

Raithwaite Hall
Sandsend
Landscape & Visual Appraisal

NYMINPA
27 OCT 2008

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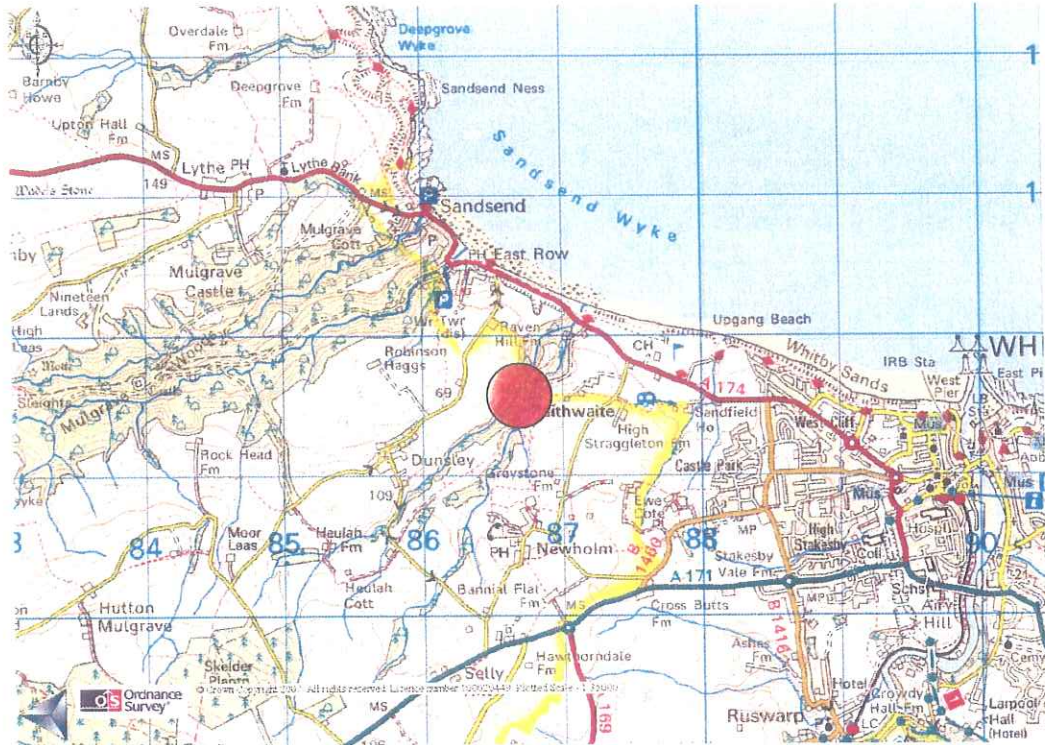
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I. Landscape & Visual Appraisal

I.1 Introduction

The site is located between the village of Sandsend to the north and the town of Whitby to the south on the North Yorkshire coast. The entrance to the site is approximately 1.5km from the centre of Sandsend off the A174 coast road.



This landscape and visual assessment is concerned with the impact of the redevelopment of Raithwaite Hall and associated outbuildings, and land to the south of the southern half of the access road which is proposed as car parking for the development.

The wider site i.e. 'the estate' covers sixty acres and currently accommodates seven holiday cottages administered from the hall buildings. The wider grounds include mature woodland, streams and a lake.

A portion of the southern section of the site falls within the North Yorkshire Moors National Park, (the park extends over the whole of the surrounding area bar the town of Whitby and village of Sandsend). The northern section outside the National Park is covered by the administrative area of Scarborough Borough Council. The boundary of the National Park is shown by a yellow line on the plan above.

The purpose of this document is to identify changes to views resulting from the proposed development and the impact of the development on the landscape character. This document focuses on these two components and concludes whether the proposed change to the site physically and visually 'fits in' with its surroundings.

