

Penrith Housing Development Plan



Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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1.0 Introduction

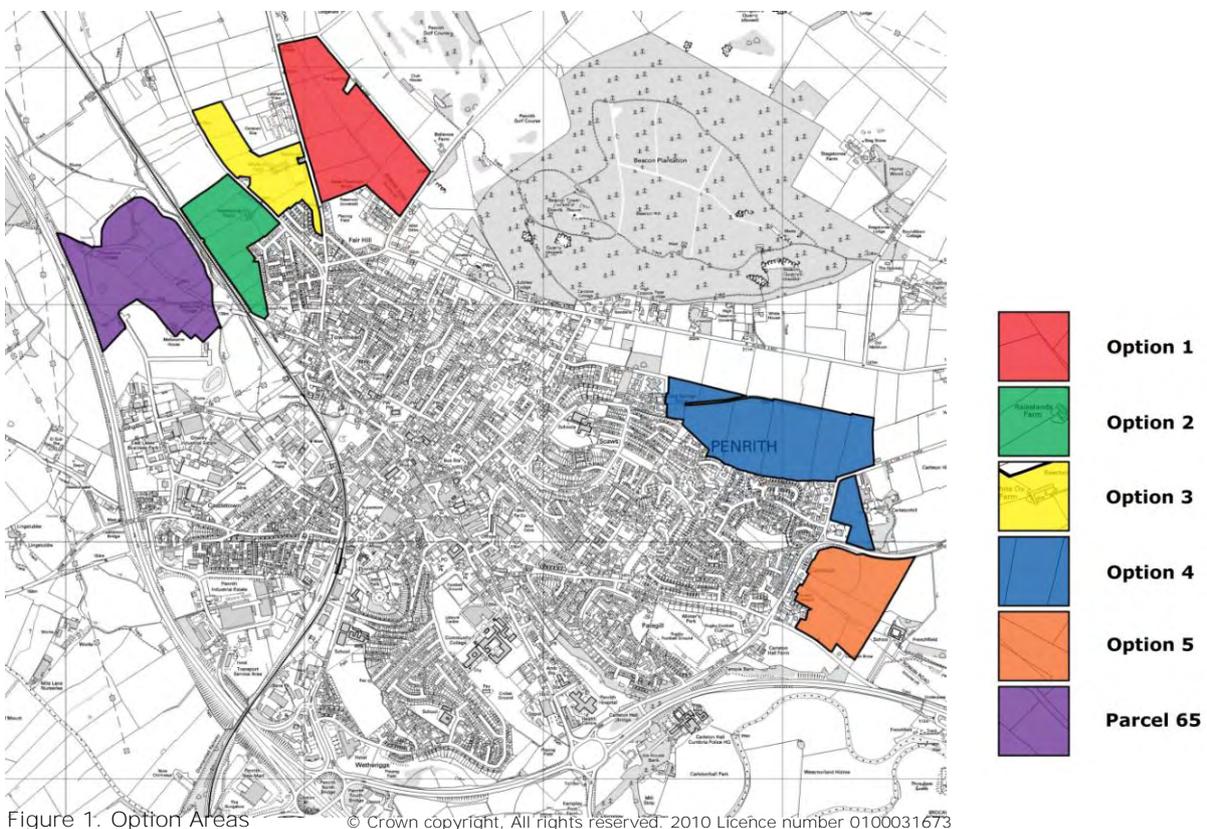
PDP Associates have been instructed by Eden District Council to undertake landscape and visual impact assessments on various sites around the edge of Penrith. This information will inform the Housing Development Plan Document by helping to assess individual site's suitability for incorporating housing (landscape impact), and the impact any such development might have on the wider area (visual impact).

By following a structured assessment method, it has been possible to rank each site according to its overall suitability for use for housing. It has also been possible to highlight individual areas within each site which are particularly suitable or less suitable for housing, and suggest mitigation methods which may improve a site's suitability.

1.1 The Option Areas

Six separate areas of land have been assessed; Urban Extension Options 1 to 6. Each area consists of separate parcels:

- **Option Area 1** – P18 & P27-31. Land southeast of Penrith Golf Club and north of Fair Hill.
- **Option Area 2** – P19-25. Land between the A6 and West Coast Mainline.
- **Option Area 3** – P41, P55, P56, P58, P69, P70, P72, P96 & P97. Land adjacent to White Ox Farm and northeast of the A6.
- **Option Area 4** – P10-15, P52 & P67. Land north of Carleton Hill.
- **Option Area 5** – P16, P26 & P53. Land west of Frenchfield Farm.
- **Option Area 6 (Parcel 65)** – Land north of Gilwilly Industrial Estate.



2.0 Methodology

Guidance for the undertaking of this report has been sourced primarily from:

The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (second edition), published April 2002 by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (hereafter referred to as GLVIA) and

Landscape Character of Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland, published April 2002 by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Unlike a standard Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, where specific, detailed proposals are assessed, in this report, assumptions and generalisations have had to be made; that the areas would be used for standard two storey national house-builder style housing. This report describes and considers all of the potential effects which are likely to arise from such development and generally assumes that an impact could lead to a positive or adverse effect. The definition of impact terminology has been developed to ensure that, wherever possible, an objective assessment has been made and that the terminology used is appropriate to the development and the landscape setting.

Current guidelines advise that the assessment of an impact on the visual amenity resulting from a particular development should take full account of the landscape (character) impacts as well as the potential visual impacts. Although they are separate, it is difficult to isolate each category and so both landscape and visual effects are considered as part of the assessment process.

2.1 Landscape impacts

The landscape impact assessment describes the likely nature and scale of changes to individual landscape elements and characteristics, and the consequential effect on the landscape character.

Part of this report takes account of existing trends that can be of both human and natural origin. The determination of the sensitivity of the landscape resource is based upon an evaluation of each key element or characteristic of the landscape likely to be affected. The evaluation reflects such factors as its quality, value, contribution of the wider landscape character, and the degree to which the particular element can be replaced.

Changes can vary between small and large scale, or be so small that there is, in effect, no change.

To assess the effects of development on a given landscape, it is necessary to examine the different factors which make up a landscape:

- Quantifiable elements, such as hills, valleys, woods, hedges, roads etc
- Characteristics, such as tranquillity and derived from the combined effect of individual elements
- Character; the sense of place of a given landscape, created by the pattern of elements that occur consistently.

2.2 Visual impacts

The visual impact assessment describes the changes of the available views resulting from the development, and the changes in the visual amenity of the visual receptors, including:

- The magnitude or scale of visual change is described by reference to elements such as:
- The extent/proportion of change within the view
- The degree of contrast
- The duration of the effect (temporary or permanent)
- The nature of the effect
- The angle of view
- The distance of receptor (viewpoint) from the development
- The area where changes would be visible.

