

Appeal Response Document



Architectural Statement

Response to the Reasons for Refusal

In Respect of Application

22/01410/FUL

Document Prepared for:

Trammell Crow Company Logistics (Heywood) Limited

Redevelopment of site comprising the demolition of all existing units and erection of new storage and distribution units (Use Class B8) with ancillary office space, vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access, external yards, parking, landscaping and associated works.



Appeal Document

Doc Ref: 21157-ASA-00-XX.XX-SP-A-0001_(S3-P6)

Revision: P6

24.05.24.

Contents

- 1. Introduction3
 - 1.1 Experience.....3
 - 1.2 Purpose of this Document4
 - 1.3 Description of the scheme4
- 2. Design Elements6
 - 2.1 Size6
 - 2.2 Scale10
 - 2.3 Form – “Form follows function”15
 - 2.4 “Not Well Designed”18
- 3. Summary19
- 4.0 Annexes20



1. Introduction

1.1 Experience

1.1.1 My name is Richard Routh. I joined Ashton Smith Associates as a fully qualified Architect in 2011 having already obtained extensive previous experience designing industrial warehousing, distribution and commercial projects. I lead a team of Architects and Technologists to deliver large complex industrial, e-commerce and manufacturing developments throughout the UK and overseas. I have over 20 years relevant experience working for end users and developers, focussing on customer operational requirements. Before joining Ashton Smith Associates, I worked on a wide variety of building types such as leisure, health, education and residential. Specifically with my residential experience, I was involved in both single and multi-dwelling schemes from one-off houses to apartments, nursing homes and housing estates. I am therefore familiar with the opportunities and constraints of the relationship between residential and commercial projects.

1.1.2 From my experience of the many commercial distribution projects that I have been a part of and have led, I am well aware of the consideration that should be given to the surrounding land uses, particularly existing and committed developments whether commercial or residential. As such I am experienced in developing multiple design strategies to integrate developments into landscape or urban grain wherever the development or situation. One example would be a new speculative distribution development at Newmarket Lane which was located adjacent to existing housing estate. The strategy here was to minimise the noise and lighting from the service yards and vehicle movements by positioning the service yards to the east behind the new building allowing the building to create the barrier. Visual mitigation placed between new development and the residential area was provided by new landscaped bunds and attenuation ponds. The elevation treatment created a graded grey colour banding running from dark at the base to lighter up at the eaves. Similar strategies were applied to a proposed multi-storey vehicle charging hub in Swindon, located adjacent to the existing housing. Here the design team substantially enhanced the existing landscaping and as the architect, I developed elevations that helped soften the visual impact with alternate cladding colours from the same palette.

1.1.3 Below is a summary of my experience and qualifications, which varies from large specific end user buildings to small scale speculative distribution developments and most logistics buildings in between. I have worked and led projects on e-commerce, food production and manufacturing, master planning, temperature-controlled buildings, data centres and all sizes of speculative developer led projects.

1.1.4 Qualifications

B.A (hons) Architecture, University of Northumbria
PG.Dip.Arch Architecture, Leeds Metropolitan University
Member of ARB (Architects Registration Board) and RIBA (Royal Institute British Architects)

1.1.5 Experience

2001 – 2004	Dodd Frankland Stocks Ltd.
2004 - 2011	Stephen George and Partners LLP
2011 – Present	Ashton Smith Associates Ltd

1.1.6 Project Experience

Apartments, Lancaster	£1.5m	Complete 2002
Various One-Off Housing, West Yorkshire	£0.4m	Complete 2004
St. Modwen, Copley, Housing development	£10m	Planning 2009
Tesco, UK, Reading 83,000sq.m Ambient DC	£50m	Complete 2012
Tesco, UK, Erith 12,000sq.m E-Commerce DC	£25m	Complete 2013
Tesco, Thailand, 55,000sq.m Composite DC	£45m	Complete 2014
M&S, Bradford 1million sq.ft. E-Commerce DC	£35m	Complete 2015
Greencore Food Production	£6m	Complete 2015
Lidl, Runcorn Office Refurbishment and Frozen Extension	£15m	Complete 2015
Clipper Logistics, UK, 13,000sq.m. Mezzanine Installation	£15m	Complete 2016
Sainsburys, UK, 39,000sq.m. Bedford E-Commerce DC	£7m	Complete 2017
Amazon, UK, London Medway, Sortation Centre	£40m	Complete 2018
Amazon, UK, Various sites - ARS Fulfilment Centres	£100m	2017-2022
Newmarket Lane, Wakefield, 20,000sq.m Distribution	£30m	Planning 2021
Amazon, UK, Electric Vehicle Charging Sites	£20m	Current
Trammell Crow, Heywood Distribution Centre	TBC	2022-Present

- 1.1.7 I became involved with Trammell Crow and the scheme at Heywood from the outset, creating initial test fits to review the capacity and constraints of the site to aid the purchase process of the site. I had previous experience working on the masterplanning schemes and specific plots of the distribution development north of the proposed site with Russell Developments, which gave me a beneficial background to the areas and surrounding context. From the initial schemes onwards, I have led a team to develop and create the design of the development and building in collaboration with the Appellant and the design team. I have first-hand knowledge of the process and issues the development has faced progressing through the planning procedure.
- 1.1.8 The evidence which I have prepared for this Appeal in this proof of evidence is true and the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

1.2 Purpose of this Document

- 1.2.1 This document has been prepared by Ashton Smith Associates (ASA) on behalf of Trammell Crow Company Logistics (Heywood) Limited (the "Appellant") in support of the submission of a planning appeal for the Full Planning Application 22/01410/FUL for the Redevelopment of site comprising the demolition of all existing units and erection of new storage and distribution units (Use Class B8) with ancillary office space, vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access, external yards, parking, landscaping and associated works (the "Proposal").
- 1.2.2 The Proposal was refused on 22 December 2023 by the Reason given below.

"By virtue of its size, scale and form, the proposed development is not well designed and would represent an overdevelopment of the site which is not compatible with surrounding land uses due to the detrimental and unacceptable impacts on the noise environment and the visual amenity of surrounding residents, with particular with regard to future residents adjacent the site. Due to this overbearing and unacceptable relationship with surrounding land uses the application fails to accord with Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (the "Core Strategy") and the National Planning Policy Framework (the "NPPF")."

- 1.2.3 The purpose of this document is to review and respond to the refusal specifically with regards to the statement that by virtue of the Proposal's "size, scale and form the proposed development is not well designed and would represent an overdevelopment of the site ... due to the detrimental and unacceptable impacts on the ... visual amenity of surrounding residents, with particular regard to future residents adjacent to the site" and confirm that the Proposal does not fail to accord with Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy [criterion /criteria [a], [b] and [c] of Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy, or the NPPF paragraphs 135 and 139. Within the following sections we will justify the development specifically in these terms.
- 1.2.4 The design of the Proposal and how it may impact on the visual amenity of existing and future residents has been a consideration from the outset and has informed the details of the proposals. For example. It is inextricably linked to the proposed landscaping to be delivered as part of the Proposal. Accordingly, where appropriate I cross refer to the note entitled 'Landscape and Visual Impacts – March 2024' prepared by Mr Patrick of TPM Landscape.

1.3 Description of the scheme

- 1.3.1 The application consists of 3no distribution centres (B8 use). An existing access road/ junction leading from Manchester Road will be retained. The buildings have been designed to achieve the industry requirements, with the buildings brought to market as a speculative development.
- 1.3.2 Units 1 and 2 will provide a warehouse footprint measuring 4,305sq.m GIA and 3,919sq.m. GIA. There will be a ground floor core and first floor office measuring 438sq.m. The buildings will have an eaves height of 13.6m (142.75m AOD) and an internal haunch height of 12m (141.1m AOD). Associated HGV loading docks 3No per unit shall be installed with 3no level access doors per unit, gated service yard access and a car park for 40 car spaces (incl. 4 disabled spaces, 3 EV Spaces, 3 Car Sharing) with cycle and motorcycle parking.

