



hda

SITES GTW3 AND GTW5, WHITEHAVEN

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

July 2022

Rev A

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Photographs

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instructions

- 1.1.1 Hankinson Duckett Associates (HDA) was appointed by Copeland Borough Council to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of two sites for potential Gypsy and Traveller development within the existing settlement area of Whitehaven. These are site GTW3 to the north of Greenbank, and the eastern portion of site GTW5 located off Sneckyeat Road (see plan HDA 1). The eastern portion of site GTW5 will be considered assuming that the western portion of GTW5 remains undeveloped, but also considered against an additional scenario where the western portion contains an extension to the existing industrial estate, which is currently located adjacent to the south-west of the site.

1.2 Methodology

- 1.2.1 National landscape guidance uses landscape character as a basis for policy. Natural England has established the current methodology for the character-based approach to landscape assessment. This provides a foundation, with adaptation, for use in project-specific landscape assessment. It describes the application of landscape character assessment at different scales: the national/regional scale, local authority scale and local scale. The third edition of the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' sets out landscape assessment methodology, which provides the basis for use in project-specific landscape assessment.
- 1.2.2 The approach to this Landscape and Visual Appraisal is based upon the latest guidance, and upon HDA's extensive practical experience of assessment work. Survey of the sites and the wider area was undertaken in May 2022.

2 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The landscape and visual appraisal has regard to the requirements of the development planning process. The planning framework assists in the identification of the issues related to landscape, particularly in relation to landscape designation and policy objectives.

2.2 National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government's planning policy. Relevant paragraphs from the Framework are identified below:

Achieving Sustainable Development

- 2.2.2 Paragraph 8 of the Framework sets out how sustainable development can be achieved, through three overarching objectives:
- a) Economic;
 - b) Social; and
 - c) Environmental.

- 2.2.3 The environmental objective, c), seeks *'to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment'*. Paragraph 10 states that *'at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development'*.

Healthy and Safe Communities

- 2.2.4 Section 8 of the Framework is about 'Promoting healthy and safe communities'. Paragraph 92 states that:

'Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.'*

Rights of Way

- 2.2.5 Paragraph 100 concerns the protection of rights of way and access. Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, *'including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.'*

Achieving Well-Designed Places

- 2.2.6 Section 12 concerns the achievement of well-designed places. *'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve'* (Paragraph 126). Paragraph 130 states that: *Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*

- 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;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*

- 2.2.7 Paragraph 131 deals with the approach to trees within a proposed development: *"Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted*

trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

2.2.8 Section 15 of the Framework relates to ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’. The means by which this can be achieved are set out within Paragraph 174 and include:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;”*

2.2.9 Paragraphs 176 and 177 of the Framework relate to National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and their settings. Paragraph 176 states that:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitivity located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas”.

2.2.10 Paragraph 177 of the Framework states that:

“When considering applications for development within the National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*

- c) *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*"

- 2.2.11 Heritage coasts were established to conserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coastline, their terrestrial, coastal and marine flora and fauna, and their heritage features. Paragraph 178 of the Framework states that:
"Within areas defined as Heritage Coast... planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character."

Conserving and Enhancing The Historic Environment

- 2.2.12 Section 16 addresses the protection and enjoyment of heritage assets including Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings. Potential effects on the landscape setting to a heritage asset are also considered as part of the LVA process. Paragraph 189 states that:
"Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites, which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations."

2.3 Local Policy

- 2.3.1 Planning policy for Copeland Borough is currently set out in the Copeland Development Plan, which consists of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (December 2013) and a number of policies saved from the Copeland Local Plan 2001-2016. Current policies relevant to this landscape and visual appraisal are set out below.
- 2.3.2 The Borough is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2021-2038 which will replace the Core Strategy and saved policies. Copeland is due to be combined with Allerdale Borough and Carlisle City councils in 2023 to form a new unitary authority of West Cumberland. However, it is envisaged that once adopted, policy contained within the 2021-2038 Copeland Local Plan will remain in force beyond the creation of the new authority. Emerging policy is therefore also taken into account where appropriate.

Current policy

- 2.3.3 Policy ST1 sets out fundamental principles including:
"B Environmental Sustainability

ii) Focus development on sites that are at least risk from flooding and where development in areas of flood risk is unavoidable, ensure that the risk is minimised or mitigated through appropriate design.

iii) Protect, enhance and encourage the creation of new areas of green infrastructure, recognising the important role that the natural environment and healthy ecosystems have to play in the future social and economic, as well as environmental sustainability of Copeland.

iv) Reuse existing buildings and previously developed land wherever possible, directing development away from greenfield sites, where this is consistent with wider sustainability objectives.

vii) Prioritise development in the main towns where there is previously developed land and infrastructure capacity.

C Protect, enhance and restore the Borough's valued assets.

i) Protect and enhance areas, sites, species and features of biodiversity value, landscapes and the undeveloped coast.

ii) Protect and enhance the Borough's cultural and historic features and their settings.

v) Support the reclamation and redevelopment or restoration of the Borough's vacant or derelict sites, whilst taking account of landscape, biodiversity and historic environment objectives."

2.3.4 Policy DM20 relates to Gypsy and Traveller sites, and states:

"Proposals for sites to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers will only be permitted when the following criteria are met:

A) There is a demonstrable need for a site.

B) Sites are not located within or adjoining St Bees Heritage Coast, areas of Landscape Importance, areas of nature conservation interest, Conservation Areas or in the vicinity of Listed Buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments, where such development would compromise the objectives of the designation or otherwise have a significantly adverse impact on the local landscape or undeveloped coast.

C) The site is well related to an existing settlement and the main highway network.

D) It incorporates appropriate access and parking arrangements.

E) The site has reasonable access to community services.

F) It is not significantly detrimental to the amenity of adjacent occupiers."

2.3.5 Policy DM26 relates to 'landscaping', including in relation to Landscapes of County Importance, and states that:

"All development proposals will be assessed in terms of their potential impact on the landscape. Developers should refer to the Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment and Cumbria Historic Landscape Characterisation documents for their particular character area and design their development to be congruent with that character. The Council will continue

to protect the areas designated as Landscapes of County Importance on the Proposals Map from inappropriate change until a more detailed Landscape Character Assessment can be completed for the Copeland plan area. Proposals will be assessed according to whether the proposed structures and associated landscaping relate well in terms of visual impact, scale, character, amenity value and local distinctiveness and the cumulative impact of developments will be taken into account as part of this assessment. Development proposals, where necessary, will be required to include landscaping schemes that retain existing landscape features, reinforce local landscape character and mitigate against any adverse visual impact...”

2.3.6 Policy DM28 relates to the protection of trees, and states:

“A Development proposals which are likely to affect any trees within the Borough will be required to:

- i) Include an arboricultural assessment as to whether any of those trees are worthy of retention and protection by means of a Tree Preservation Order.*
- ii) Submit proposals for the replacement or relocation of any trees removed, with net provision at a minimum ratio of 2:1, with preference for the replacement of trees on site and with native species.*

B Any proposed works to Trees within Conservation Areas, or protected with Tree Preservation Orders, will be required to include an arboricultural survey to justify why works are necessary and that the works proposed will, where possible, not adversely affect the amenity value of the area. Applicants for development that will result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland or veteran trees outside woodland should demonstrate that the need for and benefits of the development will clearly outweigh the loss.”

2.3.7 Policy ENV3 relates to biodiversity and geodiversity, and states:

“The Council will contribute to the implementation of the UK and Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan within the plan area by seeking to:

- A) Improve the condition of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites.*
- B) Ensure that development incorporates measures to protect and enhance any biodiversity interest.*
- C) Enhance, extend and restore priority habitats and look for opportunities to create new habitat.*
- D) Protect and strengthen populations of priority or other protected species.*
- E) Boost the biodiversity value of existing wildlife corridors and create new corridors, and stepping stones that connect them, to develop a functional Ecological Network.*
- F) Restrict access and usage where appropriate and necessary in order to conserve an area’s biodiversity value.”*

- 2.3.8 Policy ENV5 regards protecting and enhancing the Borough's landscapes, and states:
"The Borough's landscapes will be protected and enhanced by:
A) Protecting all landscapes from inappropriate change by ensuring that development does not threaten or detract from the distinctive characteristics of that particular area.
B) Where the benefits of the development outweigh the potential harm, ensuring that the impact of the development on the landscape is minimised through adequate mitigation, preferably on-site.
C) Supporting proposals which enhance the value of the Borough's landscapes."

