

Landscape Visual Assessment

The Parks, Frizington

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1.0 Overview

1.1 Introduction

Landscape and visual impact assessments (LVIP) can be defined as a mechanism by which the landscape can be assessed against its capacity to accommodate change.

The aim of this report is to provide an assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of a proposed development upon the landscape, in line with current legislation and guidance. It comprises two main assessments, the first for landscape and the second for visual effects.

Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may cause changes in its character and how this is experienced. Due to the dynamic nature of the landscape, change arising from a development may not necessarily be significant.

Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects with the respect of visual amenity.

This report provides a landscape and visual impact assessment of the proposed development of 2, 15m wind turbines close to a farm steading.

This assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the methods outlined in the following best practice guidance:

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition), published by the Landscape Institute and the IEMA (2013) (GLVIA); and

An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, published by Natural England (2014).

In accordance with the GLVIA and other best practice guidance noted above, both the landscape and visual assessments will include baseline studies that describe, classify and evaluate the existing landscape and visual resources, focusing on their sensitivity and ability to accommodate change.

The principal objectives of the LVIA are:

to identify and classify the existing landscape likely to be affected by the construction and operation of the proposal and ancillary works;

to identify the 'visual receptors' with views of the proposed development;

and

to assess the significance of effects on the prevailing landscape character and visual amenity, taking into account any measures proposed to mitigate any impacts identified.

The prediction and extent of effect cannot always be absolute. It is for each assessment to determine the assessment criteria and the significance thresholds, using informed and well-reasoned professional judgement supported by thorough justification for their selection, and explanation as to how the conclusions about significance for each effect assessed have been derived, as noted in GLVIA 3rd edition para 2.23-2.26 and 3.32-36.

1.2 Proposal and Location

The wind turbines are proposed to be located adjacent to a farm steading at The Parks, Frizington, CA26 3RB, with the purpose of generating electricity to power the steading. The location of these turbines is in a field to the north of the main steading adjacent to the farm access road. Appendix 1: Location Plan.

1.3 Landscape Description and Designations

The west coast of Cumbria is characterised by the industrial market towns of Workington and Whitehaven with their history of sea trade through the ports and with the mining of coal and production of steel. Further inland, the small towns of Frizington and Cleator Moor have grown from farming villages to towns built up around the mining of coal and iron ore. Frizington is located close to the edge of the Lake District National Park and World Heritage Site and sits within the National Character Area (NCA) of the West Cumbria Coastal plain. This NCA is formed of a plain of varying width between the Cumbrian High Fells NCA in the east and the Irish Sea to the west. Views inland are set against the Lake District mountains, with long-distance views to the Isle of Man and southern Scotland across the sea. There are extensive areas of land reclaimed from coal mining, iron and steel industries, and processing industries around the towns/ports of Whitehaven, Workington and Maryport. The NCA specifically states that *“The energy industry is highly visible and an important employer”* within this area.

The National Historic Landscape Characterisation is defined as enclosed agriculture, unplanned fields and land typically of ancient and modern form, the Dudley Stamp land use classification is 4-arable and 5-grassland.

Soils are a mixture of slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid, but base-rich loamy and clayey soils with some freely draining sandy breckland soils.

The Lake District National Park and World Heritage Site are located within 800m southeast of the proposed site.

2.0 Assessment

2.1 Methodology

An initial desk-based study using aerial photography and Ordnance Survey maps was conducted to a radius of 2.5km. This identified any potential viewpoints within this range. In addition to this a Zone of Theoretical Visibility was mapped using Viewshed analysis, through QGIS 3.30, shown in Appendix 2 which, alongside the OS maps and aerial photography identified viewpoints where survey work should be concentrated. It should be noted that this is a topographical information-based exercise with no account being taken of the visual barrier effects of vegetation or buildings. The extent of study area and viewpoints were selected as being representative and having the potential to offer significant landscape and visual effects.

2.2 Landscape Character

The current landscape character has been assessed and determined as 'Minor' based on the tables in Appendix 3: Landscape Character Assessment Criteria.

Landscape Quality was determined as being 'High' with most landscape elements remaining intact and in good repair, most buildings in local vernacular and materials and few detracting elements are evident.

Landscape Value was determined to be 'Medium' with areas primarily of valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition with low levels of disruptive visual detractors, exhibiting a recognisable landscape structure. Such areas would generally be non-statutory locally designated areas such as Areas of Great Landscape Value.

