: Extract outline DAS page 62



Above: Extract outline DAS page 49

05.0

Appraisal

5.0.1 The following design appraisal is structured according to the ten design principles of the NDG with supporting reference to policy and guidance. The appraisal focuses on the design of the lodges and considers also their siting and layout through reference to the DASs (CD 5.3, 2.85), plans, CGIs and visual material. The appraisal helps to determine the appropriateness of the design to its surrounding context.



05.1

Context: Enhances the Surroundings

Context

5.1.2 Good design should demonstrate an understanding of its context and demonstrate how it has learnt from it (the design is rooted in place). It should respond favourably to a good environment and enhance a poor one. It should promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. Consistent with the NDG (i.e. §41,...§48), the appeal scheme was supported by a DAS (CD 2.85) and informed by the material prepared in support of the outline planning consent. The DASs and outline ES – LV collectively describe the surrounding landscape context relevant to this appeal – demonstrating that the design team had a robust understanding of the appeal site, its context and the effects of the scheme upon the surroundings.

Constraints and Opportunities

5.1.3 The DASs (CD 5.3, 2.85 – outline planning consent and appeal scheme) provide an informed assessment of the appeal site’s opportunities and constraints, identifying the key parameters for development. The outline planning consent is supported by a Parameters Plan (CD 1.2).

Engagement

5.1.4 The appeals scheme and outline planning consent, were discussed and developed with Council Officers and the community

consistent with §137 of the Framework. This demonstrates the extent to which the appellant’s sought to collectively resolve an appropriate design for this leisure park.

Response to Context

5.1.5 The appeal site is within an area where the principle of redevelopment is supported.

5.1.6 The proposed tourist led development is considered to be an appropriate use that is in accordance with policy and guidance.

Density

5.1.7 The context supports a low density, landscape led, scheme. The optimisation of this former quarry site resolves an appropriate standard of accommodation and the density of development is considered appropriate within this very well contained site.

5.1.8 The proposed pattern of development reinforces the existing landscape framework of the appeal site. The design approach is deliberate in designing buildings and structures that are subservient in scale and appearance to the landscape. The ‘hub’ is an exception, and is a distinctive, contemporary building.

Character

5.1.9 The layout of the lodges affords space for landscaping between and around each lodge, reinforcing the landscape led approach.

5.1.10 The lodge design is of a contemporary ‘rural style’. At a single storey, the lodges are subservient in height and scale, to the landscape planting. In terms of form the lodge designs draw upon two typologies – a wide and narrow footplate lodge – with variation in roof pitch, decking and fenestration. There are no extraneous features such as bays.

5.1.11 There is a very limited materials palette, which retains an overall degree of homogeneity to the 190 lodges, whilst allowing for a degree of visual interest.

5.1.12 The appellant’s proposed an additional Condition on matters of detailed elevation and it is understood from the Council’s SofC §4.9 that this is acceptable. I reproduce the relevant extract from the Council’s SofC below:

1. Context: Enhances the Surroundings

Framework

§127, §128; §129, §132; §133; §135 (a,b,c,d,e,f); §137; §139

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020

SS1: Development Principles: Well-designed and well-maintained environments that maintain the local distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands and its settlements.

SS11: Churnet Valley Strategy: Preserving the area’s landscape, heritage and biodiversity.

E4: Tourism and Cultural Development: Enhancing heritage, landscape and biodiversity.

DC1: Design Considerations: High standard of design, adding value to the area through creativity, detailing and materials, and incorporate sustainable building techniques.

Churnet Valley Masterplan 2014

Landscape and Visual Impact

Ensure that any development is in-keeping with the scale and nature of the landscape character of the three sub areas within which it is located

Ensure that any future development is located in a way that does not impinge on the small scale landscape or the open, visible landscape and where they can be screened by existing vegetation or can be screened by appropriately located new planting

NDG

C1 Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context (§41, §42, §43, §44, §45, §48)

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018

Design in Context

In rural areas use ground hugging forms of development.

Respect the existing roofscape in term of pitch, materials and details.

Large buildings are often difficult to accommodate so consider a low profile, shallow roof and the use of recessive colours.

Plan for good landscaping at the outset.

The retention of existing landscaping can help assimilate a building into its setting.

Local species of planting can engage the building into the landscape.

4.9 The appellant in their statement of case have suggested two additional conditions relating to the lodges themselves.

A condition relating to the final materials, finishes and installation of the external materials, including agreeing specification of the glazed balustrade.

This seems sensible to include and would allow the Council additional control of the quality external appearance of the lodges. This would be in accordance with policies DC1 and the design aspects of the CVM. It is suggested that this could be timed to be before any of the lodges that are approved are brought to, or installed on, the site.

Height, Scale and Massing

5.113 The proposed layout mediates the overall scale and massing of the scheme. The lodges do not visually crowd or dominate the landscape setting, arranged to afford space for the wider landscaping to be appreciated within each character area. The hub, whilst taller than the lodges, is located centrally to the layout where an existing large building are presently (to be re-purposed as a leisure centre).

5.114 The layout is demonstrably informed by the ES LV which undertook a comprehensive assessment of the outline scheme from a number of viewpoints. Whilst there is obvious change within the appeal site, from a former quarry to a leisure park, this is supported in principal by the outline planning consent.

5.115 In accordance with the NDG §41: *Well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary;* I consider that the scheme has a positive relationship to the existing landscape.

Summary

5.116 This will be a well-designed scheme that provides a high standard of design that integrates the overall form and layout into its surroundings as set out in accordance with the matrix of policy and guidance above. The treatment of the buildings in context is considered to have met the design threshold expected of the outline consent, policy and guidance.



Above: CGI View of the proposed hub as presented to Committee (CD 3.4)

05.2

Identity: Attractive and Distinctive



Placemaking

- 5.2.1 Consistent with the policy and guidance matrix right, as described by the DAS (CD 2.85), the landscape character (existing and proposed) has demonstrably informed the detailed design of the appeal scheme.
- 5.2.2 The appeal site is visually contained such that it can draw upon its own character – a natural, rural setting – an approach consistent with the imagery of the outline planning consent as illustrated earlier.
- 5.2.3 Both lodges and the hub demonstrate a common aesthetic language which I note includes the proposal to reuse the existing building on the appeal site (as the ‘activity building’).
- 5.2.4 The hub is designed as a visual centrepiece to the new place, from which the lodges are appropriately subservient – they do not compete in height, scale or form or decoration.
- 5.2.5 It is acknowledged that the appeal scheme has not sought to reproduce local residential dwelling form and aesthetic in the detailing of the lodges and the hub, as guided by the SMDG, the aesthetic is informed by the outline DAS (CD 5.3).

Facade Treatment: Hub

- 5.2.6 The hub upper and lower floors have a local Gritstone the lower Level the stone is taken to the top of the windows, whereas at the upper level it is only taken partially up the height of the windows. Above the stone, vertical board and batten cladding is used up to eaves level. The link element is clad with vertical and horizontal aligned timber, the upper part of which will be stained black to emphasise the separation between the elements. Eaves and fascia’s and rainwater goods to be dark grey powder coated aluminium. The exposed curved roofs have a green roof finish.

2. Identity: Attractive and Distinctive

Framework

§128; §131; §132, §135; §137; §139

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020

SS1: Development Principles: Maintain the local distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands and its settlements.

SS11: Churnet Valley Strategy: Preserving the area’s landscape.

E4: Tourism and Cultural Development: An appropriate quality, scale and character which is compatible with the local area, as well as enhancing landscape.

DC1: Design Considerations: Emphasis on all new development reinforcing local distinctiveness.

Churnet Valley Masterplan 2014

Landscape and Visual Impact

Ensure that any development is in-keeping with the scale and nature of the landscape character of the three sub areas within which it is located.

Sustainable Development

Creation of a high quality, sustainable environment which will promote environmental awareness.

NDG

C2. Value Heritage, Local History and Culture

I1. Respond to existing local character and identity(§52 §53)

I2. Well-designed, high quality and attractive places and buildings (§54, §55, §56, §57),

I3. Create character and identity (§58)

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018

In rural areas use ground hugging forms of development.

The retention of existing landscaping can help assimilate a building into its setting.

New development should be guided by the existing character and context. Consider both contemporary and traditional forms that are high quality and functional.