Emerging policy

- 2.3.9 The Publication Draft of the Copeland Local Plan 2021-2038 was published in January 2022. Relevant policies are set out below.

- 2.3.10 Policy H10PU updates existing policy related to gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople sites, to include requirements that proposals should not lead to significant adverse impact on landscape character, and should provide suitable residential amenity to occupiers. The draft policy states:

"Planning applications for the development of new or extension of existing Gypsy and Traveller sites will be supported where it accords with the Development Plan and meets the following criteria:

- a) There is a demonstrated need;*
- b) The site would not lead to the unacceptable loss, or significant adverse impact upon landscape character and value, heritage assets and their settings, nature conservation or biodiversity sites;*
- c) The site is well related to an existing sustainable settlement, with safe and convenient access to the main highway network, and a range of basic and everyday community services and facilities including education, health, shopping facilities and transport provision;*
- d) The site would offer a suitable level of residential amenity to any proposed occupiers, and will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents;"*

- 2.3.11 Draft Strategic Policy N1PU relates to conserving and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity, and states:

"The Council is committed to conserving the borough's biodiversity and geodiversity including protected species and habitats. Potential harmful impacts of any development upon biodiversity and geodiversity must be identified and considered at the earliest stage. Proposals must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Council, that the following mitigation hierarchy must have been undertaken:

Avoidance – Biodiversity and geodiversity must be considered when drafting up proposals and any potential harmful effects on biodiversity and geodiversity must be identified along with appropriate measures that will be taken to avoid these effects.

Mitigation – Where harmful effects cannot be avoided, they must be appropriately mitigated in order to overcome or reduce negative impacts.

Compensation – Where mitigation is not possible or viable or in cases where residual harm would remain following mitigation, harmful effects should be compensated for. Where this is in the form of compensatory habitat of an area of equivalent or greater biodiversity value should be provided. Compensation is a last resort and will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

Where harm remains to a National Site Network or Ramsar site, or functionally linked land, development will only be approved where it can be demonstrated that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In such cases, compensatory measures must ensure the overall coherence of the network of European sites as a whole is protected.

Planning permission will be refused for any development if significant harm cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated for. A Construction Environmental Management Plan should be submitted where appropriate and sustainable construction methods must be used where possible.

Development proposals where the principal objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests will be supported in principle.”

2.3.12 Draft Strategic Policy N6PU updates existing policy related to landscape protection, and states:

“The borough’s landscapes will be protected and enhanced by:

- a) Supporting proposals which enhance the value of the borough’s landscapes;*
- b) Protecting all landscapes from inappropriate change by ensuring that development conserves and enhances the distinctive characteristics of that particular area in a manner commensurate with their statutory status and value;*
- c) Ensuring development proposals demonstrate that their location, scale, design and materials will conserve and where possible enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Lake District National Park and Heritage Coast where proposals could impact on its setting and views into and from the National Park or Heritage Coast;*
- d) Requiring a Landscape Appraisal, and where appropriate a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, to be submitted where development has the potential to impact upon landscape character or a protected landscape. Where harm is identified the development will only be permitted where the benefits of the development outweigh any potential harm and mitigation and compensation measures must be provided.*

Proposals will be assessed according to whether the proposed structures and associated landscaping relates well in terms of visual impact, scale, character, amenity value and local

distinctiveness and the cumulative impact of developments will be taken into account as part of this assessment. Consideration must be given to the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, Settlement Landscape Character Assessment and the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit at the earliest stage."

- 2.3.13 Draft Strategic Policy N9PU relates specifically to Green Infrastructure, and states:
"A comprehensive, high quality network of green infrastructure will be identified through a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Copeland Local Plan Area. This network will connect our towns and villages to the more rural parts of the borough and the coastline and will be formed of a variety of GI types including open countryside, green wedges, protected green spaces, local green spaces, rivers, ponds, grass verges, woodlands and trees, private gardens, green walls and green roofs.

The amount of green infrastructure on the development site should be maximised and developers should take opportunities to create new connections, expand networks and enhance existing green infrastructure to support the movement of plants and animals. Green infrastructure should be multi-functional where possible and should be considered at the start of the design process."

- 2.3.14 Draft Policy N13PU updates existing policy related to the protection of trees, to encompass woodlands, trees and hedgerows. The draft policy includes:
"Existing trees and hedgerows which contribute positively to the visual amenity and environmental value of their location will be protected. Developers are encouraged to incorporate tree planting and hedgerows into new developments where possible and appropriate. Development proposals which are likely to affect any trees within the borough will be required to:

- 1) Include an arboricultural assessment as to whether any of those trees are worthy of retention and protection by means of a Tree Preservation Order.*
- 2) Submit proposals to replace or relocate any trees that are to be removed with net provision at a minimum ratio of 2:1. Replacement trees should be on site and with native species where possible..."*

2.4 Neighbourhood Plan Policy

- 2.4.1 No Neighbourhood Plans have been prepared for Whitehaven.

3 SITE CONTEXT

3.1 Location (see plan HDA 1)

- 3.1.1 Whitehaven is situated in Copeland Borough within the west of Cumbria, approximately 30 miles (50km) to the south-west of Carlisle. The town is located along the A595 road and the Cumbrian Coast Line railway, with Workington approximately 5 miles (8km) to the north, and St Bees, Egremont and Cleator Moor within 3 miles (5km) to the south. Both sites

GTW3 and GTW5 are within the southern part of Whitehaven settlement area. GTW3 is located along the western side of the north-south B5345 road at the junction with Woodhouse Road, and can be accessed from the adjacent roads. GTW5 is located to the east of Homewood Road, between Sneckyeat Road Industrial estate adjacent to the south, and the Cumbria Sports Academy adjacent to the north. Vehicle access into site GTW5 is from Sneckyeat Road, via a track into the south-east corner of the site.

3.2 Geology and Soils

3.2.1 Site GTW3 is located within an area of the sedimentary bedrock geology, on the edge of the Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation and the Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation. Site GTW5 is underlain by a narrow band of Cumbria Limestone sedimentary bedrock. Both sites are in areas recorded as having freely draining slightly acid loamy soils, and the Natural England 1:250,000 series Agricultural Land Classification data identifies both sites as 'urban'.

3.3 Landform and Drainage (see plan HDA 2)

3.3.1 Whitehaven is located on the coast to the west, with lowland to the north and east, rolling hills to the south, and then the upland fringes of the Lake District further to the east. The majority of the town is located inland, within or on either side of the Pow Beck valley. The valley is orientated broadly north-south, widening where it meets the sea at its northern end at Whitehaven harbour and the town centre. Within Whitehaven the Pow Beck flows north along the valley to the harbour. To the south of Whitehaven, the valley continues south then south-west to meet the sea again at St Bees and contains a further watercourse also known as Pow Beck which flows south.

3.3.2 Site GTW3 is situated on the steep east facing slopes of the Pow Beck valley, with the site rising from approximately 45m AOD at its eastern edge, up to approximately 70m AOD at the sites western edge. Landform continues to rise to a north-south ridgeline up to approximately 100m AOD west of the site. Further west the ridge line descends to the cliffs above Saltom Bay.

3.3.3 Site GTW5 is located on the opposite side of the Pow Beck valley at approximately 110m AOD where the west facing slopes begin to slacken and turn to face the south-east and the River Keekle. The majority of the site falls gently to the south-west, although a raised area partially within the eastern portion of the site falls steeply for a short distance towards the north-east and east, outside the site boundary.

3.4 Local Land Use and Vegetation

3.4.1 Both sites GTW3 and GTW5 are located within the urban areas of Whitehaven. The town is made up of a number of residential areas of predominately semi-detached and terrace

houses, including Woodhouse, Greenbank, Mirehouse West, Mirehouse East, Homewood, and Rosebank within the south of the town, and Corkickle and Hensingham towards the middle. Residential streets connect to main roads running predominantly north-south. The Cumbrian Coast Line railway is also orientated north-south, running through the town along the Pow Beck valley, and includes Whitehaven railway station near the town centre, and Corkickle station which is approximately 1 mile north of the two sites.

