

### **Appendix 3**

A landscape appraisal of the site of planning application AVA/2014/0928 by Peter Wood (BSc Hons , Dip La , CMLI) a landscape architect, botanist and arboriculturist: Land to the west of Kedleston Road in Quarndon Parish.

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 I have been asked to prepare this appraisal by John Wren, a resident on the eastern side of Kedleston Road with whom I have worked previously. John and other local residents oppose the proposal by Catesby Estates to carry out residential development on some 48 acres of farmland immediately west of Kedleston Road. That road forms the boundary between Derby City and Amber Valley Borough Council. (AVBC)

1.2 Initially I started looking at this site in response to the proposed changes to AVBC's Core Strategy. Then when planning application AVA/2014/0928 was submitted I turned my attention to that. In particular I looked at the landscape and visual impact assessment written by The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP).

1.3 I am a very experienced Chartered Landscape Architect having worked in this area for nearly 40 years. I have a Botany / Geography degree from Hull University and I qualified as a Chartered Landscape architect from what is now Birmingham City University. I am also a qualified tree specialist and arboriculturist as well as being a self-taught horticulturist.

1.4 Over the years I have worked for many Midlands planning departments plus private architects, Groundwork and Tarmac. I have worked for the following local authorities – South and East Staffordshire, West Midlands, Nottingham City, South Derbyshire District Council.

1.5 Importantly, I have carried out many Landscape Visual Impact Assessments. (LVIAs)

1.6 In this case, I carried out a detailed desk top survey to obtain baseline studies of the site and its surrounds and read the documentation available from the local authorities, Catesby Estates, Kedleston Voice and the application documents submitted by EDP.

1.7 To back up my desk top studies I surveyed the site and the surrounding landscape on September 25th 2014.

## 2. Background Documents.

2.1 I read the initial available literature from Catesby Estates and some of the work produced by Kedleston Voice. The latter has been concerned, amongst many other things, with the detrimental impact a development of some 400 dwellings would have on the setting of the nationally important Kedleston Hall and its gardens. As that has already been discussed in detail, I wish to concentrate on the landscape implications a residential development would have in this location rather than the historic relationship with Kedleston Hall, important though that is in a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.

2.2 Although the land is in AVBC it appears to me that Catesby Estates are anticipating the development will function as an extension of Allestree in Derby City. I have, therefore, looked at the relevant documents produced by that Authority.

2.3 Allestree is described in the City Council's draft townscape character assessment as having a leafy character and excellent access to open land and the countryside. "The ward is flanked by two City Parks to the north and south. These help to maintain a separate identity from other parts of the built up area. This separate identity is reinforced by the dominance of the A38 to the east. The arterial routes of Kedleston Road and Duffield Road also help to define the character of the area...Open space is a key contributor to the character of the area...Beyond the western boundary of the ward the landscape opens out into estate farmland surrounding the villages of Mackworth, Kedleston and Quarndon within Amber Valley."

2.4 In the October 2012 review of its Green Wedge (GW) policy the City Council considered Allestree along with Mackworth and Markeaton Brook and noted that the green wedge which includes Markeaton Park provides a vital break in the urban landscape helping to reduce the feeling of urban sprawl.

2.5 "The GW allows the open countryside to penetrate into the urban area of the city, providing residents with access to the countryside and space for recreational activities. It also provides a haven for wildlife within the urban area. This GW contains Markeaton Park which serves a citywide catchment and is one of the city's most important recreational spaces...it forms part of the setting of the Markeaton conservation area and abuts the protected setting of Kedleston Hall and historic gardens."

2.6 Catesby Estates has made the point that this site is not within a green belt and that is true. That designation, however, is not necessarily a reflection of landscape character. The green belt to the north and east of Derby starts immediately north of where Kedleston Road forks left to go to the golf course and Kedleston Hall and takes in Quarndon village and the fields to the west of that. It contributes to the broad sweep of countryside running down from north of Duffield as far as Mackworth.

2.7 The September 2012 technical assessment of the Derby Principal Urban Area Green Belt Purposes produced by the five Councils involved examined this area of green belt under the heading of Derby North West. It said “the green belt in this location performs a very important role in constraining the northward sprawl of the City and the merging of the urban areas of Derby with Quarndon, Duffield and Belper.”

2.8 Paragraph 6.4 of the document continues by saying “the physical open gaps between Derby and Quarndon and Quarndon and Duffield are very narrow in this location and the green belt performs an important role therefore in preventing the merging of these settlements with each other and the urban area of the City. On the western edge of the broad location the green belt performs an important role in preventing urban sprawl between the City and the National Trust’s Kedleston Hall estate.”

2.9 The relationship between Kedleston Hall and the belt of countryside subject to current Local Plan policy EN33 and Policy E3 in the emerging Core Strategy was discussed in the October 2001 report prepared by the Derek Lovejoy Partnership on behalf of the National Trust. It was a report to establish the setting of Kedleston Hall and its associated parkland and an assessment of the effects of potential development upon the parkland and setting.

