

Landscape & Heritage

The application site is not considered to be particularly representative of its Northumberland landscape designation. Rather, the site comprises a number of large and irregular agricultural fields, with field boundaries defined by species poor hedgerows and a few large mature trees.

The location of the Garden Village within the Estate was chosen in part due to its less sensitive visual prominence in the landscape. Its natural enclosure assists in compartmentalising the site and framing views towards the wider landscape setting. Furthermore, the relatively flat and low-lying topography also helps to minimise visual impacts, with the proposed strategic green infrastructure providing good opportunities to address any specific effects that might arise, and to integrate the proposals more considerably into the local landscape.

The most sensitive visual receptors in immediate proximity to the site are limited to Public Rights of Way; with residential receptors including a small number of scattered properties close to the site, and a number of large properties on the northern boundary of Darras Hall.

There are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas or Registered Parks and Gardens or Battlefields within the site.

Ponteland Conservation Area is located 0.8km to the east and represents the historic core of the town, containing 18 Listed Buildings including the Grade I Listed Church of St Mary, and the Grade II* Listed Blackbird Inn and The Old Rectory.

There are also two Scheduled Monuments located within 3km of the site, including The Vicar's Pele and a round cairn at Heddon Laws Farm.

There is only one Listed Building located within the site: the Grade II Listed West Houses Farmhouse. This is a T-plan, two-storey farmhouse of c.1840. Other than a single-storey L-plan building at the east end of the farmyard, the remainder of the farm buildings post-date 1948.

Careful consideration has been given to the conservation of West Houses Farm in the proposed design. A sensitive scheme is proposed that seeks to bring the asset into a viable use, enhancing its setting through the replacement of the detracting and existing sheds with buildings that better reflect the heritage significance of the house and allow for its enjoyment.

An archaeological assessment of all buried and above ground archaeological remains is also being considered.

