

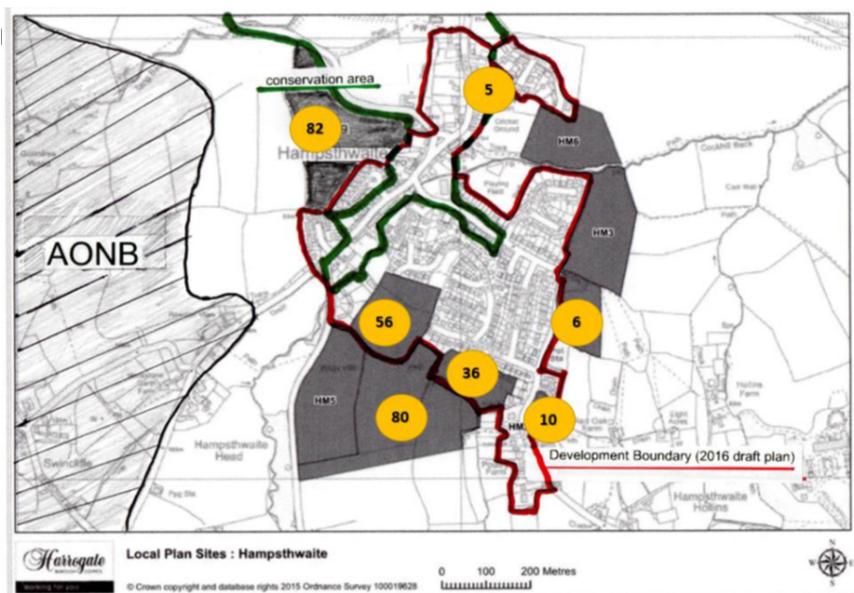
HAG Comments on Leeming Associates landscape objection

HAG has read the 31st March landscape objection raised by Leeming Associates on behalf of the Parish Council. We are pleased that yet another professional endorses the many other comments that have been raised regarding the negative landscape impacts of this planning application.

We have just a few additional comments to make on the report.

Distance from AONB Boundary

There are references in the report to the AONB being 1 kilometre from the Elton Lane site. It is actually much closer, depending on where you take the Elton Lane boundary – 200 metres from the original planning application and less than 300 metres from the amended planning application. You will no doubt have the AONB boundary information to hand but this drawing illustrates the point.



Joint Advisory Committee of the AONB objection

The Joint Advisory Committee of the AONB objected to this planning application. We feel it would be useful to remind you of what they said:

“The site forms part of the setting of the AONB, being under 1km from the boundary. In its response to the Draft Local Plan in December 2016, comments by the Joint Advisory Committee highlighted the potentially adverse impact of development on land close to the AONB as a result of some or all of the following: a) Blocking or interference of views out of the AONB particularly from public viewpoints b) Blocking or interference of views of the AONB from public viewpoints outside the AONB c) Loss of tranquillity d) Introduction of abrupt change of landscape character e) Loss of biodiversity, particularly of species of importance in the AONB The Council should ensure that such impacts are avoided. If they cannot be avoided, they must be minimised by good design or mitigated by appropriate on-site landscaping. The Council should insist that the developer compensates for any residual impact by investing in off-site work inside the boundary of the AONB. The Committee notes that the assessment of potential new housing sites by the Council’s officers concluded that this ‘Site makes an important contribution to the rural approach to Hampsthwaite and its development would

harm the landscape setting of the village and the character of the valley'. It is clearly visible from a range of surrounding vantage points in the AONB and is a significant component of the network of pasture and silage fields which, including the site in question, extend into the heart of Hampsthwaite, and which help integrate the village into the surrounding countryside. It is a transitional landscape between the AONB and the urban edge of Harrogate clearly visible to the east and further development could harm the designated area by bringing urban development ever closer to the boundary.

The landscape study that accompanies the application identifies landscape features but it lacks a systematic analysis of the impact of the proposed development except for a rudimentary description of views from a limited and carefully selected number of viewpoints. The Committee does not agree with its conclusion that the visual impact of the development will be adequately mitigated by existing vegetation. The report does not comply with the standard of assessment recommended by the Landscape Institute. The scale, density and layout of the proposed housing development on a site that will form the edge of the village facing the AONB within 1km of the boundary is unacceptable. The landscape report hints at the possibility of structural planting on land to the west - 'Although the development proposals will only fall within the red line boundaries indicated, larger areas are within the control of the site owner. These areas offer additional, potential areas for vegetation planting and mitigation' - but does not contain firm proposals. The AONB's Joint Advisory Committee objects to this application".

No comment yet from Council's landscape team

The final sentence of the report states: *"If additional and amended information is submitted we request the opportunity to review and comment on it."* HAG is aware that the council's own landscape team was asked to make a comment on the planning application as long ago as 20 November 2017 and has not yet made any formal response. Given (1) the importance of landscape and conservation to the consideration of this planning application, (2) the extended time already elapsed since the original planning application, and (3) the amendment to the site area and consequential issues regarding lack of amendment of the applicant's Design Development: Landscape report, we feel that local objectors and professional bodies MUST be given an opportunity and time to review and comment on the council's assessment of landscape and conservation issues after you receive those comments.

A copy of this letter has been sent to your landscape and conservation team and we would ask for this letter to be placed on the planning portal.