Facade Treatment: Lodges

5.2.7 The lodges have a simpler facade treatment that comprises large openings to capitalise upon views, smaller windows for bathrooms and bedrooms and plain timber cladding that extends to the skirting (the 600mm base to the structure).

5.2.8 The overall style is contemporary, large areas of glazing, glazed balustrades and simple elevations.

5.2.9 Windows and openings, roofs – imprinted with a 3D slate effect – and guttering are grey/anthracite. The cladding is natural timber arranged tongue and groove both vertically and horizontally. The timber will be retreated on a regular basis to retain its colour rather than allowing it to grey naturally in order to maintain colour and avoid an aged appearance. The deck railings are proposed to be timber post and glass (see figures opposite).

5.2.10 The lodges are aesthetically simple and blend into the landscape setting as seen from afar. As shown by the CGIs right, the siting and height of the lodges afford a view of trees and planting between, above and below the buildings and the timber cladding relates well to the woodland backdrop.

5.2.11 Up close the design affords subtle variation and interest. The CGI images right demonstrate a variation of the principal elevation to include additional fenestration above the main windows and doorways. The variations in the facade does not detract from the overall cohesiveness / homogeneity of the lodge aesthetic.

Summary

5.2.12 The appeal scheme will be a distinctive and characterful place.

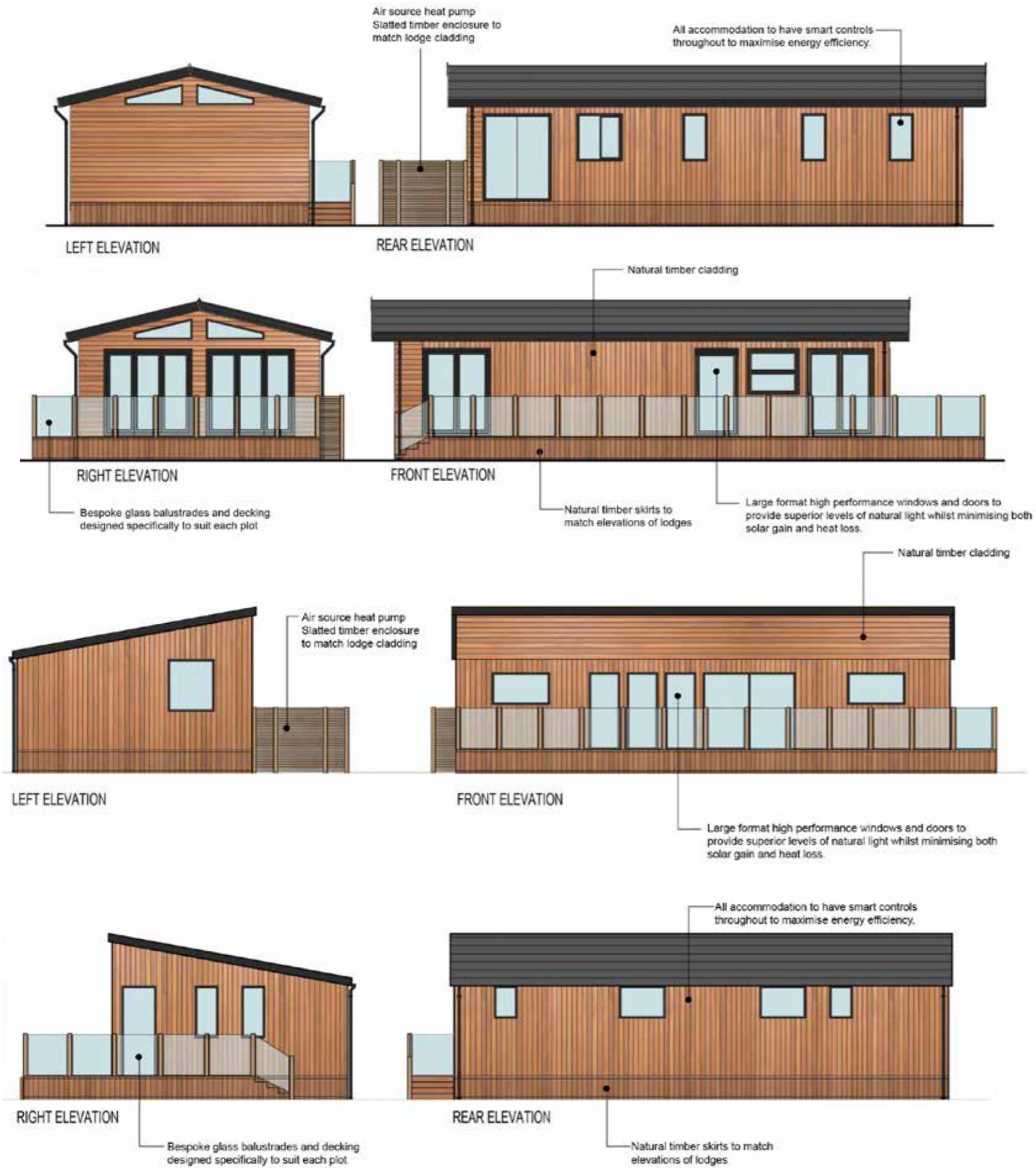
5.2.13 The proposed design of the lodges positively contributes to the wider landscape character and overall, there will be an improvement to the quality of the area. The design of the lodges is to a high quality. I also consider that the scheme meets the requirements of the NDG (as measurable) for being ‘beautiful’ and the requirements of policy and guidance.



Above: CGI View of Quarry 3 proposed lodges



Above: CGI View of the proposed lodges at Quarry 1



Eaves, Fascias & Rainwater Goods:



Deck Balustrade:



Composite Timber Decking:



Roof Finish:



Wall Cladding – Treated T&G Timber eg:



Doors & Windows:



Above: Elevations of Lodges. Top. Twin Lodge end deck (1733-LV-020) dual pitch roof
Bottom. Twin lodge side deck (1722-LV-021) mono pitch roof

Above: Materials Palette and references

Moneystone Quarry

Reference: Rivendale Lodge Retreat, Buxton Road, Alsop en le Dale, Ashbourne

5.2.14 For reference, the images across the page illustrate a nearby lodge 'retreat' designed to a high quality using a similar construction process as proposed by the appeal scheme.

5.2.15 I include this reference as it is near to the appeal site, within a similar context, and illustrates a similar design approach to that of the appeal scheme.

5.2.16 The scheme has a strong landscape setting within which the contemporary styled lodges are arranged along paths and access roads.

5.2.17 Herein, there is similar limited range of lodges and a simple materials palette. The lodges are clad in 'timber effect' panels in two complementary shades with matching fenestration, doors and balustrades. The darker shades define the base or skirt, balustrades, steps, windows and doors. The lighter shade the main elevations.

5.2.18 The base or skirt connects the upper building to the pad such that concrete pad is not visible and the building is firmly landed. The darker colouration accentuates the skirt but this could easily have been the same tone as the main elevation if desired.

5.2.19 The asymmetry of the windows and doorways in the gabled elevations to the wider units is clearly not familiar to a traditional 'static caravan'.

5.2.20 The limited variation in design lends an overall cohesiveness to the appearance and a strong sense of place.



Reference: Rivendale Lodge Retreat, Buxton Road, Alsop en le Dale, Ashbourne



Reference: Rivendale Lodge Retreat, Buxton Road, Alsop en le Dale, Ashbourne

Moneystone Quarry

05.3

Built Form: A Coherent Pattern of Development

5.3.1 The appeal scheme achieves an efficient use of the appeal site having appropriate regard to the Framework; policy and guidance.

Layout

5.3.2 The layout of the appeal scheme will knit well into the proposed landscape fabric and closely relates to that of the illustrative layout plan of the outline planning consent.

5.3.3 The hub is appropriately the centrepiece of the appeal scheme from which the lodges connect.

5.1.1 Individual character areas afford for variation in plotting of the lodges in response to the landscape, such as the arrangement of linear plots about the lake in Quarry 3 and plots to either side of the wandering access routes in Quarry 1.

Density

5.3.1 Having regard to the layout plan, the built density of the development is considered acceptable.

Pattern and Grain

5.3.2 The pattern and grain of development reinforces the landscape setting of the appeal site with appropriate variation to distinguish between the different character areas as informed by the outline planning consent.