In order to satisfy these objectives each section has been set out as follows:

1. Baseline analysis – This is an analysis of the existing situation within and surrounding the site. It draws upon information gathered during a desk study and field survey work. In the Visual Amenity section (1.5), the area of study (extent of visibility) is also identified and a number of visual receptors were selected and visited. A full understanding of the existing site and its surroundings has been gained to fully assess the impacts of the proposed development within a wider context.



2. Assessment of Landscape & Visual effects – This part of the study describes the likely nature and scale of changes to the landscape character and visual amenity. The proposed development was studied and then compared against the baseline information to ascertain potential effects.

The final section of the report than collates all of the information and suggests how any negative impacts could be mitigated (if necessary).

1.2 Methodology

Although this document is not part of a formal Environmental Impact Assessment, the process of this assessment has been guided by the document 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2002(2)' to appraise the effect of development of the site.

To accompany the description of baseline and assessment information, a series of classifications have been applied to the Landscape Character of the site and each visual receptor. This acts as a summary and places a defined value on the sensitivity of the character area/visual receptor, the magnitude of change and the subsequent significance of the effect of the development.

1.2.1 Sensitivity of existing Landscape Character/Visual Receptors

This is the degree to which landscape character or a visual receptor can accommodate change arising from this particular development, without a detrimental effect. The sensitivity of landscape character is dependant on its importance, quality, value and contribution and the degree to which it can be replaced or substituted.

For visual receptors and views the sensitivity will depend on the location and context of the viewpoint, the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor and the importance of the view. The most important receptors are usually users of outdoor recreation facilities, where the interest may be focused on the landscape. Also occupiers of residential properties where views may be affected by the development are considered important. Other receptors that have been included are people travelling through or past the affected landscape in cars, on trains or other transport routes.

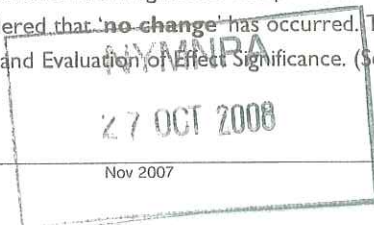
The sensitivity of landscape character/ a visual receptor is defined as being **High/ Medium/Low**, where high is the most sensitive.

1.2.2 Magnitude of Change

The magnitude of change to landscape character or visual receptors will be dependant on the nature of the proposed development itself and its size, location and individual forms and pattern in relation to the character of the proposed development site and the surrounding area. Magnitude of change is categorised using the terms **Low, Moderate, and High** which can generally be defined as:

- **Low** - a limited number of changes to any of the key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline landscape or views. This would equate to a discernable but non-material change to the landscape character or view.
- **Moderate** – a moderate number of changes to any of the key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline landscape or views. This would equate to a material change in the landscape character or view.
- **High** - a large number of changes to any of the key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline landscape or views. This would equate to a fundamental change in the landscape character or view.

For completeness where the development cannot be seen by an identified receptor (due to screen vegetation or undulating landform), the receptor has still been shown on Figure 02 Viewpoints and has been included in the text. In these circumstances it is considered that 'no change' has occurred. This approach and classification also applies to Nature of Impact and Evaluation of Effect Significance. (See below)



1.2.3 Nature of the Impact

Determination of the nature of the impact is essentially a matter of judging whether the introduction of the proposed development would be to the detriment of the existing landscape character or view, or would improve the existing character or view. Therefore the impact of the proposed development can be adverse or beneficial.

The following system of categorisation is used for the nature of impact:

- Adverse – the key characteristics of the existing landscape or view would be weakened by the introduction of the proposed development.
- Beneficial – the key characteristics of the existing landscape or view would be strengthened by the introduction of the proposed development.
- No change/neutral.

1.2.4 Evaluation of Effect Significance

The final overall evaluation which combines the judgements previously made about sensitivity, magnitude of change and the nature of impact. However, the assessment of effect also requires the application of professional judgement and experience, on a case by case basis, given the often subjective nature of the assessment process. Effects will be categorised using the terms **Minor, Moderate, Major** and **No Change**.

