YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

CAPITA SYMONDS

PENNINE BRIDLEWAY – SELSIDE ALTERNATIVE ROUTE AND FARMOOR BRIDGE

Supplementary Information Relating to Landscape and Visual Impacts

For

Yorkshire Dales National Park

By

Capita Symonds

Date	Version	Written by	Checked by
10-02-09	Final Rev0	KM	DC
11-02-09	Final Rev 1	KM	
12-02-09	Final Rev 2	KM	

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This supplementary report has been prepared in support of the planning application for the proposed development of a new section of public bridleway in Ribblesdale at Far Moor Common. This new bridleway follows a route across open access land and the River Ribble, between the B6479 near Selside and the lane to High Birkwith and involves the construction of a new crossing of the River Ribble. The bridleway, once constructed, will form part of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail.

1.2 The report will provide elements of:

- Clarification in relation to the information already submitted for consideration by the planning authority
- Additional information requested to help the authority judge the merits of the application
- A summary of the key factors affecting the landscape and visual impacts of the proposals and the measure taken by the applicant to mitigate any negative impacts.
- A summary of the benefits of the scheme

2.0 Landscape evidence already submitted

2.1 This report is a supplemental to the following reports:

- Ref 10a. Morley K (2008) Pennine Bridleway – Selside Section. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the Yorkshire Dales National Park (Track). Capita Symonds

- Ref 10b. Morley K (2008) Pennine Bridleway – Selside Section. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the Yorkshire Dales National Park (Bridge). Capita Symonds

these have been submitted in support of the planning application, previously. A number of points have been clarified in relation to these earlier reports as follows:

- It is confirmed that the Planning Policy Statement consulted in the preparation of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments was PPS 7 *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas – 2004* and not *PPG 7* as was mistakenly referenced in one part of the assessment document.

- It is confirmed that earthworks to be undertaken during the construction of the track or bridge will be the excavation of the ground to accommodate the bridge's concrete abutments and a small short section of 'cut and fill' to the north east of the bridge site to allow access to the site by plant and avoid the finished route traversing steep

ground. A detailed drawing showing cross sections and cut and fill details has been submitted with this report (see proposed route profile drawing CS-27503A-16-1FP). The proposed earth works are described in more detail later in this report.

3.0 Landscape Context for the Proposal

3.1 A great deal of thought has been given to the siting of the bridleway and the character of the river crossing in the vicinity of Selside from a landscape perspective. This is to ensure that it has the minimum impact possible, and the design of the bridge and track are sensitive to the landscape setting.

3.2 Section 4 of ref 10b provides a breakdown of the landscape character of this part of Ribblesdale, based on the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Landscape Character Assessment. The dominant landscape characteristic is the distinctive rounded drumlin landforms, with river cut slopes edging the river flood plain. There is an absence of tree cover in the immediate bridge site setting, but some sparse tree cover around near-by river cut drumlin slopes of Far Moor, and also occasionally up stream along the river bank, within inbye land.

3.3 Alternative sites to the north and south were considered for the bridge, but the site at Far Moor offers the best 'landscape fit' given the limited visibility of the bridge, and sensitive siting in relation to the local topography. The topography of a possible site to the north (the original route proposed by the Secretary of State) is flat and has an open aspect, and whilst there are a few riverbank trees that would screen the bridge, a bridge at this site would be highly visible from the east bank and flanks of Pen-y-Ghent. Any sites for a possible river crossing to the south were unsuitable because of the difficulty in finding a bridleway link through, connecting this area into the proposed route of the national trail. By contrast the route across the River Ribble at Far Moor Common has much to commend it. The bridge site takes best advantage of the local topography and setting of surrounding drumlin's, such that they form a backdrop to views of the bridge from the south and east, and screen the bridge from view from many possible vantage points to the north and west. For example when traversing the proposed bridleway the bridge only comes into view along the proposed bridleway at close range (see map of bridge visibility from the proposed bridleway route Ref 10b page 5.3).

3.4 Appendix 2 of Ref 10b Zone the Theoretical Visibility Map (based on 1m height resolution) demonstrates the limited visibility and points of theoretical views. However, from selected viewpoints 'in the field' (see photographs that follow) the actual views of the bridge appear more limited. This is because views are partially constrained by the topography, and the bridge will be constructed in wood, so the weathered colour of the bridge, greyish/brown, blends well with the colour of the surrounding unimproved rough pasture, making the bridge harder to pick out against this background.

4.0 The proposal

(a) The bridge

4.1 The form of the bridge is a series of 3 arches, set asymmetrically, so that it utilises the local ground levels and reflects the asymmetry of the immediate landforms. The bridge has been designed to accommodate the significant drop in levels from one bank of the river Ribble crossing point to the other, (this accounts for it's asymetrical design). In terms of scale the bridge is approximately 50m linear length and the deck is 5m high above average river level. The drumlin to the west of the bridge is approximately 16m in height. (See drawing CS_27503A_17_1FP for details of the contour information in the immediate vicinity of the route).