Assessment needs to allow for an average as well as worst-case scenario.

Although residents may be particularly sensitive to changes in visual amenity, most land use planning regimes consider that public views are of greater value than those from private property.

2.3 Terminology

The potential significance of landscape and visual impacts is determined by combining the magnitude of the potential impact with the sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor to change.

The following terminology is used to describe sensitivity with regard to the landscape:

- Low – Where little, or no landscape structure dominates, and landform and land cover are masked by land use. Where lack of management and intervention has resulted in a degraded appearance or there are frequent detracting features.
- Moderate – Where there is a recognisable landscape structure and where there are characteristic patterns and combinations of landform and land cover. Some may be masked by developed land cover. Where there are some features worthy of conservation but also some detracting features.
- High – Where there is a strong landscape structure, characteristic pattern and balanced combination of landform and land cover. It includes features worthy of conservation and a strong sense of place.

The following terminology is used to describe sensitivity with regard to the visual receptors:

- Low – Where views are incidental to other activities, such as viewers at work or travelling through or past the site on a train or by road.
- Moderate – Where views are noticeable, but not prominent. Includes residents of outlying areas of residential/urban areas, but from where no particular direct or notable view can be ascertained.
- High – Where the view forms a strong component of the activity at the viewpoint location. Includes users of recreational footpaths with specific viewpoints to the subject site and direct, close range views.

The following terminology is used for the definition of magnitude of change for both landscape and visual effects:

- No change
- Negligible – Where the change is so small that there is, in effect, no discernible change within the viewed landscape.
- Low – Where proposals constitute only a minor component of the wider view, which could be missed by the casual observer or where awareness does not affect the overall quality of the scene.
- Medium – Where proposals would form a visible and recognisable new development but where it is not intrusive within the overall view.
- High – Where the proposals would form a significant and immediately apparent element of the scene, and would affect the overall impression of the view.

Sensitivity/ Magnitude	N/A	Low	Moderate	High
None	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact
Negligible	No impact	Negligible impact	Negligible/slight impact	Slight impact
Low	No impact	Negligible/slight impact	Slight impact	Slight/moderate impact
Medium	No impact	Slight	Slight/moderate impact	Moderate impact
High	No impact	Slight/moderate impact	Moderate impact	Substantial impact

Table 1. Criteria for assessing significance

Level of significance	Definition
No impact	The proposed scheme would affect no landscape or visual receptors
Negligible	The proposed scheme is largely appropriate in its context, would have very little effect on its surround and affect very few receptors
Negligible/slight	The proposed scheme would have a minimal change on the landscape and would affect very few receptors
Slight	The proposed scheme would have a slight change on the landscape and would affect few receptors
Slight/moderate	The proposed scheme would have a noticeable effect on the landscape and would affect several receptors, therefore changing the character of the landscape or the character of a view
Moderate	The proposed scheme would have a very noticeable effect on the landscape and would affect several or many receptors, therefore changing the character of the landscape or the character of a view
Substantial	The proposed scheme would change the character and appearance of the landscape, either for a long period or permanently. It would affect many receptors and would therefore alter the character of the landscape or of a view

Table 2. Significance criteria for landscape and visual impact

2.4 Photography

Site visits of the Option Areas and visual receptors took place between October and December 2009. For each viewpoint, either a panoramic or a single-frame photograph, (shot at the equivalent to a 35mm SLR with a 50mm focal-length lens as this best replicates the view a human eye sees) was taken. For distance views, a subsequent 85mm (equivalent) panorama was also taken. Section 4.8 shows a single-frame photograph from each viewpoint looking towards the Option Areas. Panoramic photographs from the same viewpoint are included in Appendix 1 to allow an appreciation of the view in a wider context.

2.5 Visibility Mapping

Computer generated Zones of Theoretical Visibility (hereafter referred to as ZTVs) maps were produced in order to display the assumed visibility of each Option Area within a 5km radius. Their production took into account large areas of buildings or vegetation but not smaller areas of woodland or individual buildings. Consequently, the mapping exaggerated the visibility of each Option Area. No location was found to have a view of an Option Area where the ZTVs suggested otherwise.

Assumptions had to be made about the nature of any future development; that each Option Area would be developed at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare, with two storey housing and an average eaves height of 6m. Whilst this is a very broad generalisation, it allows a comparative and realistic assessment of each **site's suitability to be made.**

The ZTVs are available in Appendix 1.

3.0 Baseline assessments

3.1 Policy guidance

3.1.1 Regional Policy Guidance

Regional policy guidance is offered through the Northwest of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (NWRSS) and The Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001-2016 (Structure Plan), in which Cumbria's **"fine landscapes, wildlife, buildings and features of archaeological and historic importance"** are identified as being a major factor in attracting tourists, businesses and residents to the area. The Structure Plan sets out to protect, conserve and enhance the local environment by promoting sustainable development which **"relate[s] well to the existing built and natural environment and to the capacity of the landscape to accommodate new development"** and recommends that there are **"high standards of design including siting, scale, use of materials and landscaping which respect and, where possible, enhance the distinctive character of townscape and landscape' and wherever possible should look to minimise levels of light pollution and noise"**.

The most relevant policy within the Structure Plan is Policy E37 (Landscape Character) which states;

"Development and land use change should be compatible with the distinctive characteristics and features of Cumbria's landscape types and sub types. Proposals would be assessed in relation to:

- 1. Locally distinctive natural or built features.**
- 2. Visual intrusion or impact.**
- 3. Scale in relation to the landscape and features.**
- 4. The character of the built environment.**
- 5. Public access and community value of the landscape.**
- 6. Historic patterns and attributes.**
- 7. Biodiversity features, ecological networks and semi-natural habitats.**
- 8. Openness, remoteness and tranquillity."**

RSS Policies EM1(A): Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets and DP7 (Promote Environmental Quality) are also relevant.

DP7 (Promote Environmental Quality) and EM1 (Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets) may also be relevant, although indirectly so.

3.1.2 Local Policy Guidance

The Eden Core Strategy was formally adopted in March 2010 and recognises the District's "exceptionally high quality of environment" and the fact that much of the District is covered by either national or local landscape or conservation designations.