The following standards are used in assessing whether the impacts are **short, medium** or **long** term.

- Short term - > 12months
- Medium term – one to five years
- Long term - + five years.

1.3 Description of Proposal

The proposal comprises two key parts; the conversion of the Hall and outbuildings at the core of the site and the creation of associated parking facilities. Refer to the following drawings for detailed illustrations of the proposals:

David Bamford Architects Drawings P1 P2 P6 & P7

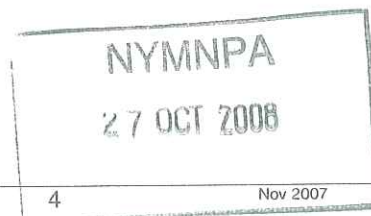
Smeeden Foreman Drawings SF1349 LL01 & LL02

1.3.1 The Hall

The proposal is to convert the Hall into a quality boutique hotel. The main building will be extended to give a balanced frontage, and will accommodate around thirty bedrooms and suites. The two outbuildings, the garage and the workshop will also be converted into approximately ten more bedrooms. The remnant outbuildings and conservatories will be demolished and replaced with accommodation encompassing a bar, restaurant, kitchen, gym, pool & function facilities etc.

1.3.2 Parking

It is proposed to introduce a parking area along the upper section of the drive. The current access drive is of high specification for its current function. The width reduces along the road in places to 3.5m wide and will need to be widened to 4.5m along the length to the hotel. The widening can be achieved to the southern side of the road without causing disturbance to the kerbs and existing vegetation to the north.



1.4 Landscape Character

Landscape character is defined as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular area. Forms and landuse in the landscape, activity or tranquillity, heritage and cultural associations, vegetation, land use and connectivity combine together to create landscape character. It is important this is considered so a full understanding of the site and its surroundings can be achieved. Figure 01 Landscape Designations illustrates any statutory designation within the study area that may have a bearing on landscape character.

1.4.1 Form and Landuse

The form of the landscape in which the proposal site is located is that of a large residence/estate with associated buildings, grounds and driveway. At the heart of the site is Raithwaite Hall, an unusual a building of little architectural merit, made up of a jumble of styles and generally presenting a run down appearance. There are several glasshouses, stables and garages linked to the Hall.

There is an area of gardens mainly to the south of the Hall focused on the Newholm beck that runs through the site. The well maintained formal gardens end at a lake further to the south of the site, created by damming the beck with an ornamental bridge structure at this point.

To the wider site, there are several other buildings associated with the estate and its grounds including The Lakeside House, Home farm (Holiday Lets), The Lodge, and Woodcutters Cottage.

The Hall site and proposed car park area are located towards the base of the valley (Raithwaite Gill) and enclosed by the valley sides. The close proximity to the sea is hard to appreciate from the enclosed location.

The form of the site would be changed in that the building would be greatly altered. An area of associated car parking would be created.

1.4.2 Activity/ Tranquillity

There are occasional vehicles arriving at the property to access the residential properties and the holiday cottages. There are also occasional deliveries to the Hall. No other walkers were observed on the footpaths during the survey work, though the paths are generally clear and appear moderately well used.