- 1.3.3 Unit 3 will provide a Warehouse footprint measuring 32,537sq.m GIA. There will be a three-storey main office and transport office measuring 2,009sq.m GIA. The buildings will have a haunch height of 15m (144.500 AOD) and eaves height of 16.3m (145.800 AOD) Associated HGV loading docks 35No shall be installed with 4No level access doors, gate house controlled service yard access and a car park for 319 car spaces (incl. 18 disabled spaces, 15 EV Spaces) with 40 cycle and 9 motorcycle parking spaces.
- 1.3.4 Developing the scheme to the final point has taken numerous site layouts, alterations to each unit in terms of yards, site levels and internal layouts. Following initial schemes, the design team collaborated to refine the relationship between the surrounding buildings and boundaries to obtain a high quality design which respects and enhances the surrounding landscape and built forms. Design is an iterative process with multiple inputs – there is no one ‘right’ answer for a given site – this iterative process, collaborating closely with colleagues from other disciplines has been central to the design of this scheme. The effects upon the existing and future residents have been a key concern when reviewing and developing the scheme, which as an example included the proximity of the new buildings and the vehicular movements to the boundaries.
- 1.3.5 The submitted design proposals have been carefully considered by multiple design and construction professionals, including civil and structural engineers, landscape architects and services engineers. The proposals were developed with due regard to the existing site, it’s context and surroundings, to create a coherent, usable site, consisting of a modernised building with efficiency and consistency in mind to meet the needs of the local economy and in particular deliver a significant boost to local employment for a sustained period. The proposals allow for the best possible access by all modes of transport and encourages travel to the site by means other than car.
- 1.3.6 The current site is unattractive and out-dated, and the proposed scheme will greatly improve the existing industrial site to provide modern, high-quality units which are well suited to future occupier requirements, more attractive in appearance, and more suitable in regards to their construction and energy demands. The building will be designed and constructed to achieve BREEAM level: ‘Excellent’.
- 1.3.7 Following the original application submission subsequent amendments to the proposals were made to acknowledge concerns raised on the siting, scale and form of Unit 3 specifically. As a result of the interaction with officers the scheme evolved and, with hindsight, was improved such that I believe, as did the Planning Officer in recommending approval, that the current proposal addresses all the matters raised by internal and statutory consultees.

1.3.8 Below are the amendments:

March 2023

- Amendments to proposed ‘Unit 3’, reducing the length by 13.05m to the south, resulting in Unit 3 being set back from existing units and achieving a separation distance of approximately 47 metres from the closest future residential property.
- Unit 3 was reduced in height by 3.5m to lessen the impact on proposed dwellings to south-west boundary.
- Amendments to proposed Unit 3 to increase the width by 2 metres to the west to compensate for loss of floorspace to the south.
- Increase to the width and height of the proposed landscaped bund to the south, increasing the scale and amount of landscaping to be applied.

June 2023

- Addition of a 2 metre high retaining wall to the south-west boundary of Unit 3 and associated amendments to the bund which resulted in a 5m high bund with additional landscaping.
- Additional landscaping and planting was added to Unit 1 and Unit 2 northern boundary.
- Tweaks to the design of attenuation ponds to the north and south of the site, resulting in an increase in the total area of attenuation ponds.

2. Design Elements

2.1 Size

2.1.1 When dealing with 'size' in terms of a new development I take its meaning as the following, "the relative extent of something; a thing's overall dimensions or magnitude; how big something is". Within the National Design Guide I am also cognisant of the components of good design where size, scale and form are defined.

2.1.2 The reason for refusal provides:

*"By virtue of its **size, scale and form**, the proposed development is not well designed and would **represent an overdevelopment** of the site which is not compatible with surrounding land uses due to the **detrimental and unacceptable impacts on the noise environment and the visual amenity of surrounding residents, with particular with regard to future residents adjacent the site**. Due to this overbearing and unacceptable relationship with surrounding land uses the application fails to accord with Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF."* [Emphasis added]

2.1.3 It will be immediately obvious that the reason for refusal is vague and unparticularised. This is exactly the sort of approach which has long been deprecated. For example in 2006 the Government's then advisor the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment issued guidance entitled "Design at Appeal" in which it observed:

"When a scheme is examined at appeal, written or oral evidence will need to say why it is or is not seen as appropriate. ...It is important to use easily understandable language; both in reasons for refusal and appeal evidence. Generalised or generic terms such as 'out of keeping' or 'overdevelopment' should be avoided as they are meaningless when not substantiated by site specific information. The design, and why it is appropriate or inappropriate, should be described in as much detail as possible."

2.1.4 Within this section I provide justification for the design with regards to the size of the proposed development and confirm that it does not represent an overdevelopment of the Site.

2.1.5 To design the building form and elevation treatment the design team have taken into account key viewpoints and context of the development. Views may be mitigated with appropriate use of screen bunding and landscaping, and where this cannot be achieved the architecture of the buildings addresses best practice to reduce visual impact. Viewpoints and landscaping are covered in the evidence of Mr Patrick.

2.1.6 The size of the buildings within the Proposal is determined by a number of factors. Ultimately, the buildings must meet modern institutional standards in order to accommodate the local market needs whilst taking into account and responding to existing constraints on and surrounding the site.

2.1.7 The size of the new units allows for appropriate flexibility for the end user and matches other modern industrial distribution units in the current market. The existing units are outdated and restricted internally due to internal structural layout. The design of a modern industrial distribution centre must provide a flexible open plan warehouse space for a prospective tenant to operate within. This requires the footprint and height of the proposed buildings to be appropriately optimised within the existing site constraints.

2.1.8 The B8 use class modern requirements which will attract blue chip occupiers are based on creating an open plan flexible warehouse space using an 8m wide structural frame grid for a portal frame internal height of 8m upwards all depending on the footprint size. Typically, 50,000ft² building would have 10-12.5m eaves and a 35-40m service yard. Buildings between 300,000 and 500,000ft² would have a 15m+ haunch height with 50m wide yards including parking opposite.

2.1.9 One of the obvious existing constraints was the proximity of existing and future residential development and as confirmed in paragraphs 5.6 and 6 of the Design and Access Statement submitted with the Proposal. This describes the mitigation for these areas, which is to use the cladding colour and orientation to break up the elevation and link with the skyline as well adding substantial landscaping including bunds and tree planting.

EXISTING FOOTPRINT
OF BUILDINGS IN RED COLOUR

11703

20713

2.1.11 Each building's footprint is determined by numerous external factors, including: site constraints; the required access to and from the building; the activities required to operate the building; car parking requirements; service yard requirements (each building must have its own service yard); and maintenance access.

2.1.12 Units 1 and 2's design is cognisant of the existing building footprint layout (Fig 2). They use the same eastern building line as the existing and maintain a minimum of 30m distance to nearest dwelling. The boundaries are supplemented with additional planting and a new closed boarded fence.

2.1.13 For reference the proposed building footprint is 42,635m² and the un-developed area is 68,885m². This clearly demonstrates that built area is appropriate in relation to undeveloped areas and that the scheme does not represent overdevelopment.



7

2.1.14 Unit 3 responds to the northern and southern boundaries with additional landscaping, landscaping batters and acoustic fencing. Unit 3's building footprint consolidates the four existing units into one which can be seen in the existing and proposed overlay. (Figure 2)

Building height

2.1.15 The building height is a result of the building form and function creating a flexible open plan space for building users. The elevational treatment of the building uses textures, horizontal and vertical cladding to greatly reduce the visual impact of each unit's height. The cladding colours deliver a graded effect which graduate up the building and link with the skyline colours. Together with the perimeter landscaping and boundary treatments we believe the building size and height are appropriate and acceptable. It is for these reasons we believe we comply with NPPF paragraph 135 a and b and 139. As is shown in Fig. 3 and 4 the difference between the existing and proposed building height shows minimal impact on the view into the site from these locations as both views are obstructed by existing and proposed landscaping.

2.1.16 Within the Principle of Development section of the Officer's Report, item 28 of the Public Report confirms the mitigation provided is acceptable.

