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REFERENCES
Northamptonshire County Council Interactive Mapping
http://www.mrenvironmentalcharacter.org.uk/data/4.%20CLCA.pdf
Bedford Borough Council Interactive Mapping
www.magic.gov.uk
www.bing.com/maps

ISSUE INFORMATION
First draft issued 5.6.18
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Colvin & Moggridge have been instructed by Dallol Energy Ltd, planning agent on behalf of Energy Roots Ltd, the applicant and developer of the site at Upper Higham Lane, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire, NN10 0SU to prepare a Visual Appraisal in support of an application for planning permission for a Plastics to Liquid Fuel Recycling Facility.

1.2 The site already has planning consent granted (ref :16/00020/WAS/FUL).

1.3 This report addresses the landscape effects of the proposed facility.

1.4 There is no public access to the land. The nearest public routes are shown on Figure 2: Landscape Designations and Public Rights of Way.

1.5 The proposal is for new construction to house the plant and process and is situated on previously developed land within the boundary of the site and the development is known as the Plastic Recycling Facility.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 This Landscape Appraisal is guided by the publication "Assessment Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment" (Third Edition) IEMA/LI 2013.

2.2 The appraisal has comprised both desktop study of landscape designations and published landscape assessments and field study to gain information on the character, sensitivity and potential of the study area to accommodate the proposed development. Scoping of representative viewpoints, VSI visibility analysis and verified views/photomontage and landscape character appraisal were not requested.

2.3 The site was visited on 24th and 30th May 2018 to walk the site of the proposed facility and local footpaths and bridleways to establish the visual envelope. Weather conditions were poor on the morning of the 24th, becoming clear, bright and sunny in the afternoon. On the 30th, the weather was overcast. The photographs were taken with a digital camera using a focal length equivalent to a 50mm lens on a 35mm SLR film camera.

3.0 EXISTING LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL RESOURCE

Study area

3.1 The study area has largely been determined by the anticipated visibility of the proposed facility. Theoretical visibility covers an inaccurately wide area when determined by topography alone. In reality it is a combination of the lie of the land, intervening vegetation (mature woodland, clumps of mature trees, hedgerows and roadside tree belts) and buildings that significantly reduce the extent of visibility of the proposed development. Visibility from public rights of way and private houses is illustrated on Figure 8.

Landscape designations

3.2 There are no local, regional or national landscape designations upon the site. Designated landscape areas near to the study area are shown on Figure 2.

Topography

3.3 The site is located in flat/gently undulating countryside at between 85 and 90mOD in landscape which reaches a maximum of 100mOD. It lies on the northwest side of the plateau ridge orientated southeast-northwest lying between Yelden and Newton Bromswold to the east and Caldecott, Chelveston and Higham Ferrers to the west. (Figure 3 – Topography).

Site features and land use

3.4 Access to the site, ‘Upper Higham Industry’, is gained from Upper Higham Lane to the south, at 90mOD. Existing site features and land use are shown on Figures 4 and 5. The wider setting site is characterised by industrial and commercial landuse; the site of the proposed development is currently a rubber recycling plant. The existing buildings comprise of six sheds estimated to be 7.2m high at their apex. There are bunds on the boundary to the north (1.2m height) and to the south (approx. 5m height). The industrial site is surrounded by mixed agricultural land. Chelveston Renewable Energy Park is located approximately 1.5km to the northeast.

Landscape Character Assessments

3.6 The site lies within the Chelveston and Caldecott Claylands Landscape Character Area (Type 9a) in the Current Landscape Character Assessment for Northamptonshire (2003). The key characteristics of this landscape type relevant to this appraisal are:

- expansive, flat or gently undulating landscape where plateau areas are divided by broad shallow valleys;
- wide views give the landscape an expansive and sometimes exposed character;
- open and intensively farmed arable landscape with large scale fields bounded by open ditches or sparse, closely trimmed hedges;
- limited woodland cover and hedgerow removal contributes to open character;
- thinly settled landscape, feeling remote in some particularly sparsely settled areas.

In this expansive landscape vertical features are prominent on the skyline.

4.0 THE PROPOSALS

4.1 As described in the supporting statement by Dallol Energy Ltd. “The approved proposal is for for 0.075Mtpa of waste material to be imported and existing consent for a small waste incinerator and energy pellet plant.” The proposed development changes the process of production and therefore the built environment from the previous application.

4.2 Figures 6 and 7, Dallol drawing number Ch-D-101-031 pages 1 and 2, illustrates the proposed arrangement. Three main buildings dominate, the highest at 29.55m. A chimney stack is the tallest feature at 35m. During periods of extreme weather (ambient temperature of less than 2oC) a short plume of water vapour may be visible above the stack.