- 3.4.2 Built up areas are broken up in places by linear lengths of open space and woodland or smaller pockets of open space and tree cover, including meadows along the valley floor, woodland along the east facing valley slopes, an area of hedge lined pastoral fields between the A595 and Whinlatter Road on the west facing slopes, the extensive Whitehaven Cemetery on either side of the B5345 north of site GTW3, along with recreation and sports grounds, play areas, public gardens, and allotments.
- 3.4.3 Both sites contribute to areas of green infrastructure within the town, but have varying amounts of development within their vicinity. A general swathe of woodland and other tree cover continuing across site GTW3 forms a green link through Whitehaven along the west side of the Pow Beck valley and out to the countryside south of the town. Adjacent to the north of GTW3 was a workhouse and gardens demolished in the 1960s. Woodland has since established on the site and now forms part of the general band of woodland through the area. An application for approximately 100 houses on the site of the former workhouse was permitted in 2016 but was not constructed. Housing within the Greenbank area is located adjacent to the south of site GTW3 on the opposite side of Woodhouse Lane. The Mansion Bed and Breakfast is within a relative large pale coloured building along Woodhouse Lane, approximately 120m to the north-west of site GTW3.
- 3.4.4 Site GTW5 is within a local area of open space, which forms a minor general corridor of open space penetrating into Whitehaven from the adjacent countryside, including the grounds of the sports academy, Kie Park, allotments, and the grounds of Hensingham Primary School. However, there are a number of urban land uses which form the settlement edge within the vicinity of GTW5, including Sneckyeat Road Industrial Estate to the south, the Cumbria Sports Academy to the north, and housing to the west along Homewood Road. Approximately 200m north of site GTW5 is housing along Ullswater Avenue, and 250m to the south is West Cumberland Hospital, which has a tall chimney. The countryside immediately to the east of the settlement edge, and site GTW5, includes arable and pastoral farmland with fields lined by hedgerows of varying intactness, and occasional tree groups. Sneckyeat farmstead and other dwellings are located along Galemire Road which continues south-east from the edge of Whitehaven and towards Dalzell Street and the linear settlement of Keekle.

3.5 Designations (See plan HDA 3)

- 3.5.1 There are no landscape designations on or adjacent to either site GTW3 or site GTW5. The Lake District National Park and World Heritage Site is located approximately 3 miles (5km) to the east of Whitehaven at its closest point, with GTW3 and GTW5 forming a minimal contribution to the wider setting of the National Park.
- 3.5.2 The majority of the landscape to the south of Whitehaven is designated through the current Copeland Core Strategy as a Landscape of County Importance (see policy DM26 in section 2.4 above). However, it should be noted that this local landscape designation is unlikely to be continued with the emerging Local Plan which will replace the Core Strategy, with emphasis now on landscape character assessment and protecting landscapes through sensitive development management.
- 3.5.3 Heritage coasts are 'defined' rather than designated but are protected through development control. The Council is in the process of agreeing the definition of an extension to the St Bees heritage coast, however its current extent is approximately 1½ miles (2.3km) to the south-west of site GTW3, and 2¼ miles (3.6km) south-west of site GTW5.
- 3.5.4 There is no ancient woodland within 1km of either site.
- 3.5.5 Public footpath 431028 passes along the northern edge of site GTW5, providing a short link between Homewood Road (to the west of the site) and the pedestrian track which leads to Galemire Road (to the east of the site). Near to the entrance into GTW5 from Sneckyeat Road, is the northern end of public footpath 431029 which continues south from Sneckyeat Road and along the eastern edge of the hospital, until it reaches Rutland Avenue. There are no public rights of way within site GTW3, however public footpath 431017 connects to the B5345 approximately 60m to the north-east corner of the site and public footpath 431016 proceeds north-westwards from Woodhouse Lane, approximately 170m to the north-west of the site. The England Coast Path National Trail runs along the coastline to the west, but is approximately 1 mile (1.6km) from site GTW3 and approximately 1¾ miles (2.8km) from site GTW5.
- 3.5.6 The sites do not provide any immediate landscape setting to listed buildings. However, Nether End Farmhouse is a grade II* listed building approximately 350m to the south-east of site GTW5, and The Cross is a grade II listed building approximately 250m to the south of GTW5. The sites do not form part of the landscape setting to Hensingham conservation area, which is approximately 500m to the north-west of the site, or the setting to any ancient monuments.

4 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

4.1 Landscape Character

National Scale

4.1.1 Natural England divides the country into broad scale National Character Areas (NCAs). Whitehaven and the surrounding landscape are located within Area 7 'West Cumbria Coastal Plain'. The Character Area profiles cover large areas, and are of limited relevance to urban areas. However, site GTW3 is close to the south edge of the settlement, and GTW5 is on the settlement edge bordering the countryside. Key characteristics of Area 7 which are of some relevance to the two sites include:

- There is limited tree cover, with most woodland to be found on steeper slopes and along river corridors. There are some plantation woodlands and shelterbelts associated with the upland margins of the area and former open cast mining sites.
- Larger urban settlements and coastal towns are closely linked with the growth and location of the area's strong industrial history of coal and iron ore mining, processing ore, smelting and ship-building.
- Extensive urban-fringe influence is linked to highly visible industrial past and present, including quarrying, open cast mining, restoration and reclamation initiatives, manufacturing and processing plants and the nuclear energy industry.

County and Borough Scale

4.1.2 As an urban area, Whitehaven and the sites are excluded from the 2011 Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment and the 2021 update related to Copeland.

Local Scale

4.1.3 In 2021 a 'Landscape Settlement Study' was prepared for the Local Plan area which identified character areas surrounding settlements and assessed the settlements themselves. Site GTW3 is within the 'West of Whitehaven' area assessed by the study, and site GTW5 is within the 'South of Whitehaven' area. Although located within the settlement area of Whitehaven, site GTW5 is also included within the study's 'Urban Fringe' Type 5D, and 'Keekle Hillsides' Area of Local Character 5Dvi.

4.1.4 Site GTW3 is identified by the study as located within an area of strategic green infrastructure which runs through the town on prominent hillsides, extending from the surrounding countryside into the settlement. The band of woodland adjacent to the site is noted by the study as an 'important landscape link'. The study notes that rising ground beyond the settlement provides a visual setting to this part of Whitehaven and helps separate the town from the wider rural landscape to the south-west.

- 4.1.5 Site GTW5 is also identified to be within an area of strategic green infrastructure, and beyond the site to the east are hillsides which help separate Whitehaven from the Keekle valley. The study also notes the presence of isolated farmsteads to the south-east of site GTW5, including Sneckyeat Farm, which are characteristic of the rural landscape beyond the town.
- 4.1.6 Site GTW5 is located within the very western edge of the study's 'Keekle Hillsides' Area of Local Character 5Dvi, which is part of the 'Urban Fringe' Type 5D. Key characteristics described for the character area which are of relevance to site GTW5 include:
- Landform: Gently sloping hillsides, running to river Keekle valley.
 - Land Use: farmland, urban edge and evidence of historic industrial use and reclaimed land. Recreation and commercial business park.
 - Landcover: semi improved pasture, rough grazing and some scrub. Use of some fields for horse grazing. Woodland along stream. Large, wooded commercial parkland.
 - Perceptual Character: Urban influences and modern development have encroached on the edge of the valley and dominate an otherwise pastoral character.
 - ...Influence of Whitehaven noticeable with housing and large buildings on skyline. Active, disturbed landscape but with pockets of relative calm in valley bottom woodland.
 - Industrial time depth, evident in reclaimed land, distinctive settlement pattern. Panoramic views towards Lakeland Fells.
- 4.1.7 The study notes that open green spaces and fields close to settlement edges are sensitive to unsympathetic development, but concludes that the overall sensitivity of the Keekle Hillsides Area of Local Character is Medium-Low. The study recommends that existing green infrastructure should be enhanced and strengthened to provide a link between urban areas and the wider countryside, and it's management strategy for the area includes:
- Management practices will create a stronger definition between town and country areas integrating adjacent discordant land uses into the landscape.
 - Woodland areas and traditional field boundaries will be managed and enhanced. New woodland planting will be used strategically to create a bold landscape structure unifying disparate uses in developing areas.
 - Access through the public rights of way network from surrounding settlements into the countryside will be enhanced.