2.1.17 Planning Officer Report – pg. 47 & 48, Item 28.

*"The proposed Storage and Distribution (Class B8), by nature of their intended use and function, are relatively utilitarian and functional in design. By virtue of the demands and requirements of large, modern firms that operate within the competitive storage and distribution sector, the floor areas of the units and size of the structures are larger than existing units on site, which are to be demolished. **Despite their large size and functional appearance, the proposed buildings have been designed to somewhat mitigate their visual impact.** External walls will consist of composite cladding panels, which will vary in colour and include decorative horizontal strips of varying colours (shades of blue). The colours have been selected to blend somewhat with the sky to minimise the visual impact and reduce the degree the units will stand out when viewed in context with clouds/the sky. It is of note that the lower sections of the building will largely only be visible from within the site, or be obscured from landscaping and regraded embankments from outside the application site. The proposed office areas will feature aluminium framed clear glazed curtain walls and fenestration, aluminium being a relatively high quality material compared to lower quality UPVC. To ensure that the highest quality of materials and good architecture are achieved, a condition will be added requiring samples/full materials specification prior to any above ground works (excluding demolition and associated site clearance)."* [Emphasis added]

2.1.18 Unit 1 & 2's internal haunch are 12m (141.150) and eaves heights are 13.6m (142.750 A.O.D.). Within Figure 3 and Figure 4 the relationship with the existing building line and existing dwellings to the eastern boundary can be reviewed. (Fig. 3 & 4).

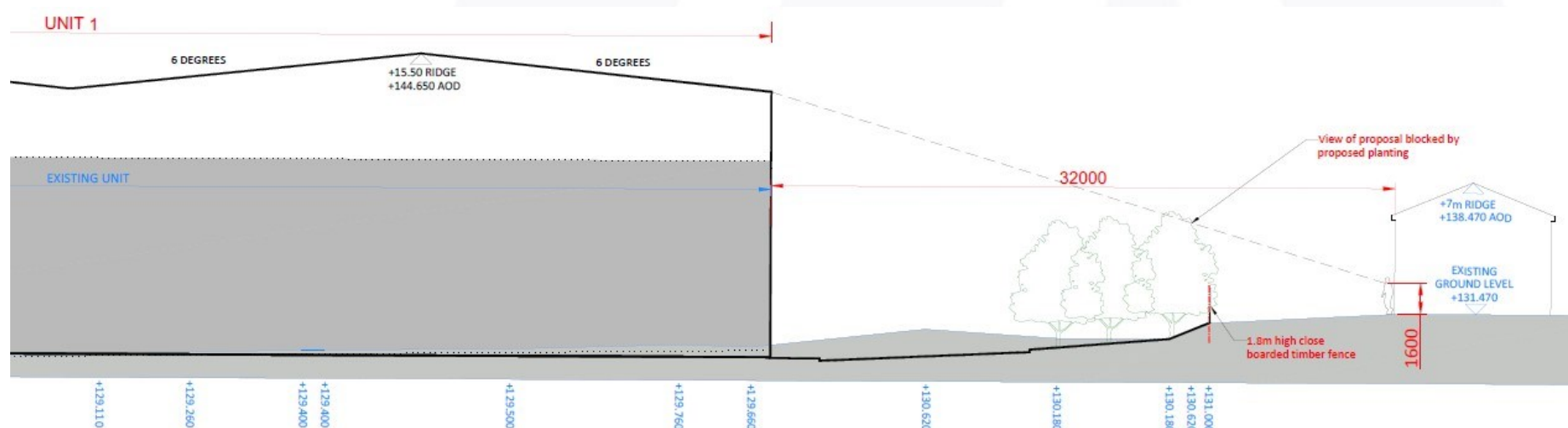


Fig 3. UNIT 1 – Existing and Proposed Section A-A.

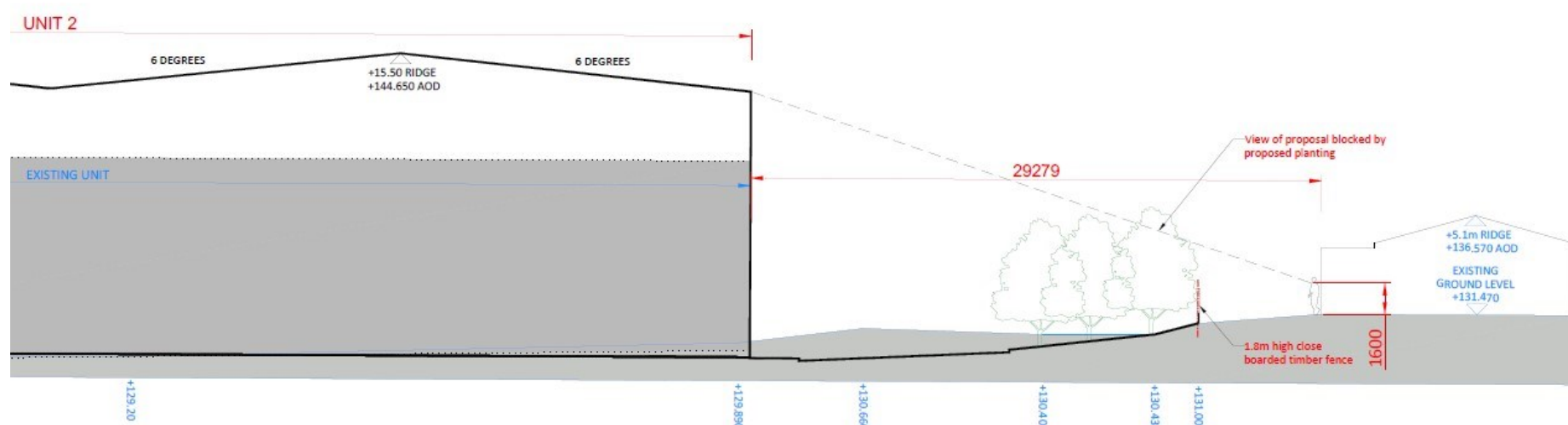


Fig 4. UNIT 2 – Existing and Proposed Section B-B.

2.1.19 The Officers Report, at paragraph 31, confirms that the case officer considered the size of Unit 1 and 2 to be acceptable:

"Given the proposed siting, scale and height of Units 1 & 2, it is not considered that occupiers of any other nearby users or occupiers of buildings would be unduly impacted through visual impact or overbearing impact."

2.1.20 Unit 3's internal haunch height is 15m (144.500 A.O.D.), with a maximum ridge height of 17.6m (147.100 A.O.D.). Following feedback from officers, the building was reduced in the length to reduce the impact on the outline housing scheme to the west elevation and the separation distances between Unit 3 and the potential future residential development to the south is expected to be a 47.3m (fig. 9), (ASA Drawing 0004-P13) and those to the west 51m (Fig.8). I discuss this in more detail in the next section on "scale".

2.1.21 It is for the reasons detailed above that I consider that the development complies with Rochdale Core Strategy DM1 (b) is compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users and does not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy. We would also add that for these reasons it does not impact on the visual amenity of surrounding residents, with particular regard to future residents adjacent the site.



2.2 Scale

- 2.2.1 When dealing with 'scale' in terms of a new a development I take it's meaning as the following, "the relative size or extent of something". It is the height, width and length of each building proposed within a development in relation to its surroundings.

*By virtue of its size, **scale** and form, the proposed development is not well designed and **would represent an overdevelopment** of the site which is not compatible with surrounding land uses due to the **detrimental and unacceptable impacts on the noise environment and the visual amenity of surrounding residents, with particular with regard to future residents adjacent the site.** Due to this **overbearing and unacceptable relationship with surrounding land** uses the application fails to accord with Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF. [Emphasis added]*

- 2.2.2 Within this section we will justify the design with regards to the scale of the proposed development and that it is not overdeveloped. The scale of the development is appropriate with the existing site and surrounding properties.
- 2.2.3 Throughout the design of this development the design team were fully aware of the surrounding properties and how the Proposed development would respond and develop alongside them to create a development at an appropriate scale.
- 2.2.4 The case officer clearly considered that the Proposal was appropriate in terms of scale, writing at paragraph 29 of the Officer Report that: "**It is considered that the proposed Storage and Distribution (Class B8) units are acceptable with regards to their external appearance and design (subject to condition requiring samples and full material specification), representing good architecture and appropriate in their scale and density, with appropriate landscaping and materials proposed to soften the appearance of the large buildings and allow for appropriate integration into the local setting and townscape**" [Emphasis added]
- 2.2.5 It is clear that the case officer considered that the scheme complies with policy DM1 (a), requiring that development proposals are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area.