Character Sensitivity was determined to be 'Low' with important elements of the landscape insusceptible to change and of low quality and condition. Generally, with large-scale landform, land cover, development, coarse grained, open with broad views. Frequent presence of utility, infrastructure or industrial elements, contemporary structures e.g. masts, pylons, cranes, silos, industrial sheds with vertical emphasis, functional man-made land-use patterns and engineered aspects. Busy and noisy, human activity and development with prominent movement.

Landscape Visual Sensitivity was determined as 'Medium' with undulating or gently rolling topography, some vegetative and built features. Moderate density of population, settlements of moderate size with some views outwards, routes with some degree of focus on the landscape.

Based on the above criteria the Magnitude of Change was determined as 'Small' showing minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features, characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape and may affect an area of recognised landscape character.

2.3 Visual Impact

The field study was undertaken in March 2023 and benefits from the vegetation not being in leaf to obscure views. Appendix 4 show the location of the photographs.

Table 1: Viewpoint Locations

No	Location	Distance (km) and direction	National Grid Reference	Rational for Selection
1	Minor Road to Fizington Household Recycling point.	0.84km	NY037 168	Busy minor road to recycling centre, regular use by locals.
2	A5086 Cleator Moor, Frizington Road	1.87km	NY030 148	Busy main road in residential area.
3	Wath Bridge, Cleator Moor	2.1km	NY031 144	Parking and walks along the river.
4	Minor road to Croft Brow	1.55km	NY045 146	High viewpoint looking across the valley from within the Lake District National Park.
5	A5086 jct with Skelsceugh	2.32km	NY044 185	Looking down on development from main road. Looking from within the Lake District National Park.
6	Bank House on minor road to Ennerdale Bridge	1.47km	NY056 157	Minor road with several residential developments. Looking from within the Lake District National Park.
7	Disused railway line, now PROW.	0.28km	NY042 159	Busy PROW with direct views to development.
8	Farm Steading access road	0.1km	NY041 163	Main view on approach to farm steading

Viewpoint 1: Minor Road to Frizington Household Recycling point.

Baseline Description	No photo taken as landform, topography and vegetation view.
Predicted Change	No change from this point
Magnitude of Change	N/A
Type of Effect	N/A
Assessment	Sensitivity – Low
	Magnitude - Negligible
Significance of Effect	Negligible - Not significant

Viewpoint 2: A5086 Cleator Moor, Frizington Road

Baseline Description	No photo taken as landform, topography and vegetation view.
Predicted Change	No change from this point
Magnitude of Change	N/A
Type of Effect	N/A
Assessment	Sensitivity – Low
	Magnitude - Negligible
Significance of Effect	Negligible - Not significant

Viewpoint 3: Wath Bridge, Cleator Moor



Baseline Description	Photo taken from bridge looking northeast upstream. There is a car park at this location and PROW along the River Ehen, public users from the local towns of Cleator Moor and Frizington regularly use this area. This River Ehen is the boundary of the Lake District National Park and World Heritage Site.
Predicted Change	From this point the proposal will be set on the skyline. There is the potential for users of the road and PROW to see the proposal from this point, but it is not easily viable due to distance from the development and existing vegetation in the landscape.
Magnitude of Change	The introduction of the proposal into the landscape will be negligible with minor changes from this point.
Type of Effect	The development will not result in a significant change in the landscape from this point.
Assessment	Sensitivity – Low
	Magnitude - Negligible
Significance of Effect	Negligible - Not significant

Viewpoint 4: Minor road to Croft Brow



Baseline Description	This photo taken a highpoint on a minor road looking north across the valley. There are no PROWs within this area therefore use of this location limited to residents on the 2 properties. This view is from within the Lake District National Park and World Heritage site looking out.
Predicted Change	From this point the proposal will be set centrally within the mid distance. There is the potential for users of the road to see the proposal from this point, due to the scale of the development would not be prominent.
Magnitude of Change	The introduction of the proposal into the landscape will be very small with minor changes from this point.
Type of Effect	The development will not result in a significant change in the landscape from this point.
Assessment	Sensitivity – Low
	Magnitude – Very Small
Significance of Effect	Negligible - Not significant

Viewpoint 5: A5086 Jct with Skelsceugh

Baseline Description	No photo taken as landform, topography and vegetation view. Hedges, trees and discussed railway embankments obscure view.
Predicted Change	No change from this point
Magnitude of Change	N/A
Type of Effect	N/A
Assessment	Sensitivity – Low
	Magnitude - Negligible
Significance of Effect	Negligible - Not significant