Height, Scale and Massing

5.3.3 The height, scale and massing of the scheme is an appropriate response to the landscape context.

5.3.4 I acknowledged that the outline planing consent afforded the potential for two storey lodges. However, there is no stipulation that lodges *should* be two storeys and apart from one consideration for 2 storey lodges in the Quarry 1 character area, elsewhere in the outline DAS (CD 5.3) the references and visualizations are for single storey lodges. Notwithstanding, this, informed by the underlying LV, the single storey lodges are considered to be wholly appropriate and rather, I would consider that adding two storey lodges into the 'mix' would introduce a more domestic 'house' typology that could appear incongruous to the wider provision.

3. Built Form: A Coherent Pattern of Development

Framework

§96; §128 (d, e); S129; §135 (a, b, c, e); §137; §139

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020

SS1: Development Principles: Maintain the local distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands and its settlements. SS11: Churnet Valley Strategy: An appropriate scale and nature, and high quality of design, as well as preserving the area's landscape.

E4: Tourism and Cultural Development: Importance of development being of an appropriate quality, scale and character which is compatible with the local area, as well as enhancing landscape.

DC1: Design Considerations: Emphasis on all new development reinforcing local distinctiveness, setting out criteria for new development that includes, inter alia, being of a high standard of design, adding value to the area through creativity, detailing and materials, being designed to promote a positive sense of place and incorporate sustainable building techniques.

Churnet Valley Masterplan 2014

Landscape and Visual Impact

Ensure that any development is in-keeping with the scale and nature of the landscape character of the three sub areas within which it is located.

Sustainable Development

Creation of a high quality, sustainable environment which will promote environmental awareness.

NDG

B2 Appropriate building types and forms (§67, §§68)

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018

Guidance note 3 – New Buildings

In rural areas use ground hugging forms of development.

Respect the existing roofscape in term of pitch, materials and details.

Large buildings are often difficult to accommodate so consider a low profile, shallow roof and the use of recessive colours.

The retention of existing landscaping can help assimilate a building into its setting.

Local species of planting can engage the building into the landscape.

5.3.5 The lodges are of a simple rectilinear form. As the centrepiece, the distinctive hub departs from this cohesiveness. The lodges are of a simple low, ground hugging form that sits within the landscape as illustrated by the CGI below.

5.3.6 The massing of the lodges is broken up by the large openings and fenestration, the roof form and contrast in colour of the roof and timber.

Summary

5.3.7 There is a coherent structure to the layout, expressed by the integration into the surrounding landscape and buildings that relates well in scale and massing to the surrounding landscape.

5.3.8 Having considered the application material I do not consider that the proposed lodges would detract from the surrounding context, to the contrary I am strongly of the view that they would sit well within there context and reinforce a cohesive sense of place.

5.3.9 Having regard to the matrix of policies and guidance right, the appeal scheme will make a positive contribution to the landscape setting.



Above: CGI View of the proposed lodges at Quarry 1

05.4

Movement: Accessible and Easy to Move Around



5.3.1 Access into the appeal scheme was determined as part of the outline planning consent.

5.3.2 A retained footpath is also incorporated into the appeal scheme and upgraded to a bridleway.

Access to Hub and Lodges

5.3.3 The hub is conveniently located centrally within the site to serve all lodge areas, promote walking / cycling on site and provide a wider off the surrounding community. From the central area of the hub there will be a network of connecting routes.

5.3.4 The design of routes is determined by the landscape character of the site and the surfacing has regard to the natural landscape.

5.3.5 A bridge is proposed to the western end of the lake to allow for a circular route within Quarry 3.

Cycle

5.3.6 Cycle parking is appropriately accessible and designed.

Parking

5.3.7 Parking bays adjacent to the lodges will incorporate the facility to enable trickle charging of EV cars.

Summary

5.3.8 In accordance with the matrix of policy and guidance to the right, the appeal scheme is considered to be appropriately accessible.

4. Movement: Accessible and Easy to Move Around

Framework

§96; §135 (d)

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020

T1 – Development and Sustainable Transport

Churnet Valley Masterplan 2014

Incorporate measures to create off road links to be used by cyclists, walkers and horse riders to reach other attractions.

Ensure that necessary road improvements associated with the expansion of the facility should be in-keeping with the character of the area and avoid creating intrusive features. Roads within the site should be of a scale and nature that are not intrusive to the landscape character and should minimise hedgerow and tree removal.

Expand off-road paths with existing networks for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

NDG

M3. Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users (§88, §89); H3: Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing.

EV charging §87.

Parking §86.

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018

The right landscaping can promote pedestrian and cyclist priority over vehicles.

Manual for Streets

Pedestrian access should be designed for people of all ages and abilities

05.5

Nature: Enhanced and Optimised



5.5.1 A landscape plan (CD 2.54) has been prepared in accordance with the outline planning consent approved Parameters Plan (CD 1.2) (see figures overleaf). The appeal scheme will retain and enhance the existing landscape character and features of the site where possible as described by the DAS (CD 2.85). New areas of landscape have been sympathetically designed incorporating native species and taking inspiration from the surrounding landscape.

5.5.2 The siting of lodge plots ensures there is sufficient space between plots to provide a good degree of natural planting.

5.5.3 As part of the landscape strategy described by the DAS, a variety of habitats are included including cliff faces, woodland and aquatic planting around the retained water bodies. Additional landscape measures include:

- Retaining & substantially enhancing existing landscape features, such as the existing bund along Whiston Eaves Lane and areas of existing woodland.
- Existing watercourses and waterbodies retained and incorporated into the scheme.
- The proposed built development is located on areas of least ecological impact. Existing habitats are to be retained and enhanced.
- The creation of new habitats such as at Quarry 3 with implementation of pre-established coir rolls to the perimeter of the water's edge.
- Working with the land, avoiding areas of unstable and steep ground to minimise disturbance.
- Within the south of the appeal site are areas designated as Ancient Woodland. The landscape has been designed and management practices set out to protect and enhance these woodland areas.

Summary

5.5.4 In accordance with the matrix of policy and guidance to the right, the appeal scheme appropriately incorporates natural landscaping.

5. Nature: Enhanced and Optimised

Framework

§102; §124 (a); §135 (c)

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020

SS1: Development Principles: Well-designed and well-maintained environments that maintain the local distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands and its settlements.

SS11: Churnet Valley Strategy: Development to be of an appropriate scale and nature, and high quality of design, as well as preserving the area's landscape and biodiversity.

E4: Tourism and Cultural Development: An appropriate quality, scale and character which is compatible with the local area, as well as enhancing landscape and biodiversity.

Churnet Valley Masterplan 2014

Landscape and Visual Impact

Ensure that any development is in-keeping with the scale and nature of the landscape character of the three sub areas within which it is located.

Ensure that any additional planting is of a nature that complements the informal wooded setting. Ensure that any future development is located in a way that does not impinge on the small scale landscape or the open, visible landscape and where they can be screened by existing vegetation or can be screened by appropriately located new planting.

Ecology

Active conservation of the site – re-establishing habitats, measures to protect SSSI, woodland planting. Ensure development makes appropriate provision for the management of land for nature conservation and the enjoyment of areas of wildlife and geological interest.