Unit 1 & 2

- 2.2.6 Unit 1 and Unit 2 are situated on the same building line as the existing units in this location with the proposed eaves of the units are 4.95m above the existing building. As shown on the extracts of the site sections in Fig. 3 and 4 the difference between the existing and proposed building height shows minimal impact on the view into the site as both views are obstructed by existing and proposed landscaping. The relationship and distance to existing properties to the north on Bader Drive and Whitehouse Close are the same at 29m as shown in Fig. 3. Units 1 and 2 are of a very similar scale to the existing building albeit they are back-to-back rather than separated. Additional landscaping to the northern boundary supplements the existing with a closed boarded timber fence on the boundary line. There will be no overlooking from the proposed offices as these are all at ground floor level and hidden by the fencing and landscaping. To the eastern and southern boundaries existing highways are present and boundaries are dealt with appropriate fencing and landscaping. To the west is Unit 3, of which Unit 2 is offset from with the access road and service yard.

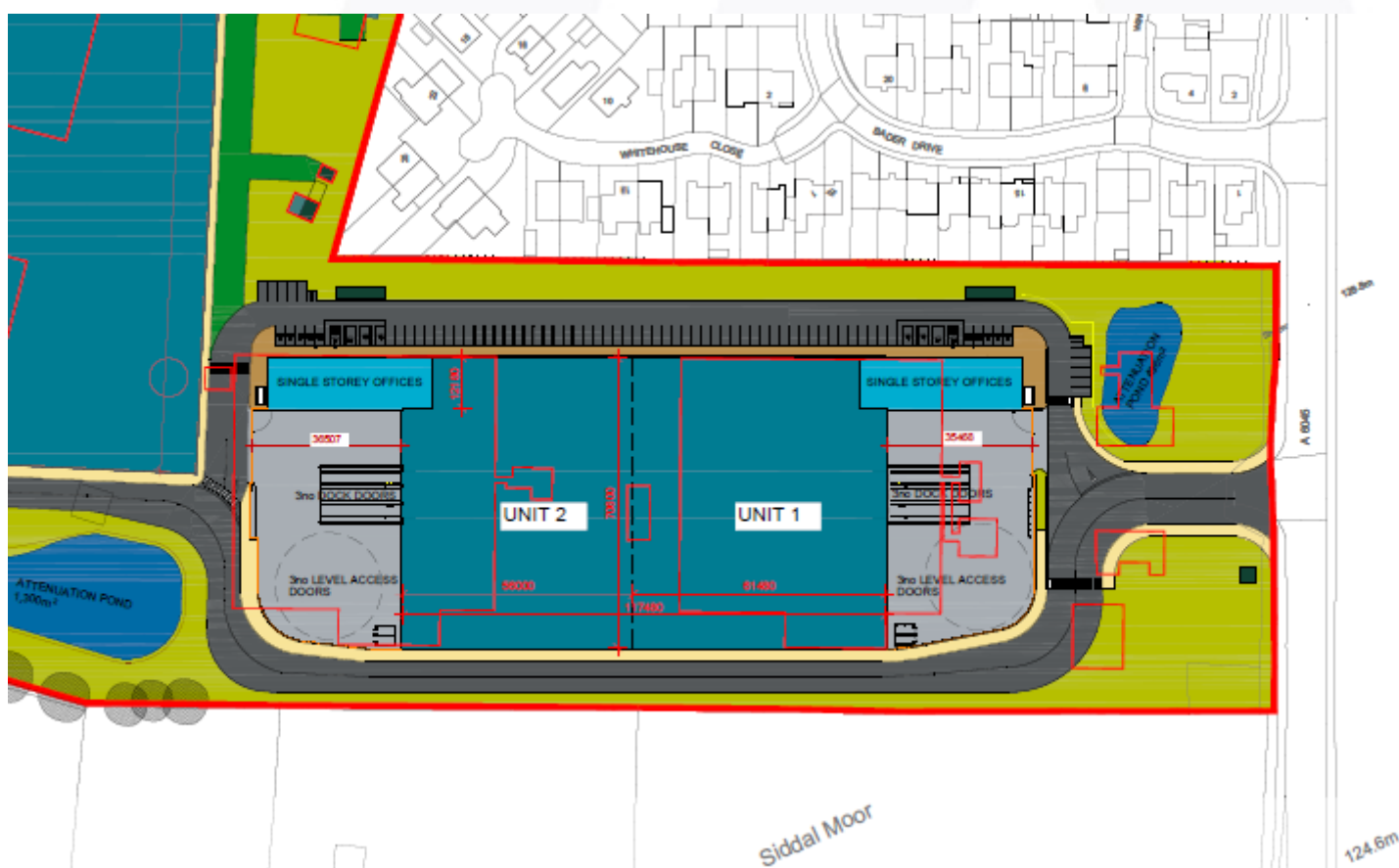


Fig 5. UNIT 1 & 2 – Existing and Proposed Plan extract.

Unit 3

- 2.2.7 This building has a maximum height of 17.6m (147.100 A.O.D.) and is visible from all four boundaries. The scale of the building is a result of the design team maximising the potential of the site to provide a modern industry standard distribution centre.

Eastern Boundary

- 2.2.8 When developing Unit 3 it was clear this area of the site could accommodate a larger footprint than Unit 1 and 2. The design team responded to each boundary in turn. Along the eastern boundary is the existing housing development of semi-detached and detached dwellings which have larger than average rear gardens which run to the site boundary. Between the site boundary and existing buildings is a large expanse of grass and perimeter trees which are being maintained and supplemented with trees and landscaping. Unit 3's footprint uses the furthest existing building extent on this elevation. This elevation runs north to south maintaining this line.

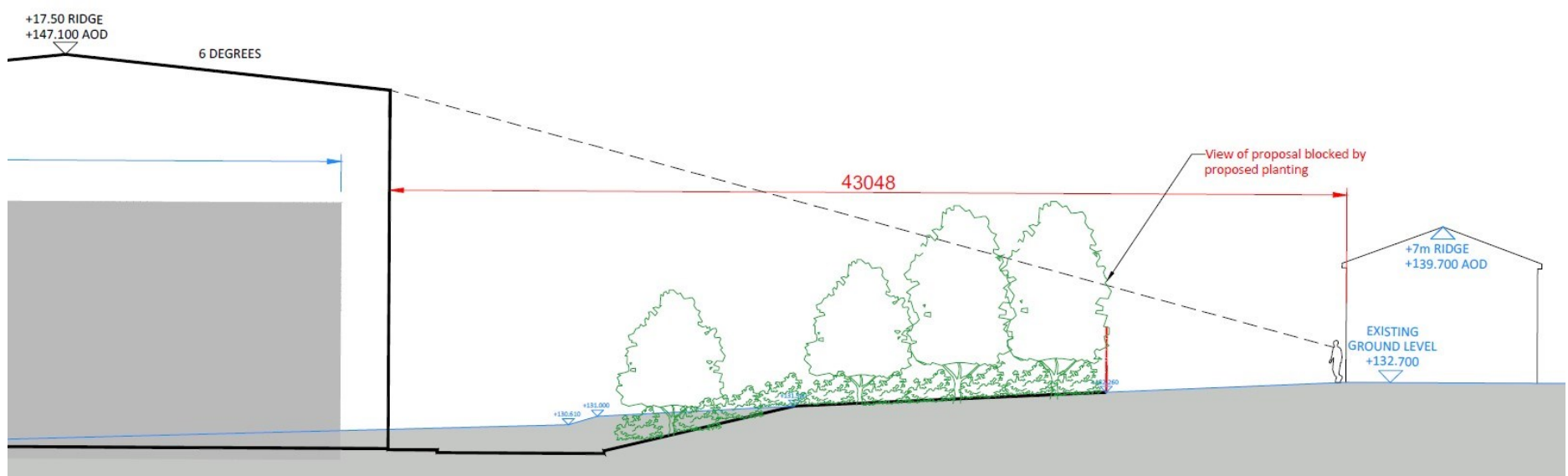


Fig 6. UNIT 3 – Existing and Proposed Eastern Section D-D
21157-ASA-00-ZZ.ZZ-D-A-0004-(S3-P13) - EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS 1 OF 2

Northern Boundary

- 2.2.9 The northern boundary is adjacent to the existing Newhouse Academy playing fields which lie at a very similar ground level as the northern edge of the site. The school building is substantially set back from the site boundary which creates enough distance so that scale is not a meaningful concern here.