Viewpoint 6: Bank House on minor road to Ennerdale Bridge

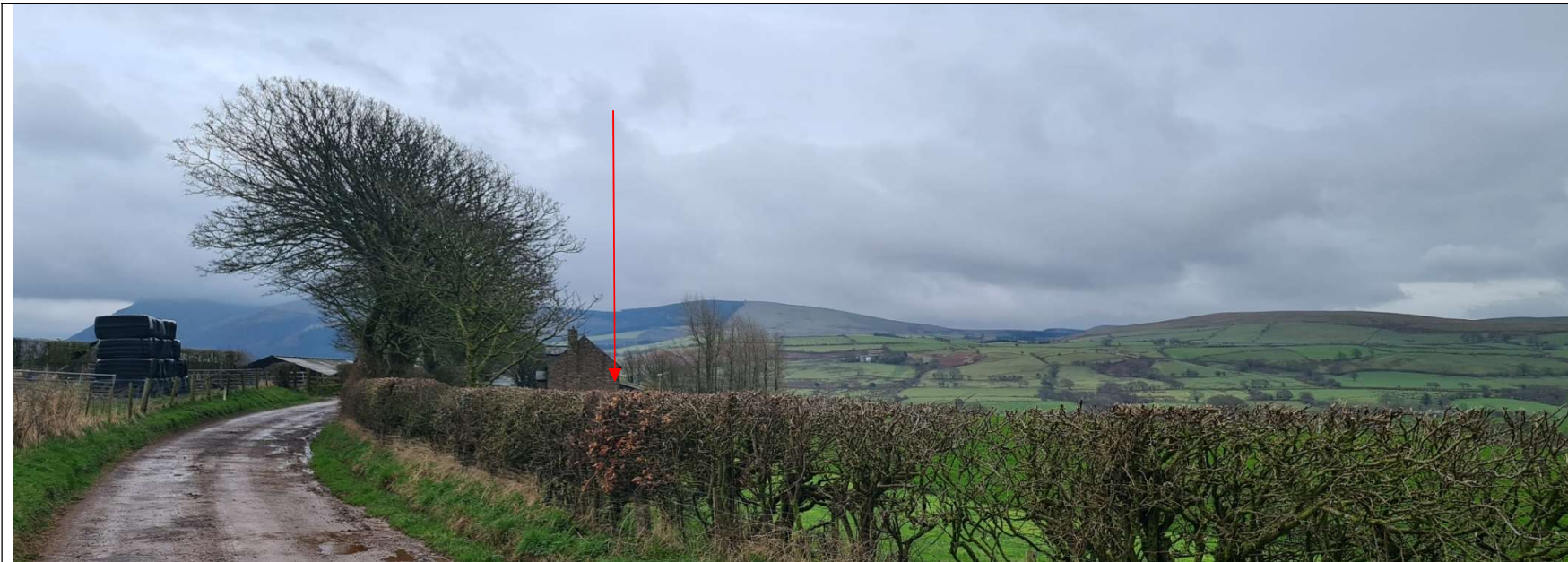
Baseline Description	No photo taken as landform, topography and vegetation view.
Predicted Change	No change from this point
Magnitude of Change	N/A
Type of Effect	N/A
Assessment	Sensitivity – Low
	Magnitude - Negligible
Significance of Effect	Negligible - Not significant

Viewpoint 7: Disused railway line, now PROW.



Baseline Description	Photo taken from PROW along discussed railway line. The RROW is regularly used by local walkers, cyclist and horse riders. The development site is clearly visible from this location.
Predicted Change	From this point the proposal will be set on the skyline. There is the potential for users of the PROW to see the proposal from this point.
Magnitude of Change	The introduction of the proposal into the landscape will result in a noticeable change in the existing view and will be noticeable by the observer at intervals along this stretch of pathway. Trees and bushes will obscure the view, but occasional gaps will reveal the development.
Type of Effect	The development will result in a significant change in the landscape from this point.
Assessment	Sensitivity – Medium
	Magnitude – Medium
Significance of Effect	Moderate – Not Significant

Viewpoint 8: Farm Steading access road



Baseline Description	Photo taken from farm access road close to site of development. This is a private road with access to the farm steading only. The development site is clearly visible from this location.
Predicted Change	The users of the farm access road will be able to clearly see the proposal from this point.
Magnitude of Change	The introduction of the proposal into the landscape will result in a noticeable change in the existing view and will be noticeable by the observer at intervals along the approach to the farm. Trees and bushes will obscure the view, but occasional gaps will reveal the development.
Type of Effect	The development will result in a significant change in the landscape from this point.
Assessment	Sensitivity – Low
	Magnitude – Medium
Significance of Effect	Moderate/Minor – Not Significant

