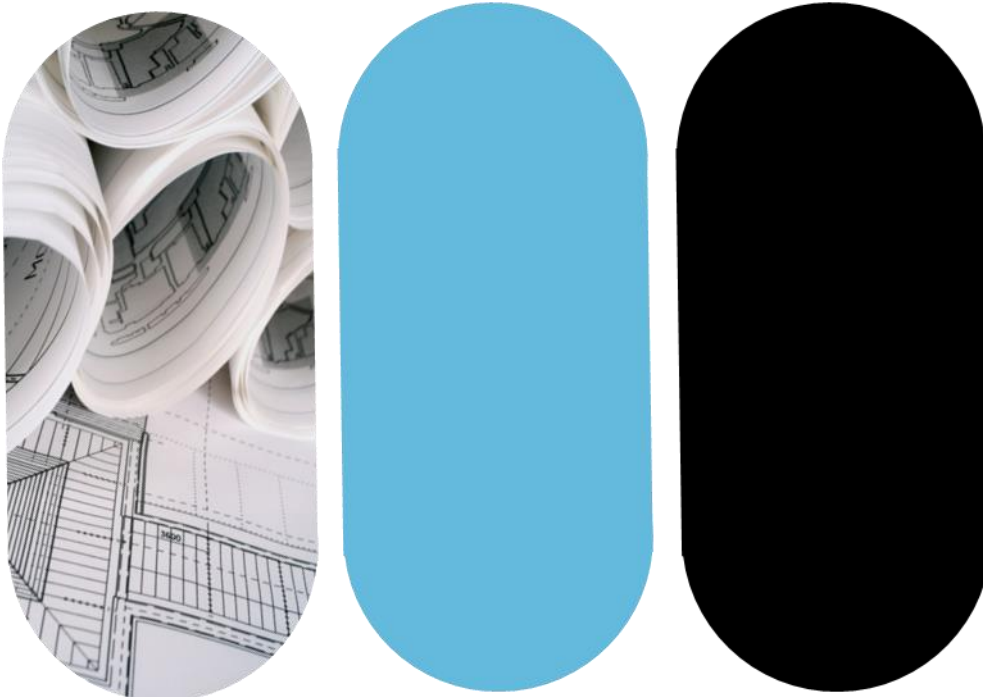


MR DEAN WILLSHEE

Retrospective planning application for the erection of a leisure building with associated access, parking and landscaping (resubmission of DMPA/2021/1196)

At Knight's Lodges, Knight's Lane, Bretby, Derbyshire, DE15 0RT

LANDSCAPE VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT – UPDATED JUNE 2022





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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report updates the June 2021 Landscape Baseline Report submitted in support of planning application ref: DMPA/2021/1196.
- 1.2 A further update to the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment is now required, as the design and siting of the previously approved Leisure Building (ref: DMPA/2021/1196), has been revised by the Applicant. Further details on the design changes are provided in the accompanying Covering Letter acting as a Planning, Design and Heritage Statement, prepared by Marrons Planning.
- 1.3 This report covers the site context, landscape setting, and visual setting before discussing the relevant landscape framework with the inclusion of concluding comments. The differences in the design of the refused building (LPA ref: DMPA/2021/1196) and the revised building are summarised at section 3. All of the images that form the basis of this report are provided in Appendix 1.



2. SITE CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is approximately 0.38 hectares in size. The blue line on the attached Site Location Plan indicates the extent of land under the applicants' ownership, upon which there are an existing No. 8 holiday lodges approved under planning permission ref: DMPA/2020/0395.
- 2.2 An additional No. 8 holiday lodges has been approved on site (LPA ref: DMPA/2019/1305), between Phase 1 of the cabins and the approved Leisure Building (ref: DMPA/2020/0226). A separate planning application to regularise these holiday lodges as built out has recently been submitted.
- 2.3 This resubmission application proposes alterations to the siting and design of the Leisure Building. The proposed Leisure Building proposes to utilise the access track leading to the second phase of holiday cabins, as shown on the attached Location Plan.
- 2.4 The proposed Leisure Building continues to be sited to the east of the existing site entrance. Therefore, due to its proximity to the site entrance where there is no established hedgerow or vegetation cover, the building will be viewable from Viewpoint 1 (Appendix 1). Some limited views will also be available from Footpath FP13 to the west, due to the reinforced vegetation buffer in this location. However, due to existing and proposed vegetation and the topography of the site and surrounding land, the Leisure Building will not be viewable from any other location. The viewpoints included within Appendix 1 corroborate this statement.
- 2.5 This report should be read in conjunction with the Golby & Luck Landscape Baseline Report 2017 at Appendix 2, as it provides further site background and contextual information of relevance to this application.