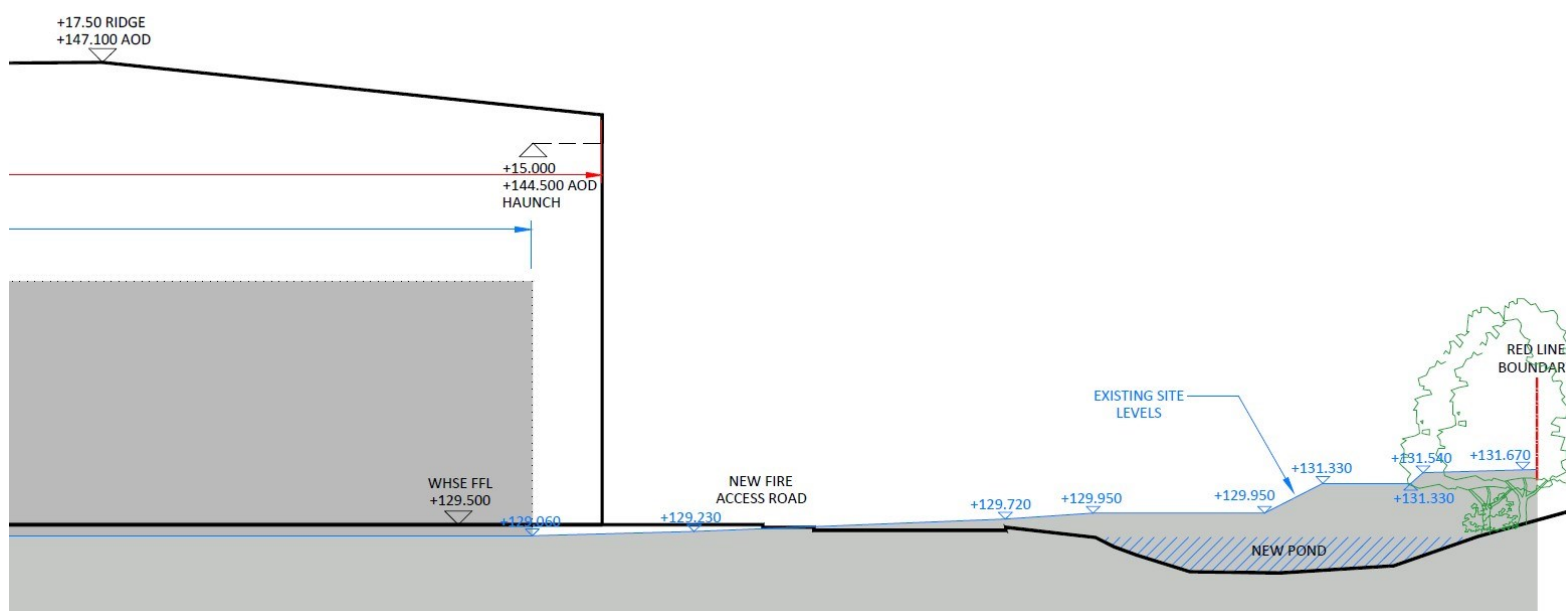


Fig 7. UNIT 3 – Existing and Proposed Northern Section F-F
21157-ASA-00-ZZ.ZZ-D-A-0005-(S3-P15) - EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS 2 OF 2

Western Boundary

2.2.10 The western boundary has a mix of open fields to the northern end and a proposed housing development to the south. The western façade of Unit 3 is set back from the western boundary due to the 35m service yard, which facilitates a 51m wide distance. At the site boundary pinch point on this elevation there is a 5m high acoustic fence and green wall which mitigate the service yard noise within this area, which are detailed within the landscaping and noise documents. As shown below the views from the proposed housing will be of new and existing landscaping and not the proposed Unit 3.

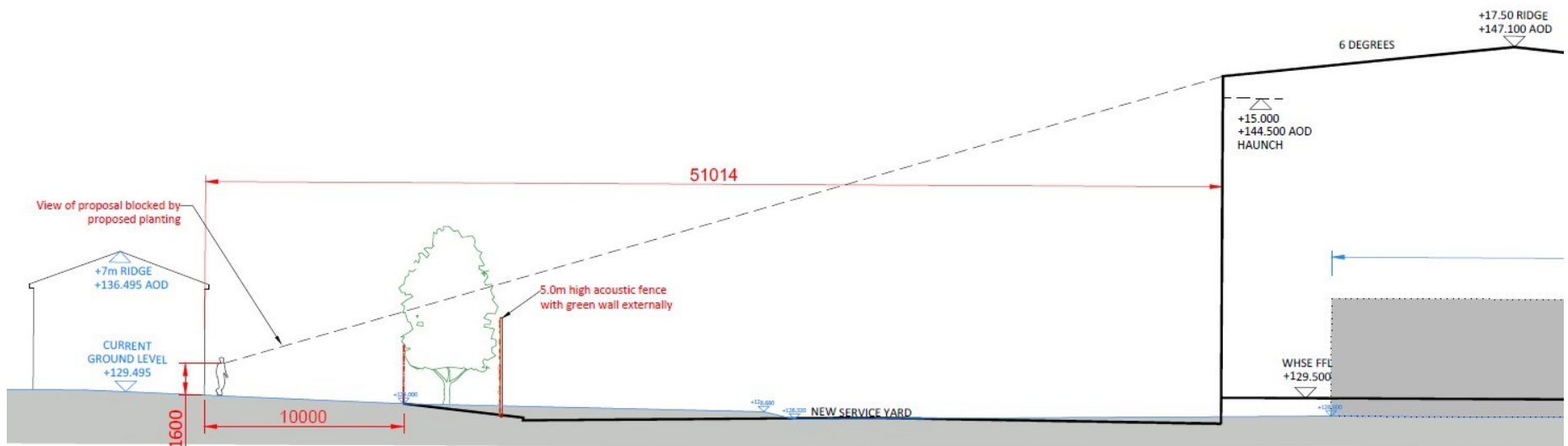


Fig 8. UNIT 3 – Existing and Proposed Western Section D-D with view line added.
21157-ASA-00-ZZ-ZZ-D-A-0004_(S3-P13) - EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS 1 OF 2

South-Western Boundary

2.2.11 The scale of the Unit 3 and its relationship with the future residential development along the south-western boundary was given a great deal of thought and work around the access, landscaping and façade treatment in this area. Following submission and in respect to consultation with the Council and third party objectors, Unit 3 was reduced in height by 3.5m, the façade cladding was refined, providing a broken, graded colour linking up with the sky. A 5m landscaped bund was also provided along the boundary. The building line of Unit 3 is located 37m from the south-west site boundary. Beyond the fence line there is outline planning permission for residential dwellings with reference 16/01399/HYBR (the "Russell Homes Scheme"). There are currently no detailed reserved matters plans for this land and as such an indicative layout has been provided within the Appellants original submission to take account of these properties within the assessment. This indicative layout shows dwellings with gardens of 10m to the boundary, leading to a total separation distance of at least 47m between Building 3 and the proposed development pursuant to the Russell Homes Scheme.

