

## **Review of Landscape and Visual Aspects**

### **Addendum Materials dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016**

of the Planning Application by

IDI Gazeley

Hybrid Planning Application comprising: 1) Outline application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 427,200 sq m Storage and Distribution (B8) with ancillary offices (B1a), up to 3,700 sq m for a Logistics Institute of Technology (D1) with associated playing field, up to 9,000 sq m small business space (B1a, B1b), up to 300 sq m estate office with conference facility and exhibition centre (D1), the creation of a Country Park, other open space and landscaping works on land to the north of Mere Lane, formation of access road from Magna Park, creation of roundabouts, partial realignment of Mere Lane, upgrading of A5 to dual carriageway, creation of roundabout access on A5, creation of SuDS facilities and associated infrastructure and landscaping works (siting, extent and use of the defined parcels, the maximum quanta and height of buildings, the restriction on the siting of yards, demolitions and means of access to be considered only); and 2) Detailed application for the creation of a 140 space HGV parking facility, associated gatehouse and HGV Driver Training Centre, vehicle wash and fuelling facilities, and a rail freight shuttle terminal, with associated hardstanding, landscaping works and SUDS facilities on land adjacent to Asda George Headquarters, A4303 | Land At Mere Lane Bittesby Leicestershire

Land at Mere Lane,  
Bittesby,  
Leicestershire

Planning Application: 15/01531/OUT & 15/01531/FUL

on behalf of

Harborough District Council

September 2016

Quality Control

Review of Addendum to Landscape and Visual aspects of

Storage and distribution centre (B8) with ancillary B1(a) offices and logistics institute (D1) and 140 space HGV parking facility, associated gatehouse and HGV Driver Training Centre on land adjoining and linked to Magna Park  
Land at Mere Lane, Bittesby, Leicestershire

Planning Application: 15/01531/OUT and 15/01531/FUL

Checked by Project Manager:	Approved by:
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Date: 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2016	Date: 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2016

The Landscape Partnership is registered with the Landscape Institute, the Royal Town Planning Institute, and is a member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report has been prepared by The Landscape Partnership (TLP) for Harborough District Council (HDC) to review the Addendum submissions of April 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 related to landscape and visual matters in relation to a hybrid planning application 01531/OUT, a proposal by IDI Gazeley comprising:

1) Outline application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 427,200 sq m Storage and Distribution (B8) with ancillary offices (B1a), up to 3,700 sq m for a Logistics Institute of Technology (D1) with associated playing field, up to 9,000 sq m small business space (B1a, B1b), up to 300 sq m estate office with conference facility and exhibition centre (D1), the creation of a Country Park, other open space and landscaping works on land to the north of Mere Lane, formation of access road from Magna Park, creation of roundabouts, partial realignment of Mere Lane, upgrading of A5 to dual carriageway, creation of roundabout access on A5, creation of SuDS facilities and associated infrastructure and landscaping works (siting, extent and use of the defined parcels, the maximum quanta and height of buildings, the restriction on the siting of yards, demolitions and means of access to be considered only); and

2) Detailed application for the creation of a 140 space HGV parking facility, associated gatehouse and HGV Driver Training Centre, vehicle wash and fuelling facilities, and a rail freight shuttle terminal, with associated hardstanding, landscaping works and SUDS facilities on land adjacent to Asda George Headquarters, A4303 on land adjacent to Mere Lane, Bittesby near the Lutterworth, Leicestershire.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to review the submitted Addendum materials in relation to landscape and visual matters in relation to their sufficiency, the judgements made on the level of impact and the resultant acceptability of the scheme in landscape and visual terms.

## 2 REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE MATERIALS IN THE ADDENDUM

2.1 This report considers the relevant documents submitted with the application in relation to landscape and visual effects as follows :

- ◆ Clarifications Addendum to the Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual Effects by Nicholas Pearson Associates (NPA) on behalf of IDI Gazeley. This is based on the original submitted hybrid scheme.
- ◆ Update Addendum to the Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual Effects by Nicholas Pearson Associates (NPA) on behalf of IDI Gazeley. This is based on a revision to the scheme involving the retention of Bittesby House.
- ◆ Cover Report and Summary: The Amendment to the Planning Application, Update of the Environmental Statement and Supplemental Information on behalf of IDI Gazeley and associated Amended Submission Plans drawings listed at Appendix 1.