CS1 – Sustainable Development Principles (point 12) states **"Development should reflect and enhance landscape character having regard to the sensitivity of the Eden Valley, the North Pennines AONB, the Lake District National Park, and their settings."**

CS16 – Principles for the Natural Environment states that **"Development should accord with the principles of protection and enhancement of the natural environment of the District, including landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity and especially those areas designated as being of international, national and local importance."**

It then goes on to list the aims as: -

To further protect the natural environment within the District as a whole:

- 1. The relationship between development and the natural environment would be managed to minimise the risk of environmental damage.**
- 2. Loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land would be avoided.**
- 3. Encouragement would be given to the creation of opportunities for species to spread out and create niches elsewhere in order to reduce any negative impacts of development and to allow species to migrate as a result of climate change.**
- 4. The re-creation and restoration of traditional habitats would be encouraged and existing wildlife and habitats such as hedges, ponds, woodlands, ancient woodlands, wetlands and species rich grasslands would be protected and enhanced.**
- 5. Where possible, developments would be expected to include suitable measures to contribute positively to overall biodiversity in the District or to mitigate harm caused by the development.**
- 6. Areas of open space and unbuilt frontages within towns and villages would be protected and enhanced where they are important to the character and amenity of the area.**
- 7. Promote improvements in accessibility to the natural environment for all people regardless of disability, age, gender or ethnicity.**
- 8. Development should reflect and where possible enhance local landscape character.**

CS18 – Design of New Development and CS24 – Open Space and Recreation Land are also relevant.

In terms of specific saved policies within the Local Plan: -

Policy NE1 ***The countryside of the District is valued for its undeveloped character. To protect its character, new development in the undeveloped countryside outside settlements and groups of dwellings will only be permitted to meet local infrastructure needs or if a need is established for the development in a specific location which is sufficient to outweigh environmental cost and if all of the following criteria are satisfied:***

- i) the siting of the development and any landscaping proposed will minimise impact;***
- ii) the design and materials proposed are appropriate to the location; and iii) an unacceptable level of harm will not be caused to any interests of acknowledged importance.***
- ii) the design and materials proposed are appropriate to the location; and***
- iii) an unacceptable level of harm will not be caused to any interests of acknowledged importance.***

Policy NE13 ***In considering development proposals particular regard would be given to the retention of trees of amenity value, including those the subject of Tree Preservation Orders, and to their protection during development. Where appropriate, Tree Preservation Orders would be used to afford the necessary level of control.***

Policy BE18 ***Proposals involving environmental improvement including landscaping schemes, the enhancements of open spaces ...would be permitted if the design and materials to be used are appropriate to the location concerned.***

Policy BE20 ***In all new housing developments containing ten or more dwellings the Council will seek the provision of publicly accessible open space to a minimum standard of 15 square metres per dwelling as an integral part of the proposal.***

Policy BE21

Applications for development requiring or likely to require external lighting shall include details of lighting schemes. Such schemes would be assessed against the following criteria:

- i) that the lighting scheme proposed is the minimum to undertake the task;**
- ii) that light spillage is minimised;**
- iii) in edge-of-town or village locations, or in rural areas, that landscaping measures would be provided to screen the lighting installation from neighbouring countryside areas; and**
- iv) that road safety will not be compromised as a result of dazzling or distraction**

Policy RE5

Proposals that would affect any rights of way will only be permitted where an acceptable diversion is provided by the developer and a legal diversion order obtained, or if a clear benefit arises from the change sufficient to outweigh the loss to the rights of way network.

3.2 The landscape setting

Landscape character is defined as a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that make one landscape different from another. Landscape character types can be categorised at national, regional and local levels. Each level provides a more detailed description, breaking the landscape into smaller units.

At a national level, Penrith falls within National Character Area 9 – Eden Valley, as defined by Natural England. The characteristics of this landscape type are:

- Broad, river valley landscapes of productive mixed farmland with local variations in topography, scale and landcover.
- Productive improved pasture and arable land with large farms in the lower lying areas.
- Less intensively managed rolling or hilly pasture and lowland heath, intersected by numerous gills, in the foothills of the North Pennines.
- Sandstone hills with woodland and lowland heath vegetation.
- Numerous small basin mires among drumlins.
- Large broadleaved and coniferous estate/farm woodlands and areas of ancient semi-natural woodland. Mature hedgerows, hedgerow trees, small
- Copses and shelterbelts contribute to the well-wooded character.
- Settlements have strong distinctive character. Red sandstone is the dominant building material and a unifying feature. Limestone is found on the margins of the area.
- Intricate network of narrow minor roads with tall hedgerows and walls.
- Red sandstone features such as walls and gateposts.
- Important transport corridor for the Settle-Carlisle railway line, M6 motorway, A66 trunk road and west coast mainline railway.

At a regional level, the sites fall within the Landscape Type 6a (a sub-section of Landscape Type 6); Intermediate Land, as defined within the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001 – 2016. However, Option Area 4 also bounds Landscape Type 10a (a sub-section of landscape type 6); Sandstone Ridge.

Landscape Type 6 is described as ***"A large-scale open landscape, the intermediate land between lowland and rolling upland areas. The land use is predominantly grazing land bound by hedgerows and stonewalls. A well-managed landscape interrupted by M6 motorway/mainline railway"*** while Landscape Type 6a is further described as ***"predominantly grazing land between 100-200m AOD. It is intermediate between the lowland and more rolling upland types. It varies from rolling high land with wide views and few hedges to undulating more enclosed land with a regular pattern of hedges or hedgerow trees. Stonewalls are also common...In Eden there are very broad valleys and narrow ghylls. Most of this landscape type is fairly simple in character with few strong features. A number of historical elements have been identified"***.

The key characteristics are described as:

- Grazing land between 100-200m AOD. Intermediate between the lowland and upland landscapes.
- Planned villages with greens displaying topographical and archaeological evidence of their medieval origins.
- Carlisle area is dissected by the deeply incised valleys of the black and white Lyne, which are well wooded.