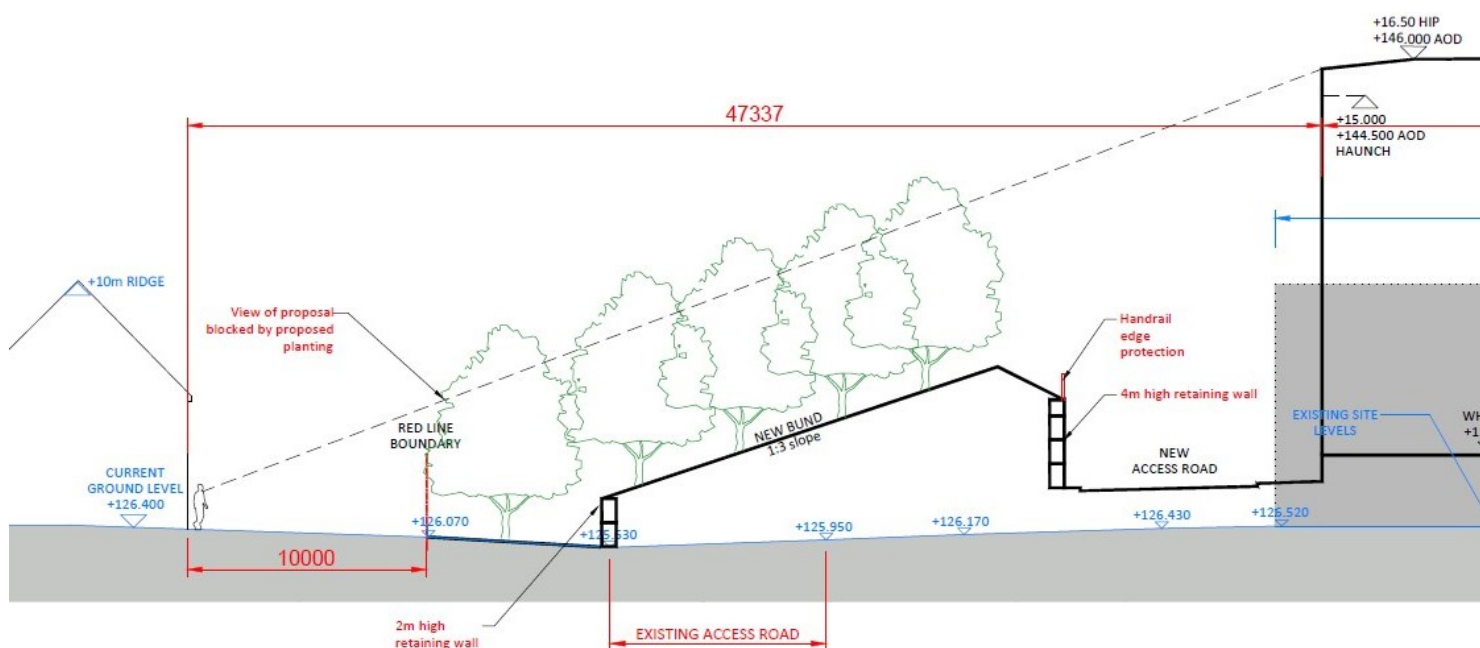


Fig 9. UNIT 3 – Existing and Proposed South-West Section F-F
21157-ASA-00-ZZ-ZZ-D-A-0005-(S3-P15) - EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS 2 OF 2

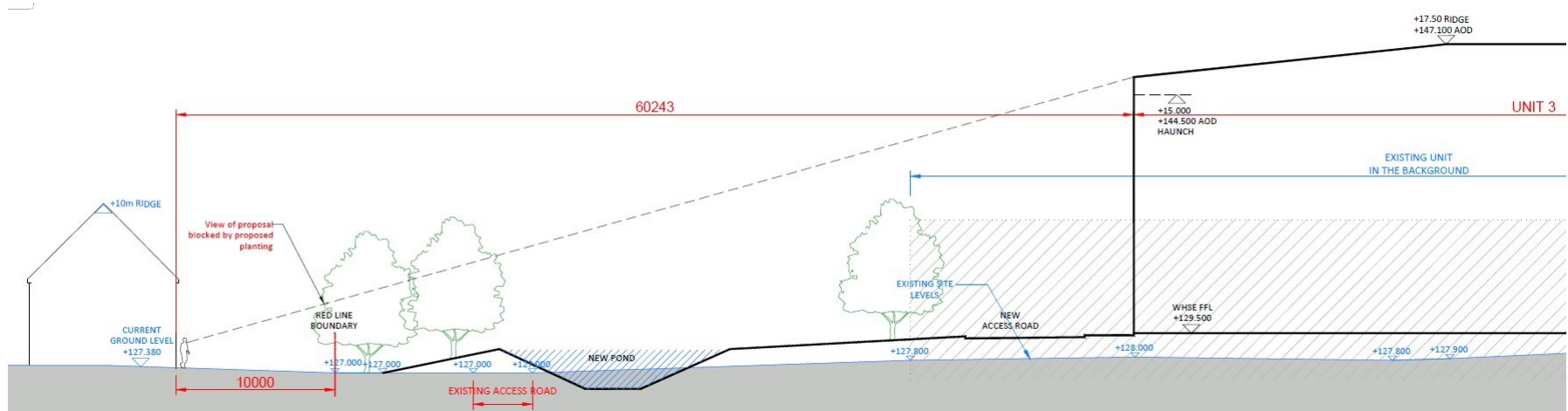


Fig 10. UNIT 3 – Existing and Proposed South-West Section H-H
21157-ASA-00-ZZ-ZZ-D-A-0005-(S3-P15) - EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS 2 OF 2

2.2.12 The case officer, at paragraph 37 of the Officer Report, recognised that *"as the final layout and siting of dwellings has not been formalised, and only an indicative housing layout exists this dilutes the certainty of the final form of the residential development"* within the Russell Homes Scheme. There is still opportunity for Russell Homes to develop the new housing layout and feasibly orientate the main outlook and views from the new dwellings away from what they perceive as a visual impact and still achieve the dwelling quantity required.

2.2.13 In addition to the work that Russell Homes could to do mitigate any perceived impacts when designing its own scheme, the impact on future residential units on this elevation is mitigated through the cladding and site landscaping, which Mr Patrick deals with in his evidence. Below are extracts from TPM's LVIA document and supplementary sections which clearly show the landscape mitigation to the south western boundary.



Fig 11. UNIT 3 – TPM View 12 showing existing and proposed building and landscaping. *Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal Rev E.*

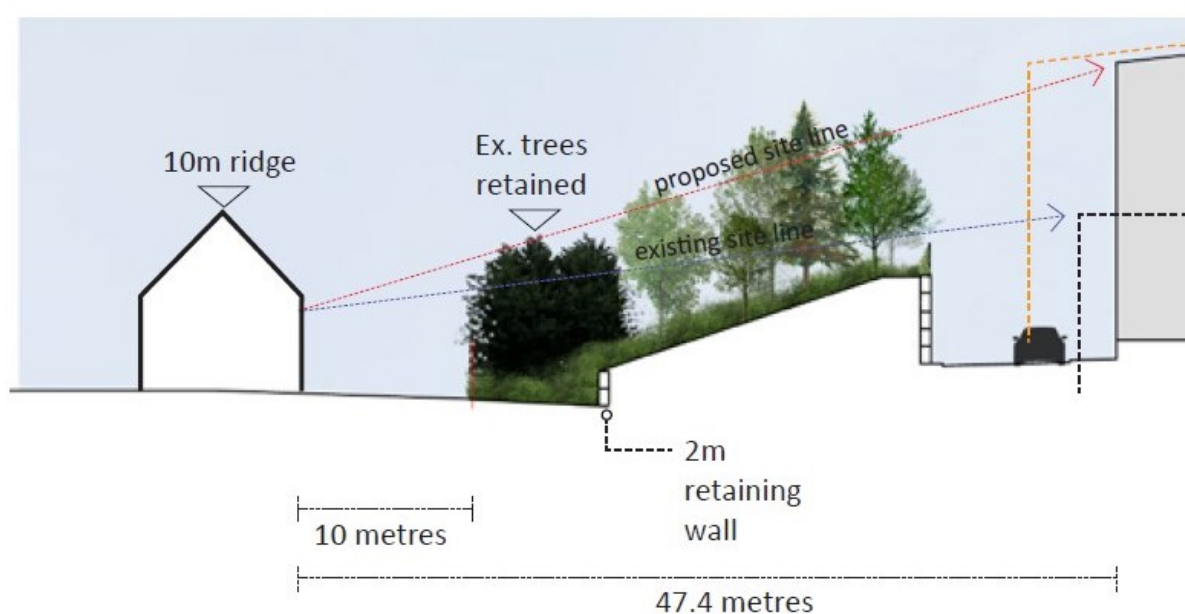


Fig 12. UNIT 3 – TPM Section B (Rev F) showing existing and proposed site lines with the existing and proposed landscaping and buildings.

2.2.14 Based on the details in the above section we believe, which is also reinforced by the case officer's report, the scheme is compliant with the Core Strategy DM1 (b) that developments "*Are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users; and (c). Do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy.*" Furthermore based on the evidence above we believe we comply with NPPF paragraph 135 a and b and 139.



2.3 Form – “Form follows function”

- 2.3.1 When dealing with ‘form’ in terms of a new a development we take it’s meaning as the following, “the visible shape or configuration of something”. The reason for refusal alleges, as regards form, that:

*“By virtue of its size, scale and **form**, the proposed development is not well designed and **would represent an overdevelopment** of the site which is not compatible with surrounding land uses due to the **detrimental and unacceptable impacts on the noise environment** and the **visual amenity of surrounding residents, with particular with regard to future residents adjacent the site**. Due to this **overbearing and unacceptable relationship with surrounding land** uses the application fails to accord with Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.”* [Emphasis added]

Functional form

- 2.3.2 The internal form of the new development originates from the institutional standards used throughout the industry to create a large open plan flexible space for prospective tenants to use and operate within.



