

GREEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Site: 49 Cross Bank Road, Batley,
WF17 8PN

Proposal: *Demolition of Existing
Garage, Out-Building &
Dwelling. Erection of 1No. New
Build Dwelling, Detached
Stable, formation of Riding
Arena and External Works
(within a Conservation Area).*

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DOCUMENT CONTROL	0
TABLE OF CONTENTS	0
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THE SITE	2
3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	7
4. CONCLUSION	10

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Urban Green Space Assessment has been prepared in support of the proposed development at land to the south-west of Cross Bank Road, Batley, comprising an extension and alteration to a dwelling, detached stable block, riding ménage and associated equestrian grazing land.
- 1.2. The application site lies partly within an area designated as Urban Green Space under Policy LP61 of the Kirklees Local Plan. Accordingly, it is necessary to consider the role and function of the designated land and assess whether the proposed development is consistent with the objectives of the designation.
- 1.3. In undertaking this assessment, regard has been given to the Kirklees Local Plan, the Kirklees Open Space Study and associated Green Infrastructure evidence which informed the designation of Urban Green Space across the Borough. The assessment considers the environmental, landscape and recreational role of the site and the extent to which these functions will be affected by the proposed development
- 1.4. The assessment concludes that the proposal accords with both the wording and objectives of Policy LP61 and will maintain, and in several respects enhance, the environmental qualities that the Urban Green Space designation seeks to protect.
- 1.5. The report concludes that, whilst the site forms part of the wider Urban Green Space network and contributes positively to the local landscape framework, the proposed development has been designed in a manner which retains and enhances these qualities. The proposal introduces an appropriate recreational use whilst maintaining the site's role as an important component of the wider green infrastructure network.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1. The application site extends to approximately 0.655 hectares and comprises land associated with 49 Cross Bank Road, Batley.
- 2.2. The site currently consists of domestic curtilage, grassland, scrub vegetation, mature trees and areas of open land. It occupies an elevated position and forms part of a wider network of woodland, vegetation and open spaces that contribute to the green character of this part of Batley.
- 2.3. A review of the Kirklees Local Plan Policies Map confirms that part of the application site is designated as Urban Green Space. The proposals show the introduction of Menage and Stables in the area currently designated as Urban Green Space.
- 2.4. The Urban Green Space designation forms part of a wider network of protected green spaces across the Borough which are recognised for their contribution to recreation, visual amenity, landscape character and biodiversity. The designation was informed by the Council's Open Space Study and Green Infrastructure evidence base, which assessed the role of open spaces in contributing to environmental quality and local character.
- 2.5. However, the site remains entirely within private ownership and is enclosed by existing boundary treatments. There is no lawful public access to the site, nor are there any public rights of way crossing the land. Consequently, the site does not contribute directly towards meeting local recreational needs in the way that public parks, recreation grounds or amenity spaces do. The site nevertheless performs an important environmental role. It forms part of a wider woodland and vegetation corridor that links surrounding areas of open space and contributes to ecological connectivity across this part of Batley. The site's tree cover, vegetation and open character contribute positively to local visual amenity and the perception of a continuous green corridor when viewed from surrounding public areas.