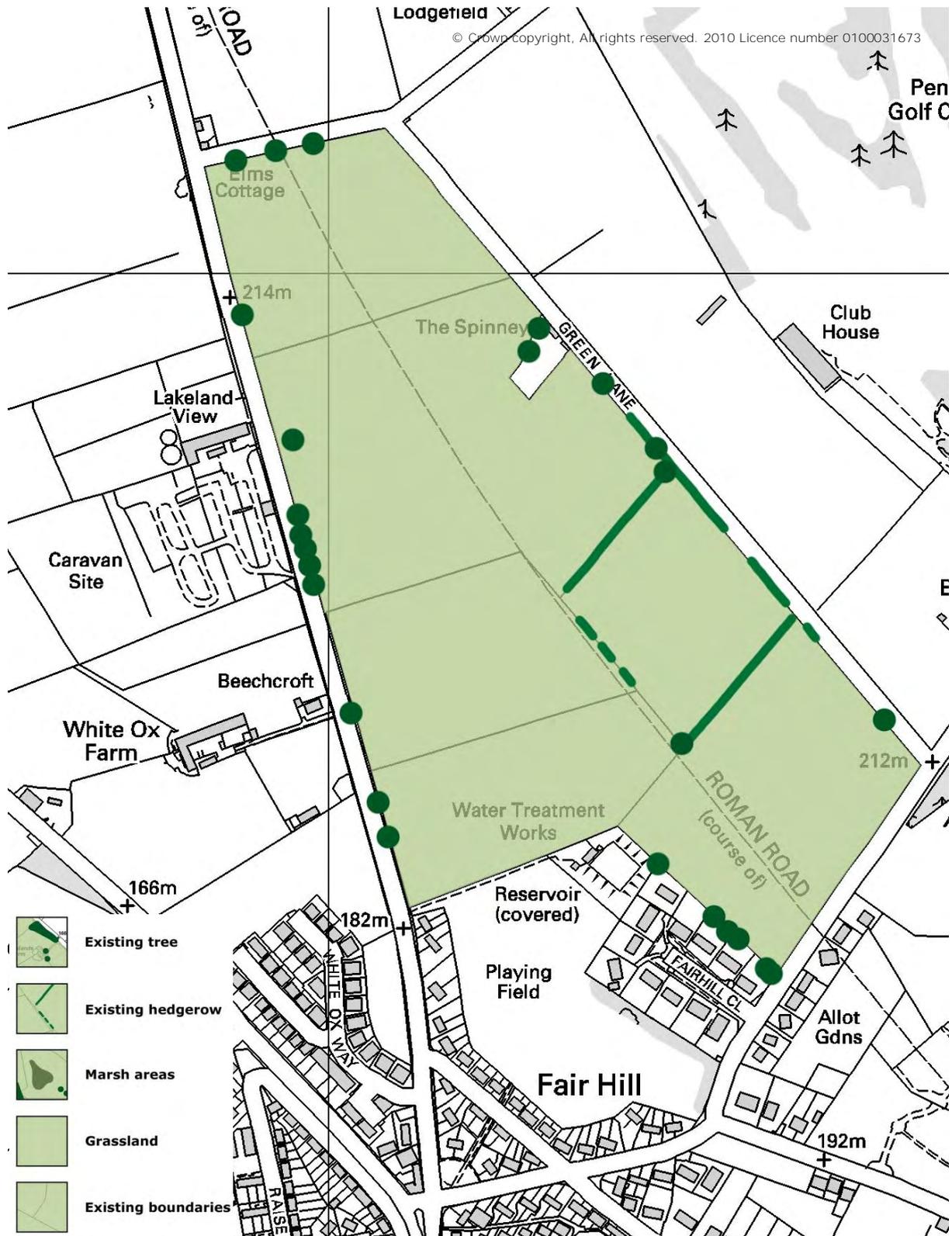
Landscape Type 10 is described as consisting of “a sandstone ridge running from Penrith breaking off into a series of hills as you move north of Lazonby toward Carlisle. This open, large-scale landscape is sometimes varied in character with landcover of improved farmland, conifer plantation or unimproved heathland. Open expansive views are present both toward and away from the Lake District National Park” while Landscape Type 10a is further described as *“a distinctive ridge runs north from Penrith towards Carlisle at an elevation of 100-250m AOD. It is particularly prominent from the M6 corridor to the west whence it provides a mainly afforested skyline. The southern part of the ridge including Beacon Hill and Lazonby Fell is most pronounced. North of Lazonby Fell it breaks into a series of isolated hills. Here the ridge is partly intersected by the Eden Gorge which forms a dramatic feature on the east side. Whinfell forms an outlier to the south of Penrith at 200m AOD. Landcover is dominated by improved farmland or conifer plantation but with significant areas of unimproved heathland. There are attractive long distance views over the Petteril valley to the Lake District in the west and eastwards across the Eden to the Pennines. The type generally lacks clear ‘historic’ field patterns. Farming out by ‘open range’ methods may result in neglect of field boundaries. Uncharacteristic new farm entrances and large-scale modern farm buildings also occur”*.

The key characteristics are described as:

- Ridge 100-250m AOD running north from Penrith to Carlisle.
- Land cover is dominated by farmland or conifer plantation although there are significant areas of improved heathland.
- Attractive long distance views.

3.3 General description of the Option Areas

3.3.1 Option Area 1



Option Area 1 occupies approximately 21 hectares of agricultural land to the north of Penrith. The area is enclosed on its western boundary by Inglewood Road, on its northern and eastern boundary by Green Lane, and by Salkeld Road and Fairhill Close on its southern boundary.

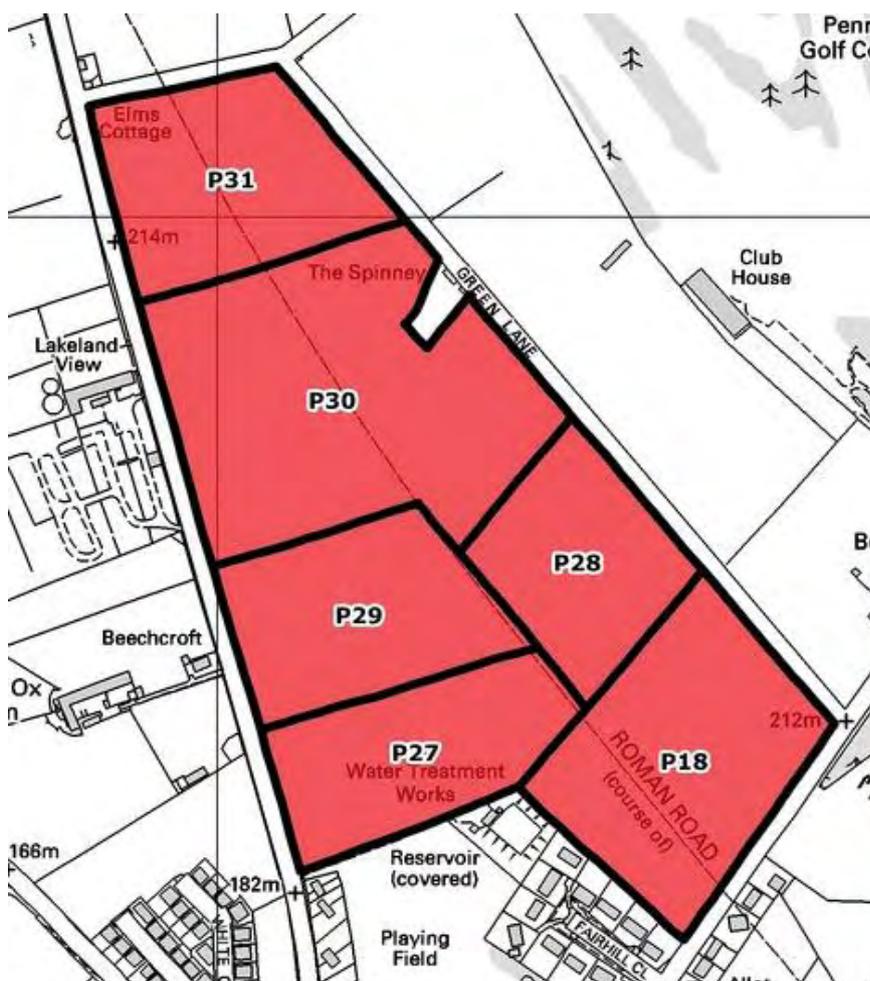
The area is currently semi-improved pasture land comprising of six separate fields between approximately 0.3 and 0.7 hectares. The land rises from approximately 180m above sea level at its southern end to 220m in the northeastern corner. As the site slopes up to the northwest, far-reaching views are directed back over Penrith and towards Blencathra, the fells surrounding Ullswater and up the Eden Valley.

