

Eden District Council

Housing Development Plan



Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisals

Kirkby Stephen

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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 in Kirkby Stephen. This information will inform the Housing Development Plan by helping to assess individual parcel's suitability for incorporating housing (landscape impact), and the impact any such development might have on the wider area (visual impact).

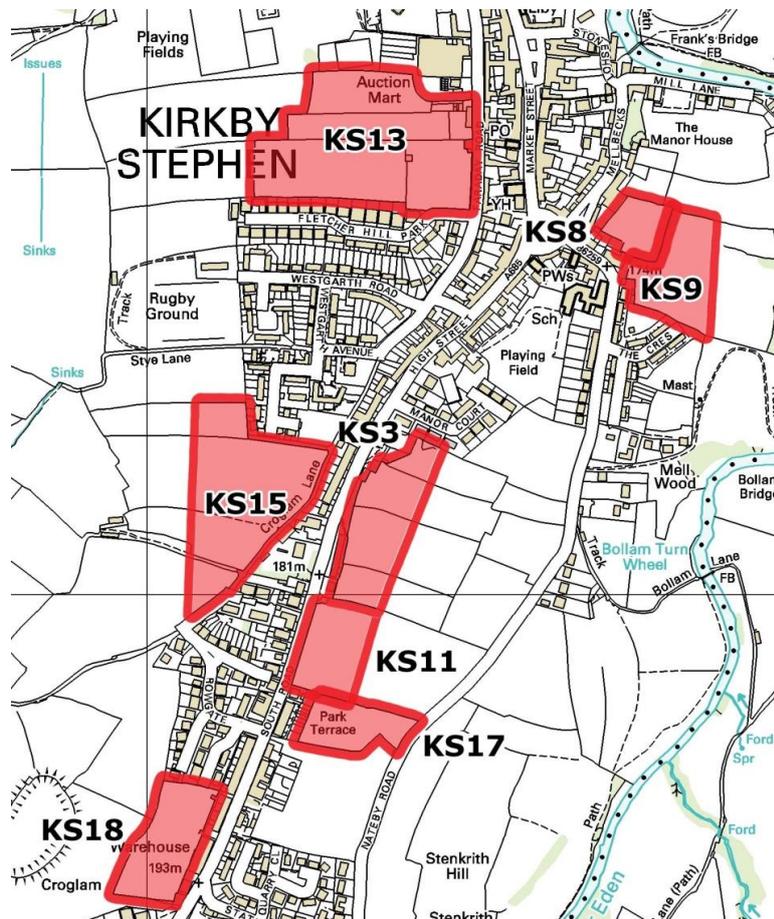
By following a structured assessment method, it has been possible to rank each parcel according to its overall suitability for use for housing. It has also been possible to highlight individual areas within each parcel which are particularly suitable or unsuitable for housing, and suggest mitigation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

Kirkby Stephen is a small town in the Eden District of Cumbria, with a population of approximately 1800. The town's facilities far exceed that which would be expected of such a small town, and it is the hub for a wide, exceedingly rural area, with the nearest sizeable towns; Penrith and Kendal, both being approximately 30 miles away.

The town is famous for being surrounded by fine walking country in an unspoilt landscape. It is a major stopping point on the Coast to Coast walk, and the Settle Carlisle line. As such, it is an important tourist destination and its setting is of vital importance to the town's economy.

1.1 The proposed parcels

Eight separate parcels of land have been assessed.



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- Parcel KS3 – Approximately 1.5 hectares to the east of South Road and the south of Manor Court.
- Parcel KS8 – Approximately 0.5 hectare to the east of Mellbecks and immediately adjacent to Parcel KS9.
- Parcel KS9 – Approximately 1.25 hectares to the east of Mellbecks and north of The Crescent, immediately adjacent to Parcel KS8.
- Parcel KS13 – Approximately 4.5 hectares to the immediate west of Faraday Road and to the north of Fletcher Hill Park.
- Parcel KS11 – Approximately 1 hectare to the immediate east of South Road and immediately adjacent to Parcel KS17.
- Parcel KS15 – Approximately 2.9 hectares to the immediate west of Croglam Lane and to the north of Rowgate and the south of Westgarth Grove.
- Parcel KS17 – Approximately 0.7 hectare spanning between Park Terrace on South Road and Nateby Road and immediately adjacent to Parcel KS11.
- Parcel KS18 – Approximately 1.2 hectares to the west of South Road and the south of Croglam Park.

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 are to be used for standard national house-builder type housing will be proposed on these parcels. 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 Effects

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.

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 Magnitude of landscape impacts

The magnitude of landscape impacts, which are categorised as high, medium, low or negligible depends on the following factors:

- The scale or degree of change to the existing landscape character.
- The nature of the change caused by the proposed development (beneficial, adverse or neutral).

Without specific, detailed proposals, it is difficult to assess the landscape impact on any individual area. However, it can generally be considered that placing housing on Greenfield sites, such as these, will have a high impact. On areas with a low existing landscape quality, this could be a beneficial impact. Conversely, on areas with a high landscape quality, this could be a negative impact. Mitigation can be applied through careful design, variation in density (according to a landscape's ability to accommodate change) and through landscape enhancement of certain features, or even the re-introduction of landscape features currently missing from a given specific area, but evident in the wider surroundings.

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.