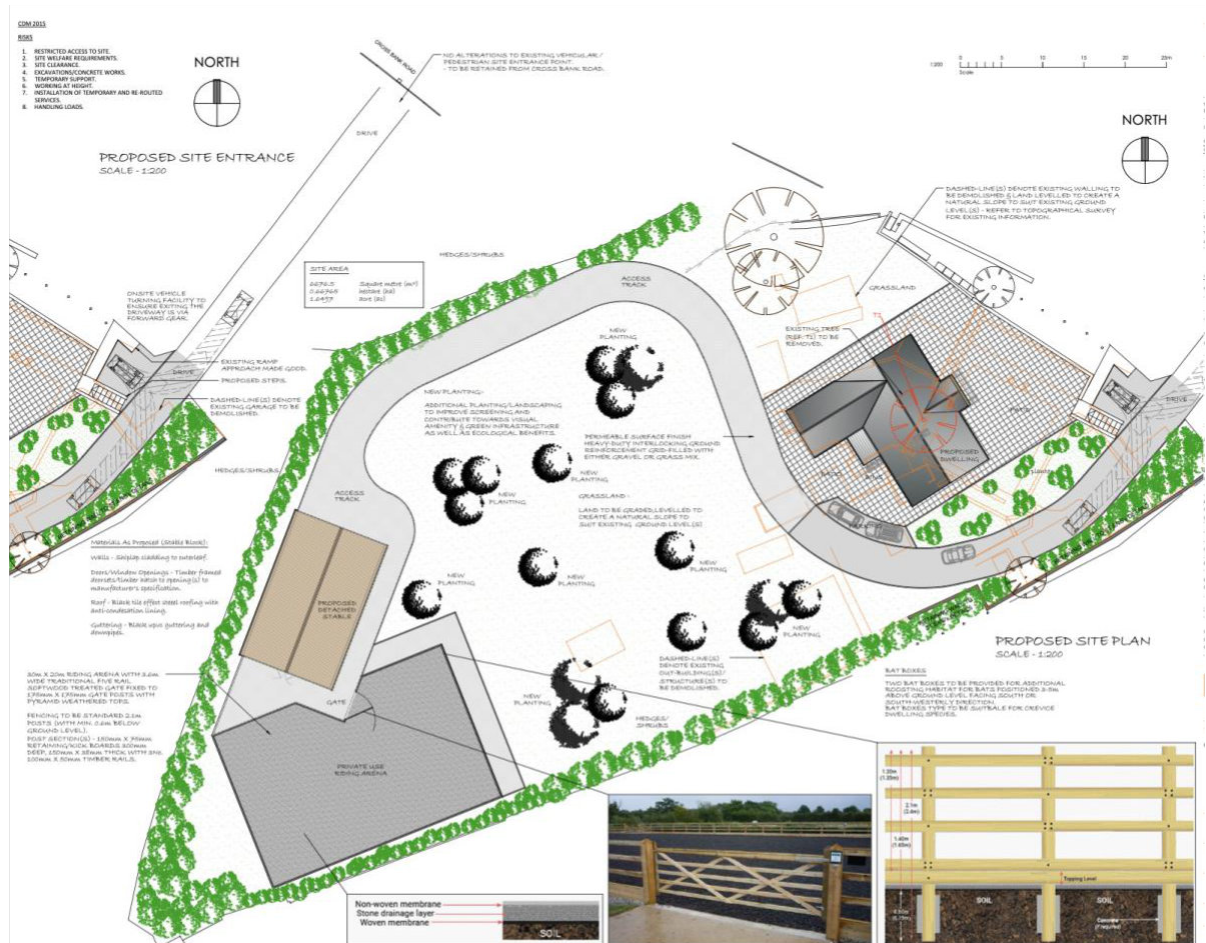
- 2.6. The site is located immediately adjacent to land that forms part of the playing fields for St Mary's Catholic School. The land is not adjacent nor connect to a public park.
- 2.7. The principal contribution of the site lies not in recreation but in its environmental and landscape functions. The existing vegetation, trees and open character of the site contribute positively to local visual amenity and form part of a wider network of green infrastructure extending through this part of Batley.
- 2.8. The site also forms part of a broader woodland corridor that links areas of vegetation, open land and ecological habitat. This contributes to the perception of a continuous green landscape and provides opportunities for wildlife movement through the surrounding area.
- 2.9. Accordingly, whilst the site has value as part of the wider green infrastructure network, its significance arises primarily from landscape and biodiversity considerations rather than from public accessibility or recreational use and therefore the most significant planning consideration arising from the proposal relates to its impact on local landscape character and the wider green infrastructure network rather than the loss of Green Space.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. The development includes the demolition of existing garage, out-building & dwelling and the erection of 1no. new build dwelling, detached stable, formation of riding arena and external works. The applicant owns 6 horses (evidence provided by Agent) and the size of the proposed budling is commensurate with the needs of the animals.
- 3.2. The proposed use represents an outdoor recreational activity and maintains the site's predominantly open and green character. The majority of the land will remain as grazing land and therefore continue to contribute to the visual openness of the locality.
- 3.3. Unlike many forms of built development which substantially alter the character of open land, the proposed equestrian use is inherently compatible with the existing landscape setting and reflects the semi-rural characteristics of the site.
- 3.4. The value of the existing site is relates to tree cover. The image below shows the extent of this coverage. The proposed development retains all boundary trees.



3.5. A key element of the proposal is the introduction of a comprehensive landscaping scheme. Whilst some existing trees within the middle of the site will require removal to facilitate development, substantial new planting is proposed throughout the site. In particular, extensive native mixed deciduous woodland planting is proposed along all site boundaries. This woodland planting has been designed to strengthen the existing landscape framework, reinforce ecological connectivity and provide enhanced screening of the proposed development.



3.6. Over time, the new planting will establish a stronger and more coherent woodland edge around the site than presently exists. This will assist in integrating the development into the landscape and strengthen the continuity of the wider woodland corridor extending through the locality.