The current field boundaries within the site are a mixture of mature hedgerows, post and wire fencing and dry-stone walling, interspersed with occasional mature trees. Further **dry-stone walls form the area's perimeter boundary**. The remains of a Roman Road cross the site from the southeast to the northwest, although no evidence of this is visible at the surface.

There are no public rights of way within the area.

The area's surroundings are varied, ranging from the adjacent Penrith Golf Club, further agricultural land, a housing estate and a caravan park. The area is also in close proximity to Penrith's cemetery.

The area, therefore, has far-reaching, highly attractive views and an elevated feel, yet does not feel isolated or rural due to the mixed-use character in its immediate vicinity and its proximity to Penrith. It is a small scale landscape of moderate quality.



3.3.2 Option Area 2

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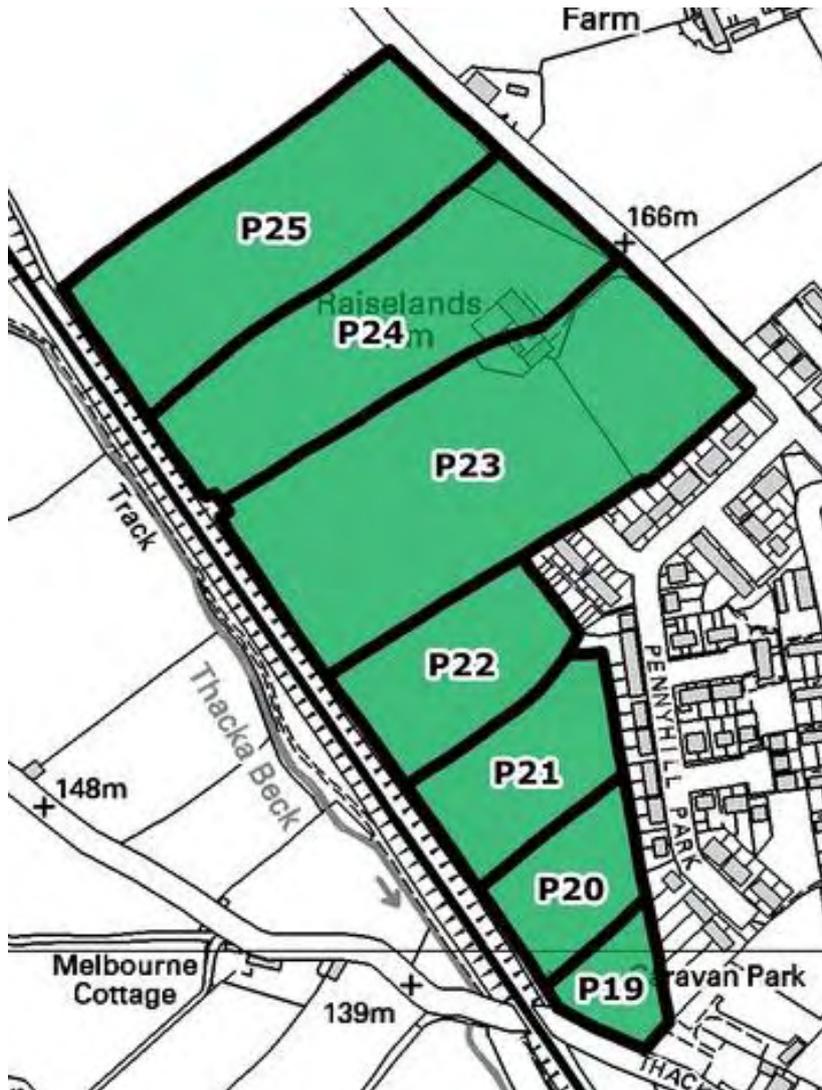


Option Area 2 occupies approximately 11 hectares of gently sloping land to the northwest of Penrith. The area is currently semi-improved grassland comprising of fields between approximately 0.4 hectares and 2.2 hectares, divided by mature hedgerow, post & wire fencing and dry-stone walls, surrounding Raiselands Farm. The land rises from approximately 145m above sea level on its southeastern boundary adjacent to the West Coast Mainline, to approximately 170m in its northern corner adjacent to the A6.

Views from this area are restricted to mid-range through a combination of the **area's lower elevation (compared to Option Area 1)**, surrounding land-form and existing development, such as the houses along Pennyhill Park and the M6/West Coast Mainline corridor. There are distant views of Blencathra and the fells around Ullswater, but these are not expansive as with Option Area 1.

There are no public rights of way within the area.

The relative lack of views, the immediate proximity of the A6 and West Coast **Mainline and the neighbouring existing houses give this area a strong 'edge-of-town' feel, particularly** in parcels 19 to 22. . Parcels 23 to 25 are a medium scale landscape with medium-high quality and a more rural feel.



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3.3.3 Option Area 3

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Option Area 3 occupies approximately 10 hectares of moderately sloping land to the northwest of Penrith. The area is currently semi-improved grassland comprising of fields between approximately 0.2 hectares and 2 hectares, divided by post & wire fencing and dry-stone walls, with occasional hedgerow, surrounding White Ox Farm. The land rises from approximately 165m above sea level on its southern boundary, to approximately 200m in its northern corner.