4.3 As described in the supporting statement by Dallol Energy Ltd. “The entire site is land designated for industrial and commercial use including waste management developments according to Policy 17 of the Northamptonshire Waste & Minerals Local Plan.”
Chelveston
Landscape
Designations and
Public Rights of Way
PLANNING

Key
BW MM17 Bridleway
FP VC10 Footpath
- Site boundary
- SSSI site
- SSSI Impact
- Risk Zones

Figure 2
05/06/18

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Key

- Site boundary
- Photographs shown in figure 5

Figure 4

Existing Site Features

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LS

44 (0)1367 860225

Line of conifers (approx. 16m high)

Sheds (7.2m high at apex)

Cranes (extend to 28m height)

Site boundary

Photographs shown in figure 5

Figure 4

Existing Site Features

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Line of conifers (approx. 16m high)

Sheds (7.2m high at apex)

Cranes (extend to 28m height)

Site boundary

Photographs shown in figure 5
1. Looking W along Upper Higham Lane
2. Entrance gate from Upper Higham Lane
3. Looking E along Upper Higham Lane

4. View from the entrance gate looking N across the proposed development site

5. View looking N towards neighbouring industrial businesses

6. View looking N over bund (from the N side of the proposed development site)

7. View looking NE from the site

**FIGURE 5 - EXISTING SITE PHOTOGRAPHS**
8. and 9. Existing buildings on the proposed development site

10. View looking SE towards the Caldecott to Newton Bromswold road from the proposed development site

11. View looking S from the proposed development site

12. View looking S towards the entrance

FIGURE 5 - EXISTING SITE PHOTOGRAPHS (continued)
FIGURE 6 - PROPOSED SITE PLAN
FIGURE 7 - PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
Figure 8

Chelveston

Site visibility and representative viewpoints

PLANNING

Not to scale

05/06/18

Figure 8

Colvin & Moggridge: Chelveston - visual appraisal DRAFT

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5.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

5.1 The study area for the visual assessment is largely defined by the locally undulating topography, hedges, hedgerow trees and roadside tree belts that restrict views of the proposed development site. Site visibility is shown on Figure 8. Figure 8 also identifies the location of houses that could have views of the proposed development. Actual views from these houses could not be ascertained but site survey suggests that there may be intervisibility between them and the proposed development.

5.2 To help appraise the visual effects of the proposed development the height of features near to the development site were ascertained. The conifer hedge 8 metres to the west of the proposed buildings was measured to be approximately 16m tall and we were informed the height of a crane on the adjacent site was 28m tall at a ground level approximately 3m lower than the centre of the development site. We understand that at least one crane is always erected.

5.3 The viewpoints chosen are representative of views that will be gained from public rights of way at various orientations to, and distances from, the site. The viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 8.

5.4 Commentary on the views and the effect of the proposal on completion is described next to each viewpoint photograph on the photo sheets that follow.
A mature hedge along the field boundary mostly screens the site from view but the site can be glimpsed through/over occasional gaps and low points. Cranes, utility poles and power cables are already visible through these glimpsed views. The proposed buildings will be set behind existing vegetation. Views are oblique to the direction of travel. Overall the proposed development will have a negligible effect on visual amenity.

Houses on the east side of Chelveston Rise lie 600m to the NE of the proposed development site. Oblique views of the proposed development site will be gained from the first floor of house numbers 2, 4, 6 and 8 but views from ground floor living rooms are screened by a hedge along the southern boundary of the properties and will not be affected by the proposed structures. A hedge on the opposite side of the road mostly screens the site from the road although there are occasional gaps through which it can be glimpsed: from a car these views are fleeting and likely to be missed.
View 3 (stitched) - View looking NW to site from near the junction at the east end of Upper Higham Lane

The site lies at approximately 220m from the viewpoint to the rear of the Haunds Booster Pumping Station. The proposed development will occupy the site of the fire-damaged sheds to the right of the pumping station and, though bedded in vegetation, will overtop the conifers to the left. Taking into account the foreground development, the existing industrial character and vertical elements and the transient nature of the view, the proposed development is anticipated to have a minor adverse effect on visual amenity which could be reduced by establishment of trees along the east boundary of the site and around the pumping station.

View 4 (stitched) - View looking SE from Upper Higham Lane

Over a length of approximately 1km the proposed development site can frequently be seen from Upper Higham Lane when travelling southeast. The proposed buildings will be screened to a height of approximately 15m by vegetation along the west site boundary but the taller building will rise 5m above it and the chimney stack 20m and will be a strong vertical feature on the skyline. The adverse visual effect is moderated to an extent by the other man-made vertical features on the skyline - the turbines and cranes, and, taking into account this is a view normally experienced at speed, it is anticipated the proposed development will have a minor adverse effect overall.
Footpath VC9 both crosses open fields and runs adjacent to field boundary hedges. This representative viewpoint – which is oblique to the direction of travel - lies 1.3km from the site. The turbines are just visible on the skyline and the proposed chimney stack will also be visible in the area indicated. At this distance and within this expansive view, the proposed built development will have negligible effect on visual amenity.