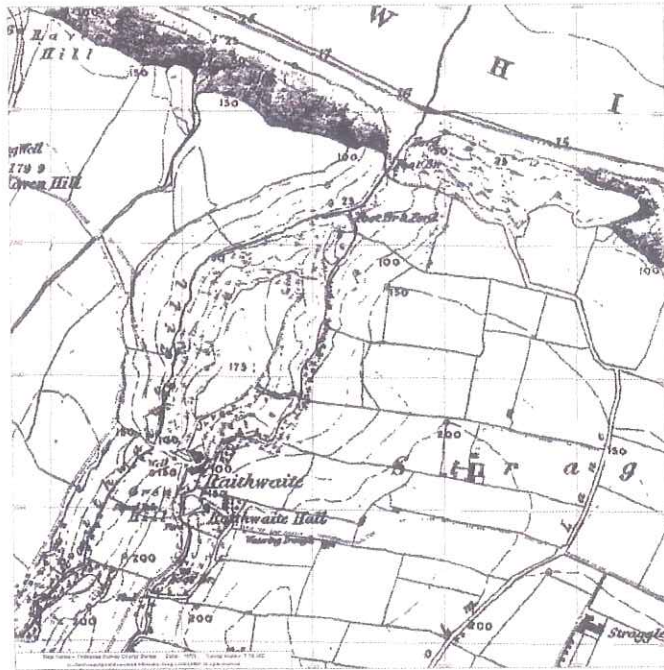
The feel of the site is generally quiet and tranquil.

The activity within the site will inevitably increase quite significantly during construction and following development with the arrival and departure of guests and the increase in deliveries to service a hotel.

1.4.3 Culture and heritage

There appears to be very little written about Raithwaite Hall; local library and internet searches have yielded very little information. Historic Ordnance Survey (O.S.) maps have provided the most information about the progression of development on and around the site.

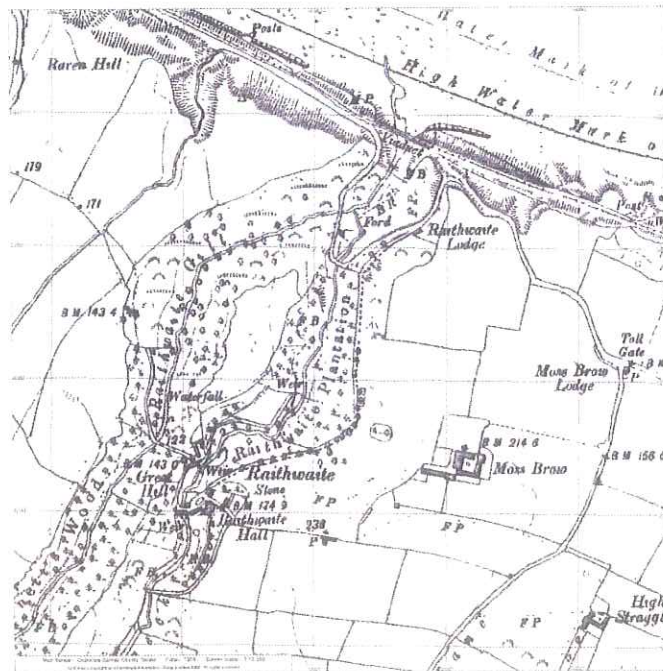




LANDMARK
Historical Maps

Landmark Historical Map
Published Date(s): 1853
Originally plotted at: 1:10,590

1853 Ordnance Survey Map



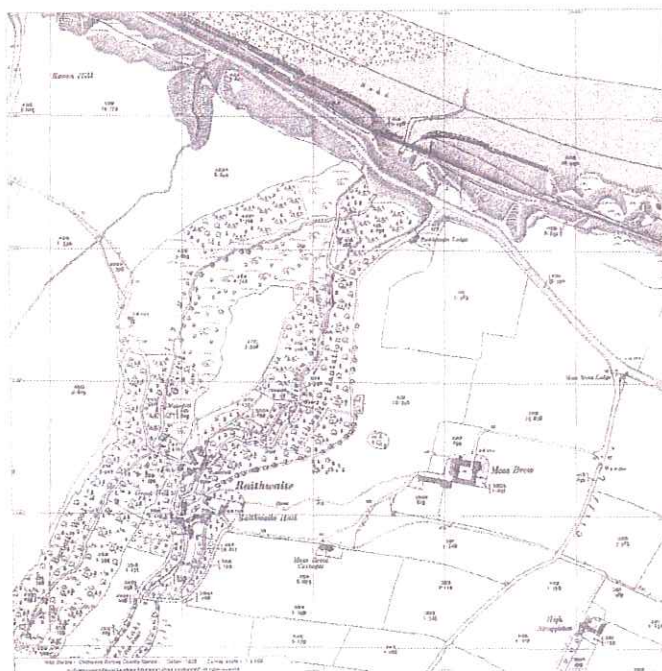
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LANDMARK
Historical Maps

