
3rd May 2023

Land to the South of
Warren Lane, North of
Weston Road, Long
Ashton

Landscape Evidence
of Mr. Jonathan Berry
BA (Hons), DipLA,
CMLI, AIEMA,
M.Arbor.A

Volume 3: Summary

Between Long Ashton
Company and North Somerset
Council

Council Ref: 21/P/3076/OUT

Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/
D0121/W/23/3315584

Inquiry Start Date: 31st May 2023

Report Number: 1478_R08a_JB



Tyler
Grange

Volume 3: Summary



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Volume 3 - Landscape Evidence (Summary) of Mr. Jonathan Berry

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Summary

- 1.1. My name is Jonathan Berry, I am a co-founder and Director of Tyler Grange Group Ltd and I specialise in landscape and visual planning issues associated with development and change. I hold a BA (Hons) degree in Landscape Architecture and a Post Graduate diploma in Landscape Architecture from the University of Gloucestershire. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (LI), an Associate of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and a Professional Member of the Arboricultural Association (AA).
- 1.2. The application was refused planning permission by North Somerset Council on 5th August 2022 and I was instructed to act as landscape witness and to prepare evidence for this appeal in April 2023.
- 1.3. The evidence I have prepared here represents my professional opinion on the aspects of landscape and visual impact assessment, responding to North Somerset Council's (the Council) reasons for refusal. I believe the facts stated in this evidence are true, accurate and have been prepared in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution (the Landscape Institute).
- 1.4. It is important to note that the Reason for Refusal (RfR) does not make specific reference to landscape considerations as being a determinative issue. Consistent with that, the refusal does not cite Policy DM10 – Landscape (of the North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 – Development Management Policies) nor Policy ENV5 – Conserving and enhancing wildlife, biodiversity and historic assets, including designated areas of local ecological and landscape value (of the Long Ashton Neighbourhood Development Plan).
- 1.5. My evidence demonstrates the following:
 - i. That the Appeal Site is not internationally, nationally or locally designated for its landscape quality;
 - ii. That the Appeal Site is ordinary and does not form part of a valued landscape with identified qualities, in the context of para. 174(a) of the Framework;
 - iii. That the scheme offers substantial new landscaping and Green Infrastructure (GI), which represents 40% of the total Site area; and measurable enhancements that result in over a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. The quantum of GI as shown on the GI Parameters Plan can be secured through an appropriately worded Condition;
 - iv. That the up to date LCA classifies J5 (Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland) and the Site as being moderate and that a number of the specific landscape attributes that it seeks to conserve do not relate to the Appeal Site itself; however, clear opportunities have been taken to enhance the landscape in accordance with the LCA objectives;
 - v. That the sensitivity of other sites to the north of Long Ashton have been downgraded to medium given the visual inter-visibility with the settlement edge and despite the



rising topography and proximity to the SAM. The same approach should be applied to the Appeal Site;

- vi. That predicted moderate adverse landscape effects are typical of a settlement fringe greenfield site and highly localised. The proposed development does not alter the context and understanding of the local character areas; and that change to the Site itself from arable to residential development is not a suitable test for determining impact and harm, but full consideration is needed in relation to the value of the features to be both lost and gained;
 - vii. That the predicted worst case moderate adverse visual effects are also localised, relating to private residential dwellings on Warren Lane, thus any associated impact and harm is also tightly drawn to the Site itself and immediate surroundings. In close proximity, it is inevitable that change will be visible; however, that visual change is characteristic, softened by landscaping and there is nothing objectionable or unusual about inter-visibility between housing in a settlement fringe location;
 - viii. That the Council's Green Belt Review overstated the contribution made by Parcel 4, but even if those findings were endorsed, Parcel 4 and the Appeal Site within it, still perform better than many of the other Sites. The development parameters proposed for the Appeal Site would maintain both the integrity of the surrounding landscape character and the visual openness of the wider Green Belt; and
 - ix. That the majority of the Alternative Sites being considered (as identified in the Council's Call for Sites information to inform the emerging Local Plan 2038), are significantly constrained and have much less capacity to absorb development without harm to both the landscape and Green Belt context.
- 1.6. In relation to North Somerset Core Strategy Policy CS5 (Landscape and the Historic Environment), my judgement is that the policy wording does not set out a specific requirement for the safeguarding of an individual Site, just because it is currently free from development; and the ability to enhance through development is also a component part of the policy wording. In this case, the landscape-led approach has been sympathetic to the landscape context in order to produce a scheme that both protects and enhances the landscape, and thus complies with the policy.
- 1.7. In terms of national policy and with reference to para. 174(b), the Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside. It is important to note that 'recognition' does not mean the protection of all countryside from development.
- 1.8. The Council has highlighted more sensitive landscapes across the wider District and also locally sensitive LCA characteristics that represent particular local landscape value and need safeguarding; however, they are of limited relevance to the Appeal Site itself, or can be addressed as the proposed mitigation measures respond to the existing landscape



framework and offer appropriate enhancement of features that have become lost or eroded. In my opinion, the approach taken with this submitted planning application conserves and enhances the natural environment, in accordance with the objectives of the Framework.

- 1.9. For the reasons set out in my evidence, I respectfully submit that there are no grounds for refusing this Appeal on the basis of landscape and visual effects. The Site is well-suited for residential development (in landscape and visual terms) and will deliver high quality sustainable development, consistent with local and national policy.