4.2 Site Character and Features

GTW3 (see plan HDA 4)

4.2.1 Site GTW3 is technically 'brownfield' with remnants of demolished flats including earthworks and a length of paving, however traces of the sites previous use are subtle. Well established tree cover within and surrounding the sloping site give site GTW3 a woodland character. There is a moderate degree of remoteness and tranquillity within the centre and northern parts of the site where vegetation is at its densest, however any sense of remoteness is lost along the southern and eastern edges of the site due to urban influences including adjoining roads, electricity sub station, bus stop, street lighting and housing to the south. A derelict single storey brick storage building, small area of rubble, lengths of unmaintained fencing and areas of scrub and brambles result in some limited parts of the site appearing overgrown and dilapidated, mainly along its southern and eastern edges. A level area of mown grass within the southern corner of the site gives this part of the site and amenity feel adjacent to the road junction. An informal walking route leads through the site from the south and into the woodland to the north.

4.2.2 Dense tree and shrub cover within the main body of the site forms a continuation of similar woodland adjacent to the north of the site. Trees include large mature specimens up to approximately 15m high, along with smaller and younger trees. Species include horse chestnut, poplar, birch, sycamore, hornbeam, hawthorn and willow. Understorey includes a variety of shrubs and ground covers including ferns and mosses. The woodland within the site would likely benefit from selective thinning to improve light and space. A number of trees are identified as individual specimens along the south and eastern boundaries of site GTW3, including large sycamores.

4.2.3 Site GTW3 falls steeply away from Woodhouse Lane, on the east facing slopes of the Pow Beck valley, and the site is raised slightly above the level of the B5345 road with a low retaining wall along the eastern edge of the site.

GTW5 (see plan HDA 5)

4.2.4 Although site GTW5 itself is open space and absent of any significant development, surrounding urban influences lend a semi-industrial character to the site. These influences include the industrial units of Sneckyeat Road Industrial Estate, and the Cumberland Hospital buildings and tall chimney to the south, metal railing of the Cumbria Sports Academy along the northern edge of the site, and a mast near the south-east corner of the site. The majority of the site has limited landscape features, and primarily consists of rough grass, but areas of brambles and scrub give the site an unkempt appearance in places.

4.2.5 At the eastern end of the site is a small area of scrub and relatively young trees including hawthorn and sycamore up to approximately 5-10m high which extends slightly beyond the

site boundary to the north-east. At the western end of the site adjacent to Homewood Road is a tree group of predominantly sycamore, up to a height of approximately 10m. The compacted gravel vehicle access track from Sneckyeat Road is lined by outgrown hedgerows forming substantial, dense tree lines up to approximately 5m high on either side of the track.

- 4.2.6 Informal dog walking routes cross the site and connect between the access track and public footpath 431028 which runs along the inside of the north-eastern edge of the site. The access track also provides vehicle access and parking to an area of timber sheds on lower ground outside the site to the east. The site rises generally from the south, slightly above the ground level of the adjacent industrial estate, then flattens out to the north and the sports ground.

4.3 Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.3.1 The key landscape receptors that are likely to be affected by potential development of site GTW3 or the eastern portion of site GTW5 are as follows:

- The site landscape including internal features
- Features along the site perimeter
- The landscape character surrounding the site
- The landscape character of the wider area

- 4.3.2 The landscape sensitivity of a receptor comprises a combination of landscape value and susceptibility to change. Landscape value can be derived from designations placed upon a landscape or where Local Plans refer to specific landscape qualities of an area. Where designations or such local plan references are absent, judgements can be made on quality criteria and experiential associations which may include:

- **Landscape quality (condition):** *'A measure of the physical state of the landscape'*. This includes land use, the intactness of the landscape and the quality and condition of the features within the landscape and the influence of incongruous features or elements;
- **Scenic quality:** The effect that a landscape is likely to have on the senses. For example, visual enclosure/openness or the pattern and scale of the landscape, whether there is a distinctive sense of place, striking landform or visual interest in the landscape
- **Rarity:** *'the presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type'*;
- **Representativeness:** whether the landscape or features within it are exemplary for the local area or whether the landscape being considered covers a high proportion of a particular character area;

- **Conservation interests:** recognition of importance through designation, or local consensus. Includes features of wildlife, archaeological, historic and cultural interest;
- **Recreation value:** *'evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important'*;
- **Perceptual aspects:** including tranquillity and appropriateness of substitution of the characteristics affected;
- **Associations:** *'with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area'*.

There are variations between the various landscape receptor groups of the two sites with differences, at a local scale, in tranquillity, landscape condition, scenic quality and representativeness.

- 4.3.3 The susceptibility to the type of development proposed would also vary between receptors. In landscape terms, susceptibility is *'the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation'* (GLVIA Page 158). Landscape receptors within the wider landscape which are distant from the proposed development and largely outside the visual envelope, would be less susceptible to the changes brought about by a development than the rural landscapes immediately adjacent to the sites.

Site GTW3

- 4.3.4 Woodland within site GTW3 is predominantly self set and would benefit from improved management, however trees are well established, in relatively good condition and would take considerable time to recreate if lost. Therefore the landscape of site GTW3 has been assessed as High sensitivity to potential gypsy and traveller development.
- 4.3.5 Features along the perimeter of site GTW3 include some large mature trees, but some sections of the site boundary, in particular to the south, are without any significant landscape features. Overall, features along the perimeter of site GTW3 are assessed as Medium sensitivity to potential gypsy and traveller development.
- 4.3.6 Site GTW3 is within an urban area, adjacent to roads and housing. However the site is also part of a continuation of tree cover through this part of Whitehaven. The north-south band of woodland on the east facing slopes forms a mature band of distinctive green infrastructure linking the town to the countryside to the south, albeit with existing urban influence at its edges. The sensitivity of the landscape character surrounding site GTW3 has been assessed as Medium/High.

- 4.3.7 The wider landscape to the south of site GTW3 is predominantly rural farmland, but already incorporates settlement and detracting features and does not form the immediate setting to the National Park. The wider landscape character has been assessed as Medium sensitivity to potential gypsy and traveller development at site GTW3.

Eastern portion of site GTW5

- 4.3.8 Except for a small area of scrub and occasional relatively young trees, the majority of the eastern portion of site GTW5 has limited landscape features and is therefore considered to have Low sensitivity to potential gypsy and traveller development.
- 4.3.9 Landscape features are also limited along the northern, western and south-western boundaries of the eastern portion of site GTW5. However, there are substantial tree lines form from outgrown hedgerows and the site boundary either side of the access track, and the eastern edge of the site includes a continuation of the adjacent scrub and trees. Overall therefore, features along the perimeter are assessed as Medium sensitivity to potential gypsy and traveller development.
- 4.3.10 The landscape character surrounding the site is informed by urban influences including the Sneckyeat Road Industrial Estate to the south, the Cumbria Sports Academy to the north and the area of timber sheds to the east. The sensitivity of the landscape character surrounding the eastern portion of site GTW5 has been assessed as Low.
- 4.3.11 The wider landscape to the east of the eastern portion of site GTW5 is predominantly rural farmland, but already incorporates settlement and detracting features and does not form the immediate setting to the National Park. The wider landscape character has been assessed as Medium sensitivity to potential gypsy and traveller development at the eastern portion of site GTW3.
- 4.3.12 The following tables sets out the sensitivity of landscape receptors associated with each site and considered within this assessment.

Site GTW3:

Landscape Receptors	Sensitivity
The site landscape including internal features	High
Features along the site perimeter	Medium
The landscape character surrounding the site	Medium/High
The landscape character of the wider area	Medium

Eastern portion of site GTW5:

Landscape Receptors	Sensitivity
The site landscape including internal features	Low
Features along the site perimeter	Medium
The landscape character surrounding the site	Low
The landscape character of the wider area	Medium

5 VISUAL BASELINE

5.1 Methodology

5.1.1 The visual baseline serves to establish the type of Visual Receptors (VR) that may be affected by the proposed development, the extent and character of existing views, the contribution that the sites makes to each view/local visual amenity and the susceptibility to change in views. This in part correlates with the degree to which the sites are visible from a VR.