Landmark Historical Map
Published Date(s): 1914
Originally plotted at: 1:10,560

1914 Ordnance Survey Map





1928 Ordnance Survey Map

The Hall is predominantly Edwardian in style, though it appears from the O.S. information that there has been a building on the site at least since the 1850's. The landscape surrounding the proposal site appears little changed since this time, the woodland and clearings forming similar shapes. The stream had been dammed by 1928 to form a lake within the gardens. The groups of trees within the car park site and the half avenue along the access road appear to have been planted during the early part of the last century.

The original access to the site appears to have been via Raven Hill Farm to the north and from Dunholm Lane to the east. The coast road link does not appear until the early 1900's. Along with this connection is the introduction of a rail link along the coast that can be seen on the 1914 map and an improved coast road in the 1920's. The rail link has now disappeared and forms part of the route of the Cleveland Way.

1.4.4 Vegetation

There is extensive established woodland vegetation within the valley. Vegetation further up the valley sides is extensively wind pruned. The land above the incision of the valley is generally open grassland and is mostly used for grazing animals.

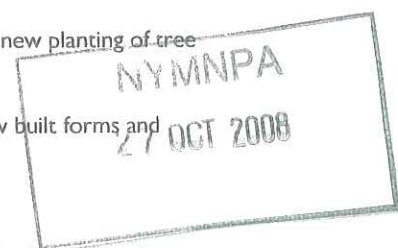
The formal gardens are intricate and well tended. There appears to have been little new planting of tree species in recent times.

Extensive planting is proposed as part of the development to both integrate the new built forms and screen the car parking.

1.4.5 Connectivity

The A174 coast road was generally quiet during the survey work but the surrounding facilities such as car parks and cafes indicate that it may well experience a vast increase in traffic during the summer and holiday periods.

There are several footpaths and bridleways through the site, though there is no public access along the drive, which is secured at the entrance by electrically operated gates.



1.4.6 Natural England Countryside Character Classification

The site falls within Character Area 25 of the Natural England Classification. The key characteristics of this classification are as follows.

- Upland plateau landscape underlain mainly by sandstone and mudstone of Middle Jurassic age and, in the south calcareous sandstone and limestone of Upper Jurassic age, with areas of undulating land arising from deposits of glacial till, sand and gravel.
- Plateaux dissected by a series of dales, often broad and sweeping but with steep sided river valleys in places, floored by Lower Jurassic shales.
- Extensive areas of heather moorland on plateaux and hills, creating a sense of space expansiveness and openness.
- Arable landscape to south and east, but pasture on elevated sweeping plateaux and hills.
- Sparsely settled, with population concentrated in the dales and around the fringes.
- Valley landscapes characterised by predominantly pastoral farming with clear demarcation between the enclosed fields, farms, settlements and the moorland ridges above. The transition is often marked by bracken fringes.
- Panoramic views over moorland ridges, dales, surrounding lowland vales and the sea.
- Extensive areas of coniferous plantations especially on the tabular hills in the south east and Hackness north of Pickering. Remnant areas of predominantly ancient, semi-natural woodland occurring mainly on valley side slopes on escarpments and fringing hills.
- Traditional stone walls hedgerows enclosing fields in the dales and lower fringing farmland – now often replaced by fences.
- Farms and villages built predominantly rubble limestone or dressed sandstone with red pantile or slate roofs.
- Distinctive and dramatic coastal landscapes with high cliff, small coves and bays, coastal towns and fishing villages.
- Rich archaeological heritage from many different periods especially on the high moorland plateaux.

