

Visual Impact Statement

The purpose of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to assess the visual impact of the proposed scheme on local residents.

The following advice was given to the applicant in the Pre-application Response from Derbyshire County Council dated 13 February 2013:

*The description of the potential visual impact and assessment should not be limited to the identified viewpoints but should also include descriptions and reference to the residential properties overlooking the site. Whilst direct access may not be available to these properties the Landscape Architect will have access to the site. **Views from the site can often be the best way to identify residential properties with views of the site and the site works.** In short visual receptors should be assessed for the overall impact on residents and not just comment and assess individual viewpoints. I would also suggest that the narrative of the LVIA should detail the particular elements in the view for example **approximately 'x' number of properties will have direct views of a 'x' meter high soil/subsoil/overburden/open cut for xxx months.** This brings clarity to the assessment of the impact and assists in making an overall judgement.*

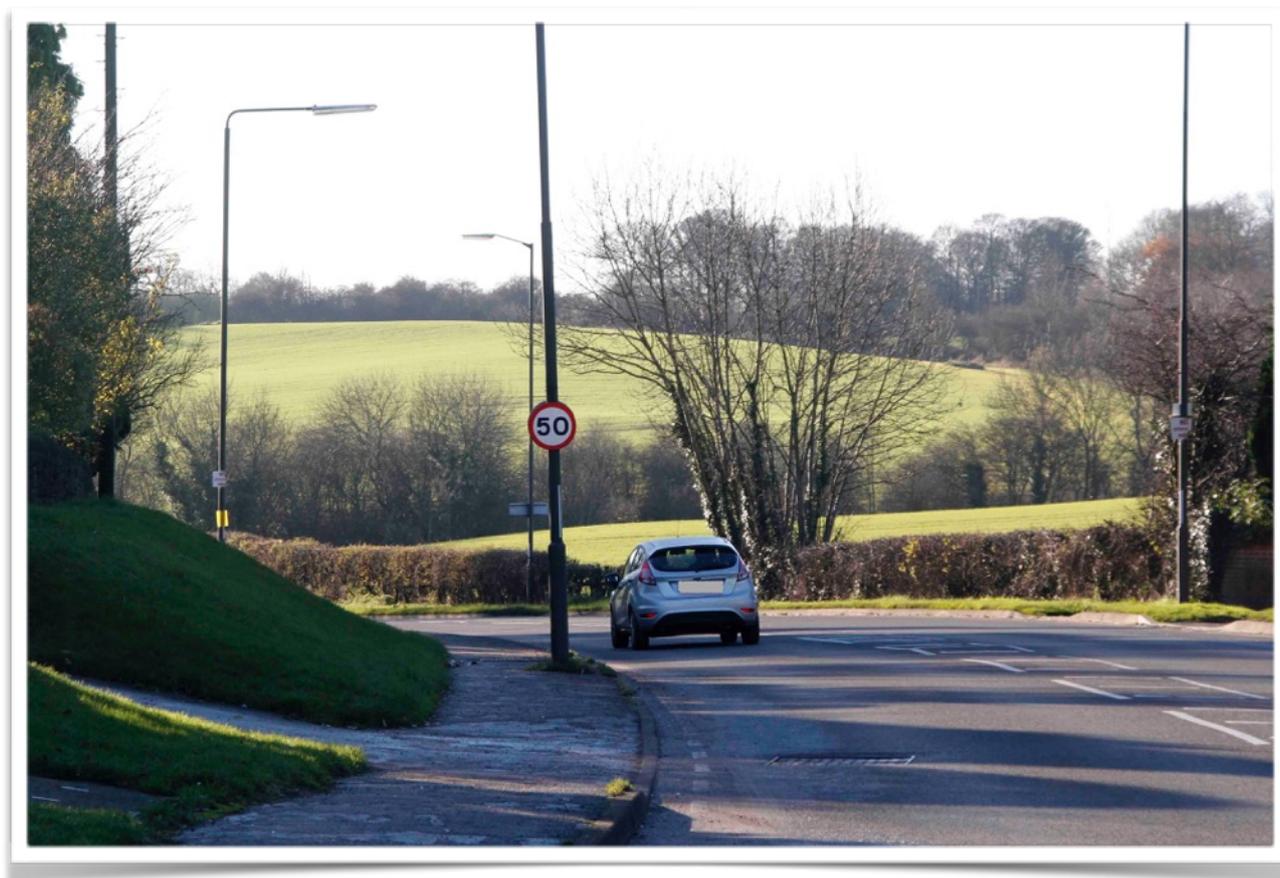
This advice appears to have been largely ignored as no views from the site have been provided nor has any attempt been made to quantify the number of properties having a particular view of the Hilltop site.

We leave it to the applicant to provide this information.

The viewpoints used in the report have been carefully chosen so that anyone not familiar with the area could easily be led to believe that they represent the worst possible views of the site. In most cases a viewpoint just a few metres away presents a very different, and worse, view.

The North of the site

This picture is taken from a point approx. 70m north of applicants Viewpoint H.



Most of the northern half of the site is visible. Whilst a 3m bund may obscure the northernmost field, the field between the watercourse and the Ashover Light Railway embankment will remain visible. (Cuts 4, 5, 6 and 7). All heavy plant movement on the internal haul road will also be visible.

This view will be enjoyed by all southbound traffic - 6,899 vehicles per day (applicant's own Transport Assessment figure). Many of these vehicles will make this journey on a daily basis and will therefore see this vista hundreds of times.

Furthermore, this view is the 'Gateway to Clay Cross' which is undergoing a generation programme. A large black hole is not going to encourage new businesses and residents to the area.

The following picture is the view from the garden of 27 Ashover Road.



A 3m bund will not obscure the view towards the track of the Ashover Light Railway and the internal haul road. This view (or very similar) will be seen from about 20 houses/ gardens on Derby Road and Ashover Road which border the site.

Footpath 23 (Viewpoint B)

The applicants choice of and description of this viewpoint is totally misleading.

Existing woodland planting bordering Woodland Way screens the majority of residential properties from the site. Relatively open views are available from the public footpath which crosses the site although visibility is largely limited to the central part of the site owing to a combination of undulating landform and field boundary vegetation.

Footpath 23 will be CLOSED whilst the northern part of the site is being worked and therefore will not be seen by anyone. This footpath will be re-opened, when Footpath 26 is closed, to maintain footpath access across the site. Users of the path will then have to cross a desolate area of recently restored land (or more likely still to be restored land) before being confronted with the coal processing area. There is no indication in any of the applicants documents of how the path will negotiate this area and its associated haul roads and bunds.

Viewpoints C & D

Again the applicant fails to mention the number of properties on Winsters Close, Riber Crescent and North Street that will enjoy these overbearing views of the enormous overburden storage mounds.

The applicant states that for properties on North Street:

Residents are likely to experience views of the proposed overburden stockpile (B4) however these will predominantly be from first floor level with a limited number of properties directly backing onto the proposed bund location also experiencing ground level views.

What they fail to mention is that the majority of the properties on North Street which back onto the playing fields are TWO STOREY FLATS! So as they applicant rightly says, the first floor flats will have views of the overburden mounds uninterrupted by hedges, fences and garden outbuildings.

Footpath 26 (Viewpoint F)

If the viewpoint had been about 100m to the east on the footpath, it would have shown that the eastern, working faces of the overburden mounds would be in full view to walkers.

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