3. SUMMARY OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REFUSED AND PROPOSED LEISURE BUILDING

- 3.1 In terms of the siting of the proposed Leisure Building, it is situated on much of the same footprint as both the approved and refused building. The difference between this proposal and the refused building is that the western wing of the building has been removed. Table 2 in the accompanying Covering Letter provides a summary of the similarities and differences between the approved, refused and revised Leisure Building, in terms of shape, scale, massing and materials.
- 3.2 As demonstrated within the accompanying Ground Floor Plans and Elevations, drawing no. 1560W 35 and Table 2 above, to reduce the total GIA of the proposed leisure building the western wing of the leisure building has been removed. This wing previously comprised the games room area. This results in the GIA of the proposed leisure building being significantly reduced from that of the leisure building proposed under refused planning application DMPA/2021/1196, from 438m² to 355m², equating to a 18.95% reduction in the GIA.
- 3.3 The removal of the western wing returns the roof plan of the proposed leisure building to an “L shaped” building, as opposed to the “T shaped” building offered under planning application ref: DMPA/2021/1196. By way of comparison, planning permission ref: DMPA/2020/0226 was for an “L shaped” leisure building with a GIA of 326m². The current proposals are for an “L shaped” building with a GIA of 355m². By removing the western wing of the proposed leisure building, the distance of the proposed leisure building to the nearest heritage assets to the south-west of the application site is increased by some 9m. This also assists in locating the proposals further away from the nearest PROW, Bretby Footpath FP13, thereby further reducing the visual impact of the proposed leisure building.
- 3.4 The proposed leisure building has been “cut into” the landscape, assisting in reducing the visual impact of the proposals when viewed from the south and from the west. To ensure that the land surrounding the application site remains



stable, a stone retaining wall has been erected to the south of the proposed leisure building as shown on Proposed Site Plan drawing no. 1560W 37. Whilst the eaves and ridge height of the proposed leisure building are the same as that proposed under planning application DMPA/2021/1196, by cutting into the underlying hillside, the height of the proposals when viewed from the west the height of the proposed leisure building within the landscape has been reduced by 0.6m when compared to planning application ref: DMPA/2021/1196.

- 3.5 The materials to be used for the proposed leisure building will reflect existing materials onsite. The proposed stone will match the entrance wall at the site, with the vertical larch cladding matching that used on the existing 8 holiday cabins onsite. The use of a catnic SSR2 anthracite roof, anthracite window and door frames and rainwater goods will bring visual continuity to the entire site and assist in assimilating the leisure building into the backdrop of existing and permitted holiday cabin accommodation on-site. The amount of stone to be used within the walls of the leisure building has also been reduced, and has been replaced at appropriate locations with vertical larch cladding, bringing visual continuity to the wider Knights Lodges site.
- 3.6 The revised design has a much shorter frontage width compared to that of the refused building, which will entail that the building appears smaller from the site entrance. Due to the revised building cutting into the underlying hillside, the perception of the height of the proposals will be reduced, which will also assist with reducing the visual massing of the building from this location. Any perceived visual intrusion from views within the surrounding countryside will also be minimised.
- 3.7 A scheme of soft landscaping is also proposed, the function of which is two-fold. The proposed landscaping has been reconfigured to resemble a visual buffer, which will further screen the proposals when viewed from the west of the application site.