Though the site is located very close to the coast there are generally very limited views of the sea. The character of the site generally feels much more inland than is actually the case.

1.4.7 Summary

There would be almost no change to the character of the surrounding area. The site is extremely discrete and well contained within its valley location. There would also be limited change to the landscape character of the site itself. The development of the Hall buildings would be sympathetic to the estate landscape and the associated planting would tie the proposals into the existing formal gardens and other landscape elements.

The introduction of a new car parking area would be balanced with the establishment of a substantial band of native tree planting that would tie into the existing woodland lower down the slopes.

The effect of the proposals would therefore have a **moderate beneficial impact** due to the improvement of the hall buildings and the integration of ancillary facilities such as the car parking into the existing landscape.



1.5 Visual Amenity

Figure 02 Viewpoint locations shows where each viewpoint is situated in relation to the site. It also shows viewpoints that were visited but where views of the site could not be seen, either because of the undulating landform or screening vegetation.

The visual survey was carried out and the extent and nature of the views and the contribution made by the existing site was recorded. The photographs are representative of the views experienced from each viewpoint, however they should not be considered as a substitute to visiting the viewpoint in the field.

1.5.1 Viewpoint 1 – Entrance to the Estate from Sandsend Road (A174), Cleveland Way National Trail, Public Car Park & Golf Course



The entrance to the estate is located off the A174 the coast road between Whitby and Skelton further north along the coast. The Cleveland Way national trail also follows the road at this point. The visual receptor is defined as **high sensitivity** as the route is used as a national trail by walkers, as a scenic route along the coast, as a stopping point, and for recreation (golf).

The entrance to the site is enclosed by electrically operated gates and marked by a lodge building. The entrance is located to the lower side of the valley cut by the Dunsley and Newholm Becks which flow into the sea on the opposite side of the main road.

Neither the Hall nor the proposed parking area can be seen from this point. Both sections of the site are screened by the landform, (i.e. the valley sides) and the associated woodland.

Therefore from this viewpoint, there would be **no change**.



1.5.2 Viewpoint 2 – Moss Brow Farm



View from proposed car park site



View from access road only behind Moss Brow

This former farm complex has been converted into what appears to be mainly holiday lets. There are no public footpaths directly to the complex. The sensitivity of this view point is classed as **moderate sensitivity** as the property does not appear to be permanently residential.



The buildings are located on the high point of the valley sides with extensive views of the surrounding coast. Windows facing the site are either Velux roof windows or very small openings that appear to be for bathrooms.

There are also gardens to the properties that have an aspect towards the site. There are clear views down into the car park section of the site but these are from the access track behind the property only. Views from the gardens are screened by the brow of the valley side.

Visitors using the track to access the nearby footpath to Raithwaite and Whitby would get clear views down into the car park. Windows in the property appear to be very small or roof level, and are likely to provide no views into the site. It was not possible to assess views from the courtyard area of the property.

The introduction of cars into the visual scene would give rise to a **moderate negative impact** (mainly from the track), in the short term until the screen vegetation became effective. In the longer term this would reduce to a **minor negative/ neutral impact**.

1.5.3 Viewpoint 3 – 2no Cottages between Raithwaite Hall and Moss Brow.



View from access track up to receptor

Like Moss Brow, these two cottages are located on the crest of the valley side. The properties are residential and therefore are classed as being of **high sensitivity**.

From the access road to these properties there are clear views into the proposed car park site as described for the viewpoint above. The front of the property is set back from the ridge sufficiently for the landform to screen views directly into the proposal site. The above photo illustrates that views are however likely from the upper windows of the properties.

The introduction of cars into the visual scene would give rise to a **moderate negative impact** (views are limited to the access track only), in the short term until the screen vegetation became effective. In the longer term this would reduce to a **minor negative/ neutral impact**.