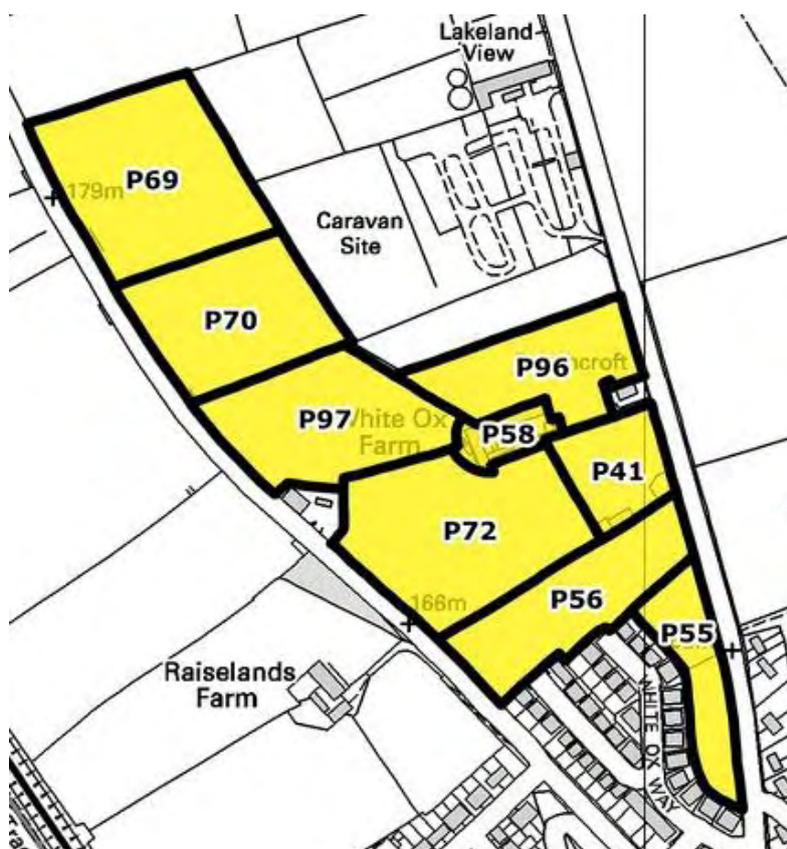
Boundaries are formed by the A6 to the southwest, White Ox Way to the south, Inglewood Road and the caravan site to the northeast and further agricultural land to the north.

Views from this area are directed towards Blencathra and the fells around Ullswater in the distance, with the M6 corridor in the mid-range. As elevation increases, so does the expanse of view offered, but towards the southern end of the site, views once again become more restricted by the presence of the houses of White Ox Way.

There are no public rights of way within the area.

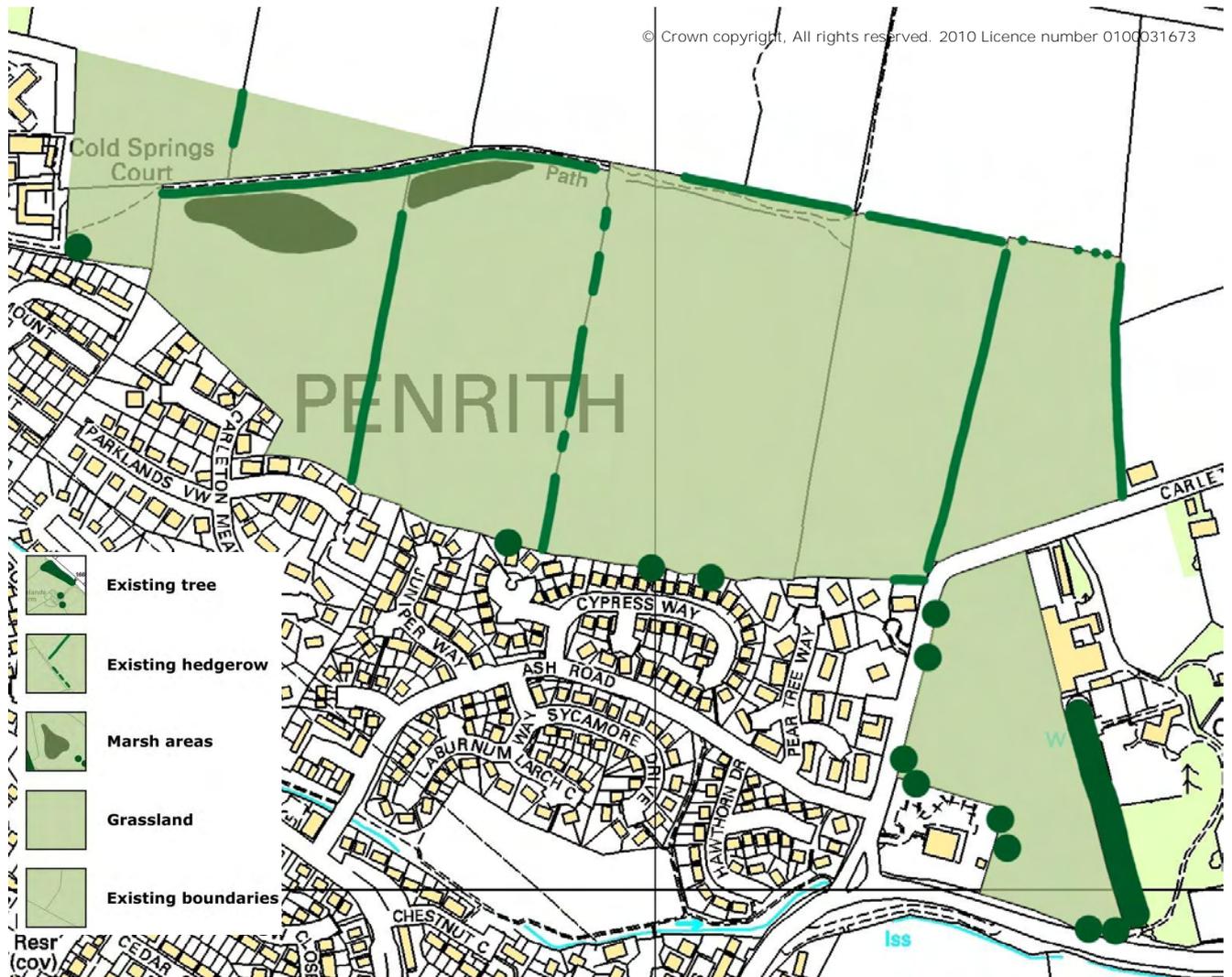
Parcels 41, 55, 56, 58 and 96, whilst having some high quality, long distance views, do not in themselves have a high quality landscape, displaying small scale, fragmented characteristics further compromised by the mixed use in the immediate vicinity. Parcels 69, 70, 72 and 97 do have a medium-scale landscape of medium-high quality, and a more isolated, rural feel, although this is still compromised by the adjacent A6 and the proximity of the M6 and West Coast Mainline.

The area is screened to the east by the rising topography and to the south-east by the built form of Penrith. Aside from the immediate vicinity, visibility is predicted to be greatest in an area around the Newton Rigg Campus and Gilwilly Industrial Estate, a stretch of the M6 and West Coast Mainline and sporadically over a wider area to the west, including land around Newton Reigny and Newbiggin. Reduced visibility is predicted around Great Blencow, Little Blencow, Tirril down to Askham Fell, and land around Hackthorpe.