2.4 Sensitivity of viewpoints

The sensitivity of individual viewpoints can be categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. Sensitivity depends on the following factors:

- The location and context of the viewpoint; viewpoints which are closer to the parcel are generally more sensitive.
- The number of viewers who commonly use the viewpoint. Some viewpoints are commonly used by the public, such as formal viewing platforms, picnic areas or recreational rights of way. Other viewpoints may be difficult to gain access to.
- The nature of the viewpoint. Residential properties are sensitive to visual impacts as the residents experience the impacts on a regular and prolonged basis. Public footpaths can also be sensitive, since the users' attention is often focussed on the landscape. By contrast, views from outdoor sports facilities, transport routes or places of work are less sensitive.
- Movement of viewers at the viewpoint. More transitory views, for example from a motorway, are generally less sensitive than views experienced from residential properties and footpaths.
- The cultural significance of the viewpoint, including its appearance in guidebooks and tourist maps, or cultural and historical associations.

2.5 Magnitude of visual impacts

The magnitude of impact for individual viewpoints can be categorised as negligible, low, medium or high depending on;

- The proportion of the existing view would change as a result of the proposed development.
- The number of features or elements within the view that would change.
- The appropriateness of the proposed development in the context of the existing view.
- The angle of the view.
- Whether any impact has a beneficial nature.

2.6 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 for the definition of magnitude of change for both the landscape and visual effects at an individual viewpoint:

- Negligible – Where the change is so small that there is, in effect, no change at all within the viewed landscape.
- Small – 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.
- Large – Where the proposals would form a significant and immediately apparent element of the scene, and would affect the overall impression of the view.

The following terminology is used to describe sensitivity of individual viewpoints:

- Negligible – Where views either don't exist or contribute an insignificant amount.
- Low – Where views are incidental to other activities, such as viewers at work or travelling through or past the parcel on a train or by road.
- Medium – 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 parcel and direct, close range views.

The following terminology is used to describe sensitivity with regard to the effect on 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.
- Medium – 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.

Magnitude/Sensitivity	Negligible	Low	Moderate	High
Negligible	Negligible impact	Negligible/ slight impact	Slight impact	Slight/ moderate impact
Small	Negligible/ slight impact	Slight impact	Slight/moderate impact	Moderate impact
Medium	Slight impact	Slight/ moderate impact	Moderate impact	Moderate/ substantial impact
Large	Slight/ moderate impact	Moderate impact	Moderate/ substantial 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 and 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/substantial	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

2.7 Key Issues

Without specific proposals, at this stage, the key issues are limited to:

- Landscape Character
- Visual Qualities
- Mitigation Measures

Computer-generated mapping showing each parcel's theoretical visibility were not produced for this study. Instead, careful analysis of the likely visual receptors was made at each parcel, and the impact from each receptor was then made.

Site visits took place during January and February 2010. 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.

3.0 Policy context/framework

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.**
- 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 types can be categorised at national, regional and local levels, with each level adding detail.

At a national level, Kirkby Stephen lies at the boundary of two character areas; Joint Character Area 9 – Eden Valley and Joint Character Area 17 – Orton Fells, as defined by Natural England.

The characteristics of the Eden Valley Character Area 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.

The characteristics of the Orton Fells Character Area are:

- Rolling upland farmland with limestone outcrops, scars and pavements.
- Strong field pattern bounded by high limestone walls with isolated Ash trees.
- Ancient villages, built in local limestone, surrounded by small-scale field patterns of historical interest.
- Limited woodland cover in the form of sheltering clumps around farmsteads and small copses of semi-natural broadleaves, coniferous woodland and mixed woodlands.
- Moorland and commons with remnant heather, extensive areas of limestone pavements and scars, with occasional coniferous plantations.
- Rivers with low flows due to permeable limestone bedrock.
- A rich legacy of visible archaeological remains.
- Impact of large-scale limestone quarrying and stone extraction from limestone pavements.

At a regional level, Kirkby Stephen lies at the boundary of three Landscape Types; 8b (a sub-section of Landscape Type 8); Broad Valleys, and 12a & 12d (sub-sections of Landscape Type 12); Limestone Farmland and Moorland and Commons, as defined within the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001 – 2016.

Landscape Type 8 is described as a combination of “linear landscape features with significant alterations in topography and rural elements. Such landscapes are common within the county. Height and location determine many of the features, although streams, rivers, hanging woodlands, pastures, scrub and woodland are common throughout. The orientation, population density and scale of these landscapes vary, affecting perceptions and the experience gained”.

The key characteristics of landscape type 8b are described as:

- Narrow and deep valleys and plains with land cover of pasture with scrub and woodland.
- Fences and hedges are the main boundaries throughout, however stone walls are also present.
- Field boundaries and woodland often appear neglected.

Landscape Type 12 is described as being a “open and sometimes exposed, varied scale landscape, diverse in character, historic features, textures and has distinctive limestone characteristics. Improved pasture and heather moorland is abundant. Other land cover includes ancient woodland and parkland. On the higher ground limestone pavement, scars and grasslands are present; these have high ecological and conservation value. Shap Granite underlies the western fringe of this landscape type. ”

The key characteristics of landscape type 12a are described as:

- Rolling upland farmed landscape 250-300m AOD with distinctive limestone characteristics in the form of strong field patterns with high stone walls.
- Land cover dominated by improved or semi-improved pasture and small broad leaved, coniferous or mixed plantations.
- The landscape is of historic character, which evokes a strong sensory response.