4.2 As previously stated the bridge has been designed to accommodate the difference in levels between the two banks at the point where the route crosses the Ribble. This ensures that no changes to the existing levels will be made during the installation of the bridge. The abutments with two flat platforms will need to be made to accommodate the landing pads at both ends of the bridge whilst this will require some minor re-grading, earth movement will be minimal. (See Drawing No CS/027503a/16/IFP which illustrates the minimal impact the bridge will have on its immediate environment).

4.3 Appendix 3 of Ref 10b showed a photomontage of the proposed bridge looking downstream. An additional photo montage is now attached to this document (See Drawing No CS/027503a/1). This photomontage illustrates the view looking north at the bridge from down stream. The view clearly shows how the multiple arched design reflects the smooth rounded form of the surrounding landscape and facilitates the change in level between one bank and the other. The connection to the drumlins, especially on the western side of the river helps to anchor the bridge firmly in its locality while the bridge can be seen largely with a backdrop of the surrounding land form. The muted colours of the timber used to construct the bridge clearly marry well with the rough grassland around it. (It has not been possible to produce further photomontages of the site from a more distant setting, because of the landforms and size of the structure make it difficult to see).

(b) The route

4.4 The majority of the new route will follow existing ground levels. The design of the route is such that it closely follows existing contours to achieve a sympathetic fit within the landscape through which it travels, ensuring a gradual change in levels where necessary. Minor adjustments in path level will be needed occasionally to accommodate minor localised level changes and to facilitate adequate drainage. It is anticipated these would involve changes in level of no more than 300mm. (Drawing no CS/027503a/16/IFP, shows the route relative to the natural contours of the site).

4.5 The exception to the above is a small area immediately to the north east of the bridge site. Here the natural topography precludes the creation of a

suitable multi user track due to the sudden change in levels and the resulting steep gradients. There is no option to route the track around this obstacle, but instead it will be necessary to create a ramp of a suitable gradient. The maximum gradient recommended for a rural bridleway is 1 in 12 and the proposed ramp would conform to this specification. The ramps would be of a cut and fill construction which will limit the amount of material removed from the upper slope by using the material excavated to raise the ground level between the base of the slope and the stone wall adjacent to the river. Pipes incorporated into the path construction will ensure the hydrological flows in the area are not impeded. The design of the ramps will ensure that the ramp marries in with adjacent slopes in smooth flowing lines and the side slopes to the ramps will be of a gradient to match the existing adjacent slopes. The resulting side slopes will be re-vegetated as soon as constructed with turves set aside from the stripping of the area before construction starts. (See drawing no CS/027503a/16/IFP for details).

(c) Design of the route in relation to existing topography.

4.6 To facilitate easy understanding of the route design and its relationship to the topography of the land over which it passes a drawing (no CS/027503a/17/IFP) has been created to show the original submitted General Arrangement plan (drawing no CS/027503a/2/IFP) overlaid onto a contour map of the area. This drawing clearly illustrates the connection between route selected and the local topography, with the path following contours and winding its way between drumlins. Any changes to this rational are to avoid obstacles such as sink holes or to follow existing landscape features such as the remnant lane to the east of the B6479 or the existing farm track from Dale Mire Barn to High Birkwith lane.

5.0 Landscape Setting

5.1 The following sections represent a summary of the key points of landscape and visual impact in relation to the scheme and how the careful design of both the route and the bridge mitigates these potential impacts.

(a) Local landscape setting (within 500m)

5.2 The potential landscape and visual impact of the bridge and track are greatest within the immediate landscape around the bridge and along the route of the track. The bridge will largely be seen by users of the route. A clear view of the bridge will be obtained from approximately 50m along the track approaching in either direction.

5.3 Both the bridge and the tracks have been designed to mitigate the severity of this impact through:

- Carefully routing the track along the contours especially when traversing the slopes of drumlins, avoiding straight runs of path and responding to localised landscape features such as shake holes and utilising existing tracks where possible (i.e. the section east of the B6479 and the track from Dale Mire barn to High Birkwith lane)
- Careful siting of the bridge crossing within the drumlin field which provides opportunities for creating a sympathetic setting of an appropriate scale along with the screening of distance views. In particular the drumlin on the western bank of the river at the crossing point provides a visual anchor for the bridge, whilst the higher ground to the east provides extensive screening.
- The careful selection of construction materials to provide a sympathetic visual appearance which marries well with the muted colours of the surrounding rough grassland. Both the timber selected for the bridge construction and the local aggregate to be used to build the track will weather over time to further reduce any impact. Revegetation of disturbed ground caused by the construction activities and of the track itself will be a priority for the maintenance programme for the bridleway. The team involved has extensive experience of achieving results as quickly as possible.
- While the track and bridge will be new features in this local landscape they are a familiar and common feature of the wider rural landscape. Those receptors who will be using the route for recreational purposes will expect to encounter such elements in their landscape experience.