NDG

N1: Provide a network of high quality, green open spaces with a variety of landscapes and activities, including play. §92

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018

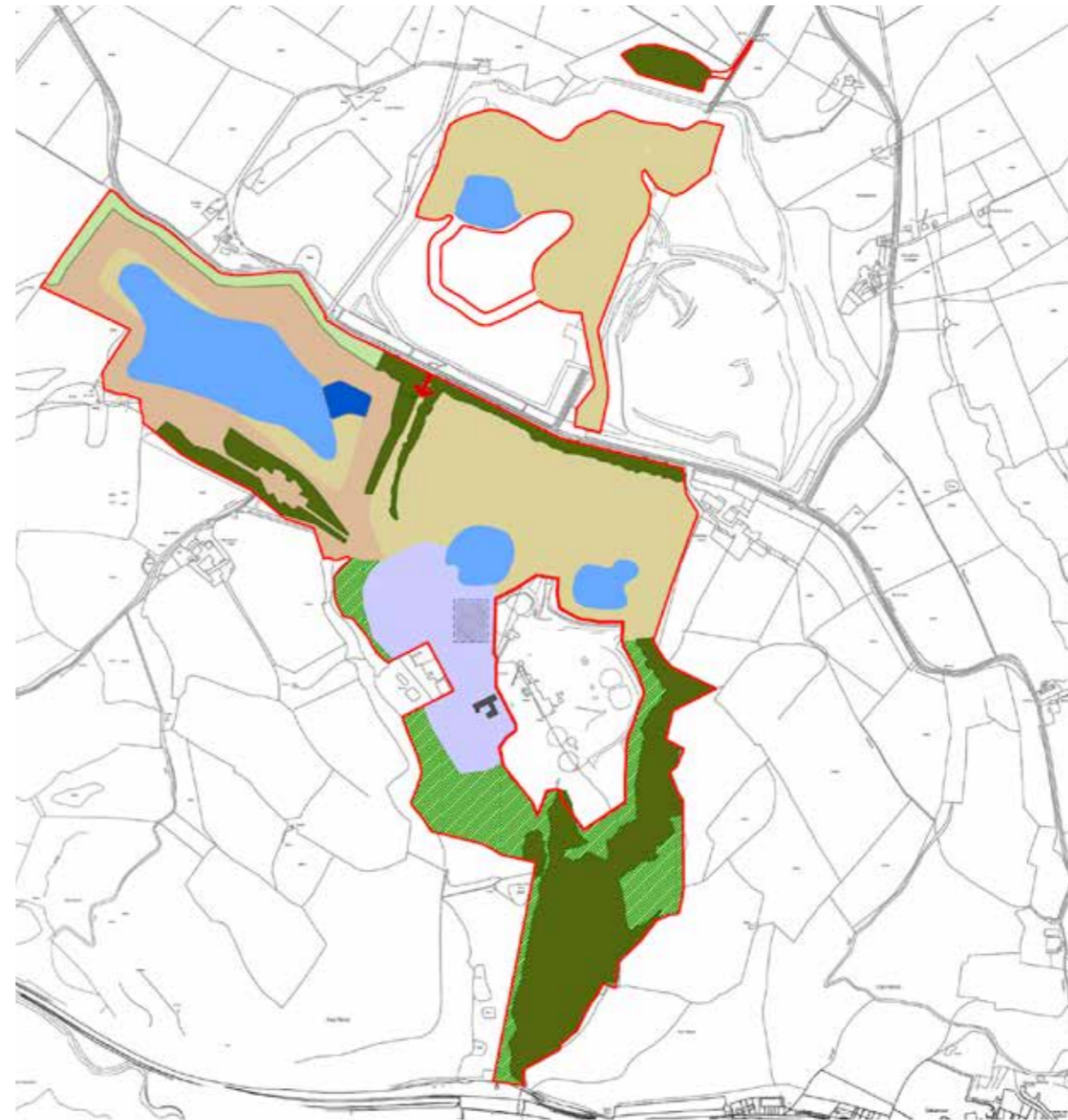
Enhances nature and helps to make the city more climate resilient.

Local species of planting can engage the building into the landscape.

New development should conserve or create new opportunities for wildlife.



Above: Landscape Plan (CD 2.54)



KEY

- Application Boundary
- Holiday Lodges and associated access, landscape, footpaths
Maximum height: 2 storeys or up to +7.5 m above FFL
- Holiday Lodges and associated access, landscape, footpaths
Maximum height: 1 storey or up to +4 m above FFL
- Multi Activity Hub Area
Area within the hub where buildings of up to 2 storeys can be located or up to +6 m above FFL
- Zone for Main Hub Building
- Water Sports Hub Area
Area adjacent to lake where buildings of up to 2 storeys can be located or up to +7.5 m above FFL
- Existing buildings to be retained
- Area of retained landscape where footpaths, cycleways, bridleways and outdoor activities are permitted.
- Existing woodland to be retained
- Existing bund to be retained
- Existing waterbody to be retained
- ← Vehicular access point

Note: Variance of Boundaries between uses +/- 10m

Above: Approved Parameters Plan (CD 1.2)

05.6

Public Spaces: Safe, Social and Inclusive



Above: MUGA Plan. 1088.4-PLA-00-XX-DR-L-8006

5.6.1 Into the scheme, the layout and arrangement of lodges address and overlook the principal network of footpaths and access roads and landscape spaces.

5.6.2 Extensive outdoor recreational facilities are proposed as part of the overall development which will support a healthy, safe and active environment. As part of the appeal scheme there are recreational paths and cycle routes and the MUGA, sports pitch and play area at the hub – a central meeting space.

5.6.3 Recently, planning permission to redevelop the retained building was granted for:

Retention of former laboratory building and change of use to a sports hall with climbing wall, soft play area, two-lane mini bowl, cinema room; craft room and craft store, bike store and maintenance and bike hire office, cafe, viewing area, WCs, management office and plant rooms associated with Moneystone Park external alterations and reconfiguration of existing car park to provide 24no. car parking spaces.

5.6.4 The above will supplement the range of activities proposed.

5.6.5 Overall, I consider that the appeal scheme will provide safe, social and inclusive spaces.

6. Public Spaces: Safe, Social and Inclusive

Framework

§96; §102; §123, §131, §135 (e, f)

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020

SS1: Development Principles: Delivering healthy, safe, active, well-designed and well-maintained environments

SS11: Churnet Valley Strategy: Development to be of an appropriate scale and nature, and high quality of design, as well as preserving the area's landscape.

E4: Tourism and Cultural Development: Importance of development being of an appropriate quality, scale and character which is compatible with the local area, as well as enhancing landscape.

Churnet Valley Masterplan 2014

Ensure a high quality, sustainable tourist offer.

Ensure provision of outdoor activity facilities – walking, cycling, horse riding, water sports, climbing etc.

NDG

P2 Provide well-designed spaces that are safe §101, §102; §104

P3 Make sure public spaces support social interaction §107

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018

Public spaces should be well overlooked without loss of privacy.

Design public spaces to allow dignified access for all.

The right landscaping can promote pedestrian and cyclist priority over vehicles.

05.7

Uses: Mixed and Integrated

- 5.7.1 The NDG at §65 and §66 states that well-designed new development makes efficient use of land with an amount and mix of development and open spaces that optimises density; relates well to and enhances the existing character and context; and that built form is determined by good urban design principles that combine layout, form and scale in a way that responds positively to the context.
- 5.7.2 As illustrated by the CGIs and the landscape plan (CD 2.54), the density of development maintains a landscape led environment. The greatest density of lodges are within the visually contained Quarry 1 area, closest to the hub and the proposed activity building. The lowest density of development is around Quarry 3. The retained woodland and landscape corridors between the lodge character areas further breaks up the perceived density of development.
- 5.7.3 The arrangement of lodges around the hub and activities within the layout makes for a coherent layout.
- 5.7.4 In accordance with the matrix of policies and guidance right, the scheme provides for an integrated leisure community.



7. Uses: Mixed and Integrated

Framework

§124 (a, c); §135 (d, e)

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020

E4: Tourism and Cultural Development: Importance of development being of an appropriate quality, scale and character which is compatible with the local area, as well as enhancing landscape and biodiversity.

Churnet Valley Masterplan 2014

Tourism and Leisure Activities

Ensure a high quality, sustainable tourist offer

Community

Provide new community facilities which will help sustain local villages and businesses through promotion of local services, goods and attractions, according to local need

NDG

B1 Compact form of development

B2: Appropriate building types and forms

U2. A mix of home tenures, types and sizes

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018

Developments, which have high amenity value, are pleasant and agreeable. A well planned scheme works well and adds to the economic attractiveness of an area.

05.8

Homes and Buildings: Functional, Healthy and Sustainable



5.8.1 The design supports a healthy and sustainable leisure park.

Sustainable

5.8.2 As set out in the Appellant’s Energy SofC, the appeal scheme will comply with the criteria of Building Regulations (2021) Part L1A for the lodges and Part L2A (2021) for the hub.

Functional

5.8.3 The simple rectilinear floorplan of the lodges affords a large, dual aspect living/kitchen and dining space (“LKD”) that opens out onto a deck. The LKD is sociable space that through the openings expands into the deck.