The landscape characteristics of landscape type 12d are described as:

- Open grazing common at 250-400m AOD with limestone pavement and scars, except in western areas of granite.
- Land cover is dominated by grassland, coniferous plantations and heather moorland.
- Wide views of the Lake District and Howgill Fells, although the M6 motorway and mineral extraction sites are detractors.

From these descriptions, it is clear that all the parcels, and their immediate surroundings, have landscape characteristics in common with landscape type 12a; Limestone Farmland.

All parcels lie within the county's Landscape of County Importance.

3.3 General Descriptions of the Parcels

3.31 Parcel KS3

Parcel KS3 is an area of four separate fields, all used for grazing and separated by fragmented mature hedgerow and mature native trees. The fields lie to the east of South Road, but separated from it by relatively recent housing, and a currently unoccupied larger detached property and garage. The rear of these properties serves as the western boundary, and comprises largely post and wire fencing, leaving the aspect of the existing properties very open. In the north west corner, behind the detached house is some overgrown hedge planting which provides good screening. South road is evident in places, but is largely invisible from within the parcel.

The northern boundary is partly formed by low dry stone walls to the rear of existing properties of Manor Court. For the remainder of the boundary, a further mature hedge with post and wire fencing runs between the parcel and an adjacent similar grazing field.

The eastern boundary is an unmarked line in the fields, but beyond which lies further mature hedge and tree planting, providing a substantial screen. The parcel rises towards the east and therefore screens the parcel totally from Nateby Road, which runs parallel.

The southern boundary is another fragmented, but substantial hedgerow with mature trees towards the western edge. There is no fencing along this boundary and it bounds directly onto the northern boundary of parcel KS11.

Whilst immediately adjacent to parcel KS11, it does display very different characteristics due to the very structured hedge/tree planting running along the individual field boundaries, and therefore having a far higher sense of enclosure. This is further enhanced by the housing on its western and northern boundary. Views out of the parcel are limited to gaps in the built form and tree belts, although there are occasional glimpses towards the Pennines around Cross Fell.

3.32 Parcels KS8 and KS9

Parcels KS8 and KS9 can be treated as one entity as they are immediately adjacent to each other and share many characteristics.

In general terms, the parcels lie on the eastern edge of the town centre. The western boundary of the parcels are buildings on Mellbecks; a narrow no through road leading down to Frank's Bridge. The southern boundary is formed by a dry stone wall adjacent to some gardens of properties along Nateby Road, and a post and wire fence at the end of The Crescent. The northern boundary is formed by dry stone walling, and the eastern boundary is an arbitrary line in a pasture field.

Both parcels are currently improved pasture fields, separated by a post and wire fence. The western portion of Parcel 8 is currently being built on with two residential properties being constructed. The land is undulating, rising from approximately 175m at its lowest point to 180m at its highest point towards the eastern boundary. The parcels are devoid of any notable trees or shrubs other than some self-set Ash trees on the northern boundary.

To the parcels' east, beyond Mellbecks, is Kirkby Stephen town centre. To the south beyond the housing along Nateby Road and The Crescent is the town's primary school, and large detached housing along Nateby Road, which in turn leads to Nateby, Swaledale and Mallerstang. The northern and eastern boundaries are adjacent to other pasture fields, which slope down to the heavily tree-lined River Eden; a Site of Special Scientific Interest

There are no public rights of way within the parcels.

The parcels themselves are of little landscape quality and almost completely featureless. Views from the parcels are limited to the highest point, otherwise they are constrained by landform and existing buildings. The parcels have a relatively peaceful, settled feel, although the immediate proximity of Kirkby Stephen is very evident, although not directly as little traffic movement is noticeable from the site.

3.33 Parcels KS11 and 17

Parcels KS11 and KS17 can be treated as one entity as they are immediately adjacent to each other and share many characteristics.

In general terms, the parcels lie on the eastern edge south of the town centre. The western boundary of the Parcel 11 is South Road; the A685. This is a busy road, leading to and from the M6, congested by residential car parking. On the opposite side are large, 2 to 3-storey Victorian semi-detached properties which front onto South Road. The eastern boundary of Parcel KS11 is an unmarked line running approximately north-south. The eastern boundary of Parcel KS17 is a dry stone wall bounding Nateby Road. The southern boundary of Parcel KS11 is the properties of Park Terrace and part of Parcel KS17, while the southern boundary of Parcel KS17 is a dry stone wall dividing the parcel from a similar field. The northern boundary of parcel KS11 is partly former by a utilities' facility, and then a dry stone wall dividing the parcel from another similar field. The northern boundary of Parcel KS17 dry stone wall dividing the parcel from the adjacent field.

Both parcels are currently improved pasture fields, separated a dry stone wall with some mature tree planting and smaller former hedgerow plants. The southern boundary of Parcel KS17 also has some mature planting along it. The western boundary of Parcel KS11 slopes very steeply down to the road, leaving a gently sloping plateau to its east, rising from approximately 187m to 193 in the southeast corner. A footpath runs diagonally across both parcels, from southeast to northwest. Other than this, the parcels are devoid of features.

The parcels themselves have a moderate landscape quality, displaying features and structure typical of the wider landscape type. From Nateby Road, Parcel KS17 has a very rural feel, with the houses of South Road out of view beyond the ridge line. From within the parcel, and from Parcel KS17, views west are dominated by the houses of South Road and the movement of the traffic. Views east are highly attractive, looking towards Tailbridge Hill and the fells around Nine Standards Rigg. However, a parcel of land immediately to the south of the parcel already has approval for housing, and this will impact on the rural feel to a great degree.