Table 2: Summary of Visual Significance of Effect

No	Viewpoint	Receptor Type	Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Visual Effect
1	Minor Road to Fizington Household Recycling point.	Residents and users of the recycling centre	Low	Negligible	Negligible
2	A5086 Cleator Moor, Frizington Road	Resident and road users	Low	Negligible	Negligible
3	Wath Bridge, Cleator Moor	Residents, road and PROW users	Low	Negligible	Negligible
4	Minor road to Croft Brow	Resident and road users	Low	Very Small	Negligible
5	A5086 jct with Skelsceugh	Resident and road users	Low	Negligible	Negligible
6	Bank House on minor road to Ennerdale Bridge	Resident and road users	Low	Negligible	Negligible
7	Disused railway line, now PROW.	PROW users	Medium	Medium	Moderate
8	Farm Steading access road	Farm traffic	Medium	Low	Moderate/Minor

The overall Visual Assessment has been assessed as **Minor** based on the tables in Appendix 5: Visual Assessment Criteria.

The Visual Receptor Sensitivity is 'high' with the development being visible by occupiers of residential properties, users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape and communities where the development results in changes in the landscape setting or valued views enjoyed by the community. With the main view from the discussed railway line PROW.

The Magnitude of Visual Impact has been assessed as very 'small' with the development resulting in a barely perceptible change in the existing view, and/or without affecting the overall quality and/or would form an inconspicuous minor element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 Landscape Character

Historically the landscape in this area has been subject to change over the past century by the introduction of mining and a change of land use away from traditional farming, and more recently energy production through larger wind farms have appeared in the landscape.

The proposed development has been assessed to have a 'Minor' significance on the landscape character of the area.

3.2 Visual Impact

The visual effects have been assessed through a series of photographs taken at various viewpoints looking back towards the development as well as using the assessment criteria in Appendix 2. The visual impact has been assessed to have a 'Minor' effect.

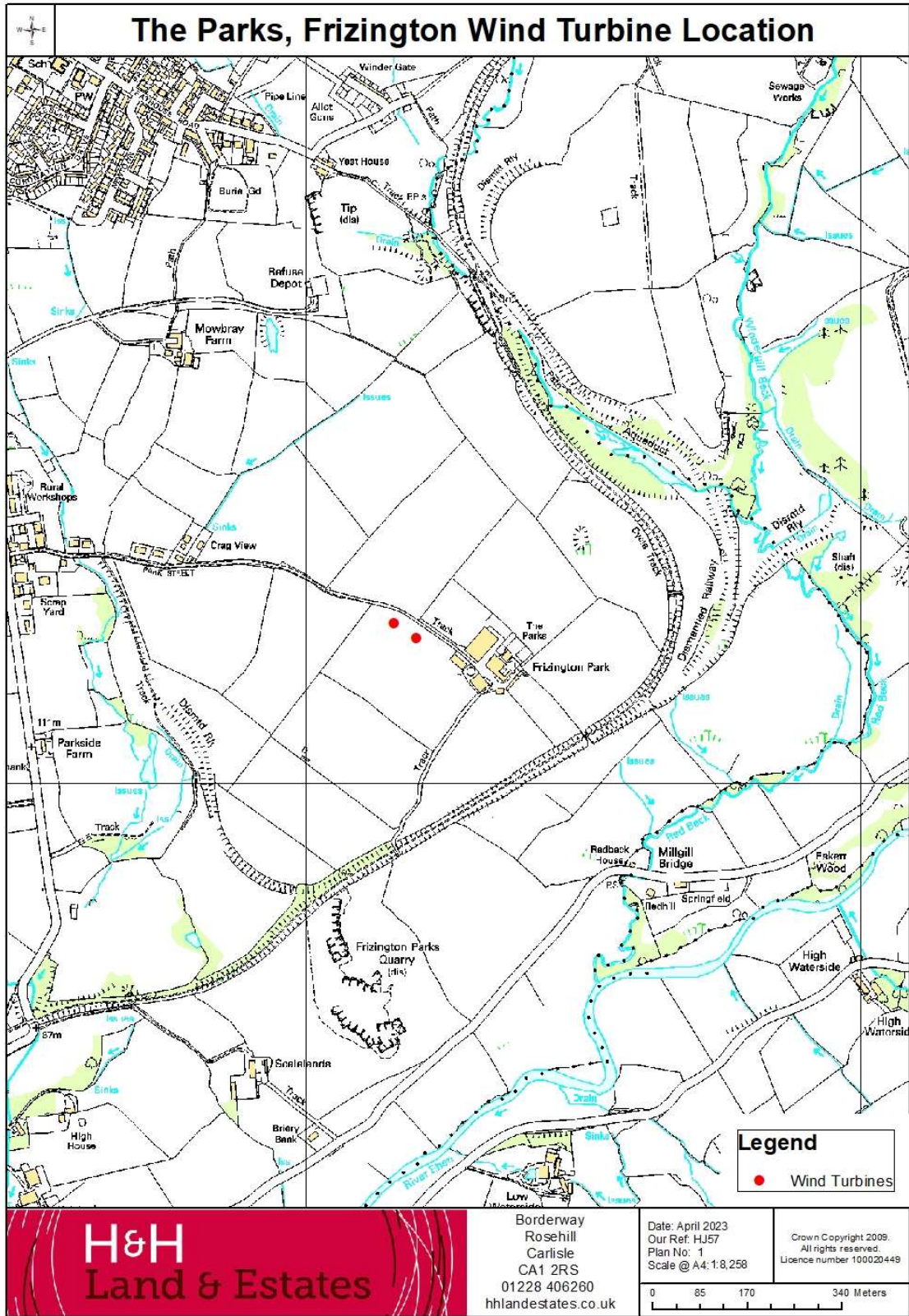
4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, when seen within the context of the wider landscape, from most viewpoints, the proposals are less noticeable with minor effect and would consequently have visual effects that are not considered 'Significant'.

