PINS REF:
6013490

LPA REF:
25/01764/OUT

Land at Greenlands, Tattenhall, Chester

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF LOUISE FITZGERALD MSCI (HONS) PG DIP CMLI

FOR

GLADMAN DEVELOPMENTS LTD

ON LANDSCAPE AND VIEWS

Introduction

S1 My name is Louise Fitzgerald. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) and Associate at The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd and have extensive experience in the preparation and review of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments and Appraisals for a range of residential, commercial, infrastructure and renewable energy projects.

S2 My evidence considers anticipated effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and views. TEP was appointed by Gladman to advise on landscape and visual matters on its development proposal at Greenlands, Tattenhall, to include the production of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) to accompany the planning application.

S3 Landscape and visual matters do not form part of either the putative reasons for refusal or the Rule 6 Party's Statement of Case. I have been asked to provide evidence on these matters because landscape and visual matters have been considered in previous appeals relating to development at the Site and have been raised by third parties.

The Site and Context

S4 The Site and its context are described in detail in paragraphs 4.49 to 4.57 of the LVA (CD1.07).

S5 The Site comprises approximately 6.3ha of grazing land on the northern edge of Tattenhall. The Site is to the immediate north of Keys Brook and is contained by existing hedgerows and trees.

Landscape Baseline

S6 The landscape baseline is set out in Section 4 of the LVA (CD1.07).

S7 The Site is not subject to any national, local or other statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.

S8 At the borough level, the Site is in Landscape Character Area (LCA) 9b: Hargrave, Hoofield and Beeston Plain. Key characteristics of the LCA are described in paragraph 4.21 of the LVA (CD1.07). The Site is broadly characteristic of LCA 9b, comprising modified grassland with a gently sloping landform, enclosed by hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees. However, its character is also influenced by the adjoining settlement edge of Tattenhall and nearby roads.

Visual Baseline

S9 The visual baseline is set out in Section 5 of the LVA (CD1.07).

S10 The LVA identified 13 visual receptors comprising persons who may have a view of the Proposed Development and included seven representative viewpoints. I consider the viewpoints identified in the LVA appropriate and representative of views experienced of the Site.

The Proposed Development and Landscape Strategy

S11 I describe the Proposed Development summarily in my evidence referring mainly to the Design and Access Statement (DAS) (CD1.06).

Landscape and Visual Effects

S12 I explain in Chapter 6 of my main proof that the LVA for the application was undertaken in accordance with The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (now the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP)).

<u>Landscape Effects</u>

S13 The Proposed Development has been designed to retain Keys Brook within a substantial green infrastructure corridor, reinforced by additional planting and open space.

S14 The greatest forecast landscape effect is locally at the Site and its immediate environs although after 15 years this is anticipated to be no greater than Minor Adverse. This is a finding consistent with formerly undeveloped land changing to developed land.

Visual Effects

S15 Visual effects would similarly be localised and concentrated on receptors closest to the Site, including nearby residents, users of local roads and users of surrounding Public Rights of Way. Some receptors would experience adverse effects, particularly during the early years following construction. However, the visual envelope of the development would be restricted by existing vegetation, built form and the generally flat landform. As planting matures, visual effects would reduce substantially, with the majority of long-term effects assessed as minor adverse or negligible.

S16 The Proposed Development would not materially affect the important views identified within the Tattenhall and District Neighbourhood Plan.

Cumulative Effects

S17 I have considered cumulative effects alongside the proposed developments at Chester Road and Frog Lane. Whilst those schemes would contribute to a perception of growth around Tattenhall, cumulative effects would remain geographically contained and principally affect receptors close to the individual sites. The developments would continue to be perceived as separate additions associated with the existing settlement, rather than a continuous or coalesced area of development.

Compliance with Landscape Related Planning Policies

S18 I have considered compliance with landscape related planning policies and found that the proposals accord with planning policy.

S19 Several policies deal with matters of detailed design, which can be readily achieved and can be agreed with the Council at the Reserved Matters stage.

Representations Relating to Landscape and Views

S20 In Chapter 8 of my main proof I consider the comments made by Cheshire West and Chester Council's Landscape Officer noting that they generally agree with the findings of the LVA, including that impacts would be largely contained to the Site and its immediate surroundings and that the proposed embedded landscape mitigation will help to reduce visual effects and integrate the Site into the wider landscape over a period of time. The Landscape Officer noted some disagreement with the reported sensitivity and magnitude of change on views from FP8 and I explain in my proof why I consider the LVA's judgement to be robust.

S21 I also consider the Officer's Report which places significant weight on the findings of the Inspector for a previous application and appeal for 137 dwellings on the same site in 2016 (ref 12/02352/OUT). The Inspector found that the site is influenced by the existing settlement edge, that its position north of Keys Brook was not particularly influential in landscape character terms, and that views towards Beeston Castle and the wider Sandstone Ridge would not be obscured by development. Importantly, the Inspector concluded that satisfactory mitigation could be achieved and that the overall landscape effect would be minor adverse.

Conclusion

S22 I confirm that the LVA is consistent with guidance. I reviewed that work and in preparing my evidence I have revisited the LVA and found it to be robust with sound, evidenced judgements.

S23 I have found that there are no serious adverse effects on landscape character or on views which would arise from the Proposed Development.

S24 For the reasons stated above, there are no substantive reasons on landscape and visual grounds for refusing planning permission for the proposed residential scheme on the appeal Site.