3.34 Parcel KS13

Parcel KS13 is a large parcel of land comprising several fields rising gently from Faraday Road and the town's cattle market.

In general terms, the parcels lies to the west of the town centre, and adjacent to the estate of Fletcher Hill Park on the southern boundary, and the cattle market and playing fields of Kirkby Stephen's high school on the northern boundary. The western boundary is a staggered line of dry stone walls adjacent to further similar pasture fields. The eastern boundary is formed by the cattle market and Faraday Road; a back lane running parallel with Market Street but used heavily by local traffic, particularly on market days.

The parcel is currently improved pasture fields, separated a dry stone walls. Some boundaries have mature tree planting, with a particularly dense and imposing belt of trees on the parcel's northern boundary. There is a small stone agricultural building in the middle of the parcel adjacent to one of the walls. The land rises very gently, from approximately 176m next to Faraday Road, to approximately 179m at its western edge.

The parcel itself has a high landscape quality, displaying features and structure typical of the wider landscape type, and providing a well defined edge to the built-up environment. Views from Faraday Road are highly attractive and the parcel gives the High School a highly pleasant semi-rural setting. From the parcel, views west are towards the Pennines, with views in other directions curtailed by the town. There are distant views of Tailbridge Hill and Mallerstang above the rooftops.

3.35 Parcel KS15

Parcel KS15 is a large parcel of land, comprising several fields to the southwest of the town centre. Unlike parcels 8, 9, 11, 13 and 17, this parcel has less of an association with the town, being located adjacent to a rough track and behind outbuildings, with mature tree belts bisecting it.

In general terms, the parcel lies off Croglam Lane, a track running parallel to High Street/South Road, and runs north from the top of Rowgate to the Westgarth estate. Croglam Lane forms the eastern boundary, with Westgarth forming the majority of the northern boundary, except a short run with is formed by a dry stone wall. The western boundary is an unmarked line crossing four separate fields, themselves divided by a mixture of post and wire fencing and dry stone walls with varying amounts of existing planting. The parcel narrows to a point at its southern end. The site rises gently from approximately 180m in the northeast corner to approximately 190m in the southern end.

The parcel itself has a moderate landscape quality, with some signs of features and structure typical of the wider landscape type, but a slightly neglected feel. The southwest corner of the site does offer views back across Kirkby Stephen and towards the fells beneath Nine Standards Rigg.

3.36 Parcel KS18

Parcel KS18 is a small parcel of semi-improved pasture land, at the southern end of the town, near to the old Kirkby Stephen West railway station.

In general terms, the parcel lies to the west of some residential and commercial properties on South Road, and to the south of Croglam Park; a recent small residential development. The western boundary is formed by a post and wire fence beneath the earthworks of Croglam Castle; a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The parcel's topography appears somewhat unnatural, with steep sides and a flat bottom; presumably this has connections with the adjacent form railway station. Because of this, views are very restricted to the immediate area, and consist of the rear of residential properties and their outbuildings to the east, industrial units of Station Yard, and the side boundaries of the houses of Croglam Park and Rowgate. The parcel's western boundary is formed by a post and wire fence, with the land steeply rising towards the earthworks of Croglam Castle. The lowest point of the site is approximately 190m in the northeastern corner, with the highest point of approximately 200m in the southwestern corner.

The parcel has a moderate landscape quality, with little character and few features typical of the landscape type of the wider area.

4.0 Landscape and visual impacts and their significance

4.1 Visual baseline

Visual impact assessment relates to “**changes that arise in the composition of the available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people’s responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to the visual amenity**” (GLVIA).

Potential visual receptors can include the public or community at large, residents, visitors and other groups of viewers as well as the visual amenity of people affected.

During the site surveys, careful notes were taken as to likely viewpoints of the parcels, and those viewpoints were subsequently visited, and the views recorded and analysed.

4.2 Landscape sensitivity

Sensitivity is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible, according to the degree to which a particular landscape or area can accommodate change arising from a particular development, without detrimental effects on its character, as based on the following factors:

- Compatibility of the proposed development with the existing land-uses and landscape character.
- The pattern and scale of the landscape in relation to the development.
- Visual enclosure/openness and potential extent of visibility.
- The scope for mitigation of the proposed development, which would be in character with the existing landscape.
- The value placed on the landscape.

In order to provide comparisons between Option Areas (and/or individual parcels), scores have been assigned to each impact level.

Significance of landscape or visual effect	Score
No impact	0
Negligible impact	1
Negligible/slight impact	2
Slight impact	3
Slight/moderate impact	4
Moderate impact	5
Moderate/substantial impact	6
Substantial impact	7

Table 3. Scores allocated to each given impact level

4.21 Parcel KS3

Landscape element	Sensitivity	Nature of impact	Predicted magnitude	Significance of impact	Score
Landform	Low	The site gently slopes but this could be easily accommodated into any development.	Small	Slight	3
Land cover	Low	Change of use from agricultural to developed.	Large	Moderate	5
Trees and woodland	High	Considerable tree cover and sufficient to make root protection zones an issue if retention were required. To retain all trees would greatly limit the available developable land.	Large	Substantial	7
Hedgerows	High	Large, mature albeit fragmented hedgerows in the same locations as the existing trees. However, any hedge removal would have less affect than tree removal as continuous cover could still be maintained in most places.	Medium	Moderate/substantial	6
Water bodies	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Rights of way	Low	Route will be unlikely to require alteration as it is on the boundary.	Small	Slight	3
Landscape character	High	The area currently has a very strong landscape character, with its tight field pattern and strong structural planting, which would be greatly altered if developed.	Large	Substantial	7
					31