- 3.7. The benefits of the planting scheme will be particularly evident from surrounding public viewpoints. Views from nearby public footpaths, the adjacent playing fields and the burial ground will continue to experience the site as part of a wider green corridor. As the proposed woodland planting matures, the perception of a continuous band of vegetation and woodland cover is expected to be enhanced.
- 3.8. The landscaping proposals will therefore ensure that the site retains its contribution to visual amenity and green infrastructure whilst also delivering meaningful ecological enhancements through the creation of new native woodland habitat.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1. The Policy LP61 of the Kirklees Local Plan seeks to protect designated Urban Green Space from inappropriate development. The policy recognises that Urban Green Space can contribute to recreation, visual amenity, landscape character and biodiversity and seeks to ensure that these functions are appropriately safeguarded.
- 4.2. The supporting evidence base for the Local Plan, including the Kirklees Open Space Study and wider Green Infrastructure evidence, identifies the importance of maintaining connected green networks throughout the Borough. These networks perform a variety of functions, including providing visual relief, supporting biodiversity and contributing to local character.
- 4.3. The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the importance of open space and green infrastructure whilst supporting proposals that retain or enhance environmental quality and contribute positively to local character.
- 4.4. The key consideration in this case is therefore not simply whether part of the site falls within a designation, but whether the proposal would undermine the recreational, visual, landscape or ecological functions that the designation seeks to protect.
- 4.5. The Kirklees Open Space Study provides an audit and analysis of the supply and demand for open space and outdoor recreation facilities within the district in order to identify deficiencies and opportunities for new provision.
- 4.6. The report identifies this site as 466 Land adjacent St Mary's RC Primary School, North Bank Road, Batley. The assessment rates the land as Amber (Medium) and states; *"Woodland/treed area considered to be of important value. Retain as woodland/treed area."*
- 4.7. The Council's assessment is significant as it identifies the principal reason for the site's contribution to the Urban Green Space designation. Importantly, the assessment does not

identify the site as an important recreational resource, sports facility or publicly accessible area of open space. Rather, the value attributed to the site arises from its woodland and tree cover and its contribution to the wider landscape framework.

- 4.8. The proposed development has been designed specifically to respect and reinforce these qualities. Whilst a limited amount of tree removal is required to facilitate the proposed stables and ménage, the scheme retains the essential woodland character of the site and is accompanied by a substantial programme of additional planting.
- 4.9. In particular, extensive native mixed deciduous woodland planting is proposed along all site boundaries, creating a reinforced woodland edge around the site and strengthening its relationship with surrounding areas of vegetation. The proposed planting will significantly increase woodland cover across the site over time and will enhance its contribution to the wider green infrastructure network.
- 4.10. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to respond positively to the Council's own assessment of Site 466. The defining characteristic identified by the Council will not only be retained but enhanced through the proposed planting strategy. The development therefore maintains the essential function of the site within the Urban Green Space network whilst accommodating an appropriate recreational use in the form of equestrian grazing and associated facilities.
- 4.11. The proposal has been assessed against the objectives of Policy LP61 and can be summarised as follows;
- Firstly, the site does not perform a meaningful public recreational role because there is no lawful public access. The proposal will therefore not result in the loss of publicly available open space or diminish recreational opportunities available to local residents.
 - Secondly, the proposal acknowledges the site's contribution to visual amenity, landscape character and biodiversity and incorporates specific measures to maintain and enhance these functions. The extensive woodland planting proposed around the site boundaries will strengthen the wider green corridor, improve landscape integration and secure ecological enhancements over the long term.
 - Thirdly, the proposed use itself constitutes a recognised recreational activity. The provision of stables, grazing land and a riding ménage supports equestrian recreation

and represents an appropriate use of land within a predominantly open and green setting.

- 4.12. Taken together, the retention of the site's open character, the enhancement of the woodland corridor and the introduction of a recreation-related use ensure that the objectives of the Urban Green Space designation continue to be fulfilled.
- 4.13. When assessed against the objectives of Policy LP61, the proposal is therefore considered to retain and enhance the qualities that underpin the Urban Green Space designation.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. This assessment has considered the relationship between the proposed development and the Urban Green Space designation affecting part of the application site.
- 5.2. Whilst part of the site lies within designated Urban Green Space, the land is wholly private, inaccessible to the public and does not function as publicly available open space. As a result, the proposal will not result in the loss of recreational land available to the community.
- 5.3. The principal value of the site lies in its contribution to local landscape character, visual amenity and the wider woodland corridor extending through this part of Batley.
- 5.4. The Council's Open Space Assessment identifies the site as having value principally as a woodland and treed area and recommends its retention in that capacity
- 5.5. A substantial schedule of native mixed deciduous woodland planting is proposed along all site boundaries. This planting will strengthen landscape structure, reinforce ecological connectivity, improve screening and enhance the perception of a continuous woodland corridor from surrounding public viewpoints, including nearby public footpaths, playing fields and the burial ground.
- 5.6. The proposed equestrian use is entirely consistent with the open character of the site and represents an appropriate recreational use of land within a predominantly green setting. The development will therefore allow the site to continue performing an important visual, landscape and ecological role whilst delivering long-term environmental enhancements.
- 5.7. Overall, the proposal is considered to accord with the objectives of Policy LP61 of the Kirklees Local Plan. The development will preserve and enhance the qualities that underpin the designation, whilst introducing an appropriate recreational use that is compatible with the character, appearance and function of the site.