4 LANDSCAPE SETTING

4.1 The application site is located within the Melbourne Parklands national character area. The Golby & Luck Landscape Baseline Report provides the key characteristics of the area, which are identified as:

- *“An undulating landform of Sherwood Sandstone in the west of the NCA, with Carboniferous limestones forming a broken ridge of hills in the east and extending south-eastwards. Flatter areas around Ticknall, Calke Abbey and Dimminsdale.*
- *In the east of the NCA the less resistant Triassic siltstones and mudstones of the Mercia Mudstone Group produce a gently rolling lowland plateau of productive, reddish clay soils suitable for agriculture. The less permeable soils are typically used for pasture (and, historically, for dairying), the drier soils are for cereals and potatoes, and the dark loams around Melbourne are for market gardening.*
- *The Breedon Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) comprises one of the largest areas of species-rich limestone grassland in Leicestershire.*
- *Alluvium deposits and river terraces are evident between Hemington and Lockington, in the north-east of the NCA.*
- *Differential erosion by dynamic river systems has dissected the plateau and created narrow-sided, north-flowing river valleys. Two valleys have been dammed to form large reservoirs.*
- *Large landscaped parks with grand country houses and mixed woodlands, and remnant orchards associated with market gardening.*
- *New woodland planting associated with The National Forest.*
- *There are many scattered, sometimes ancient, hedgerow trees in the core area. By contrast, low and well-trimmed hedges are found around some arable fields in peripheral areas.*
- *Extensive areas of unimproved pasture and remnant acid grassland with heathy scrub persist, with woodland on some steep, undulating sandstone slopes.*



- *The major Mercian ecclesiastical centres at Repton and Breedon-on-the-Hill are rich in Christian and Viking heritage, and prominently-sited churches invoke a historic feel to the NCA. Breedon-on-the-Hill was the site of a Saxon monastery, with Saxon carvings preserved in the church.*
- *Large, nucleated villages – the most remote built of attractive, mellow yellow brick, with a few surviving timber-framed buildings.*
- *Small, clustered red-brick villages retain a rural character, but those close to the River Trent valley, including Melbourne, Repton and Castle Donington, are larger.*
- *East Midlands Airport, with its important passenger and freight terminal, is located in the east of the NCA and serviced by the A42 and M1.”*

4.2 Although important, the Melbourne Parklands national character area spans a large area in comparison to the size of the application site. It is therefore important to also consider the impact of development on a more local level.

4.3 The Landscape Character of Derbyshire was published in 2014 by Derbyshire County Council¹. Within this, the site and wider Bretby area are identified as being within the Estate Farmlands LCT which is characterised by the following attributes:

- *“Gently rolling plateau dissected by minor river valleys*
- *Seasonally waterlogged fine loamy soils over Permo-Triassic Mudstones, Siltstones and Sandstones*
- *Mixed farming with intensive arable cropping and improved permanent pasture*
- *Estate woodlands with broadleaf and coniferous species*
- *Scattered hedgerow trees*
- *Dense watercourse trees*

¹ <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/environment/conservation/landscapecharacter/landscape-character.aspx> [online], Derbyshire County Council, accessed 16/03/20 at 10.50am



- *Predominantly medium size semi-regular and regular fields enclosed by hedgerows*
- *Settlements constructed of red brick with clay tiled roofs*
- *Scattered red brick estate farmsteads and the occasional country house*
- *Open views from elevated areas over surrounding lower lying landscapes"*

4.4 A more detailed assessment of the sites landscape setting is included as Chapter 3 of the Landscape Baseline Report prepared by Golby & Luck.