Table 4. Landscape sensitivity of Parcel KS3

4.22 Parcel KS8

Landscape element	Sensitivity	Nature of impact	Predicted magnitude	Significance of impact	Score
Landform	Low	The site slopes but this could be accommodated into any development.	Small	Slight	3
Land cover	Low	Change of use from agricultural to developed.	Large	Moderate	5
Trees and woodland	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Hedgerows	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Water bodies	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Rights of way	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Landscape character	Low	The parcel displays little character and associates entirely with the adjacent existing development of Kirkby Stephen town centre, including recent new development.	Small	Slight	3
					11

Table 5. Landscape sensitivity of Parcel KS8

4.23 Parcel KS9

Landscape element	Sensitivity	Nature of impact	Predicted magnitude	Significance of impact	Score
Landform	Low	The site slopes but this could be accommodated into any development.	Small	Slight	3
Land cover	Low	Change of use from agricultural to developed.	Large	Moderate	5
Trees and woodland	Low	Some self-sown tree cover on the boundaries, but no vegetation within the parcel itself	Small	Slight	3
Hedgerows	Low	Short areas of hedgerow on parts of the boundary.	Small	Slight	3
Water bodies	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Rights of way	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Landscape character	Low	The parcel displays little character and associates entirely with the adjacent existing development of Kirkby Stephen town centre, including recent new development.	Small	Slight	3
					16

Table 6. Landscape sensitivity of Parcel KS9

4.24 Parcel KS11

Landscape element	Sensitivity	Nature of impact	Predicted magnitude	Significance of impact	Score
Landform	Moderate	The site is relatively level in the main, but slopes steeply down towards South Road over a short distance. If housing were to be placed near to the road, groundworks would be required.	Medium	Moderate	5
Land cover	Low	Change of use from agricultural to developed.	Large	Moderate	5
Trees and woodland	Low	Some self-sown tree cover on the boundaries, but no vegetation within the parcel itself.	Small	Slight	3
Hedgerows	Low	Short areas of hedgerow on parts of the boundary.	Small	Slight	3
Water bodies	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Rights of way	Low	Diversion may be required unless any layout accommodated the existing route.	Medium	Slight/moderate	4
Landscape character	Low	The parcel displays little character and associates entirely with the adjacent existing development of Kirkby Stephen. It is generally not visible from outside the immediate area.	Small	Slight	3
					23

Table 7. Landscape sensitivity of Parcel KS11

4.25 Parcel KS13

Landscape element	Sensitivity	Nature of impact	Predicted magnitude	Significance of impact	Score
Landform	Low	The site is relatively level with no changes anticipated if developed.	Small	Slight	3
Land cover	Low	Change of use from agricultural to developed.	Large	Moderate	5
Trees and woodland	Moderate	Many large, mature trees along the boundaries which could be protected and retained within any development.	Small	Slight/moderate	4
Hedgerows	Low	Short areas of hedgerow on parts of the boundary.	Small	Slight	3
Water bodies	N/A	None	None	No impact	0
Rights of way	N/A	None	None	No impact	0
Landscape character	Moderate	The parcel displays a strong character with many features typical of the wider landscape type, although it also strongly associates with the adjacent cattle market area.	Medium	Moderate	5
					18

Table 8. Landscape sensitivity of Parcel KS13

4.26 Parcel KS15

Landscape element	Sensitivity	Nature of impact	Predicted magnitude	Significance of impact	Score
Landform	Moderate	The site slopes noticeably although gradients could be accommodated within any development.	Small	Slight/moderate	4
Land cover	Low	Change of use from agricultural to developed.	Large	Moderate	5
Trees and woodland	Moderate	Many large, mature trees along the boundaries of parcel and existing field boundaries within the parcel. Stand-offs would be required to ensure their retention.	Medium	Moderate	5
Hedgerows	Moderate	Substantial and mature hedgerow along boundary with Croglam Lane, which would require protection and retention and would be straightforward to achieve.	Small	Slight/moderate	4
Water bodies	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Rights of way	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Landscape character	Moderate	The parcel displays a strong character with many features typical of the wider landscape type,. The site has a rural feel with an obvious detachment from any surround development.	Large	Substantial	6
					24

Table 9. Landscape sensitivity of Parcel KS15

4.27 Parcel KS17

Landscape element	Sensitivity	Nature of impact	Predicted magnitude	Significance of impact	Score
Landform	Low	The site slopes noticeably although gradients could be accommodated within any development.	Small	Slight	3
Land cover	Low	Change of use from agricultural to developed.	Large	Moderate	5
Trees and woodland	Moderate	Many large, mature trees along the boundaries of parcel. Stand-offs would be required to ensure their retention.	Small	Slight	3
Hedgerows	Low	Some sporadic hedge planting along parts of the boundary which could be easily retained within any development.	Small	Slight	3
Water bodies	N/A	None	None	No impact	0
Rights of way	Low	A footpath crosses diagonally across the site linking Nateby Road and South Road beyond.	Small	Slight	3
Landscape character	Moderate	The parcel displays a strong character with many features typical of the wider landscape type. The site currently has a rural feel but an approved development on adjacent land will erode this and the parcel will then associate greatly with housing.	Small	Slight/moderate	4
					21