Fig 13. Trammell Crow Distribution Centre

- 2.3.3 The building form follows the function of the building and is the accepted industry standard which is led by the market demand for speculative B8 use class developments. The modern distribution centre has been developed from a standard building grid which provides an open plan, clear height, flexible warehouse space for prospective tenants to install and operate their logistics activities from. The warehouse space is supplemented by ancillary office spaces for tenants to carry out administrative activities. Car parks and standard depth service yards provide the vehicular requirements. Tenants require materials that are robust, simple to maintain and deliver a contemporary finish for their staff and visitors to occupy. The new development building form is a more modern approach to the buildings on the site which are now outdated which are in need of improvement or replacement. The existing buildings and overall Site are in a poor condition and are no longer meet the requirements for modern B8 use because the buildings do not provide flexible open plan space with modern office facilities and external docking facilities and service to current industry specifications. The buildings do have potential to be used for tenants that are from the low-cost end of the market who will potentially create out of hours working and associated traffic movements. It is our belief that the local authority aspires to a class leading development attracting blue chip companies offering sustained employment opportunities based on the references below.
- 2.3.4 Rochdale Core Strategy’s (2016) Strategic Objective S01 which seeks to “deliver a more prosperous economy by identifying quality employment sites and areas to increase the number and range of jobs and employment levels.”
- 2.3.5 Policy SP1 states that “Rochdale will contribute to the success of the Manchester city region and the North West by playing its role in the delivery of sustainable development and investment that meets national and sub-regional objectives for employment growth by focussing employment development so that it supports the overall economic growth of the sub region.”
- 2.3.6 In Places for Everyone (PfE) Policy JP-4 states that at “least 3,513,000 sqm of new, accessible, industrial and warehousing floorspace will be provided in the Plan area over the period 2022-2039. To achieve this, a high level of choice and flexibility will be provided in the supply of sites for new industrial and warehouses.”

2.3.7 The building form is developed from the footprint which, as stated in previous sections, is orientated and laid out similarly to the existing buildings. The warehouse area is typically rectangular allowing vehicle delivery inbound and outbound to dock to one and sometimes both sides of the building. The office content should be positioned to allow building users short travel distances to their workplace and easy access to the car parking area, views out for occupants and close proximity to the operation without impeding the warehouse area. The office outlook is crucial too as it needs to provide building users accessible views and daylight. Within larger distribution units, additional transport offices positioned centrally within the service yard provide access and views to the service yard operation. For these reasons the building form is created and is typically a very efficient and logical layout.

2.3.8 The elevations have been detailed to punctuate key features of the building and to accentuate the office entrance areas. The use of varying cladding profiles and colours along with full height glazing raise the aesthetic quality and serve to break down the overall uniformity of the warehouse design whilst offering excellent longevity and durability.

External form and relationship with neighbouring land uses, including future residents.

2.3.9 Within the design development stage of this proposal the design team were aware of the visual impact to neighbouring properties whether existing or future developments. Although visible from all boundaries and surrounding neighbours the utmost effort was given to providing mitigation to these areas. This was the priority at the masterplanning stage which led to site coverage and unit size.

2.3.10 The external envelope of the building was key to minimising the visual impact. The external building form is created by large spans of a structural steel frame enclosed with upright walls and low pitch roofs, typically with parapets. The composite cladding panels, a modern, clean, robust building material, are used in different banded colours. These break up the cladding and use graded and banded colour through blues and greys upwards and along the elevations. These relate in particular with the sky scenery. The impact of this is to vertically and horizontally blend each building into the skyline and mitigating their visual impact.

2.3.11 The overall design elevational treatment as described above reduces the risk of the building being overbearing and therefore overdeveloped. The colours lessen the buildings impact and therefore the impact on the neighbouring properties.

2.3.12 Below are as built examples where the Trammell Crow elevational treatment softens the building visual impact with graded colours.

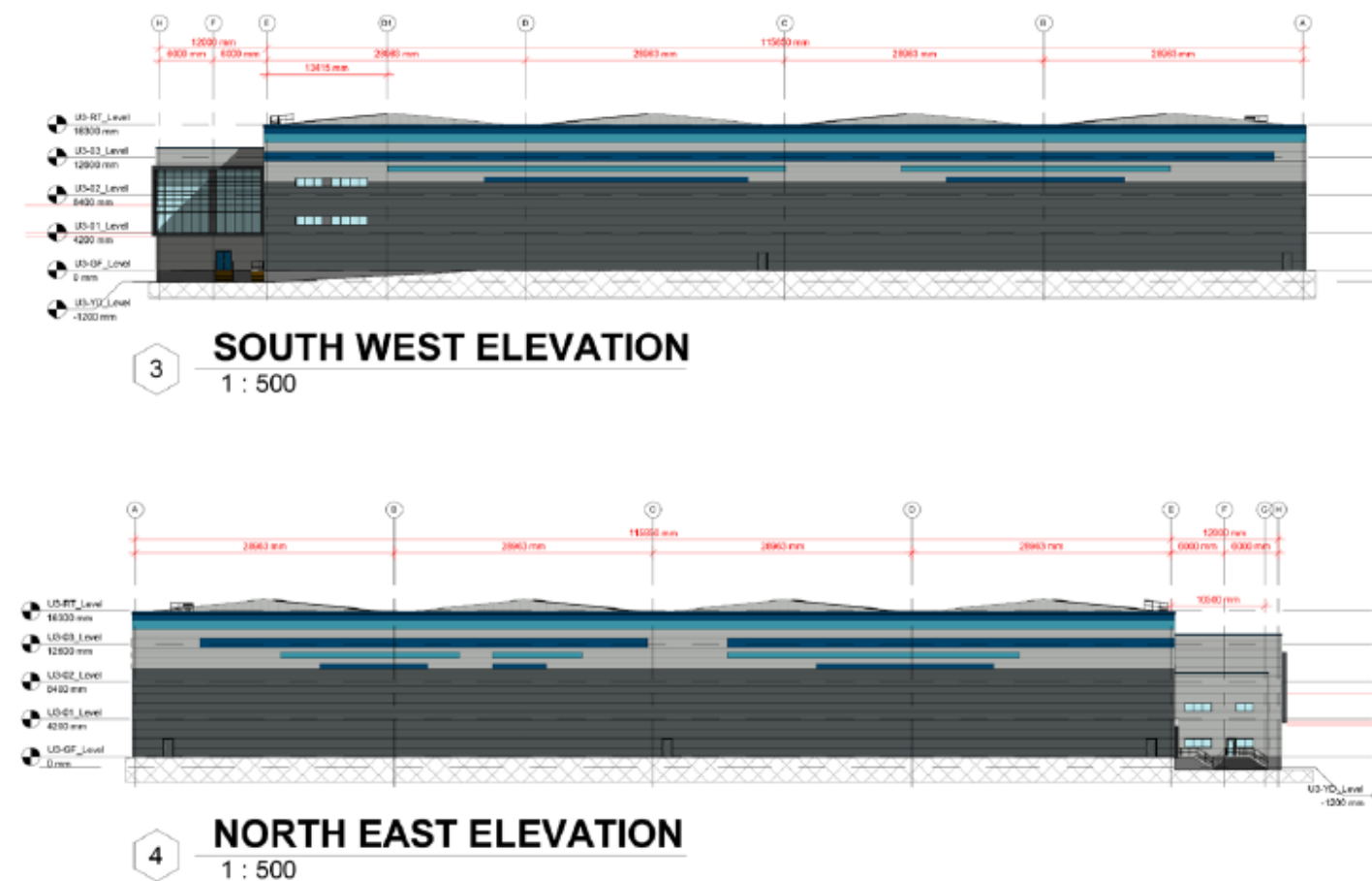


Fig 14. Unit 3 – Extract Elevations



Fig 15. Trammell Crow, Sheffield – Perspective view showing low level building colour integrating with the ground whilst the upper lighter banded colours combine with the skyline



Fig 16. Trammell Crow, Sheffield – Perspective view showing the upper lighter banded colours combine with the skyline.