5.1.2 A visual appraisal of the sites were undertaken from public roads and footpaths. Views were assessed based on 1) existing visibility 2) views after development. Views of the proposed development were estimated based on the scale and form of the proposals. Views from properties could not be assessed from the houses themselves; in most cases, the likely extent of the view could be adequately estimated identified using a reverse view, i.e. an assessment of the extent to which a property was visible in views from within the sites (or their perimeter) looking outwards.

5.1.3 The visual appraisal is based on a grading of degrees of visibility. There is, in any visual appraisal, a continuity of degrees of visibility from not visible to fully open in the view. To indicate the degree of visibility of each site from selected locations, that continuum has been divided into four categories, as follows:

- **None:** no view (no part of the site or proposed development is discernible, or it is difficult to perceive);
- **Glimpse:** only a minor area of the site or proposed development is discernible and/or the view is transient or at a distance;
- **Partial:** the site or proposed development forms a relatively small proportion of a wider view. There are open views of part of the site or proposed development such that it is easily visible as part of the wider view;
- **Open:** there are clear views of the site or proposed development such that it forms a substantial part (is a dominant element) of the overall view and affects its overall character and visual amenity; or the site or proposed development is the dominant feature of the view, to which other elements become subordinate.

5.1.4 The visual appraisal was carried out in early May 2022 with leaf cover present but not quite at its fullest extent. It should be noted that periods of mist were experienced during the

survey which reduced visibility at times, and affected the clarity of distant views demonstrated in some of the accompanying photographs. However, it is considered that over the course of the survey an accurate understanding of the extent of views towards the sites was ascertained. As part of the assessment methodology HDA has taken into account the latest guidance from the Landscape Institute with regard to the assessment of private views. Private views are likely to be experienced by individual residents, whereas public views are likely to relate to those receptors engaged in the enjoyment of the landscape for its own sake, and thus may be given more weight.

5.2 Site Visibility (see photographs 1 to 28 and plan HDA 6)

Site GTW3

5.2.1 The visual envelope of site GTW3 is contained to the west and north-west by a combination of landform and vegetation, however there are close range views of the site from roads and residential areas to the south and east of the site, as well as more distant intermittent views across the Pow Beck valley to the east and north-east. Views of site GTW3 from the rural landscape to the south are predominately limited to distant glimpses of tree tops within the site, seen in context with the existing settlement.

5.2.2 Visual receptors for site GTW3 are described in groups below.

Public views

Public Rights of Way

5.2.3 Site GTW3 is not visible, or is difficult to perceive, from the majority of public rights of way within the vicinity of the site, such as public footpath 431016 (see photograph 6). However, the site is visible from the western end of public footpath 431017 where it meets the B5345 road (see photograph 4). From this location walkers have a partial view of site GTW3, consisting of the eastern edge of the site. Although not the main focus of the view, trees along the eastern edge of the site are seen as part of the wider tree cover on either side of the B5345.

5.2.4 At greater distance, site GTW3 can be glimpsed from public bridleway 431020 and next to public footpath 431063 (see photograph 7) as the routes descend the west facing slopes on the opposite side of the Pow Beck valley. Trees within the site are seen as part of the wider belt of woodland along the east facing valley slopes, with areas of housing in the foreground and on the horizon. There is limited visibility of site GTW3 from public rights of way within the wider rural landscape to the south of Whitehaven, due to the distance and intervening features including landform, vegetation and housing. Where the site is identifiable from public rights of way to the south, such as from the eastern end of public footpath 431032 (see photograph 26), views of the site are limited to distant glimpses of the taller poplar trees within the site. There are unlikely to be any discernible views of site

GTW3 from the National Park, and the site is not visible from the England Coast Path National Trail.

Roads

5.2.5 Vegetation and built up areas obscure site GTW3 in views from the majority of roads within the local area. However, there are open close range views of the site from the adjacent B5345 (see photographs 1, 2 and 4), the eastern end of Woodhouse Lane (see photograph 3), and at increasing distance from residential roads south of the site, including Greenbank Avenue, Bowness Road and Valley View Road. Motorists views of the site are generally fleeting, however the site is relatively prominent in the view given its sloping topography and location at the road junction on the southern approach towards the centre of Whitehaven. Given that the adjacent B5345 is the main route between St Bees and Whitehaven, with connections to a number of residential areas, site GTW3 is likely to be seen by a significant number of passing motorists.

5.2.6 Trees within site GTW3 are identifiable from roads on the west facing slopes above the Pow Beck valley (see photograph 8), as part of the wider band of woodland on the east facing slopes, but seen in context with housing in the foreground and on the horizon. The site is not visible or difficult to perceive from the majority roads within the rural landscape to the south. However, trees within the site are identifiable from a limited number of locations, such as along the A595 near the bus stop for the Westlakes Science Park (see photograph 23) and along St Bees Road (see photograph 26), but form a minor part of the wider view.

Private Views

Surrounding settlement and properties

5.2.7 There are open views of site GTW3 at relatively close range from properties with windows facing the site along Woodhouse Lane, Bowness Road and Greenbank Avenue, with views of the site consisting predominately of trees. The site is also identifiable at greater distance from residential areas on the opposite side of the Pow Beck valley. Although it was not feasible to identify every individual property with views of site GTW3, the site is likely to be identifiable in the distance by a significant number of residents.

Eastern portion of site GTW5

5.2.8 The visual envelope of the eastern portion of site GTW5 is contained to the north and west by existing development and vegetation, but there are open views from the public footpath which runs along the northern site boundary, and glimpses or partial views from a limited number of nearby locations to the south and east. Trees within the eastern portion of site GTW5 are identifiable from occasional distant vantage points within the rural landscape to the south-east but are seen in context with the existing development.

5.2.9 Visual receptors for eastern portion of site GTW5 are described in groups below.

Public views

Public Rights of Way

5.2.10 Public footpath 431028 runs along the northern edge of the site and therefore affords open foreground views of the eastern portion of site GTW5 (see photograph 9). The site is the dominant element of the view from this public right of way, although the site is seen in context with the industrial estate, hospital, chimney and mast to the south, and adjacent metal railings to the north. Also visible on the horizon to the south and east are the hills which intervene between Whitehaven and the National Park, including the heritage coast and woodland at Dent. The Lake District National Park is largely obscured in the view from the footpath, indicated that the eastern portion of site GTW5 is unlikely to be discernible from the National Park.

5.2.11 The site entrance off Sneckyeat Road can be glimpsed from the very northern end of public footpath 431029 where it meets Sneckyeat Road, but the eastern portion of the site is obscured in views from other public rights within the local area, such as along public footpath 431026 to the north-east of the site (see photograph 15).

5.2.12 Discernible views of the eastern portion of site GTW5 from public rights of way within the wider rural landscape beyond Whitehaven are limited. The tops of trees within or adjacent to the site can be identified from occasional lengths of public footpaths, including public footpath 423005 (see photograph 24), and public footpath 431032 (see photographs 26 and 27). However these are distant views, where the tree tops within the site make a very small contribution to the wider view and are subordinate to the more prominent adjacent urban influences including the hospital buildings and chimney, industrial buildings and mast. The hospital may be glimpsed in the distance from limited locations along routes within the heritage coast (see photograph 28), but the site is likely to be difficult to perceive. There are unlikely to be any significant views of the eastern portion of site GTW5 from the National Park, and the site is not visible from the England Coast Path National Trail.

Roads

5.2.13 The eastern portion of site GTW5 is located away from main roads and is noticeable to relatively few motorists. The entrance to the eastern portion of site GTW5 is prominent in the view along the adjacent section of Sneckyeat Road, but is seen in context with the adjacent industrial buildings (see photograph 11) by a limited number of motorists. Vegetation along the edge of the site, the mast adjacent to the site, and the nearby hospital chimney can be seen in the middle distance from Galemire Road as it continues eastwards

from Sneckyeat Road, but the main body of the site is predominately obscured (see photographs 19 and 20).

5.2.14 The eastern portion of site GTW5 can be glimpsed from Homewood Road through gaps in vegetation to the north and south of the tree group along the western edge of the western portion of site GTW5 (see photograph 14), but views of the site are fleeting and not the main focus of motorists attention while travelling along the road. Elsewhere along Homewood Road, views of the site are obscured by intervening landform, vegetation and buildings (see photographs 13 and 16).