Table 10. Landscape sensitivity of Parcel KS17

4.28 Parcel KS18

Landscape element	Sensitivity	Nature of impact	Predicted magnitude	Significance of impact	Score
Landform	Moderate	The site slopes noticeably from the central portion of the site up to the east and west boundaries. Some groundworks may be required.	Medium	Moderate	5
Land cover	Low	Change of use from agricultural to developed.	Large	Moderate	5
Trees and woodland	Low	Some mature tree planting in the south west corner, but could be easily retained and protected.	Small	Slight	3
Hedgerows	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Water bodies	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Rights of way	N/A	None.	None	No impact	0
Landscape character	Low	The parcel has little character and displays few characteristics of the wider landscape type.	Small	Slight	3
					16

Table 11. Landscape sensitivity of Parcel KS18

4.3 Summary of landscape impacts

By scoring the anticipated impact of each factor assessed, a cumulative significance score has been given to each Option Area. The higher the score, the greater the significance of the impact on the landscape through developing an area would be.

Parcel KS3	31
Parcel KS8	11
Parcel KS9	16
Parcel KS11	23
Parcel KS13	18
Parcel KS15	24
Parcel KS17	21
Parcel KS18	16

Table 12.

4.4 Visual impact

Visual impact assessment relates to **“changes that arise in the composition of the available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people’s responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to the visual amenity”** (GLVIA).

Potential visual receptors can include the public or community at large, residents, visitors and other groups of viewers as well as the visual amenity of people affected.

Rather than identify individual locations considered to be a visual receptor to each parcel, an overview has been taken to assess visual impact in the immediate vicinity, mid distance (up to 2km) and beyond 2km. This is sufficient to give a gauge to the likely visual impact development may create.

As with landscape impact, in order to provide comparisons between parcels, scores have been assigned to each impact level.

Significance of landscape or visual effect	Score
No impact	0
Negligible impact	1
Negligible/slight impact	2
Slight impact	3
Slight/moderate impact	4
Moderate impact	5
Moderate/substantial	6
Substantial impact	7

Table 13. Scores allocated to each given impact level

4.41 Visual impact from Parcel KS3

The visual receptors in the immediate vicinity to this parcel are the residents of Manor Court and South Road with views towards the parcel. There are numerous properties with rear views directly onto the parcel and their view will change from one of rural, structured grazing fields to developed land. Because such residents would view the parcel on a permanent basis, they can be considered as having a high sensitivity to change. Development would create a large magnitude of change and this would result in a substantial impact.

Mid distance views (up to 2km) are generally not available due to topography, and screening provided by existing buildings and vegetation. There would therefore be no impact from development for such receptors.

Far distance views (2km+) are available from the north west of the town, although at such distances, the parcel would not be distinguishable from the existing built form of the town, and would form a fraction of the view, with the remaining open countryside still dominating. Receptors in this area can be considered as having a moderate sensitivity as they are likely to be using the footpath network to enjoy the countryside and views. Development would create a negligible magnitude of change and any impact would therefore be slight.

Parcel KS3	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Impact	Score
Immediate vicinity	High	Large	Substantial	7
Mid-distance	N/A	N/A	No impact	0
Far-distance	Moderate	Negligible	Slight	3
				10

Table 14

4.42 Visual impact from Parcels KS 8 and 9

The visual receptors in the immediate vicinity of parcels KS8 and 9 are the residents of Mellbecks and the end of The Crescent. Despite currently overlooking the parcels, views are generally not directly towards the parcels and any view will also incorporate existing development. Therefore, such receptors can be considered as having a moderate sensitivity. Views towards the surrounding fells are not available from these receptors, and the fact that existing development is also evident makes any development have a moderate magnitude of change, resulting in a slight/moderate impact.

Mid distance views (up to 2km) are available from the footpaths either side of the River Eden, from where views up to the parcels can be gained. Parcel KS8 would not be visible but the eastern boundary of Parcel KS9 would form the skyline and make Kirkby Stephen's presence far greater. The routes are popular with residents and tourists, and the area is an SSSI, so receptors can be considered as having a high sensitivity to change. If development were visible, it would create a medium magnitude of change and would result in a moderate impact.

Far distance views of the parcels (2km+) are limited to views from the area around Podgill Viaduct, where the boundary of parcel KS9 would be visible. Receptors in this area can be considered as having a moderate sensitivity as they are likely to be using the footpath network to enjoy the countryside and views. Development would create a medium magnitude of change, as it would not associate directly with the existing visible parts of the town and any impact would therefore be slight/moderate.

Parcels KS8 & 9	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Impact	Score
Immediate vicinity	Moderate	Medium	Moderate	5
Mid-distance	High	Medium	Moderate/ substantial	6
Far-distance	Moderate	Medium	Moderate/ substantial	6
				17

Table 15

4.43 Visual impact from Parcels KS11 and 17

The visual receptors in the immediate vicinity of Parcels KS11 and 17 comprise the residents of properties along South Road and Park Terrace which overlook the site, users of Nateby Road and South Road, and users of the footpath crossing the parcels. Of these, the residents have the highest sensitivity as they experience the view on a permanent basis. However, residents along South Road already have the view compromised by the heavy traffic volumes along South Road, Residents of Park Terrace do not have this impact as they view the parcels from the rear of their properties. Users of Nateby Road and the footpath network are less sensitive, and any impact development would have will be lessened by the fact that an adjoining parcel already has permission for housing. In general terms, therefore, receptors in this area can be considered to be moderately sensitive to change, with any change causing of medium magnitude, and any impact therefore, being slight/moderate.