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3.3.4 Option Area 4



Option Area 4 occupies approximately 27.5 hectares of very gently sloping land to the north of the existing Carleton estate residential area, on the northwest edge of Penrith. The area is currently semi-improved pasture land comprising of fields between 0.2 and 0.6 hectares, divided by native hedgerows and trees, with additional agricultural-style fencing.

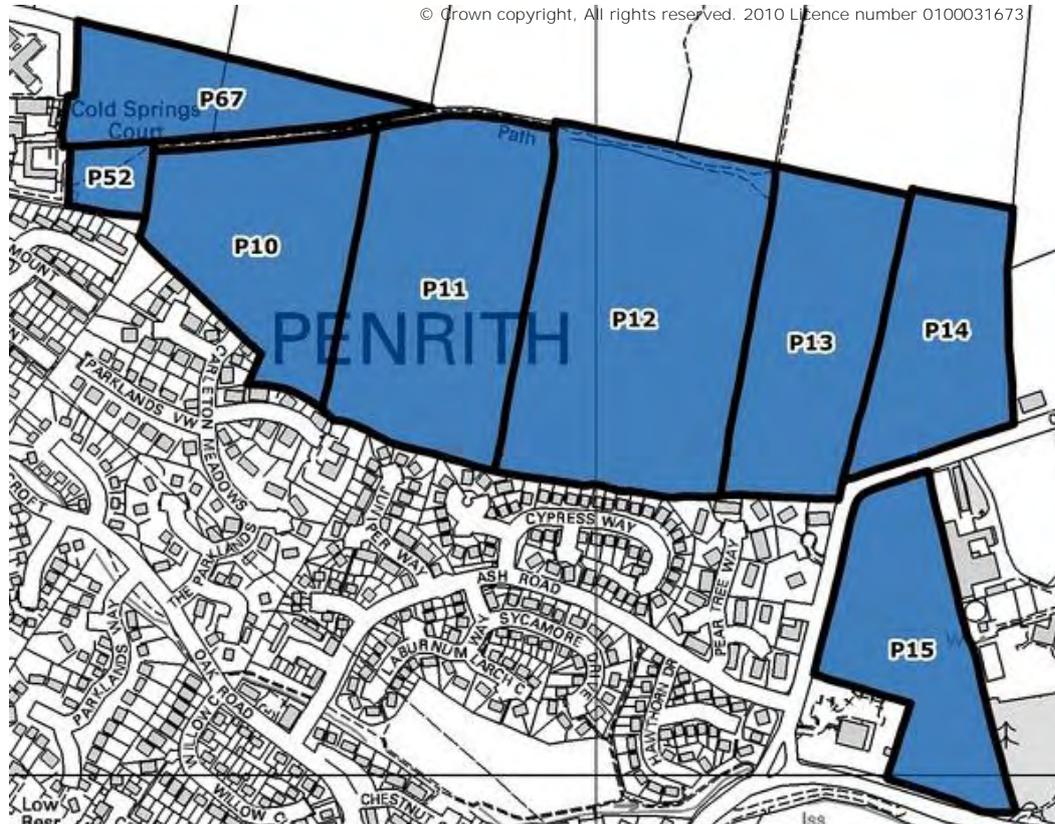
The majority of the southern boundary of the site is formed by a medium density detached housing estate, whilst the easternmost two parcels; P14 and P15 are bisected by Carleton Hill Road, a lightly trafficked non-classified road. P15's eastern boundary is formed by a long, low agricultural building and farm car-parking while P14's eastern boundary is adjacent agricultural pasture land.

A public right of way cuts between parcels 13 and 14 from the corner of Carleton Hill Road, joining to another footpath which forms the northern boundary and runs between parcels 10 and 67.

The northern boundary for Ps 12 and 13 is formed by intermittent mature hedgerow planting and grassed right of way until P11 when the grass track cuts into the Option Area. From this point west, the boundary is unmarked, continuing in the same line from Ps 12 and 13 and joins with Scaws Drive on the existing neighbouring development.

Parcels 10-14, 52 & 67 have a high quality, medium scale landscape with a strong character but compromised by the proximity of the existing Carleton estate.

Views are not extensive towards the Lake District or Pennines, but the site does have a rural backdrop to the north. Parcels 14 and 15 have a more rural feel due to their slight detachment from the neighbouring existing development and more extensive views.



3.3.5 Option Area 5

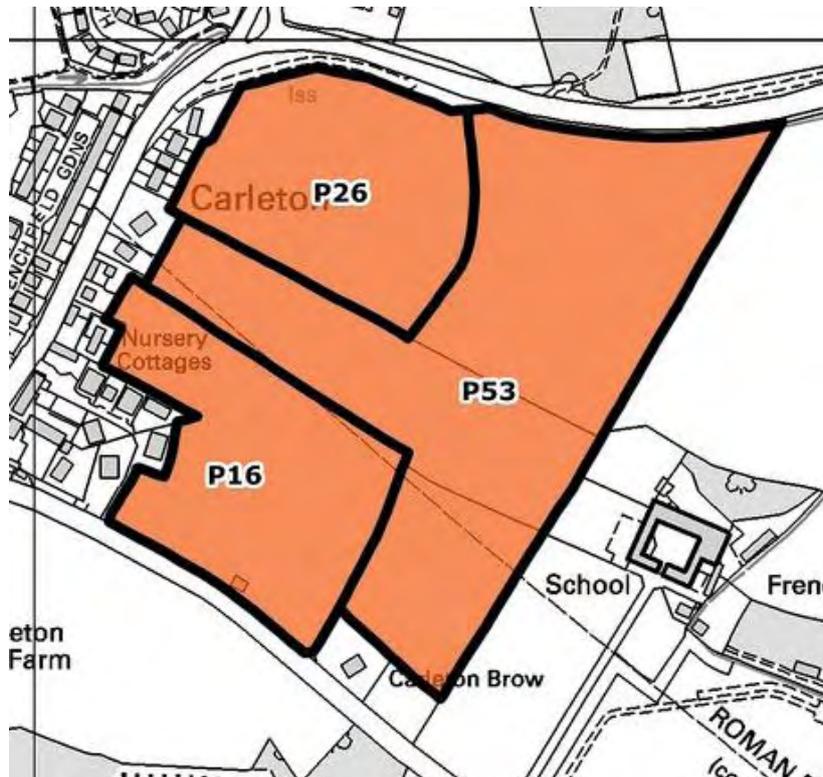


Option Area 5 occupies approximately 13 hectares of moderately sloping land to the east of Penrith. The area is currently semi-improved grassland comprising of loosely-defined fields between approximately 0.05 hectares and 0.6 hectares, divided by post & wire fencing with occasional hedgerow and tree planting. The land rises from approximately 130m above sea level at its southern corner, to approximately 160m on its northwestern boundary.