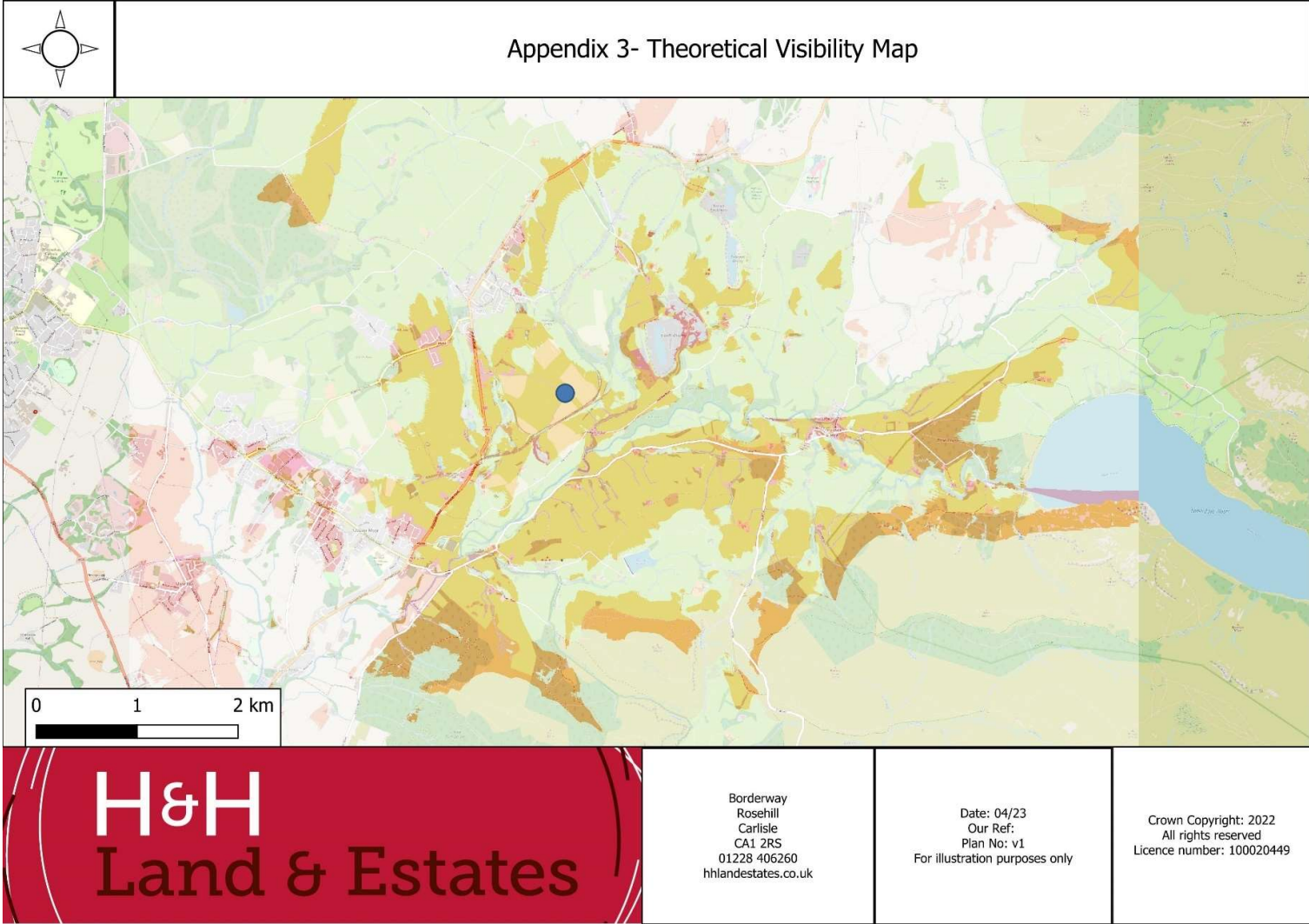
However, from nearby views, both on the farm access and the disused railway line PROW the site would remain noticeable with little visual barrier. In these views the significance of visual effect would still remain 'not significant' in planning terms.