5.2.15 The site is predominately obscured by intervening features in views from nearby roads to the east, including the B5295 (see photograph 21) and Dalzell Street (see photograph 22). Further from the eastern portion of site, the tops of trees within or adjacent to the site can be identified from occasional vantage points along roads within the wider rural landscape to the south, including the A595, High House Road and St Bees Road (see photographs 23, 25 and 26). However these are distant views, where the tree tops within the site make a very small contribution to the wider view and are subordinate to the more prominent adjacent urban influences including the hospital buildings and chimney, industrial buildings and mast.

Private Views

Surrounding settlement and properties

5.2.16 The eastern portion of the site is predominantly obscured from surrounding settlement by intervening landform, vegetation and buildings, including from the majority of houses to the north along Glenridding Walk (see photographs 17 and 18). However, there are oblique partial views of the eastern portion of the site from a limited number of dwellings facing Homewood Road (11-13 Sneckyeat Grove) (see photograph 9 for reverse view from the site back to Homewood Road), but the easterly views from these properties are dominated by industrial buildings in the foreground, and the site forms a minor element of the views experienced by residents. Further from the site, and outside the settlement area of Whitehaven, the main body of the eastern portion of site GTW5 is likely to be obscured by vegetation along the eastern edge of the site, in views from the grade II* listed Nether End Farmhouse (see photograph 10 for reverse view from the edge of the site looking back towards Nether End Farm). The site is obscured in views from The Cross (grade II listed), and Summergrove Halls due to intervening trees.

5.3 Visual Sensitivity

5.3.1 The visual sensitivity of a particular visual receptor is assessed as a combination of viewer susceptibility and the value attached to the view. The type of activity that a person – or visual receptor is engaged in affects susceptibility, as does the experience of the viewer at

a particular location and the extent to which the viewer can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on the character and extent of the view.

Public views

- 5.3.2 The visual receptors most sensitive to changes within a view are people whose activities are likely to be focussed on the landscape, including users of public rights of way, in particular users of National Trails such as the England Coast Path and rights of way within National Parks. Motorists are less likely to be focussed on the view than walkers along public rights of way, and are likely to be travelling at speed, meaning that views of the site will be transient in nature, thereby limiting the visual sensitivity of motorists in most instances.

Private Views

- 5.3.3 Local residents with open views from the primary living space of their property, are accepted to be highly susceptible to changes within the view.
- 5.3.4 Paragraph 6.17 of GLVIA states that:
“In some cases it may also be appropriate to consider private viewpoints, mainly from residential properties”.
- 5.3.5 In March 2019, The Landscape Institute published technical guidance on Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA). Residential visual amenity is defined within the document as:
“The overall quality, experience and nature of views and outlook available to occupants of residential properties, including views from gardens and domestic curtilage. It represents the visual component of Residential Amenity”.
- 5.3.6 Paragraph 1.5 of this document states that:
“Changes in views and visual amenity are considered in the planning process. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely known that, no one has ‘a right to a view.’ This includes situations where a residential property’s outlook / visual amenity is judged to be ‘significantly’ affected by a proposed development, a matter which has been confirmed in a number of appeal / public inquiry decisions.
- 5.3.7 Paragraph 1.6 states:
“It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of

a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before”.

- 5.3.8 The following table sets out the key public visual receptors that have the potential to be affected by gypsy and traveller development at each site and their associated visual sensitivity.

Site GTW3:

Visual Receptor (public views)	Sensitivity
Walkers	
Public footpath 431017 near the site	Medium/High
Public rights of way on west facing slope above the Pow Beck valley, including bridleway 431020 and footpath 431063	Medium/High
Public rights of way within rural landscape to the south, including footpath 431032	High
Motorists	
B5345	Medium
Woodhouse Lane	Medium
Residential streets to the south, including Greenbank Avenue, Bowness Road and Valley View Road	Low
Streets within residential areas on the west facing slopes above the Pow Beck valley, including Tomlin Avenue	Low
Roads within rural landscape to the south, including A595 and St Bees Road	Low

Eastern portion of site GTW5:

Visual Receptor (public views)	Sensitivity
Walkers	
Public footpath 431028 through the site	Medium/High
Public footpath 431029 near the site	Medium
Public rights of way within wider rural landscape beyond Whitehaven including footpaths 423005 and 431032	High
Motorists	
Sneckyeat Road	Medium
Galemire Road	Low
Homewood Road	Low
Roads within the wider rural landscape to the south, including the A595, High House Road and St Bees Road	Low

6 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Description of the Proposals

- 6.1 The proposed development at either site GTW3 or the eastern portion of site GTW5 would involve the construction of 12 hard standing plots for gypsy and traveller use. Each plot would provide space for a mobile home and parking for a touring caravan and vehicle. The internal layout of the site would include a shared washing/toilet/shower facility, vehicle access, areas of open space and planting.

- 6.2 For the purpose of assessing the likely landscape and visual effects of gypsy and traveller development at either site, principles for potential proposals are outlined on plans HDA 4 and HDA 5 for each site, taking into account identified landscape constraints and opportunities/mitigation. These outline principles are summarised below. It should be noted that a proving layout to determine whether 12 plots, vehicle access, open space and planting could be accommodated at each site has not yet been prepared.

Site GTW3 potential outline proposals (see plan HDA 4)

- 6.3 To accommodate level plots across site GTW3 and provide vehicle access, earthworks to create terraces would likely be required, which would result in the removal of the majority of existing internal trees across the site. Mature trees along the southern and eastern boundaries should be retained wherever possible. A single storey building to accommodate shared washing/toilet/shower facilities could be located behind retained trees at the lower eastern side of the site. Vehicle access into the site could be provided off Woodhouse Lane near the western end of the site away from the B5345 junction, although landform within the western end of the site would require reprofiling. A new native hedgerow should be planted along the eastern edge of the site, and trees planted within the southern corner of the site and between retained trees along the boundary with Woodhouse Lane to help reduce views of potential development from adjacent roads and housing, and offset the loss of tree cover generally.

Eastern portion of site GTW5 potential outline proposals (see plan HDA 5)

- 6.4 It is anticipated that to accommodate level plots across the eastern portion of site GTW5, minimal reprofiling would be required and the majority of existing trees, including along the site access would be retained and enhanced through improved management. A single storey building to accommodate shared washing/toilet/shower facilities could be located within the lower southern part of the site, in visual association with adjacent buildings within the industrial estate. Vehicle access off Sneckyeat Road would be maintained along its existing route. A new native hedgerow and trees should be planted along the southern side of public footpath 431028 to separate it from potential development. Additionally, hedgerows should be planted along the western and southern boundaries to help contain the site visually and enhance green infrastructure by creating continuous links between

existing tree groups located within the eastern end of the site, along the access track and along Homewood Road.

Eastern portion of site GTW5 – additional scenario

- 6.5 An additional scenario will be considered whereby the eastern portion of site GTW5 would be developed as set out above at 6.4, but with the western portion of site GTW5 containing industrial units and vehicle access to form an extension of the adjacent Sneckyeat Road Industrial Estate.

7 PREDICTED EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The potential effects of the potential development at either site are assessed below at year 0, when the potential effects are at their greatest and at year 10, following the establishment of potential planting proposals described in section 6 above. In order to assess the potential effects of the proposals, certain assumptions have been made as follows:

- The mobile homes and the single storey building to accommodate shared washing/toilet/shower facilities would have roof heights up to a maximum of 3.5m.
- Tree retention/losses and new planting would be as inferred on the analysis plans HDA 4 and HDA 5.
- It is assumed that tree sizes would ranging from approximately 1m to 3m in height at the time of planting.
- New planting is assumed to have no growth in the first year after planting, and 0.35m per year thereafter. Actual growth rates will depend on environmental conditions and tree species.
- Tree heights after ten years of growth would range from approximately 4m to 6m in height.
- It is assumed that hedgerows would be maintained at approximately 1.5m high once established.

- 7.1.2 The magnitude of change is a judgement on the size or scale of effect and is combined with the landscape or visual sensitivity to give a judgement on the significance of effects resulting from the proposed development.