2.10 This 2001 report was particularly important for me in painting the picture of the landscape hinterland of Kedleston Hall and the park and gardens. The report was obviously considered by AVBC to be of great importance and it is very relevant to this assessment as it highlights the sensitivity of the landscape surrounding Kedleston Hall.

2.11 I have also had regard to the work of Derbyshire County Council which in 2003 published the ‘Landscape Character of Derbyshire.’ Then it played a major role in creating landscape policy across the County. More recently the holistic and spatial techniques it used

have also been used in the analysis of other environmental data. The latest version of the document was published in 2013.

2.12 Of particular relevance to this assessment is the County Council's 2013 mapping of 'Areas of Multiple Environmental Sensitivity' (AMES) and 'Tranquillity.' The methodology used incorporated data relating to biodiversity, the historic environment and visual unity. The last of these related primarily to field enclosure patterns, trees and woodland to give a picture of the 'intactness' of each landscape.

2.13 Areas that are above average in respect of all three environmental categories are described by the County Council as having 'Primary Sensitivity.' Areas so described will be most sensitive to change and are regarded by the County Council as being a cultural resource on multiple fronts which, in the context of the European Landscape Convention, should have a strong focus on the protection of their environmental assets.

2.14 The eastern section of this proposed allocation is an area of Primary Sensitivity. That part of the site by the brook is of Secondary Sensitivity but I understand that in this latter area there are also important biodiversity issues to be addressed by any development. Areas of Secondary Sensitivity will be above average in two of the three categories listed in paragraph 2.12 above and attract a strong focus on the conservation and enhancement of their assets.

2.15. In appendices EDP 4 and EDP 5 there are extracts from the 'Landscape Character of Derbyshire' which lists the Estate Farmlands and Riverside Meadows in the Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands. The original documents show how Primary and Secondary sensitivities relate to three categories- settlement and buildings, land management and field boundaries. I consider they show just how sensitive the area including this proposed allocation is.

2.16 My assessment has taken all these reports and documents into account but I have looked afresh at this landscape using the techniques outlined in the "guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment 3<sup>rd</sup> edition" published by the Landscape Institute in April 2013. That is the most recent advice available from my professional body.

### 3. Landscape on the north western boundary of Derby.

3.1 Landscape, as defined by the Council of Europe in 2000, "is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human

factors.” That is the definition adopted by the European Landscape Convention. It confirms that landscape is about the relationship between people and place and that it provides the setting for our day to day lives.

3.2 I consider that the landscape along the western boundary of Derby northward from the A38 is an important shared resource which is important in its own right as a public good. It provides an environment in which flora and fauna may flourish, a setting in which people may enjoy recreation and experience aesthetic enjoyment.

3.3 Particularly with reference to this site the landscape of which it is a part creates a sense of place and a sense of history because of the relationship with Kedleston Hall. Moreover it provides continuity with the past through its permanence and its role in acting as a cultural record of the past. I consider these to be important attributes which should not be set aside lightly.

#### 4. The landscape west of Kedleston Road

4.1 In 1966 the body now known as Natural England published the Character Map of England which identified broad tracts of countryside exhibiting similar characteristics. Derbyshire County Council has taken this work further and has sub- divided broad character areas into landscape character types. These are to be found in “The Landscape Character of Derbyshire.”

4.2 This site is part of Character Area 68, the Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands, generally described as “a settled, pastoral landscape on gently rolling lowlands.” Specifically it is included within the sub groups known as Estate Farmlands and Riverside Meadows.

4.3 In the character area, “land-use is typically dairy farming with some arable set within a framework of hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees. Woodlands are few but locally occurring parkland, such as that at Kedleston Hall, makes a significant contribution to the overall character of the area. Small red brick villages and estate farms are distinctive features and although some settlements west of Derby have expanded through post war development the landscape retains a deeply rural character.”

4.4 Specifically of relevance to this site is the development of country house parks “most notably at Kedleston. Kedleston Hall set within the Estate Farmlands landscape remains today as one of the finest examples of a Georgian set-piece...”

## 5. The site.

5.1 This site must have existed as farmland supporting the Kedleston Estate within a parkland setting for well over 200 years given that Kedleston Hall was completed in 1765. There is no indication of any development along Kedleston Road on the 1919 map of the area- just a network of fields on both sides of the road.

5.2 By 1938 the sewage disposal works was appearing on the parkland whilst housing was evident along both Somme Road and Kedleston Road in the area of Crabtree Hill. By 1972 the gaps along Kedleston Road had been infilled and the area behind was fully developed. The current relationship between most of the site and Allestree was therefore established nearly eighty years ago and for the whole site over forty years ago. Kedleston Road is an easily recognisable and defensible boundary between the parkland and Allestree. The best views of this are to be obtained from the higher section of the road/bridleway/footpath leading to the two Vicarwood Farms west of the site. (Quarndon BW14).