Arrangement

5.8.4 All lodges are dual aspect affording opportunity for internal cross ventilation.

Sunlight and Daylight

5.8.5 All future occupiers would receive a satisfactory living conditions in terms of outlook and daylight and ventilation.

5.8.6 All dwellings have access to usable private amenity space (balconies).

5.8.7 Within the scheme all dwellings have a good degree of privacy – through spatial separation and detailing of and location of windows.

Summary

5.8.8 In summary the scheme is considered to achieve an acceptable standard of living.

5.8.9 This will be a functional, healthy and sustainable place in accordance with the matrix of policies and guidance right.

8. Homes and Buildings: Functional, Healthy and Sustainable

Framework

§96; §123; §128 (d); §131; §135 (e, f); §139

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020

DC1: Design Considerations: A high standard of design, adding value to the area through creativity, detailing and materials, and incorporate sustainable building techniques.

Churnet Valley Masterplan 2014

Creation of a high quality, sustainable environment which will promote environmental awareness – use of sustainable building techniques, low carbon, low impact development with on-site energy generation, green technology, eco-lodges Ensure new development is water efficient

NDG

H1. Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment

H2. Well-related to external amenity and public spaces

H3. Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018

Principles of sustainable development should guide all stages of the design process, from the orientation of the building, its use of energy and water, to the selection of materials for construction

05.9

Resources: Efficient and Resilient



5.9.1 The design has worked to achieve the most optimal solution possible. The arrangement of lodges and the hub balances the needs of sustainability with wider wellbeing; a sense of place (context and surroundings) and the specifics of the appeal site (topography and visual containment).

5.9.2 As set out in the Energy SofC The lodges will be powered by renewable electricity, with heating and hot water produced by air source heat pumps. Mountings in the roof could provide for photo voltaic panels (“PVs”) where appropriate – the location of which would be considered at a future time and subject to agreement with the Council such that PVs would not detract from the appearance of the scheme.

5.9.3 Features in the scheme which contribute to improving air quality include good connections to the hub and leisure walks, therein promoting walking and cycling for local needs.

5.9.4 Further, a Condition is proposed and accepted by the Council’s SofC:

7.9 The second condition relates to the sustainable energy strategy for the lodges.

Again, in the interests of meeting wider policies objectives on supporting sustainable design and construction this condition would allow this matter to be effectively considered in line with the provisions of SS1 and DC1 of the local plan. Again, it is suggested that the submission and agreement of this could be timed to be before any of the lodges that are approved are brought to, or installed on, the site. Without such a condition there would be no mechanism to test and agree how wider suggested measures (photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps) were delivered as part of the lodges or the hub building.

Surface Materials

5.9.5 The proposed foot and cycle routes across the site, will employ several different surface finishes, most of the materials will be natural, site won where feasible to reflect the character of the appeal site and minimise any impacts on the existing landscape.

5.9.6 Where at all possible, pathways will employ permeable surfacing

9. Resources: Efficient and Resilient

Framework

§131; §135 (e)

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020

SD1: Sustainable Use of Resources: All development to make sustainable use of resources and adapt to climate change. Development is located and designed to minimise energy needs and to take advantage of maximised orientation to achieve energy savings in line with policy SD3.

SS1: Development Principles: Delivering healthy, safe, active, well-designed and well-maintained environments.

SS11: Churnet Valley Strategy: Preserving the area’s landscape, heritage and biodiversity.

E4: Tourism and Cultural Development: Enhancing landscape and biodiversity.

DC1: Design Considerations: Incorporate sustainable building techniques.

Churnet Valley Masterplan 2014

Sustainable Development

Creation of a high quality, sustainable environment which will promote environmental awareness – use of sustainable building techniques, low carbon, low impact development with on-site energy generation, green technology, eco-lodges.

Ensure new development is water efficient.

Ensure that where feasible renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are included within projects for new development.

NDG

§135; §137

R1. Follow the energy hierarchy (§138)

R2. Careful selection of materials and construction techniques (§144, §146)

R3. Maximise resilience

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018

Principles of sustainable development should guide all stages of the design process, from the orientation of the building, its use of energy and water, to the selection of materials for construction

The Council supports use of sustainable design and construction methods and is committed to delivering new homes with environmentally sustainable design.

such as bound gravel and compacted stone, which allows for natural drainage and minimises the need for sub surface pipe runs and pits, reducing surface water run-off.

5.9.7 Where routes are located in sensitive woodland / planting areas, 'no dig' construction methods will be employed. Within woodland areas, pathway widths will be varied to suit the site conditions and space available and potentially using wood chip surfacing as a natural finish.

Construction and Energy

5.10.8 The approach of the appeal scheme is consistent with the objectives of the CVM which seeks:

use of sustainable building techniques, low carbon, low impact development with on site energy generation, green technology, eco-lodges

5.9.9 'Eco-lodges' are not defined. A definition from 'Eco Lodges Anywhere' that chimes with the appeal scheme is:

Eco-lodges are accommodations in undisturbed, remote natural areas where both construction and operation have the lowest impact possible on the environment. They are not only part of the local community but they are active participants in protecting nature and culturally sensitive areas.

5.9.10 The approach to the design of the lodges with off-site construction and movement onto purpose pads; each lodge with air source heat pumps ("ASHP") and serviced by low impact roads and paths; all within a landscape led scheme with environmental enhancements I consider appropriately fits within this definition.

5.9.11 The hub building is proposed to have an underfloor heating system which is to be fed by an ASHP system. The hot water demand will also be met by a hot water storage system that is fed by the ASHP system.

5.9.12 The lodges conform with Part L and British Standard BS 3632 for their design and construction which introduces higher insulation requirements than traditional static caravans. The hub conforms with Part L(2A).

5.9.13 All internal lighting installations will make use of low energy technologies combined with presence and absence detection in conjunction with timed setbacks. 100% low energy lighting provision will be included.

5.9.14 Cycle storage facilities will be provided to help to promote sustainable modes.

5.9.15 Lodge parking spaces accommodate EV trickle charging.

Summary

5.9.16 Good design is more than just aesthetics. That the lodges seek to achieve a higher standard of design and construction than a traditional static caravan – generally associated with holiday parks – is commendable.

5.9.17 I consider that the scheme is acceptable in terms of efficiency and resilience in accordance with the matrix of policies and guidance above.

05.10

Lifespan: Made to Last



- 5.10.1 Off-site construction provides for quality control and continuity of deliverability.
- 5.10.2 Lodges are delivered to site as completed elements for single lodges or two sections for larger lodges. They are positioned on concrete pads and bolted together at a time to suit completion of groundworks and services. The exact size of the pad will be dependent on the particular size of lodge.
- 5.10.3 The base of the lodge and decking 'skirt' will be of the same material as the building, so that it gives the impression of a conventionally constructed building, whilst being fabricated off-site.
- 5.10.4 The materials, as described earlier, are of a high quality.
- 5.10.5 Long term stewardship of the site will be controlled over a 30-year period through the Landscape & Habitat Management Plan; 25 years longer than the period defined under approved Restoration Plan. Along with the management of buildings and structures there is every expectation that the scheme would result in a strong sense of belonging and shared ownership from the residents and visitors (Framework §135; NDG §151, §152, §154) and that the development is sustainable over time.

Summary

- 5.10.6 In accordance with the policy and guidance matrix, this will be an enduring place.

10. Lifespan: Made to Last

Framework

§131; §135 (a, b, c, d, e, f)

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020

SD1: Sustainable Use of Resources: All development to make sustainable use of resources and adapt to climate change. Development is located and designed to minimise energy needs and to take advantage of maximised orientation to achieve energy savings in line with policy SD3.

SS1: Development Principles: Delivering healthy, safe, active, well-designed and well-maintained environments.

DC1: Design Considerations: Incorporate sustainable building techniques.

Churnet Valley Masterplan 2014

Sustainable Development

Creation of a high quality, sustainable environment which will promote environmental awareness

NDG

§151, §152 Well-designed sustain beauty over long term

L1. Well-managed and maintained (§154)

L2. Adaptable to changing needs and evolving technologies - EV charging (§157)

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018

06

Response to Rfr



Above: From the CGIs, lodge elevation to Quarry 3 lake

6.1 Having undertaken my design appraisal, this Section addresses the Council's rfr which is summarised below:

"...It is considered that the proposed lodges, which are little more than caravans with cladding, fail to deliver the required high standard of design. Owing to the proposed materials and lack of any green roofs, lack of creativity and detailing the lodges could not be said to be of an appropriate high quality nor do they add value to the local area. They have not been designed to respect this sensitive site or its surroundings, noting that it is in part adjacent to the Whiston Eaves SSSI.