For the majority of the receptors, the assessment has found that while parts of the development are visible, such views are glimpsed and would not have significant visual effects in planning terms.

APPENDIX 1: Location Map



APPENDIX 2: Zone of Theoretical Visibility Map



APPENDIX 3: Landscape Character Assessment Criteria

Table 1: Landscape Quality

Landscape Quality (or condition)	Typical Indicators
Very High	All landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Buildings are in local vernacular and materials. No detracting elements are evident
High	Most landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Most buildings are in local vernacular and materials. Few detracting elements are evident
Medium	Some landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Some buildings are in local vernacular and materials and some detracting elements are evident
Low	Few landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Few buildings are in local vernacular and materials. Many detracting or incongruous elements are evident
Very Low	No landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Buildings are not in local vernacular and materials. Detracting or incongruous elements are much in evidence

Table 2: Landscape Value

Landscape Value	Typical Indicators
Very High	Areas comprising a clear composition of valued landscape components in robust form and health, free of disruptive visual detractors and with a strong sense of place. Areas containing a strong, balanced structure with distinct features worthy of conservation. Such areas would generally be internationally or nationally recognised designations, e.g. AONB or National Parks
High	Areas primarily containing valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition and lacking prominent disruptive visual detractors. Areas containing a strong structure with noteworthy features or elements, exhibiting a sense of place. Such areas would generally be national statutorily designated areas. Such areas may also relate to the setting of internationally or nationally statutory designated areas, e.g. National Parks. Such areas may also relate to the setting of national statutorily designated areas, such as AONB.
Medium	Areas primarily of valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition with low levels of disruptive visual detractors, exhibiting a recognisable landscape structure. Such areas would generally be non-statutory locally designated areas such as Areas of Great Landscape Value
Low	Areas containing some features of landscape value but lacking a coherent and aesthetically pleasing composition with frequent detracting visual elements, exhibiting a distinguishable structure often concealed by mixed land uses or development. Such areas would be commonplace at the local level and would generally be undesigned, offering scope for improvement.
Very Low	Areas lacking valued landscape components or comprising degraded, disturbed or derelict features, lacking any aesthetically pleasing composition with a

	dominance of visually detracting elements, exhibiting mixed land uses which conceal the baseline structure. Such areas would generally be restricted to the local level and identified as requiring recovery
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Table 3: Character Sensitivity

Character Sensitivity	Typical Indicators
Very High	<p>Landscape elements: Important elements of the landscape susceptible to change and of high quality and condition.</p> <p>Scale and Enclosure: Small-scale landform/land cover/ development, human scale indicators, fine grained, enclosed with narrow views, sheltered.</p> <p>Manmade influence: Absence of manmade elements, traditional or historic settlements, natural features and 'natural' forms of amenity parkland, perceived as natural 'wild land' lacking in man-made features, land use elements and detractors</p> <p>Remoteness and Tranquillity: Sense of peace, isolation or wildness, remote and empty, no evident movement.</p>
High	Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Very High criteria but exceed those for Medium
Medium	<p>Landscape elements: Important elements of the landscape of moderate susceptibility to change and of medium quality and condition.</p> <p>Scale and Enclosure: Medium-scale landform/land cover/ development, textured, semi-enclosed with middle distance views.</p> <p>Manmade influence: Some presence of man-made elements, which may be partially out of scale with the landscape and be of only partially consistent with vernacular styles.</p> <p>Remoteness and Tranquillity: some noise, evident, but not dominant human activity and development, noticeable movement.</p>
Low	Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Medium criteria but exceed those for Very Low.
Very Low	<p>Landscape elements: Important elements of the landscape insusceptible to change and of low quality and condition.</p> <p>Scale and Enclosure: Large-scale landform/land cover/ development, Featureless, coarse grained, open with broad views.</p> <p>Manmade influence: Frequent presence of utility, infrastructure or industrial elements, contemporary structures e.g. masts, pylons, cranes, silos, industrial sheds with vertical emphasis, functional man-made land-use patterns and engineered aspects.</p> <p>Remoteness and Tranquillity: Busy and noisy, human activity and development, prominent movement.</p>