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1.5.4 Viewpoint 4 – Lakeside Cottage



View towards site from gates to Lakeside Cottage

This property is located within the estate to the southwest of the Hall in the valley bottom adjacent to the lake and alongside a bridleway. This property is residential and is therefore classed as being of **high sensitivity**.

There are very limited views of the Hall buildings through the existing vegetation.

There will be some alteration to the view of the Hall buildings and the built form will be brought forward towards this property. The form of the building will be reconstructed and the built element facing this view will be integrated into the existing formal gardens with planting to a roof garden.

The proposals will have a **moderate beneficial impact** on the view due to the improvement to the hall buildings and integration into the formal gardens.



1.5.5 Viewpoint 5 – Home Farm Holiday Cottages



View from Gardeners Cottage

The collection of buildings immediately north west of the hall known as Home Farm have been converted to holiday lets and accommodation for the site gardener. The property facing the hall is the gardener’s cottage. As a group, the properties are classed as being of **moderate to high sensitivity**.

Most of the cottages do not have views of the Hall or car parking area. The properties with south west facing windows however do have clear views of the Hall buildings and garages.

The views of the Hall will change as the building is extended and the elevations are repropotioned. The garage buildings between these properties will be renovated and converted into bedrooms for the hotel including small terraced areas to the rear.

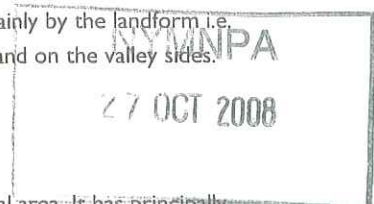
The proposals will generally have a **moderate beneficial impact** on the view due to the improvements to the elevation of the Hall and garage buildings despite a slight possible loss of privacy to the garden areas on the south west elevation of the group.

1.5.6 Viewpoint 6 – Raven Hill Farm

Raven Hill Farm is located on the brow of the northern ridge above Raithwaite Gill approximately 1/2km away. The property is a working farm with attached holiday cottages. As a group the properties are classed as being of **high to moderate sensitivity**.

There are no views of the proposal site from this location due to screening mainly by the landform i.e. the development being towards the bottom of the valley, and from the woodland on the valley sides.

Therefore from this viewpoint there would be **no change**.



1.5.7 Viewpoint 7 – Sandsend

Sandsend is a settlement located approximately 11km northwest of the proposal area. It has principally developed along the seafront and along two becks that run into the sea at this point. As a settlement of



residential properties some distance away, this viewpoint would be classed as being of **moderate sensitivity**.

The properties are generally located on low ground. Any views of the proposal area are screened by the nature of the landform i.e. all the properties are located within a valley north of the valley containing the proposal site.

Therefore from this viewpoint there would be **no change**.

Viewpoint 8 – Clifff Lane and intersection of footpath to Moss Brow



Cliff Lane is a minor road to the village of Newholm. It is intersected at this point by a footpath running from the caravan park on the edge of Whitby to Raithwaite Hall. Traffic speed is restricted by the narrow road being just wide enough for two vehicles to pass with care.

Generally the viewpoint is of **moderate** sensitivity, (the road being of moderate and the path being of high sensitivity).

The road is contained within a banked hedge. Occasional glimpsed views through gates into the fields are screened by the rising landform to the crest of the valley side. There are no views from the footpath between Moss Brow Farm back to Whitby due to the landform.

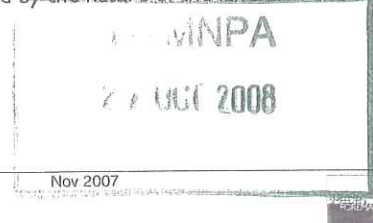
Therefore from this viewpoint there would be **no change**

1.5.8 Viewpoint 9 – Newholm Village

Newholm is a settlement located approximately 1km south of the proposal area. The settlement sits in a sheltered dip at the head of a valley branching into Raithwaite Gill. As a settlement of residential properties some distance away this viewpoint would be classed as being of **moderate sensitivity**.