- 2.3.13 To reduce the visual impact of the building form further, extensive perimeter landscaping is proposed, which is a combination of existing and proposed planting. This is discussed in detail in the evidence of Mr Patrick.
- 2.3.14 Units 1 and 2 use the same building line as the existing and maintain 23m to boundary and 29m to the nearest existing dwelling. To reduce visual impact, the boundaries are supplemented with additional planting and a new closed boarded fence. The planning officer's report confirms there is no undue impact on neighbouring properties, confirming at paragraph 34 that "upon consideration of the area surrounding Units 1 & 2, it is not considered that any other users or occupiers of buildings proximate to the site would be unduly impacted by the proposed units.", with paragraph 31 specifically confirming that there would be no undue impacts "through visual impact or overbearing impact" specifically.
- 2.3.15 In the case of Unit 3, the south-western perimeter is afforded a new landscape bund to supplement existing landscape screening. The proposed landscape batter with a gradient of 1:3, in combination with the proposed planting would, in the case officer's view (per paragraph 37 of his report) "significantly reduce any visual impact from the rear elevation of boundaries to the south of the site". A 51m separation between the future residential dwellings to the west of Unit 3 is anticipated (those units being part of the Russell Homes Scheme and still in outline, so that the final layout remains flexible and is yet to be determined), and in that space there will be landscaping, a 5m high green screen (which also acts as an acoustic barrier) and HGV parking and loading. Once more, the case officer (at paragraph 38) concluded that "the separation distance, combined with mitigation measures would result in an acceptable impact upon occupiers of future dwellings in terms of visual impact, with no undue overbearing impact expected."
- 2.3.16 The northern boundary of Unit 3 is not a concern due to the distances to the existing school (119m, taken from 21157-ASA-SK-ZZ.ZZ-D-A-SK31_(S0-P03)_PROPOSED SITE PLAN WITH EXISTING SITE.pdf) and playing fields between the site and building which allow to dissipate any overbearing or visual impact. Section 40 of the planning officers report agrees:

"Given the function of the building (education), separation distance and proposed landscaping along the north boundary of the application site, it is not expected that the users of the educational facility would be unduly impacted by way of visual impact or overbearing impact."

- 2.3.17 I agree with the case officer's findings that the form of the building is required to provide the building function and that the form which creates the scale and size of the building are mitigated by the cladding, landscaping and positioning of the buildings within the site as section 41 of the case officers report. "The proposed steps to mitigate the visual impact are considered to be acceptable on balance, contributing to appropriate mitigation to reduce the overall visual impact and reducing any overbearingness such development may have on the current and/or future occupiers of nearby dwellings and users of other buildings. On balance, the proposal is found to be consistent with adopted Rochdale Core Strategy policies DM1, P1 and P3, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework, with regards to visual impact."

2.4 “Not Well Designed”

- 2.4.1 Good design flows from the previous sections where we have explained why the development, building and site are well-designed in terms of size, scale and form. In addition to these sections, the whole development will achieve BREEAM Excellent which ensures the building’s materials, energy and life cycle combine to obtain an industry leading development. The quality, durability and materiality are all vastly improved on the existing development. Based on the above we are compliant with DM1 (a) of the Core Strategy. The reason for refusal alleges, as regards, design quality, that:

*“By virtue of its size, scale and form, the proposed development **is not well designed** and **would represent an overdevelopment** of the site which is not compatible with surrounding land uses due to the **detrimental and unacceptable impacts on the noise environment** and the **visual amenity of surrounding residents, with particular with regard to future residents adjacent the site.** Due to this **overbearing and unacceptable relationship with surrounding land** uses the application fails to accord with Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.” [Emphasis added]*

Functional form

- 2.4.2 Within this section we will justify the design with regards to the proposed development being “not well designed”
- 2.4.3 The underlying principle of the proposed design is to provide a development and buildings suitable for modern B8 use, and offering architectural character, adding quality and aesthetic enhancement to the immediate vicinity. The proposed building represents high quality industrial architecture that integrates well in the existing site and with the surrounding context and the case officer agreed with this view, noting at paragraph 32 of their report that Units 1 and 2 in particular were an improvement against the existing buildings due to their high-quality external materials.
- 2.4.4 Further, at paragraph 29 of the Officer Report, the case officer confirmed that in his view the units represented *"good architecture and appropriate in their scale and density, with appropriate landscaping and materials proposed to soften the appearance of the large buildings and allow for appropriate integration into the local setting and townscape."*
- 2.4.5 The Planning Officer Report, at pg. 48, Item 29 states:

"It is considered that the proposed Storage and Distribution (Class B8) units are acceptable with regards to their external appearance and design (subject to condition requiring samples and full material specification), representing good architecture and appropriate in their scale and density, with appropriate landscaping and materials proposed to soften the appearance of the large buildings and allow for appropriate integration into the local setting and townscape." [Emphasis added]

- 2.4.6 It is clear from the Planning Officer’s report that they confirm the buildings are ‘acceptable’, ‘representing good architecture’ and are appropriate in their scale and density. We have highlighted within this section why the buildings are designed as they are resulting ‘good architecture’ confirming they are well designed contrary to the refusal notice, resulting in high quality architecture (which is more than merely aesthetics_. This also reinforces that the design complies with NPPF paragraph 135 a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.



Fig 17. Unit 2 – Rendered image showing a modern sharp building integrated into the landscape and surroundings.

3. Summary

- 3.1 This statement demonstrates that this the proposed design has been developed specifically to suit the site context, setting and local environment.
- 3.2 The current site is unattractive and out-dated, and the proposed scheme will greatly improve an outdated industrial site to provide modern, high-quality units which are well suited to future occupier requirements, more attractive in appearance, and more suitable in regards to their construction and energy demands. The building will be well designed and constructed to achieve BREEAM level: 'Excellent'.
- 3.3 The submitted design proposals have been carefully considered by multiple design and construction professionals and developed with due regard to the existing site, it's context and surroundings, to create a coherent, usable site, consisting of a modernised building with efficiency and consistency in mind to fulfil the client's aspirations. The proposals allow for the best possible access by all modes of transport and encourages travel to the site by means other than car.
- 3.4 The development will deliver on the aspirations of Rochdale and their Local Plan and will help to promote and support employment growth, acting as a catalyst to further stimulate economic regeneration and local investment through the creation of new jobs.
- 3.5 The scheme represents a high-quality, policy compliant development and substantial investment to the local area, which we are advised is in need of investment.
- 3.6 The officers' report recommended the Proposal for permission. *"In summary, it is acknowledged that the larger Storage and Distribution (B8) units proposed will result in somewhat greater impact than the existing, smaller units that exist on site and are to be demolished. To mitigate such impacts, the applicant proposed substantial landscaping, including tree planting along all boundaries, fencing on some boundaries, and hard engineering in the form of regrading of embankments and provision of batters. The proposed steps to mitigate the visual impact are considered to be acceptable on balance, contributing to appropriate mitigation to reduce the overall visual impact and reducing any overbearingness such development may have on the current and/or future occupiers of nearby dwellings and users of other buildings. On balance, the proposal is found to be consistent with adopted Rochdale Core Strategy policies DM1, P1 and P3, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework, with regards to visual impact."*



Fig 18. Unit 2 and 3 – View from the north west

4.0 Annexes

4.1 Annex 01 - 21157-ASA-00-ZZ.ZZ-D-A-0004_(S3-P13) - EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS 1 OF 2.pdf

Original site section drawings updated section drawing showing additional view lines from 1.6m high. A.O.D. levels added and raised landscaping to Section D-D of Unit 3 in line with TPM’s proposals.

4.2 Annex 02 - 21157-ASA-00-ZZ.ZZ-D-A-0005_(S3-P15) - EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS 2 OF 2.pdf

Original site section drawings updated section drawing showing additional view lines from 1.6m high. A.O.D. levels added.

4.3 Annex 03 - 21157-ASA-00-XX.XX-SP-A-0002_(S2-P01)-Design and Access Supplement-Design Iteration.pdf

A supplementary document to the original design and access statement to explain the design iteration.

4.4 Annex 04 - 21157-ASA-00-XX.XX-SP-A-0003_(S2-P02)-Schedule of Levels.pdf. Details the existing levels and volumes.

4.5 Annex 05 - 21157-ASA-SK-ZZ.ZZ-D-A-SK31_(S0-P03)_PROPOSED SITE PLAN WITH EXISTING SITE.pdf. An overlay of the proposed site plan (P14) and the existing site buildings.