7.2 Predicted Landscape Effects

Site GTW3

- 7.2.1 During the time of construction, approximately 0.5ha of woodland including well established trees and a varied understorey would be lost to facilitate gypsy and traveller development. This would be a significant loss of features which would be difficult to recreate in the short term. The magnitude of change to the site landscape is therefore judged to be Medium/High

adverse, and given its High sensitivity, the effect of gypsy and traveller development is considered to be Substantial adverse on the site landscape at the time of construction. The majority of trees along the southern and eastern boundaries should be protected and retained, although there is likely to be some removal of vegetation for access and ground reprofiling during construction, and therefore the effect on features along the site perimeter is considered to be Minor adverse at the time of construction. The site is part of a distinctive continuation of sloping tree cover characteristic of this part of Whitehaven, and loss of part of that woodland to engineered landform at the time of construction is judged to be Moderate adverse effect on the landscape character surrounding the site. Effect on the landscape character of the wider area at the time of construction is considered to be Negligible given the distant, relatively limited contribution the site makes to the wider landscape character as part of the existing settlement area of Whitehaven.

- 7.2.2 10 years post completion, proposed planting around the edges of the site and internally would be well established and would partially off-set the loss of woodland at the time of construction, thereby reducing the effect of gypsy and traveller development on the site landscape to Moderate adverse after 10 years. Proposed tree and hedgerow planting would have enhanced the existing site boundaries after 10 years resulting in a Minor beneficial effect on features along the site perimeter. Proposed planting would provide maturing tree cover around the edges of the site, characteristic of the band of woodland through the area, and would reduce the effect of the initial loss of woodland on the landscape character surrounding the site to Minor adverse after 10 years.

Eastern portion of site GTW5

- 7.2.3 During the time of construction, approximately 0.6ha of rough grassland within the eastern portion of site GTW5 would be lost to facilitate gypsy and traveller development. This would represent a loss across the majority of the main body of the site, however the grassland has Low sensitivity and could easily be recreated. Therefore the effect on the site landscape is judged to be negligible at the time of construction. Features along the site perimeter including tree lines along the access track and the treed area which continues beyond the eastern edge of the site would be retained, although there is likely to be some disturbance to them during construction. Given the Medium sensitivity of features along the site perimeter, it is considered that gypsy and traveller development would have a Minor adverse effect on the site perimeter at the time of construction. Construction activity would be apparent from the surrounding and wider areas to a varying degree and distance. Given the site's existing context of urban influences, and retention of existing landscape structure along the eastern edge of the site, it is considered that there would be a Negligible effect on the landscape character surrounding the site and the landscape character of the wider area at the time of construction.

7.2.4 Planting within the main body of the site has the potential to improve upon the existing landscape features of the eastern portion of site GTW5 and would be well established 10 years after completion. However, given the nature of the proposals as a whole and the low sensitivity of the site landscape, it is considered that benefit to the site landscape after 10 years would be negligible. After 10 years, maturing tree and hedgerow planting would enhance the site boundaries and provide a continuation of landscape structure connecting with retained vegetation along the edges of the site, existing vegetation would benefit from improved management, and overall the proposed development would have a Moderate beneficial effect on site perimeter features after 10 years. After 10 years the enhanced boundaries would minimise harmful effect on the landscape character surrounding the site, and provide additional landscape structure to the immediate area. The minor general corridor of open space which penetrates into Whitehaven from the countryside would be maintained across the sports ground north of the site. It is considered that the effect on the landscape character surrounding the site, and the wider area would be negligible after 10 years.

Eastern portion of site GTW5 - additional scenario

7.2.5 The landscape effect of gypsy and traveller development on the eastern portion of site GTW5 would be similar regardless of whether the western portion of site GTW5 was developed with industrial units or not.

7.2.6 The tables below summarise the predicted effects on landscape receptors for each site/scenario.

Site GTW3:

Landscape Receptors	Sensitivity	Construction		10 Years Post Completion	
		Magnitude of Change	Effects	Magnitude of Change	Effects
The site landscape including internal features	High	Medium/High adverse	Substantial adverse	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse
Features along the site perimeter	Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse	Low beneficial	Minor beneficial
The landscape character surrounding the site	Medium/High	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse	Low adverse	Minor adverse
The landscape character of the wider area	Medium	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible

Eastern portion of site GTW5:

Landscape Receptors	Sensitivity	Construction		10 Years Post Completion	
		Magnitude of Change	Effects	Magnitude of Change	Effects
The site landscape including internal features	Low	Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low beneficial	Negligible
Features along the site perimeter	Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse	Medium beneficial	Moderate beneficial
The landscape character surrounding the site	Low	Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low beneficial	Negligible
The landscape character of the wider area	Medium	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible

Eastern portion of site GTW5 – additional scenario:

Landscape Receptors	Sensitivity	Construction		10 Years Post Completion	
		Magnitude of Change	Effects	Magnitude of Change	Effects
The site landscape including internal features	Low	Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low beneficial	Negligible
Features along the site perimeter	Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse	Medium beneficial	Moderate beneficial
The landscape character surrounding the site	Low	Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low beneficial	Negligible
The landscape character of the wider area	Medium	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible

7.3 Predicted Visual Effects

Site GTW3

- 7.3.1 Gypsy and traveller development on site GTW3 would have a similar visual envelope to the existing site. The most noticeable public views of the proposed development during construction would be from the adjacent roads. A significant proportion of the trees on sloping landform within the existing view would be replaced by prominent construction

activity. Motorists along the B5345 and Woodhouse Lane are considered to be receptors with Medium sensitivity, but taking into account the High adverse change in the view, the effect would be Substantial adverse at the time of construction. A reduction in tree cover and construction activity would be noticeable at greater distance from vantage points on the opposite side of the Pow Beck valley, including bridleway 431020 and adjacent to footpath 431063. Seen along with other areas of existing development and set within a treed context on the opposite slope, the effect from these rights of way is considered to be Moderate adverse at the time of construction. The effect on other remaining receptors is judged to be negligible or minor adverse.

- 7.3.2 After ten years, proposed planting would begin to assimilate the development into the landscape. However, given the sloping nature of site GTW3, mobile homes and vehicles within the higher parts of the site are likely to be seen over boundary vegetation. After 10 years the effect of the development is judged to reduce to Moderate adverse on close range views along the adjacent roads, and Minor adverse on more distant views across the Pow Beck valley.

Eastern portion of site GTW5

- 7.3.3 Construction activity within the eastern portion of site GTW5 would be partially contained in the local area by existing development and vegetation surrounding the site. The most noticeable public views of the proposed development during construction would be from public footpath 431028 which crosses through the northern edge of the site, with construction within the eastern portion of the site also visible in views across the western portion of the site. Given existing urban influences within the current view from footpath 431028, it is judged that proposed gypsy and traveller development would have a Moderate adverse effect on views from the right of way at the time of construction. The effect on views further from the eastern portion of site GTW5, including Sneckyeat Road, Galemire Road and Homewood Road would be Minor adverse to Negligible at the time of construction. Glimpses of construction activity are likely from public rights of way and roads within the wider rural landscape, but seen at a considerable distance and in context with adjacent more prominent urban influences including the hospital and industrial estate buildings, and the town of Whitehaven in general.
- 7.3.4 After 10 years, proposed tree and hedge planting along the north-east and north-west edges of the site would help soften and obscure the view of mobile homes and vehicles in views from public footpath 431028 towards the eastern portion of site GTW5. Given the urban context, including views of industrial estate and hospital buildings, is judged that after 10 years, proposed gypsy and traveller development would have a Minor adverse effect on views from footpath 431028. Retained and enhanced vegetation would limit the effect of the proposed development to Minor adverse or Negligible from Sneckyeat Road, Galemire

Road and Homewood Road, 10 years after construction. It may be possible to identify elements of the proposed development such as the top of mobile homes, in more distant views from the wider rural landscape, however these would be softened by proposed planting after 10 years, would be subordinate to more prominent adjacent urban influences including industrial estate and hospital buildings, and form a very small proportion of the wider view. The effect on these views is considered to be Negligible after 10 years.