Boundaries are formed by the A686 to its northern boundary, some housing and a pub to its western boundary and southwestern corner, an unnamed access road to Hunter Hall School to the south and the grounds of Hunter Hall School and further agricultural land to the east. The remains of a Roman Road cross the site from the southeast to the northwest, although no evidence of this is visible at the surface.

Views from this area extend to the Pennine Chain in the far distance but are mainly of the surrounding rolling agricultural land of the Eden Valley

The area does have a relatively rural feel, despite the proximity of some housing as this is low-density housing with a village-type feel, and the bulk of Penrith is screened. Views are naturally directed towards the Eden Valley and Pennines although the traffic of the A66 does reduce the rural-feel, as does the Frenchfield Sports Centre, particularly when floodlit at night. It is a moderate quality landscape with little character but offers fine views across the Eden Valley towards the Pennines.



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3.3.6 Option Area 6



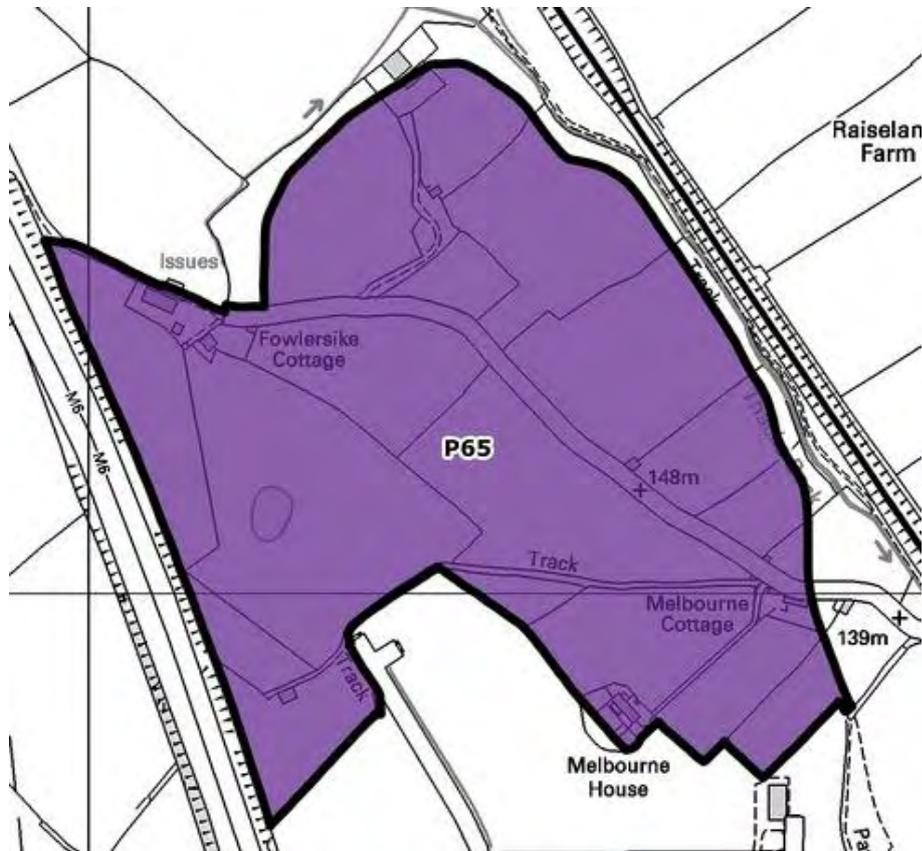
Option Area 6 occupies approximately 24 hectares of level and to the northwest of Penrith and to the north of Gilwilly Industrial Estate. The area is currently semi-improved grassland comprising of loosely-defined fields between approximately 0.05 hectares and 0.6 hectares, divided by post & wire fencing with occasional hedgerow and tree planting.

Boundaries range from dry-stone walls to undefined boundaries to post and wire fences. A bridleway, Thacka Lane, bisects the site, acting as a foot and cycle link between the Townhead area of Penrith and Newton Rigg and forms part of the National Cycle Route 7, between Sunderland and Inverness. Another footpath also crosses the site, slightly to the south. A further footpath is immediately **adjacent to the area's northeast boundary** along with a small watercourse, Thacka Beck.

The site currently has a mixed use including grazing, equestrian activities and general agricultural use.

Views from this area are restricted towards Beacon Edge and the housing beneath this. In all other directions, views are constrained by the M6 and Gilwilly Industrial Estate.

The area is a low quality landscape, very fragmented, with an air of neglect. Its proximity to the M6, West Coast Mainline and Gilwilly Industrial Estate further reduces the area's aesthetic and landscape quality.



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3.4 Landscape dynamics

3.4.1 Option Area 1

The landscape of and immediately adjacent to Option Area 1 appears unchanged over the previous 90 years, with the most recent development occurring with the construction of some houses on Fair Hill adjacent to parcel 18. Further afield, the development of the M6 corridor and the Gilwilly Industrial Estate will have been evident. There are no indications of recent changes in the landscape use.

3.4.2 Option Area 2

The landscape of, and immediately adjacent to Option Area 2 appears unchanged over the previous 90 years, with the most recent development occurring with the construction of the houses on Pennyhill Park and the general encroachment of . There are no indications of recent changes in the landscape use.

3.4.3 Option Area 3

The landscape of and immediately adjacent to Option Area 3 appears relatively unchanged over the previous 90 years, with the most recent development occurring at the caravan site next to White Ox Farm. The development of Gilwilly Industrial Estate will also have been evident from this area. There are no indications of recent changes in the landscape use.

3.4.4 Option Area 4

The landscape of Area 4 appears to have changed little over the previous 90 years other than the enlargement of some of the individual fields within the area. The enlargement of Penrith has, however, had a noticeable effect around the area with the development of the Carleton estate and Carleton Village greatly altering the setting of the area.

3.4.5 Option Area 5

The landscape of Area 5 appears to have changed little over the previous 90 years. The enlargement of Penrith has, however, had a noticeable effect around the area with the development of the Carleton estate and Carleton Village greatly altering the setting of the area. The construction of the A66 will also have impacted greatly on the aesthetic and landscape qualities of the area.

3.4.6 Option Area 6

The landscape of Area 6 appears little changed over the previous 90 years, except for the enlargement of some individual fields. However, the landscape surrounding the area has undergone a complete change, with the development of the Gilwilly Industrial Estate and the construction of the M6, transforming its location from that of a rural area on the edge of a town, to a green space within intense development.