5 VISUAL SETTING

- 5.1 This chapter of the Report describes the viewpoint imagery provided in Appendix 1 (updated as of June 2021), in terms of the sites location, notable features and potential impacts of the development. The viewpoint imagery provided at Appendix 1 was updated last year to ensure an accurate reflection of the site and surrounding area is provided.
- 5.2 Viewpoint 1 is of the site entrance, looking south-east and is taken from the layby adjacent to the site. This view includes both the site access, a tract of hardstanding comprised of tarmac, the proposed location of the Leisure Building and views of the remaining agricultural field and mature hedgerows on the sites southern boundary. A stone retaining wall has been erected to the south of the proposed leisure building – only intermittent views of this will be available due to the orientation of the building and proposed landscaping measures. The existing tree planting on site assists in reducing the visual impact of both the existing and proposed holiday lodges and the proposed Leisure Building when looking south-east across the site. Views of the Leisure Building will generally be limited to the immediate site entrance and the western-most boundary, although the reinforced vegetation buffer proposed will serve to limit views from the west. The siting of the Leisure Building will result in a cohesive grouping of built form on the site, which arguably reduces any perceived visual impact. A scheme of soft landscaping to the east, south and west elevations of the Leisure Building, as shown on the Proposed Site Plan, will ensure that the visual impact of the proposed development will decrease over time, and accord with the objectives of the Trees & Development SPG and adopted policies BNE3 and BNE4 of the Local Plan.
- 5.3 Viewpoint 2 is also of the site entrance and is taken from the adjacent layby, but looking south. From this viewpoint the eye is naturally drawn up the field towards the ridge of the hill and the aforementioned hedgerows. The building cuts into the hillside, reducing the perceived height of the building. Turning right towards the western boundary of the site, there are additional mature trees and substantial hedgerows (the latter of which is just out of shot) running alongside a



public right of way (Footpath FP13). These assist with limiting views into the site from this public right of way, which the proposed reinforced vegetation buffer will assist with further. From this viewpoint, the Leisure Building would not be within the main field of view.

- 5.4 Viewpoint 3 is taken along Knight's Lane to the east of Viewpoints 1 and 2, from a field access gate adjacent to the application site. The height of the existing hedgerow acts as a significant visual barrier when looking towards the site from Knight's Lane. The established nature of the hedgerow would ensure that even in the winter months, the view of the Leisure Building from this point would be obscured and highly limited.
- 5.5 Viewpoints 4, 5 and 6 are all taken further along to the east of Knight's Lane. Viewpoint 4 is from an existing field access. All three viewpoints are taken from the raised bank on the opposite side of the road to the site; views into the wider site from motorists or pedestrians utilising the paved road are minimal. When approaching the site along Knight's Lane to the east, the substantial hedgerows coupled with the falling topography of the site (which is particularly evident in Viewpoint 5), severely limit any view of the application site from these locations. The existing landscaping along the northern boundary of the site further limits any views of the application site from this location.
- 5.6 Viewpoint 7 is an updated view of Viewpoint 10 of the Golby & Luck Landscape Baseline Report, attached at Appendix 2. The viewpoint is approximately 800m to the north of the application site, looking towards it across the valley. The valley is relatively well-treed and the existing soft landscaping on-site provides screening and visual continuity. The proposed development, which provides additional soft landscaping measures, seeks to increase the level of tree and vegetation cover to that which was approved under planning permission ref: DMPA/2020/0226, thereby assisting with the assimilation of the building with the surrounding countryside.
- 5.7 Viewpoint 8 is taken from the stile in the hedgerow at Mount Road, where a public right of way traverses the agricultural field to the west of the application site. The land rises relatively steeply when looking east towards the application



site; there is a local high point in the topography of 131 metres, known locally as Bretby Mount with an associated wooded copse, which restricts the view of the application site from the west.

- 5.8 Viewpoint 9 is taken from the northern corner of Town Farm along public Footpath FP6. When looking to the west towards Town Farm, there is a considerable quantum of built development associated with agricultural operations at Town Farm that both dominates and interrupts the skyline. The wider application site cannot be seen from this viewpoint; the topography of the site and the intervening natural and built form ensures that the Leisure Building also will not be visible from this viewpoint.
- 5.9 Viewpoint 10 is taken from the high point of Footpath FP24. The ridge of the hill and existing built development limits views of the site from the south-east. The application site cannot be seen from this viewpoint and in any regard there are the residential dwellings of Shades Farm and Wood View within Bretby that act as medium distance visual barriers.
- 5.10 Viewpoint 11 is taken from the bottom of the valley along Watery Lane, from Bridleway BW17. This viewpoint has been included within this report as it is situated within the registered park and garden of Bretby Hall, which itself is a Grade II listed building (ref: 1001382). From this particular location, the topography and mature trees greatly restrict views looking north-west towards the application site.
- 5.11 Viewpoints 12 and 13 were both taken from Newton Solney Footpath FP2. Existing mature hedgerows, electricity pylons and trees all serve to limit views of the application site. The change in topography also restricts views of the site from the west. Man-made infrastructure, predominantly in the form of electricity pylons of varying design and scale, serve to significantly disrupt long-range views from Footpath FP2 towards the application site. In both viewpoints, looking south-east towards Bretby Lane and Common Farm, both agricultural and residential development is visually prominent, further disrupting the long-range views of the application site.