Eastern portion of site GTW5 – additional scenario

- 7.3.5 An extension of the industrial estate into the western portion of site GTW5 would further contain the eastern portion of site GTW5 with urban influences, and likely reduce the length of public footpath 431028 from where the proposed development would be visible. Glimpses and partial views of the eastern portion in views from Homewood Road would also likely be reduced. From distant views within the wider rural landscape any glimpses of the proposed development would likely be seen in context with the extended industrial estate.
- 7.3.6 Development within the western portion of site GTW5 would separate the eastern portion from existing residential areas to the west, but would marginally reduce the visual magnitude of change and effects of gypsy and traveller development within the eastern portion of the site.
- 7.3.7 The following tables set out the predicted effects of the proposed development on the public visual receptors for each site/scenario.

Site GTW3:

Visual Receptor/ Viewpoint Location	Sensitivity	Construction		10 Years Post Completion	
		Magnitude of Change	Effects	Magnitude of Change	Effects
Walkers					
Public footpath 431017 near the site	Medium/High	Low adverse	Minor adverse	Very Low beneficial	Negligible
Public rights of way on west facing slope above the Pow Beck valley, including bridleway 431020 and footpath 431063	Medium/High	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse	Low adverse	Minor adverse

Visual Receptor/ Viewpoint Location	Sensitivity	Construction		10 Years Post Completion	
		Magnitude of Change	Effects	Magnitude of Change	Effects
Public rights of way within rural landscape to the south, including footpath 431032	High	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible
Motorists					
B5345	Medium	High adverse	Substantial adverse	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse
Woodhouse Lane	Medium	High adverse	Substantial adverse	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse
Residential streets to the south, including Greenbank Avenue, Bowness Road and Valley View Road	Low	Medium adverse	Minor adverse	Medium adverse	Minor adverse
Streets within residential areas on the west facing slopes above the Pow Beck valley, including Tomlin Avenue	Low	Medium adverse	Minor adverse	Low adverse	Negligible
Roads within rural landscape to the south, including A595 and St Bees Road	Low	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible

Eastern portion of site GTW5:

Visual Receptor/ Viewpoint Location	Sensitivity	Construction		10 Years Post Completion	
		Magnitude of Change	Effects	Magnitude of Change	Effects
Walkers					
Public footpath 431028 through the site	Medium/High	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse	Low adverse	Minor adverse
Public footpath 431029 near the site	Medium	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible
Public rights of way within wider rural landscape beyond Whitehaven including footpaths 423005 and 431032	High	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible
Motorists					
Sneekyeat Road	Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse	Low adverse	Minor adverse
Galemire Road	Low	Low adverse	Negligible	Low adverse	Negligible
Homewood Road	Low	Low adverse	Negligible	Low adverse	Negligible
Roads within the wider rural landscape to the south, including the A595, High House Road and St Bees Road	Low	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible

Eastern portion of site GTW5 – additional scenario:

Visual Receptor/ Viewpoint Location	Sensitivity	Construction		10 Years Post Completion	
		Magnitude of Change	Effects	Magnitude of Change	Effects
Walkers					
Public footpath 431028 through the site	Medium/High	Low adverse	Minor adverse	Low adverse	Minor adverse
Public footpath 431029 near the site	Medium	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible
Public rights of way within wider rural landscape beyond Whitehaven including footpaths 423005 and 431032	High	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible
Motorists					
Sneckyeat Road	Medium	Low adverse	Minor adverse	Low adverse	Minor adverse
Galemire Road	Low	Low adverse	Negligible	Low adverse	Negligible
Homewood Road	Low	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible
Roads within the wider rural landscape to the south, including the A595, High House Road and St Bees Road	Low	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low adverse	Negligible

8 REVIEW OF RELEVANT POLICY

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 This section summarises the landscape related planning policy context relevant to the proposed development at either site GTW3 or the eastern portion of site GTW5.

8.2 National Planning Policy Framework

Site GTW3

- 8.2.1 Loss of 0.5ha of woodland would conflict with paragraph 131 of the Framework regarding trees, and paragraph 174 of the Framework regarding conserving and enhancing the natural environment. However, gypsy and traveller development on the eastern portion of site GTW3 would not have a significant effect on the setting to the National Park (paragraphs 176 and 177) or the Heritage Coast (paragraph 178) and would not physically affect any public rights of way (paragraph 100).

Eastern portion of Site GTW5

- 8.2.2 The proposals would broadly conform to the Framework, with planting proposals enhancing the existing natural environment of the site (paragraphs 174). Existing trees would be retained (paragraph 131), and public footpath protected (paragraph 100). Gypsy and traveller development on the eastern portion of site GTW3 would not have a significant effect on the setting to the National Park (paragraphs 176 and 177) or the Heritage Coast (paragraph 178).

8.3 Local Policy

Site GTW3

- 8.3.1 Although section iv of current policy ST1 encourages reuse of previously developed land, the loss of 0.5ha of woodland would likely conflict with part iii regarding protection, enhancement and new green infrastructure, current policy DM28 regarding trees and current policy ENV5 in relation to ensuing development does not threaten or detract from the distinctive characteristics of that particular area. Similarly, gypsy and traveller development at site GTW3 is likely to conflict with emerging policies N6PU regarding landscape protection and N13PU regarding protection of trees. Policy H10PU of the emerging Local Plan which relates to gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople sites states that proposals should not lead to significant adverse impact on landscape character and provide suitable residential amenity to occupiers of the site. The proposed development would require the sloping landform to be substantially regraded with the loss of approximately 0.5ha of woodland, giving the site a more engineered appearance, which would have an adverse effect on the landscape character within the vicinity of the site as set out in section 7.2 above. Residential amenity is available in the form of existing dwellings to the south on the opposite side of Woodhouse Lane.

Eastern portion of site GTW5

- 8.3.2 Gypsy and traveller development within the eastern portion of site GTW5 is likely to conform to the majority of relevant local landscape policy, with minimal loss of existing landscape features, and enhancement of the existing site through the provision of new landscape structure. There would be some loss of open space and visual amenity to the footpath along the edge of the site, but the general corridor of open space from the settlement edge to Kie Park would be maintained across the sports grounds to the north of the site. The proposed development would not have a significantly adverse effect on local landscape character, as set out in section 7.2 above, in accordance with Policy H10PU of the emerging Local Plan.

Eastern portion of site GTW5 – additional scenario

- 8.3.3 Residential amenity for site users would be nearby, having regard to Policy H10PU of the emerging Local Plan, but industrial estate development within the western portion of site GTW5 would separate the eastern portion of site from residential areas to the west of Homewood Road.

9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 National and local policy identify the importance of protecting and enhancing the landscape with great weight given to National Parks and their setting. Neither site would significantly alter the setting to the National Park or heritage coast if developed as proposed. Gypsy and traveller development at site GTW3 would result in the loss of approximately 0.5ha of woodland and require significant reprofiling of the site to accommodate level plots and vehicle access, causing a Substantial adverse effect on the site landscape, and Moderate adverse effect on the local landscape character. The loss of woodland would be partially mitigated over time as proposed planting establishes, however the reprofiled landform, mobile homes and vehicles within the upper parts of the site would continue to be noticeable over planting lower down the slope and the residual effect on the local landscape character difficult to mitigate. Gypsy and traveller development within the eastern portion of site GTW5 however would cause limited harm to the current landscape and presents the opportunity to enhance the existing landscape with tree and hedgerow planting to provide significant landscape structure and connectivity with retained existing vegetation.
- 9.2 Gypsy and traveller development on the GTW3 site would adversely affect the views of a considerable number of people including motorists at a relatively prominent sloping location on the southern approach into the centre of Whitehaven, as well as the views of nearby residents from dwellings with windows which face the site, and to a lesser extent and greater distance, views from footpaths, roads and properties on the west facing slopes of the opposite side of the Pow Beck valley. Gypsy and traveller development within the eastern portion of site GTW5 would be partially contained by existing development and is

likely to be visible by fewer people at public vantage points than similar development at site GTW3. However, development within the eastern portion of site GTW5 would be visible at close range from the public footpath which runs along the northern site boundary, the users of which have greater sensitivity than motorists or private residents.

- 9.3 Overall, it is considered that gypsy and traveller development would have a greater adverse landscape and visual effect on site GTW3 than on the eastern portion of site GTW5. If the western portion of site GTW5 contained industrial development as an extension to the Sneckyeat Road Industrial Estate, the visual effect of gypsy and traveller development on the eastern portion would reduce marginally, but residential amenity for site users would also likely be reduced.