

CD1.28

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES
PROCEDURES) (ENGLAND) RULES 2000**

BY BONINGALE DEVELOPMENTS LTD

**Land off Patshull Road, Albrighton,
Shropshire, WV7 3BH**

Summary Proof of Evidence of
Stephen Kirkpatrick (BSc BLD CMLI) on
Landscape/Visual Matters

on behalf of
Shropshire Council

PINS REFERENCE: 6007402
LPA REFERENCE: 24/02108/OUT

CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
2.0	COMMENTARY ON MAIN ISSUE 4: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA.....	1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 My name is Stephen Kirkpatrick and I provide evidence on landscape and visual matters for Shropshire Council (“the Council”). I hold a Bachelor of Science degree (Biological Sciences) from Dundee University and a Bachelor of Landscape Design degree from Manchester University. I am a landscape architect, a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and a Director of Scarp Landscape Architecture Ltd, which is a landscape architectural and environmental planning consultancy based in Henley-on-Thames, South Oxfordshire.
- 1.1.2 My professional experience as a landscape architect spans more than 30 years and includes both the private and public sectors. My experience covers a broad range of project and development types but my main specialisations are in the fields of environmental planning, landscape assessment and landscape and visual impact assessment.
- 1.1.3 My evidence addresses the harm to the character and the appearance of the countryside that would arise from the proposed development (“the Appeal Scheme”). My evidence does not consider matters relating to the Green Belt.

2.0 COMMENTARY ON MAIN ISSUE 4: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA

- 2.1.1 The most obvious effect of the Appeal Scheme would be to transform the majority of the Appeal Site from being part of the countryside to part of the extended settlement. In perceptual terms, the Appeal Site would acquire an overwhelmingly urban and developed character, replacing its currently open and greenfield appearance [LVIA Photographs, CD11.7].
- 2.1.2 The intrinsic rural character of the Appeal Site, its immediate context and the wider landscape would be harmed through the urbanisation of countryside that is predominantly open and largely undeveloped. The introduction of new, visually

prominent built form, highway infrastructure and tree belts in the countryside would result in a high level of change to the semi-natural character of landscape, as experienced from settlements and along existing rural roads and public footpaths.

- 2.1.3 The proposed built form would result in a loss of openness in the landscape, including loss of visual openness arising from the truncation of existing views across the Appeal Site and beyond to hillslopes that provide the visual backdrop for the Appeal Site. The proposed tree belts would contribute to this loss of visual openness.
- 2.1.4 The northernmost tip of the proposed housing area would come close to the existing settlement edge at the convergence of Cross Road and Patshull Road, but would be otherwise be well set back from it by existing and proposed greenspaces. The Appeal Scheme would have a weak relationship with the existing urban edge as a result of these large set-backs, with the result that it is likely to be perceived as a separate settlement. It would not represent a sensitive, incremental expansion of Albrighton due to its location, size, density and form.
- 2.1.5 The proposed density would be approximately 35dph based on 800 units and the Residential Area set out in the Parameter Plan [CD6.6]. This density would be out of character with Albrighton. It would also be at odds with the density of the scattered array of buildings at Boningale and along Cross Road, Patshull Road, Newhouse Lane and Holyhead Road. The Appeal Scheme would potentially include buildings up to 12.3m high. These would not be characteristic of the existing settlement.
- 2.1.6 The Appeal Scheme would remove the current clear definition between the built up area of Albrighton and the adjacent countryside. There is a strong sense of leaving the settlement and entering the countryside at the southern top of the existing settlement where Elm Road and Cross Road converge at a roundabout. This transition point would be eroded. The collection of residential properties along Cross Road southwest of the roundabout are perceived as being within the countryside due to the presence of agricultural fields to the front and rear and by their well-treed

substantially larger gardens. The character of these residential properties would change from rural to settlement edge.