- 5.12 Viewpoint 14 is taken from the eastern most terminus of Bridleway BW18. The ridge of the hill prevents any potential views into the application site from the east looking west.
- 5.13 Viewpoint 15 is taken from Bretby Footpath FP5, looking north towards the application site and the SAM of Bretby Castle. The viewpoint extends across the historic village core of Bretby, with high quality residential dwellings of some heritage value dominating views in the medium distance. Beyond this, the topography rises, resulting in the application site not being visible from this viewpoint. In any regard, existing mature trees would screen the Leisure Building from view.
- 5.14 Viewpoints 16, 17 and 18 were all taken from Bretby Footpath FP13, to the western boundary of the application site looking east. These three viewpoints serve as updates to viewpoints 1 and 2 of the Golby & Luck Landscape Baseline Report. From these locations the eye is naturally drawn to the horizon, and the existing holiday lodges on site are shown to assimilate well with their surroundings. The Leisure Building is sited at the lowest part of the site, will be cut into the hillside and will utilise materials of the same colour palette as the lodges and stone entrance wall, ensuring that the building will integrate well with the existing built and natural environment. This is evidenced within the attached 3D Visuals, prepared by Bi Design Architecture.
- 5.15 Within viewpoint 17, the Toyota Manufacturing plant can be clearly seen, and is an example of large-scale built development in the surrounding area. In both viewpoints 17 and 18, the redundant Willington Power Station dominates the skyline and is a further example of built development in the surrounding area. On this basis, built development is demonstrably an acceptable principle in this location and context. The acceptability of the development in this location is further evidenced by the approval of the initial design of the Leisure Building, under planning permission ref: DMPA/2020/0226. The revised design of the Leisure Building, presented under this application, is of an attractive, modern design which utilises a similar palette of materials to that of the adjacent holiday cabins and entrance wall. The proposed materials will ensure that the Leisure Building assimilates well with the surrounding environment. As the proposed



Leisure Building is cut into the hillside, the eave and ridge height of the revised proposal will be perceived as lower when compared to both the approved and refused building, serving to reduce any perceived visual intrusion. The proposed development therefore does not change the nature, enjoyment or amenity value of Bretby Footpath FP13, upon which these viewpoints are located.



6. LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The application site is located in close proximity to a number of important heritage assets, namely the SAM of Bretby Castle and Bretby village itself as a conservation area. Despite this, views into the site from these locations are severely limited due to the intervening land form, so would have no impact upon these areas of heritage significance.
- 6.2 The Landscape Baseline Report prepared by Golby & Luck as part of planning application ref: 9/2017/1402 asserts on page 14 that the application site is deemed to only be of '*moderate value and landscape sensitivity*'. The findings of this Report corroborate this.
- 6.3 The viewpoints in this Report also suggest that the proposed development would have minimal impact upon the surrounding area, as the Leisure Building will only be viewable from the site entrance on Knight's Lane and from Bretby Footpath FP13. Views from this Footpath will be minimal due to the proposed reinforced vegetation buffer along the western boundary. There are minimal glimpses into the wider site further east along Knight's Lane from the site entrance.
- 6.4 To soften any potential visual impact, a scheme of soft landscaping is included to the north, east and south elevations of the Leisure Building. This would restrict views into the site from the eastern part of Knight's Lane and from Bretby Footpath FP13, whilst assisting with assimilating the proposed development with its surroundings.