The properties are within a dip on the generally higher ground above the valleys cut by the surrounding becks. Any views of the proposal area are screened by the nature of the landform and the woodland in the valley.

Therefore from this viewpoint there would be **no change**.



1.5.9 Viewpoint 10 – Dunsley Village

Dunsley is a settlement located approximately 1.2km south west of the proposal area. The village sits on fairly high ground above the valley sides. As a settlement of residential properties some distance away, this viewpoint would be classed as being of **moderate sensitivity**.

Any potential views of the proposal site are screened by the thick woodland vegetation within the valley.

Therefore from this viewpoint there would be **no change**.

1.5.10 Viewpoint 11 – Bridleway from Raven Hill Farm

This bridleway runs up from Raithwaite Hall to Raven Hill farm along a track up the valley side. This viewpoint is classed as being of **high sensitivity**.

There are no views into the car park or the Hall site from the track as it runs through the woodland up the valley side. There are some views of the Hall as the path climbs out of the tree line and into the field beyond. There are no views of the car park area due to screening by the existing woodland vegetation on the opposite valley side.

Views of the Hall are long distance and through the existing vegetation and will be improved by the restructuring of the buildings.

The proposals will generally have a **minor beneficial impact** on the view due to the improvements to the elevations of the Hall.

1.5.11 Viewpoint 12 – Bridleway Dunsely road down valley to site.



Lakeside view

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View from drive

This bridleway runs from the Dunsley road down into the valley alongside Lakeside Cottage and along the drive to the Hall. As a bridleway this viewpoint is of **high sensitivity**.

There are no views of the proposal all the way down the track or past the lake until the path reaches the Lakeside Cottage and the drive. Views are generally restricted by the existing vegetation and are of the Hall building only.

The proposals will have a **moderate beneficial impact** on the view due to the improvement to the hall buildings and their integration into the formal gardens.



1.5.12 Viewpoint 12 – Footpath from the lake to Moss Brow Farm.



View from footpath behind gardens



View from footpath behind Hall.

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View into car parks site form footpath.

The footpath runs from behind the gardens where it is contained by a hedgerow around the back of the gardens up behind the Hall on to the edge of Moss Brow Farm and on to Whitby. This viewpoint is classed as being of **high sensitivity**.

There are clear views of the Hall site across the gardens over the adjacent hedge. The path runs very close to the rear of the building as it climbs up the valley side. As the path climbs up towards the cottages on the way to Moss Brow, views open up of the car park site.

The introduction of cars into the visual scene would, in the short term until the screen vegetation became effective, be a **high negative impact** from this viewpoint.

Views of the Hall would change but would be improved and integrated into the formal gardens, therefore the proposals will have a **moderate beneficial impact** on the view of the Hall site.

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1.6 Conclusion & Mitigation

This appraisal illustrates that there would be minor change to the overall character of the site. Any change would be mostly beneficial, The Hall buildings would be improved and there would be new planting to integrate the new structures into the grounds. The changes to the access road are the key element with the introduction of the car parking alongside the upper section of the drive. The impact of the car parking will decrease over time as the associated planting becomes increasingly effective.

All views into the site are generally restricted to viewpoints within the valley of Rathwaite Gill. Views of the Hall site would be improved, as the current building is in a poor state and a strange mix of architectural styles. Views into the car park site would be significantly altered (though only from one main viewpoint on the valley side), at least in the short term until the proposed native planting has established.

The proposals include extensive planting proposals. Ornamental planting around the Hall site is proposed to integrate the development into the existing formal gardens. There are also detailed proposals for the screening and integration of the car parking area into the site. These proposals include the planting of native tree species and wildflower seeding.