Mid distance views (up to 2km) are limited to walkers along the River Eden who will gain views of any development near the eastern boundary of Parcel KS17. Their sensitivity will be high, as the river is an SSSI and the rest of Kirkby Stephen is not visible from this area. Development would have a small magnitude of change, as it would be read in conjunction with any development on the already approved parcel and houses along Nateby Road, and any impact would therefore be moderate.

Far distance views (2km+) are limited to the area around Tailbridge hill, Nine Standards Rigg and the B6270 as it approaches Nateby. From this distance, Kirby Stephen is already evident and any development would be hard to distinguish. Receptors in this area can be considered as having a high sensitivity to change, as they will be recreational users, but any development would have a negligible magnitude of change, resulting in a slight/moderate impact.

Parcels KS11 & 17	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Impact	Score
Immediate vicinity	Moderate	Medium	Moderate	5
Mid-distance	Moderate	Small	Slight/moderate	4
Far-distance	High	Negligible	Slight/moderate	4
				13

Table 16

4.44 Visual impact from Parcel KS13

The visual receptors in the immediate vicinity of Parcel KS13 are the residents of Fletcher Hill Park whose properties overlook the parcel. They will have a high sensitivity as they experience the view on a permanent basis. Development would have a medium magnitude of change as, despite being a Greenfield site, views over it lead to the town's high school and auction market. Therefore, any development would have a moderate impact.

Mid-distance views (up to 2km) are gained from the footpath network to the town's west, and users of this network can be considered as having a moderate sensitivity to change, as at all points, Kirkby Stephen's presence will be very evident and the footpaths are outside areas with any special designation. Views will often be away from the town towards the Pennines. Any development would have a small magnitude of change, when considered in conjunction with the surround land use, and any impact will therefore be slight/moderate.

Far distance views (2km+) can be gained from the hills above Hartley and Nateby, including Nine Standards Rigg and Tailbridge Hill. Receptors in these areas can be considered as having a high sensitivity, as they will generally be serious walkers making use of the countryside. However, any development will have a negligible magnitude of change as it will fit comfortably within the existing development of Kirkby Stephen and will be barely distinguishable from it. Any impact would, therefore, be slight/moderate.

Parcel KS13	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Impact	Score
Immediate vicinity	High	Medium	Moderate/ substantial	6
Mid-distance	Moderate	Small	Slight/moderate	4
Far-distance	High	Negligible	Slight/moderate	4
				14

Table 17

4.45 Visual impact from Parcel KS15

Visual receptors in the immediate vicinity of Parcel KS15 are limited to a few properties at the western end of Rowgate, and southern end of Westgarth Avenue. There are nearby properties backing on to Croglam Lane, but few seem to have significant views over the parcel. Such receptors can be considered as having a moderate sensitivity to change, as their views are not directly over the parcel. However, any development would have large magnitude of change as the parcel currently has a very rural feel with open countryside beyond. Any impact of development would therefore be moderate/substantial.

Mid distance receptors (up to 2km) are limited to users of the footpath network to the town's west and users can be considered as having a high sensitivity to change as they are in open countryside. Any development would have a moderate magnitude of change, particularly towards the higher western boundary, as this would not associate with existing nearby development, but would only occupy a small portion of any view. Any development would, therefore, create a moderate impact.

Far distance views (2km+) are visible from the area around Podgill Viaduct and Waitby Greenriggs Nature Reserve. Receptors in these areas can be considered to have a high sensitivity to change and any development would create a medium magnitude of change, particularly towards the higher sections of the parcel's western boundary. Any development would, therefore, create a moderate impact.

Parcel KS15	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Impact	Score
Immediate vicinity	Moderate	Large	Moderate/ substantial	6
Mid-distance	High	Medium	Moderate/ substantial	6
Far-distance	High	Medium	Moderate/ substantial	6
				18

Table 18

4.46 Visual impact from Parcel KS 18

Visual receptors in the immediate vicinity of Parcel KS18 are limited to a few properties at the southern end of Rowgate. Such receptors can be considered as having a moderate sensitivity to change, as their views are not directly over the parcel. Any development would have medium magnitude of change as the parcel is already surrounded by development, including commercial and industrial. A scheduled ancient monument is adjacent the parcel, Croglam Castle, but access to this feature is gained to its north west and no views of the parcel are visible from this direction. Any impact would therefore be slight/moderate.

There are no mid distance receptors (up to 2km), so there would be no impact from development.

There are no far distance receptors (2km+), so there would be no impact from development.

Parcel KS18	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Impact	Score
Immediate vicinity	Moderate	Medium	Moderate	5
Mid-distance	N/A	N/A	None	0
Far-distance	N/A	N/A	None	0
				5

Table 19

4.5 Summary of Visual Impacts

Using the scoring system described in 4.2, the cumulative visual impact of each Parcel (or parcels) from differing visual receptors is:

Parcel(s)	Total Score
KS3	10
KS8 & 9	17
KS11 & 17	13
KS13	14
KS15	18
KS18	5

Table 20

From this, it can clearly be seen that in general terms, development of parcel KS18 would create the least visual impact, whilst parcel KS15 would create the greatest impact. However, what the results don't show is that the development of some portions of the parcels would create far more visual impact than others, and if these areas were left undeveloped, or used for open space, etc, the visual impact of any given parcel as a whole could be greatly reduced.