5.3 Footpath/Bridleway Mackworth BW10 can be seen in the foreground of the picture. That runs west of the site and joins Markeaton Lane after passing through Markeaton Stones. The southern boundary is the hedgerow on the northern side of Memorial Road and that leads to the housing along Somme Road which backs on to the site for part of its western boundary.

5.4 Public views of the site are, therefore, possible from all four directions.

5.5 The ease with which it may be viewed depends on a variety of factors including distance and the height of intervening vegetation. Along Kedleston Road, for example, there is no footpath along the western side of the road. That is an illustration of the difference between the appearance of both sides of the road- mature housing on one side and countryside on the other. Views of the site are possible where there are gates but in general views of the site from the footpath along Kedleston Road currently depend on how well the hedges are maintained.



5.6 Seasonality is also an issue and I note that the photographs in EDP's document were taken in October 2014 before leaf fall.

5.7 Kedleston Road itself has a different character on both sides. On the Allestree side there is a footpath of limited width and a variety of hedges interrupted by the drives to the dwellings which opposite this application site are set well back from the carriageway. There is a grass verge on the Quarndon side backed by a virtually continuous hedge apart from a few field gates. Overall despite the volume of traffic that it carries at certain times of the day it has a decidedly rural character.



5.8 The roundabout proposed for the bottom of Askerfield Avenue is going to appear an alien feature in this landscape. This is another reason why I feel this application would simply be disastrous in landscape terms. This is not an urban fringe site. It is countryside and attractive countryside at that.

5.9 The point has been made that this is not a landscape that benefits from some form of national designation and that is true but it does not have to be designated to be of value to the

local community. It is a landscape that is currently protected by the Local Plan and that should remain the case.

## 6. The Derek Lovejoy Report.

6.1 Having visited the site I found this 2001 report to be valuable and I do not agree with the criticisms made of it by EDP.

6.2 To me the report is important as it highlights the sensitivity of this landscape and its relationship with Kedleston Hall. That has not changed much over the last thirteen years, the exception being the large houses approved by AVBC off Somme Road. I understand that this is a long standing residential area which was allocated for limited new housing in the current local plan. It should not be used as a precedent for 400 new dwellings within the setting of the Hall which would tip the existing delicate balance between countryside and the built up area of Derby as well as adversely impacting on the setting of Kedleston Hall.

## 7. The EDP Report.

7.1 I have particular concerns over two matters.

7.2 Firstly, I have been unable to find any reference to the fact that the site lies within an area of Multiple Environmental Sensitivity designated by Derbyshire County Council in 2013 as part of The Landscape Character of Derbyshire. The eastern part is of primary sensitivity and the west of secondary sensitivity.

7.3 As discussed in section 2 of this report, these designations were arrived at by collecting data on biodiversity, the historic environment and visual unity. Areas that are above average in all three datasets are described as having Primary Sensitivity and will be most sensitive to change. Derbyshire County Council says that areas so designated, such as the eastern part of this site, should be regarded as being a cultural resource on multiple fronts that provide significant value for green infrastructure.

7.4 You do not protect assets like this by building houses on the land or on land next to it.

7.5 The land within the site that is regarded as being of Secondary Sensitivity is to the west of the primary area. This designation arises because the area is regarded as being above average

in respect of two of the environmental datasets. Such areas are also sensitive to change but Derbyshire County Council recognises that they may also be capable of being enhanced by development or new green infrastructure provision. The County Council considers that these areas will attract a strong focus on the conservation and enhancement of their assets.

7.6 Currently I regard the asset of the western part of the site as simply being farmland within a wider estate setting. You do not conserve or enhance an asset such as this by building a housing estate on it.

7.7 My second concern relates to the use of the CPRE map of tranquillity as Figure EDP 6. Whilst the CPRE work provides a broad overview of tranquillity at a national scale the use of 500m x 500m squares lacks a landscape context. Derbyshire County Council's map of tranquillity in the County published in 2013 as Technical Support Document 2 is a map that uses a landscape framework. That has not been mentioned by EDP.

7.8 In my view the Derbyshire County Council's map is a more accurate indicator of tranquillity because it takes account of landscapes with common characteristics. I believe that it shows this site to be significant in respect of tranquillity.

7.9 As well as these two matters I have serious reservations about the conclusions EDP have reached about the impact the development of 400 houses would have on this highly sensitive landscape.

## 8. Conclusion

8.1 In my view this is not an urban fringe site dominated by existing housing. It is countryside which acts as a visual and physical buffer between Allestree and the Kedleston Hall parkland to the west. Building houses on the site would introduce a high or major magnitude of change with significant negative landscape effects which will be seen by the public from multiple viewpoints.

8.2 AVA/2014/0928 should, therefore, be refused.