Table 4: Landscape Visual Sensitivity

Landscape Visual Sensitivity	Typical Indicators
Very High	<p>Visual interruption: Flat or gently undulating topography, few if any vegetative or built features.</p> <p>Nature of views: Densely populated, dispersed pattern of small settlements, outward looking settlement, landscape focused recreation routes and/or visitor facilities, distinctive settings, gateways or public viewpoints.</p>
High	<p>Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Very High criteria but exceed those for Medium.</p>
Medium	<p>Visual interruption: Undulating or gently rolling topography, some vegetative and built features.</p> <p>Nature of views: Moderate density of population, settlements of moderate size with some views outwards, routes with some degree of focus on the landscape</p>
Low	<p>Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Medium criteria but exceed those for Very Low</p>
Very Low	<p>Visual interruption: Rolling topography, frequent vegetative or built features.</p> <p>Nature of views: Unpopulated or sparsely populated, concentrated pattern of large settlements, introspective settlement, inaccessible, indistinctive or industrial settings.</p>

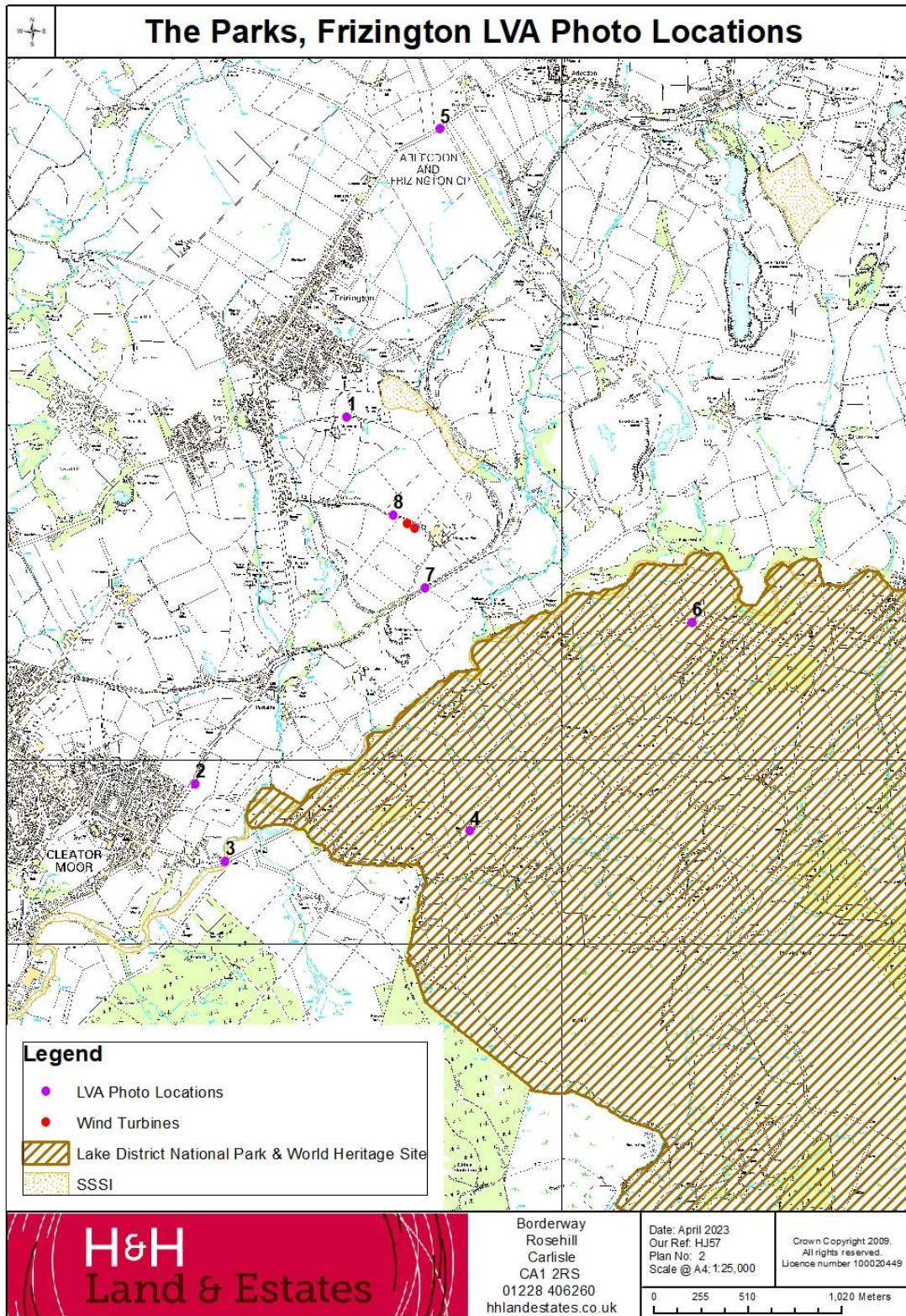
Table 5: Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Description
Large	Total loss of or major alteration to key valued elements, features, and characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements considered being prominent and totally uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Would be at a considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape. Would cause a high quality landscape to be permanently changed and its quality diminished.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements, features, characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Would be out of scale with the landscape, and at odds with the local pattern and landform. Will leave an adverse impact on a landscape of recognised quality
Small	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features, characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. May not quite fit into the landform and scale of the landscape. Affect an area of recognised landscape character
Negligible	Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features, and characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Maintain existing landscape quality, and maybe slightly at odds to the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape.