5.0 Summary and Conclusions

If the scoring of both landscape and visual impact were combined to rank each parcel in terms of its suitability for development, the parcels would rank, with least impact (and therefore highest suitability) first;

1. Parcel KS18 (total score of 21)
2. Parcel KS8 (total score of 28)
3. Parcel KS13 (total score of 32)
4. Parcel KS9 (total score of 33)
5. Parcel KS17 (total score of 34)
6. Parcels KS11 & KS15 (total scores of 36)
7. Parcel KS3 (total score of 41)

However, each parcel has constraints and opportunities that a simple scoring system cannot identify.

5.1 Parcel KS3

This parcel sits immediately to the north of adjacent parcels within this study, and as such may be considered as a logical extension of any proposed development area. However, this parcel displays many characteristics missing from Parcels KS11 and KS17 in the form of tight field patterns well defined by mature tree and hedge planting. To develop this parcel would likely require the removal of many of these trees and much of the hedgerow, which helps form an attractive backdrop for existing houses and any future development of parcel KS11 in particular. Views from Nateby Road will be unaffected as any tree removal would not be visible, and the existing tree planting to the east of the parcel would also be retained. If the existing tree planting were not present, then the site would make a logical extension of any development land, with impact being limited to the immediate vicinity.

5.2 Parcel KS8

This is a small parcel within the existing development framework of Kirkby Stephen. It is completely screened from any open countryside or public footpath and is an ideal site for infill housing, causing little landscape or visual impact, and having no need for landscape mitigation over general good design principles. There are visual receptors in the form of the existing residential properties of Nateby Road and Mellbecks, but these do already have views upon other existing development, and views over Parcel KS8 do not lead on to extensive views of open countryside.

5.3 Parcel KS9

If Parcel KS8 were developed, then this parcel becomes highly suitable for development, to further infill the new development between, and in addition to the row of housing along The Crescent. There would be an impact on the River Eden and its public footpaths, as the parcel currently forms the skyline when viewed from a short section of this area, and housing could break this skyline with little visual coalescence with the town itself.

Therefore, avoidance of the very highest section of the site, or perhaps land forming to allow development to sit within the landscape better would be beneficial. However, mitigation by tree planting could also effectively minimise this impact while also acknowledging the landscape character of the area as a whole.

5.4 Parcel KS11

This parcel currently appears as a strangely formed green gap in the development along South Road. Development would undoubtedly impact on the existing properties of South Road immediately opposite, but it would appear a natural infill and be in keeping with the developed nature of South Road as a whole. Land forming could again be utilised to good effect to prevent new development becoming too high above the road, and still allow views across to the open countryside from the upper floors of the existing properties.

More importantly, by building off reduced ground levels, the rural nature of Nateby Road, to the east of the parcel, will be retained. By breaking the skyline in this location, views of new housing would not be read in conjunction with the existing development of the town. Structural planting could again be used to both minimise any visual impact and enhance existing character or the wider area.

5.5 Parcel KS13

This is currently a highly attractive area of land, albeit read very clearly as being on the edge of town. It has existing development along its entire southern boundary, a long-established cattle market to its east and a high school to its north. Development would alter the setting of the school, and its sporting facilities, but these cannot be considered sensitive receptors, and therefore any impact must be considered lower than would otherwise be the case. Residents of properties currently overlooking the parcel will experience the greatest impact. However, views over the existing fields are soon blocked by the presence of both the school and the cattle market. Night time views will be little affected as the sports facilities at the school are often floodlit. Views from a section of Faraday Road will be altered, and the edge of town feel to the area diminished, but the parcel does not form the integral part of the view from this area.

5.6 Parcel KS15

This is a sizeable parcel of land with relatively few visual receptors, due to being tucked behind outbuildings and adjacent to a rough track with a strong boundary hedge. Boundary planting should be retained and enhanced, and the existing tree belt towards the parcel's southern tip should also be retained. Provision of public open space in the southernmost section would reduce the visual impact on the existing properties off Croglam Lane. Whilst development of the whole parcel would push the development boundary of the town slightly further west compared to Westgarth, it would be in line with Rowgate, and therefore be read as fitting in the existing development framework of the town as a whole. Avoiding the far western boundary, or providing additional structural planting, would reduce any visual impact to the town's west.

5.7 Parcel KS17

This parcel is visible from wide areas around Kirkby Stephen, without being read in conjunction with nearby existing development. It would appear isolated and detached from its nearest neighbouring development to the east of Quarry Close and near the primary school, and would completely alter the current rural feel of Nateby Road were it not for the fact that an adjacent parcel of land already has permission for housing. This, therefore, makes the development of this parcel more logical, particularly when considered in conjunction with Parcel KS11.

5.8 Parcel KS18

Development of this parcel would have almost no visual impact outside its immediate vicinity, with even the majority of nearby receptors; housing along Rowgate and Croglam Park, not having direct views over the site. Development would be a natural progression from Croglam Park and naturally sit within the parcel's topography. The main impact would be to the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Croglam Castle. However, this is a little-visited site, and has little visible presence in the landscape. Its setting is already compromised by the long-established development at Station Yard and buildings to west of South Road. New development, being well below the monument, will be viewed over, and be read as fitting completely within the existing developed framework of the town.

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