- 2.1.7 The protrusion of built form into the open agricultural countryside on the southern side of Albrighton would materially change the compact form of the town and alter the perceived scale of the settlement. The Appeal Scheme would result in a readily noticeable change to the clustered settlement pattern of the wider landscape, which principally consists of villages and hamlets. This pattern would be eroded by extending the urban area by approximately 825m to the southwest and approximately 900m southeast, where it would be approximately 90m from the northern edge of Boningale. The north-south extent of Albrighton would be more than doubled. The proposed dispersed arrangement of housing within the Appeal Site and its set-back from the settlement edge, would create an incongruous settlement pattern.
- 2.1.8 Patshull Road, Newhouse Lane and Public Footpath 0111/4/1 would all be dissected by the proposed east-west road, with resultant harm to the historic pattern of routes between Albrighton and Holyhead Road/Boningale. Patshull Road, Newhouse Lane and an approximate 170 metre section of Cross Road to the east of the A464 / Cross Road junction would be 'blocked up' and would form part of 'Green Routes'. Whilst pedestrian and cyclist access would be retained, the character of these rural lanes would significantly change due to the urbanising effects of new kerbing, bollards, signage and new junctions.
- 2.1.9 The Appeal Scheme would poorly relate to the surrounding countryside due to (1) the heights, densities and prominence of the proposed built form, (2) its sprawling nature, (3) the long lines of housing with uniform set-backs [Parameter Plan, CD6.6], and (4) a landscape strategy that aims to 'wall-in' the proposed built development area with long, visually abrupt belts of trees. The enclosure provided by this proposed vegetation would contribute to the visual harm arising from the Appeal Scheme in this open landscape.

- 2.1.10 The Appeal Scheme would urbanise the agricultural setting of both Albrighton and Boningale and the sense of separation between both settlements. The experience of people passing through the countryside along Holyhead Road would significantly change as a result of visually prominent lines of new housing seen against the skyline and the introduction of a large-scale roundabout would be an incongruous component of the local landscape.
- 2.1.11 The inter-relationship between the cluster of housing near the Patshull Road/Holyhead Road junction (including Lea Hall) and the surrounding countryside would be eroded by the extension of urban development on its eastern and western sides. The enclosure of these rural properties would erode the sense of place in the local landscape.
- 2.1.12 There would also be notable indirect effects on landscape character through the introduction of lighting and activity onto a site that is currently unlit and largely undisturbed, with implications for tranquillity in the wider landscape. The roundabout proposed on Holyhead Road to serve the westernmost development parcel is likely to be lit, thereby introducing the only lighting on the 10km section of Holyhead Road between the Newport Road/Holyhead Road junction and Shifnal 6km to the northwest. This lighting, together with increased traffic, traffic calming measures, two new junctions along the section of Holyhead Road adjacent to the Appeal Site and lighting associated with new housing, would contribute to the urbanisation of the landscape within the immediate context of the Appeal Site. Street lighting within the Appeal Site and along Holyhead Road would detract from the character and quality of both the night-time landscape and elevated views across the wider gently rolling, open landscape of the Sandstone Estatelands LCT.
- 2.1.13 The Appeal Scheme would result in the introduction of new built form across a wide panorama of many existing views, changing the perception of a lightly settled rural landscape to one of a sprawling urban area. It would also change the perception of Boningale being a hamlet set in the countryside and well separated from any large

towns, as experienced by users of Holyhead Road (VPs 9 and 13). On the eastern approach to the Appeal Site, users of Holyhead Road would have the perception that they are approaching a large sprawling settlement, rather than passing through the countryside.

2.1.14 I consider that the Appeal Scheme would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the countryside due to major adverse effects on the Appeal Site landscape, major adverse effects on its immediate context and moderate adverse effects on the landscape character of the wider countryside.

2.1.15 I consider that the Council were justified in refusing the application in view of the Appeal Scheme's degree of conflict with policy relating to landscape character/appearance.