Materials

6.2 The palette of materials as described earlier is considered appropriate to the landscape context of the appeal site.

6.3 As described by the outline DAS (CD 5.3), green roofs are not a requirement of the lodge, but a possibility as part of any sustainability measures. The lodges will be highly sustainable, addressed by the mode of construction, degree of insulation and the other renewable energy measures such as ASHP and potential for photo voltaics.

6.4 As noted in the ES LV chapter 8, the use green roofs on the lodges was supported where appropriate to mitigate the visual effects of development. The most sensitive areas for the lodges are around Quarry 3, and herein the roof form, by layout and design, is not prominent. Therein in this regard I do not consider that the green roofs are visually necessary (see figure left).

Creativity and Detailing

6.5 The design team have taken an efficient, off-site constructed, modular shell and to this applied a high quality internal and external finish.

6.6 There is a deliberately tight palette of materials, detailing, and variation to the basic lodge design. Notwithstanding, this affords a good degree of creativity to the design of individual lodges and groups of lodges as demonstrated by the contrast between the approach at Quarry 3 and 1 as seen in the CGIs.



Above: From the CGIs, elevation to Quarry 1

Moneystone Quarry

6.7 Attention to detail is evident: the matching of the colour of rainwater goods to the roof tiles which are patterned to reflect a traditionally slate tiled roof; the tongue and groove timber cladding creates shadowing to the elevation, with contrasting horizontal and vertical cladding.

High Quality / Standard of Design

6.8 Having appraised the design quality of the appeal scheme with regard to the criteria of the NDG, I conclude that the proposed lodges are of the required high standard of design.

6.9 The lodges achieve compliance with building regulations and incorporating ASHPs.

6.10 The internal spatial layouts are designed to draw the outside into the lodge LKD space.

6.11 *Less is more* (Mies van de Rohe). The aesthetic simplicity and restraint in the design of the lodges I consider to be more appropriate to the landscape setting of the appeal scheme than a design with excessive ornamentation or complexity. This is not a context where the individual lodge design should detract from the wider landscape setting. Matching natural timber applied to the 'skirt'/deck base and main building provides a strong visual coherence to the lodge and lands it to the ground. The glazed balustrades, more commonly seen on 'high end' apartments, add a visual quality and lightness to the deck which can be a 'heavy' structure as seen at the built example at Rivendale.

6.12 These lodges are simply not 'caravans with cladding'.

Adding Value, Respecting Sensitive Site

6.13 The cohesive design of the lodges with careful, limited variation in facade treatment and as plotted having regard to the character areas is considered to add to the sense of place and value of the appeal scheme; and in turn, the local area. This will be an attractive place.



Above: From the CGIs, flank elevation to Quarry 1

07

Response to Council's SofC

- 7.1 Having undertaken my design appraisal, this Section addresses comments made within the Council's SofC.
- 7.2 §3.13 of the Council's SofC sets five criteria which form the 'cornerstone of their planning arguments'. I address each point in turn.

i Clearly responding to the site's context with the buildings' design, taking account of the surrounding landscape / townscape, and reflecting the local built vernacular.

- 7.3 The appeal site landscape context affords the opportunity for a development of its own character. Taken as a whole, this landscape context has informed a landscape led development (as described in the DASs (CD 5.3, 2.85) and the outline planing consent) with a number of character areas which provide a setting for the built form.
- 7.4 The natural shape of the quarries and level areas has informed the disposition of the hub and individual lodges across character areas. The hub, lies at the heart of the scheme – a centrepiece of design. The lodges are a simple, low structures. Overall, the hub and lodges are subservient to the wider landscape as demonstrated by the various CGI visuals.
- 7.5 The hub is of local stone and timber cladding and green roofed shaped and flat roofs. It does not reflect local vernacular as described by the SMDG but draws upon local materials and timber appropriate to a rural setting.
- 7.6 The simple aesthetic of the lodges I consider an appropriate response to a rural landscape where buildings are predominantly low and subservient in form and scale. The lodges will be at low density and separated by intervening landscaping in an organic layout, so would not be read as a traditional regimented caravan site. Furthermore the detailing and cladding and skirt would mean that they would be read as appropriately sited lodges in a well landscaped environment. The Council's criticisms that follow are misfounded.

ii. Delivering a building that has an appropriate scale, mass and form, that reflects local forms and does not undermine the landscape / townscape qualities.

- 7.7 To reiterate my response to point (i) the lodges are appropriately low structures in a rural landscape. They are polite and subservient so as not to undermine the surrounding landscape. Having regard to the outline DAS (CD 5.3) it would be wholly inappropriate to look to urban townscape qualities and draw these into the rural environment; or to propose a design for the

lodge that shouted it's creativity and design.

iii. Providing creativity in the architecture of the building, including appropriate materials, roofscape and detailing, delivered as part of an effective composition.

- 7.8 Collectively across the appeal scheme there is a legible and logical approach to the aesthetic. This is a creative approach.
- 7.9 The centrepiece hub is a distinctively designed building, a focal point for the appeal scheme, wherein most guests and residents will likely meet. The 190 lodges on the other hand are appropriately less 'distinctive', but nonetheless creatively designed as I set out above with a polite, coherent and simple design language.
- 7.10 There is some variation in the 'creative' lodge design but 'less', I consider, is 'more'. An exuberant cacophony of 190 individual lodge designs of different height, scale, footprint, roof form, material and aesthetic, would visually place the lodge above the significance of the wider landscape setting and the hub; and would introduce harmful discordance to the surrounding landscape.

iv. Creating buildings that are fit for purpose, durable and long lasting, and that maximise opportunities for sustainable design and construction.

- 7.11 As applicable to a holiday lodge, as set out in the Design Statement of Case of Mr John Bratherton, the design of the hub and lodge are demonstrably fit for purpose, long lasting and maximise opportunities for sustainable design and construction.
- 7.12 The appellants have judged the lodges not against caravans but buildings in achieving conformance with Part L.

- 6.13 My own appraisal supports their view.

v. Delivering buildings that preserve and enhance their setting, and do not impact on the wider landscape, heritage or biodiversity.

- 7.14 As I set out above and in my response to i and ii, I consider that the buildings will positively contribute to the setting of the leisure park, accepting that in principle the use is appropriate.

Response to Council's SofC cited shortcomings in the design

- 7.15 Within the following paragraphs I respond to detailed design comments of the Council's SofC.
- 7.16 I note first though that given the overall scope of the appeal scheme, the criticisms of the Council are very narrow, confined to the design quality of the lodges.
- i. A focus on compliance with the Caravans Act has immediately restricted the design approach*
- 7.17 Irrespective of whether or not the lodges fall within the Caravans Act and how they are manufactured, what matters, and what I have appraised, is the appropriateness of their resultant design, including appearance, within the surrounding context.
- 7.18 That the design of the lodge is based upon a structure that can be manufactured off-site and can be transported efficiently to plots does not suggest that the design is 'restricted' or harmful. Off-site modular construction is now a well recognised and sustainable mode of construction.
- 7.19 There is nothing in policy or guidance to dictate the form of the lodge or how they should be constructed. The outline planning consent illustrates the same form of the lodge in illustrating the proposed character of the site and refers to off-site construction methods. The proportions of the lodges are clearly internally suited to provide attractive, comfortable and functional accommodation.



Above: From the CGIs, a flank view of one of the lodges illustrating a mono pitch roof, integrated skirt base and flank timber elevation, defined enclosed eaves. One design detail of the lodges



Above: From the CGIs, a flank view of one of the lodges illustrating a pitched roof, integrated skirt base and timber elevation, defined enclosed eaves. Another design detail of the lodges. The design 'module' is clearly not restrictive to affording an appropriate degree of variety whilst maintaining a cohesive aesthetic

ii. Poor form, scale and elevation appearance. The form and scale of the buildings (including the double units) is formulaic and standardised. They appear temporary and transient, with little in the way of variation or articulation of the elevations, and certainly not reflective of any form currently found within the local area.