Where field boundary hedges lie along the north side of Footpath VC9 the proposed development site is screened from view and the walker’s interest is focussed on the direction of travel or more open views to the south. There are occasional gaps in these hedges which draw the eye northwards. In this representative viewpoint, 800m from the site, the proposed development will be visible to the right of the cranes and turbines and although mostly screened by existing vegetation the taller building and the chimney stack will break the skyline. The stack will be seen in the context of other vertical structures and overall, given the incidental nature of this type of view, the proposed built development is anticipated to have a minor adverse effect on visual amenity.
Walking NW the proposed development site will come into view in the area indicated where the conifers at the site entrance can be seen low on the skyline. The view is oblique to the direction of travel and at this distance (1km) and within this view dominated by the foreground field and trees on the skyline, it is anticipated that the proposed built development will have negligible effect on visual amenity.

This viewpoint is representative of the view NW looking from the road between Newton Bromswold and Yelden. The site is at a distance of approximately 2km and whilst the other proposed buildings will be screened by intervening vegetation, the chimney stack will be glimpsed when travelling southeast. The view is oblique to the direction of travel and at this distance and within the expansive setting, it is anticipated that the proposed built development will have negligible effect on the visual amenity of road users.
View 9 (stitched) - View looking W to site from footpath 28 (route with public access)

This route with public access extends from Yelden east then northeast towards Chelveston, south of the Chelveston Renewable Energy Park. The proposed buildings will come into view at an elevation of approximately 85mOD, breaking the skyline. At this viewpoint, in the context of an expansive view, built development on the skyline will have a minor adverse effect on visual amenity.

View 10 (stitched) - View looking W to site from footpath 28 (route with public access)

The proposed development site is seen intermittently along footpath 28 when travelling northwest. From this viewpoint the proposed development site can be clearly seen from a distance of 600m. The existing industrial character of the site and adjacent businesses is also evident. The proposed development will be fully visible with the tallest building and the chimney stack breaking the skyline and it is considered that this will cause a moderate adverse effect on visual amenity. Tree planting along the north and east of the proposed development site is recommended to provide some screening and set the new development amongst trees.
Footpath UK4 was walked and for most of its length the proposed development site was obscured by a combination of topography and intervening vegetation. At this viewpoint, which is 2.5km from the site, the site can be seen from the direction of travel and the proposed building and chimney stack will be visible on the skyline. Seen within the context of the wind turbines and the skyline trees it is considered the proposed built development will have negligible effect on visual amenity.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The visual appraisal illustrates that the proposed development will not be widely visible from public rights of way or private houses. Although it is a predominantly open agricultural landscape with a lot of large-scale fields, there is sufficient intervening established field boundary vegetation, mature spinneys and shelterbelt or screen planting to reduce the potential visibility of the development. Where public rights of way lie in one of the broad shallow valleys that divide the plateau the views of the site can be blocked by topography alone.

6.2 As the viewpoint photographs illustrate, views towards the proposed development site often include the wind turbines (125m height, base to blade tip) on the Chelveston Renewable Energy Park and the cranes on the site adjacent to the proposed development. These vertical elements are prominent in the open, gently undulating landscape but they will provide a context for the most prominent element of the proposed development, the 35m chimney stack, which will reduce its visual effect.

6.3 Site intervisibility reveals that the houses on the east side of Chelveston Rise, nearest the main road do have oblique views of the industrial site but this is from first floor windows. It is common practice to consider the effects on views from ground floor living spaces only: given the ground floor level of the houses is below the main road to the south and that currently the garden boundaries are hedged to a height that screens ground floor windows from view, it is not expected that the proposed development will affect ground floor views.

6.4 In most views the proposal will benefit from existing vegetation to at least partially screen the proposed buildings and bed them into the landscape. Additional tree planting is recommended along the east and south side of the development site and, if possible, immediately to the rear of the Haunds Booster Pumping Station. This planting is unlikely to substantially reduce the visibility of the chimney stack but will grow to help conceal its associated buildings and in particular improve the view from Bridleway 28 (Viewpoint 10).

6.5 It is the conclusion of this appraisal that the visual effects of the proposed construction are quite localised and in the context of the existing site use and prominent vertical constructions within the wider landscape, the proposed development will have a small adverse effect on visual amenity.