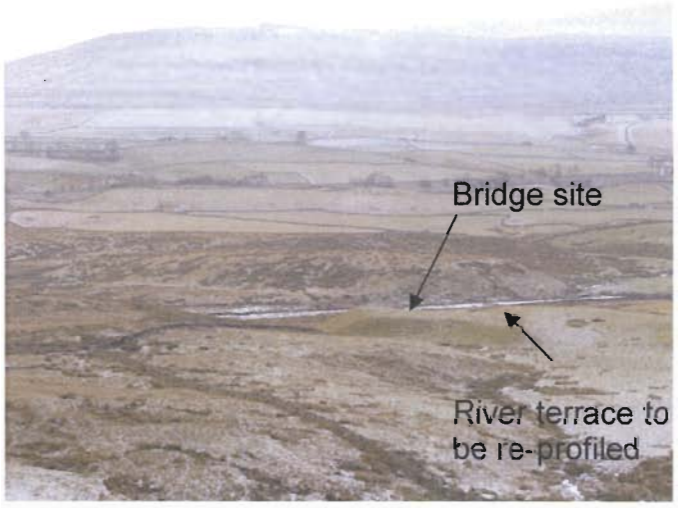
The bridge site, showing the change in levels and terrace running around the flank of the drumlin,

A more distant view from downstream showing the full height of the drumlin to the west, and rising land to the east

(b) Mid range landscape setting (500m – 2km)

5.4 Middle distance views will in general be from an elevated perspective, distance will start to lessen the impact of the proposals, however the following design decisions have been taken to mitigation any adverse impacts:

- The siting of the route and the bridge crossing amongst the drumlin field of the valley floor which provides a steeply undulating topography means that views of the bridge and track are partial glimpses from occasional viewpoints. The bridge is always seen against a backdrop of drumlins or rising ground. The surrounding topography and the fact that middle distance view will generally be from a higher elevation will firmly root the bridge in its landscape setting as well as giving a scale reference.
- The track will have a low profile and views will generally be oblique and partial, people on the route will be most visible. Material choice in terms of sub base and the revegetation of the verges and track surface after construction will reduce any residual impact.
- The design of the bridge to reflect the smooth rounded form of the surrounding drumlins will avoid a discordant element in the landscape which would attract attention. The materials used in its construction are natural and of a nature to blend with the surrounding landscape.
- Both the tracks and bridge are elements which the viewer would expect to encounter in a rural landscape setting.



The change in levels can be picked out, and the natural terrace on the west bank

From this perspective, the bridge site is screened by the surrounding drumlins

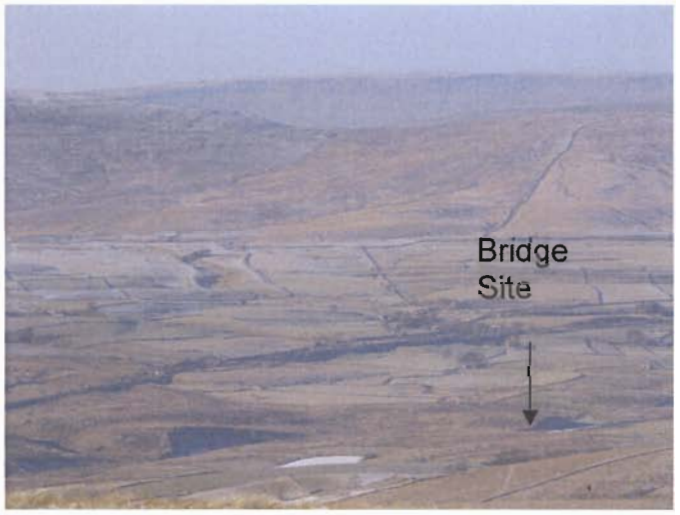
Note shadow of drumlin also colour of vegetation

(c) Wider Landscape setting (2 – 5km)

5.5 Longer distance views tend to be from the high ground of the valley sides and ridges.Therefore the extent of the track and proportion of the bridge that are visible are likely to be greater. However, at the distances involved the perception of detail is limited and the wider landscape context tend to be more dominant. In views from important high ground such as Pen-y-Ghent, although the bridge and track may be visible, it is likely that the bridge/track would be barely discernible in the context of the broad undulating dale floor and the proposed bridge/track would not draw the attention of the viewer.

Mitigation factors considered:

- Colour and backdrop are most important at this distance and again the choice of material will ensure the proposed works blend well with their surroundings



View from high ground to the east of the bridge site (Note shadow of drumlin)

View from Pen y Ghent (Note shadow of drumlin)

6.0 Benefits of the scheme

6.1 As can be seen from the supporting information submitted with the application, the proposed Pennine Bridleway and this particular section of it, have considerable benefits for both the local community and visitors to the area. In summary these are:

- Provides an obvious linear route through an area of CroW Act open access land, thereby minimising the impact of users on the ecology of the site
- Provides for sustainable travel and access to and through a high quality landscape
- The bridleway will add economic value to local communities
- The route will encourage visitors and residents to explore and experience an attractive area of river landscape in Upper Ribblesdale.

6.2 The main mitigation of the scheme, having regard to the landscape impact is the carefully siting and the fact that the size and scale of the proposal, are less than that normally recommended by the British Horse Society, and this relaxation has been agreed at a local level in direct recognition of the sensitivity of the site.

Appendix 1 – Fig CS/027503a/1 - View of bridge from down stream