7.20 I strongly disagree with this statement. Typically, built schemes in numbers, where appropriate, adopt standardised elements and a common design language (otherwise coherence would be replaced by discord). Where discord is sought, it is often to define a particular character, set piece, keynote building, landmark or landmark feature.

7.21 To generate an attractive place, the design approach does not necessitate discord and variety in form, elevation and scale apart from the hub for the reasons I set out above. As proposed, there is rightly a narrow palette of design elements for the lodges and any noticeable variation – such as the arrangement of lodges addressing the Quarry 3 lake – reinforces the proposed character. As such, I do not agree with the assertion that the design is not ‘formulaic’ – there is no ‘regimented’ application of the same typology across the whole site.

7.22 As I set out in my review, for a design language to be coherently applied to some 190 lodges; and to maintain a landscape dominant environment with subservient lodges, a strong degree of uniformity and a simple aesthetic is a positive. There will of course be some variation in detailing, but from a tightly controlled palette of materials.

7.23 I acknowledge that a number of examples were illustrated within the outline DAS (CD 5.3) of different lodge designs. However, through the process of resolving a detailed scheme, the approach to articulate and express the hub, whilst ‘hold back’ on the variety in lodge design is wholly appropriate once the details of the wider landscape setting are understood and supported. To have done otherwise would have been an error of approach in my view.



Above: From the CGIs principal elevation to Quarry 3 lake



Above: From the CGIs, principal elevations to lodges within Quarry 1. The narrow palette clearly affords an appropriate degree of variation and richness in elevation

7.24 There is nothing temporary or transient in the appearance of the lodges. The quality of materials that extends to the deck and 'skirt' visually grounds the lodges as structural features of the new place.

7.25 There is evident variety and articulation in elevation as described earlier.

7.26 And, the low slung form of building in timber is considered appropriate for the 'rural context'.

7.27 Considering the Council's SofC criticism that the roof form is too shallow and incongruous to the local area; notwithstanding that the design language of the overall scheme includes the hub which has a shallow roof form; and that the appeal site is visually contained and not seen in the context of other buildings; I note that the SMDG states in paragraph 3.2:

"In the countryside or on the edge of settlements, buildings should sit comfortably in the landscape. This is best achieved by emulating the horizontal, ground-hugging form of traditional buildings with their strong eaves and ridge lines and simple, low silhouettes parallel with the contours."

7.28 Strong eaves and ridge lines suggests 'well defined' which they are as illustrated by the elevations and CGIs.

7.29 Outwardly, as demonstrated by the CGIs the lodges would be ground hugging buildings, of a low silhouette, parallel with contours where appropriate.



Above: From the CGIs texture, shadow and interest to the timber elevations

iii) Poor response to the character and vernacular. Policies require that the design of new built form responds to local vernacular or develops a clear design response based on local character and context with regard to local materials, details and forms. Whilst this is true, the Council does not disagree with the choice of a natural wood finish as it is reflective of the wider wooded landscape setting. However, the elevations appear somewhat 'flat' and slab sided with the material lacking interest or articulation. The non-natural materials for the roof and the decked area are considered unacceptable and do not reflect local vernacular.

7.30 I note that the Council accepts wood as appropriate to the landscape setting.

7.31 I reject the assertion that the proposed natural timber cladding would be 'flat'. The tongue and groove evidently creates shadow and interest, notwithstanding the natural grain of the wood. Variation in horizontal and vertical application adds further richness to the individual and collective appearance of lodges.

7.32 The visually textured roof material, which reflects natural slate, I also consider appropriate.

7.33 The deck floor area would not be seen unless stood above or on the deck, and for practical reasons is not natural wood. Although outwardly, it would appear similar.

7.34 At §4.4 the Council's SofC notes that the lodges will sit atop in the landscape setting with a skirt below. Notwithstanding the additional 600m height afforded by the skirt, the lodge would remain low of silhouette and horizontally proportioned.

7.35 As demonstrated by the proposed elevations, in appearance the skirt would comprise a continuation of the cladding and give the appearance of conventionally constructed building. The effect would be that the lodges would not have the appearance of mobile structures, let alone conventional static caravans. Rather they would appear permanent buildings.

7.36 Also at §4.4 the Council's SofC criticises the arrangement of the lodges on concrete bases. Evident from the cross sections provided each plot is based according to a suitable contour. The size specific concrete pad will be hidden by the lodge above. I therefore struggle to understand the council's concern.

7.37 At §4.6 the Council's SofC references §140 of the Framework (diminishing of quality from application) and states that.

"In this case, care should be taken to ensure that design quality has not been diminished between the outline and reserved matters stage. The Council consider that the principles set out at outline have not been effectively delivered in the design of the lodges and that has resulted in a diminution of quality between the outline consent and appeal proposal."

7.38 Reference is then made at §4.7 to Condition 14 of the outline consent which states:

"All future reserved matters applications for any phase agreed under Condition 5 and particularly those relating to layout, scale and appearance shall be in accordance with the principles contained within the submitted Design and Access Statement and incorporate the Mitigation Measures set out in Table 8.9 of Chapter 8, Landscape and Visual of the Environmental Statement."

7.39 Having regard to the outline consent and the parameters therein, and my review of the DAS (CD 2.85) and Table 8.9, I consider that this is a well-designed and cohesive scheme that for the reasons I set out in my appraisal, has not diminished the quality sought by the outline planning consent. Rather, the considered approach has ensured that design quality has been maintained.

7.40 I set out the relevant design principles of the outline DAS (CD 5.3) at Section 4 and further points can be abstracted from Section 7 and, specific to the lodges, Section 8. I reproduce extracts below:

THE ACCOMMODATION OFFER

The lodges will offer high quality accommodation set within the unique landscape of the former quarry.

The majority of the lodges will be for short term rental, however Moneystone Park will also offer a proportion for private holiday accommodation for sale.

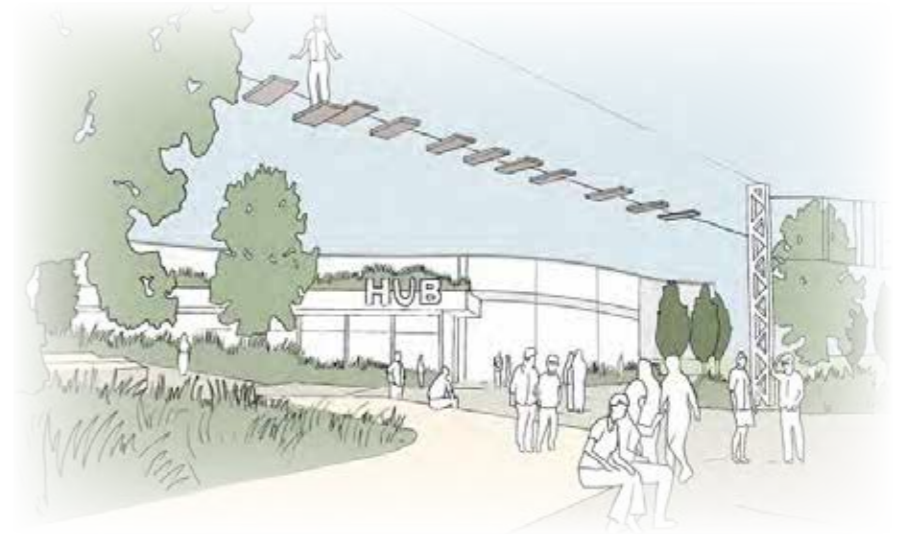
Lodge accommodation is proposed in 3 key areas, corresponding roughly to the historic quarry areas. These are:

Quarry 1, consisting of two main accommodation areas - one to the north of Quarry Park, looking in over the new green space and a second to the eastern edge focused around the existing lagoon with views out to the south.

Quarry 3, contains a large existing water body, and as such is the location for the watersports centre for the site. Pockets of lodge accommodation are nestled into the quarry banks, with fantastic views out over the water.

7.41 I note from the outline DAS (CD 5.3) at page 17, the sketch illustrations reproduced right which show:

- Distinctive hub design (top image but flat roofed and curved shape);
- Strong landscape setting within which lodges are subservient;
- Elevated base to lodges;
- Simple form to lodge (rectilinear);
- Horizontal emphasis to a low silhouette building;
- Plain roof form with shallow pitch and defined boxed eaves; and
- Coherent, simple aesthetic.