Table 6: Significance of Landscape Effects

Magnitude	Sensitivity			
	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Large	Major	Major	Major/moderate	Moderate
Medium	Major	Major/moderate	Moderate	Moderate/minor
Small	Moderate	Moderate/minor	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Minor/negligible	Minor	Minor/negligible	Negligible

APPENDIX 4: Visual Assessment Photo Location Map



APPENDIX 5: Visual Assessment Criteria

Table 1: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor Sensitivity	Description
High	Occupiers of residential properties. Users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape Communities where the development results in changes in the landscape setting or valued views enjoyed by the community.
Medium	People travelling through or past the affected landscape in cars, on trains or other transport routes where higher speeds are involved and views sporadic and short-lived. People engaged in outdoor recreation where enjoyment of the landscape is incidental rather than the main interest.
Low	People at their place of work, Industrial facilities.

Table 2: Definition of Magnitude of Visual Impact

Magnitude	Examples
Very Large	The development would result in a dramatic change in the existing view and/or would cause a dramatic change in the quality and/or character of the view. The development would appear large scale and/or form the dominant elements within the overall view and/or may be in full view the observer or receptor. Commanding, controlling the view.
Large	The development would result in a prominent change in the existing view and/or would cause a prominent change in the quality and /or character of the view. The development would form prominent elements within the overall view and/or may be easily noticed by the observer or receptor. Standing out, striking, sharp, unmistakable, easily seen
Medium	The development would result in a noticeable change in the existing view and/or would cause a noticeable change in the quality and/or character of the view. The development would form a conspicuous element within the overall view and/or may be readily noticed by the observer or receptor. Noticeable, distinct, catching the eye or attention, clearly visible, well defined
Small	The development would result in a perceptible change in the existing view, and/or without affecting the overall quality and/or character of the view. The development would form an apparent small element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor. Visible, evident, obvious.
Very Small	The development would result in a barely perceptible change in the existing view, and/or without affecting the overall quality and/or would form an inconspicuous minor element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor. Lacking sharpness of definition, not obvious, indistinct, not clear, obscure, blurred, indefinite.
Negligible	e Only a small part of the development would be discernible and/or it is at such a distance that no change to the existing view can be appreciated. Weak, not legible, near limit of acuity of human eye.

Table 3: Significance of Visual Effects

Magnitude	Sensitivity		
	High	Medium	Low
Very Large	Major	Major	Major/moderate
Large	Major	Major/moderate	Moderate
Medium	Major/moderate	Moderate	Moderate/minor
Small	Moderate	Moderate/minor	Minor
Very Small	Minor	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Minor	Negligible	Negligible