7.42 With regard to the General Lodge Design Principles – reproduced right – I note that the lodges:

- Can arrive on site as a complete structure or in sections;
- Typically will be constructed on a level concrete slab; and
- Are of a limited materials palette in muted colour range.

7.43 The typical single storey units are mostly shown as simple horizontal forms raised above ground and consistent with the principles of the Vision set out at Section 7 of the outline DAS (CD 5.3).

7.44 It is of note that the outline DAS does not prescribe the form of lodge, but illustrates typical ‘inspirational’ forms and sketches which afford a narrower degree of latitude which the design of the appeal scheme lodges is consistent with.

7.45 The inspirational images are drawn from a wide range of leisure parks and include some 2 storey examples. It is wholly appropriate that the design team have undertaken such an exercise to help inform decisions made and the future RMA. It is important to note that the inspirations inform more than aesthetics; as clear throughout the remainder of the DAS, the lodge is illustrated to be simple in form and subservient to the landscape design as demonstrated by the single storey sketches. What was not intended to be conveyed was that the scheme would lack design coherence and would have a wide variety of differing lodge types which would have risked a discordant form of development.

GENERAL LODGE DESIGN PRINCIPLES - FOR ALL CHARACTER AREAS

Dependant on Lodge design and size, it is anticipated that units will either be delivered as a complete structure by lorry, or assembled on site utilising smaller prefabricated sections.

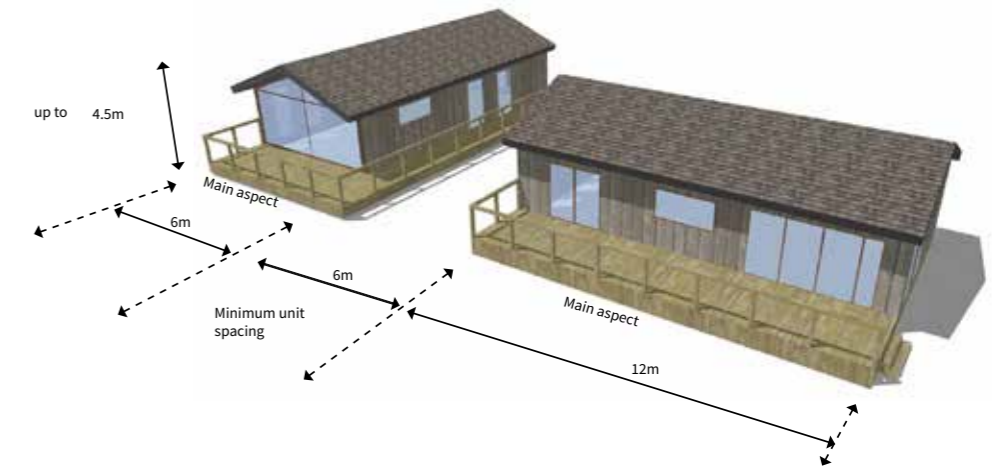
Typical site preparation for a lodge would be construction of a level concrete slab with integrated service connections, however in sensitive site locations consideration might also be given to smaller pad/beam foundations or lodges positioned on driven pile/ stilts. Surrounding pathways and access to the lodges would utilise permeable surfacing and soft verges that promotes natural drainage and minimises excavation requirements. Soft landscape would be encouraged up to the base of the lodges in the form of grassland meadow and low native shrub planting with a mown maintenance strip to the immediate external facade.

Given the sensitivity of the location, the lodges within the park should utilise a limited material pallet that reflects the local architectural character. Use of timber, stone, slate, or metal cladding and roofing in a muted colour range could be a suitable mix, that would allow the units to blend with the surrounding context. Selected use of grass/ sedum roofing systems could also help in areas of particular visual sensitivity, as well as promote biodiversity and habitat links within the lodge areas themselves.

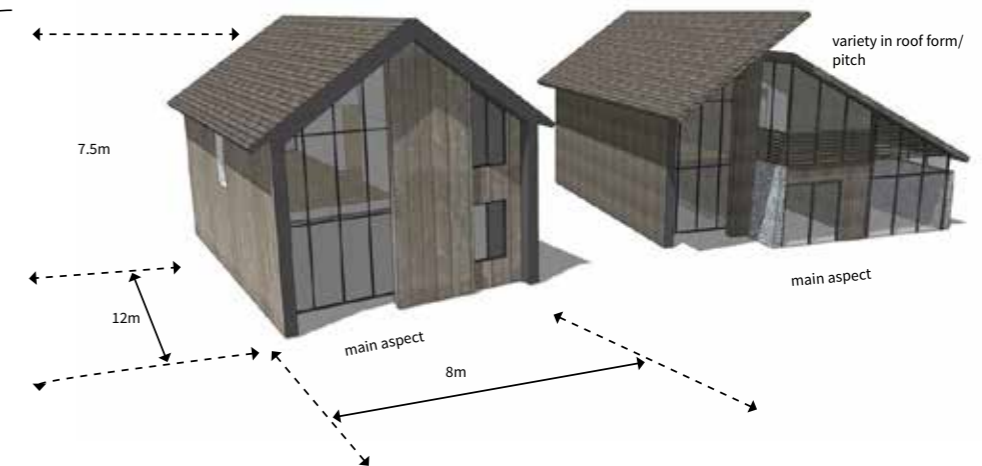
Where located on sloping sites, it will be required to set the new lodges on either a piled stilt, or piled retaining wall structure. Materials will be chosen to match with the locality, but typically could include, timber, steel or stone facing either as a drystone wall, or within a gabion cage.



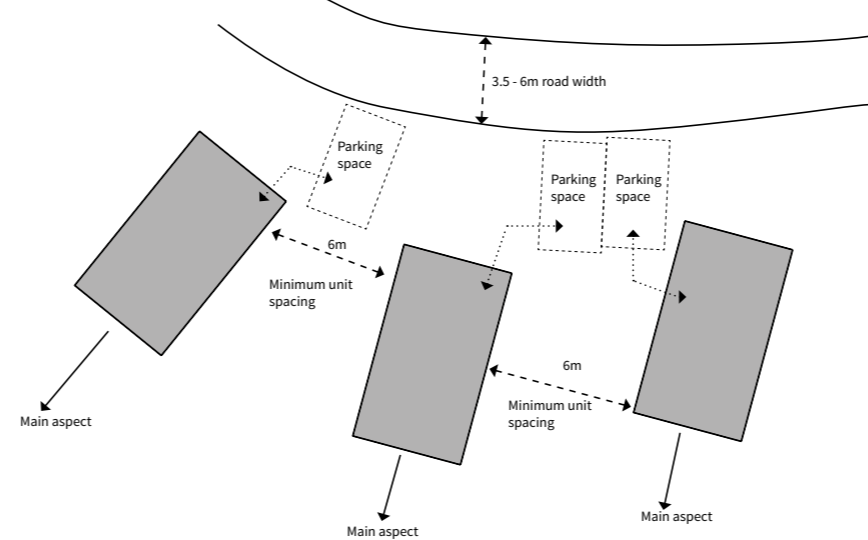
TYPICAL SINGLE STOREY UNITS



TYPICAL TWO STOREY UNITS



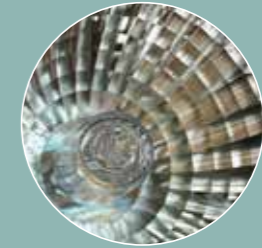
TYPICAL LODGE ARRANGEMENT



08

Conclusion

- 8.1 The appeal scheme draws upon the local landscape character as described by the DASs (CD 5.3 and 2.85).
- 8.2 This is a well-designed scheme. The structure, proposed amount and form of the development is well considered and applied across the appeal site appropriate to the surrounding context and the parameters of the outline planning consent.
- 8.3 The scheme provides a high quality and attractive environment for prospective residents and visitors. The appearance of the scheme (beauty/attractiveness) is appropriate to the function of the building and its setting.
- 8.4 I find that the criticisms in the RfR and Council's SoC are not made out. The appeal scheme would be compliant with design policies, the Framework, guidance, and the approved Parameters Plan (CD 1.2).
- 8.5 The appeal ought to be allowed therefore, mindful of the very limited nature of the Council's criticisms.



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