### Clarification Addendum to the Environmental Statement Chapter 9

2.2 This report follows on from a report by TLP produced in March 2016 for the Hybrid application. The applicant's Addendum includes a response to comments made by TLP requesting additional information and also provides a further response to some of the judgements comments made by TLP in their March 2016 report. It is also noted that Section 4 of the Cover Report and Summary produced by IDI Gazeley provides a, 'non-technical' summary of NPA's response to TLP. We will not comment further on this Cover Report below unless it raises any additional issues to those included in the NPA Addendum, see paragraph 2.8.

2.3 The applicants Addendum materials follows the structure of the comments made by TLP in their report of March 2016. We have maintained this structure for consistency as set out in the Table below :

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
<b>Policy and Guidance</b>			
9.2	National and Local Policy	Policy CS8 – Accepted that CS8 is included in section 8.53-57 of the Planning Statement.	None
9.2.20	Designations	Green Belt	None

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
		<p>It is accepted that there is no direct effect on Green Belt or its purposes (including openness, unrestricted sprawl, safeguarding countryside from encroachment) and that 'setting' of Green Belt is not specifically mentioned in the NPPF. However, there may be an indirect effect that could be captured in 'any other harm' (NPPF 88).</p> <p>Para 86 of the NPPF relates to villages/settlements within the Green Belt. This is not the case in the application.</p> <p>TLP accept that no other landscape designations are directly affected as listed in footnote 9 of NPPF para 14. However, the list states 'For example' and is therefore not exhaustive.</p> <p>TLP agree that effects on landscape character from within Rugby BC (also within Green Belt) have been covered in the ES.</p>	
<b>Baseline</b>			
9.4.49	Off-Site planting	Applicant clarified belts are 10-25m wide	None
<b>Construction Effects - Landscape</b>			
9.5. 39-67 9.7.11-14	Upper Soar LCA -low lying clay Vale farmland with gentle ridges landscape type	<p>NPA confirms loss of trees at Bittesby House was included in the original application (ES 9.9.5.45 and 9.5.52). Applicant confirms Photomontages from Viewpoint 7 should have removed existing trees around Bittesby House for the original scheme.</p> <p>The updated photomontages in Addendum from Viewpoint 7 show a reduced tree loss with the retention of Bittesby House but still a notable net loss over the existing tree cover.</p>	None
9.5.68-9.5.92 9.7.15-16	Upper Soar LCA - Soar tributary flat floodplains and terrace	The Addendum response states that in the text the judgement was 'high to medium' susceptibility. TLP's point was that this did not appear to correspond with the 'medium' in Summary Table F.5.1a	Applicant to clarify if it should be 'high to medium' in both text and summary table.
<b>Construction Effects - Visual</b>			

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
<p>9.5. 123 - Table F.5.2a</p> <p>and Residual Effects section 9.7.23</p>	<p>Visual effects during construction</p>	<p>The applicant has provided clarification in relation to differences in judgement raised by TLP:</p> <p><b>Sensitivity</b> for footpath users – value of view lowered by NPA based on existing features in the view (main roads/traffic, Magna Park and disused railway).</p> <p>TLP have some different judgements as follows:</p> <p>TLP consider 4aii, 4c, 9a-c, 13, 14b and 21 = 'Medium' value and not 'Low to Medium'. While there are some adverse features within the view these do not reduce the value on rights of way due to distance and scale of the features.</p> <p>TLP agree that the value is Medium for 4bi-ii</p> <p>TLP agree with 'Medium-low' value for Viewpoint 15 as this is much closer to the A5.</p> <p><b>Magnitude</b> of change.</p> <p>TLP have reconsidered the NPA assessment and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree Magnitude of change at View 5iii = Medium</li> <li>• Agree Magnitude of change at 6ai = Medium to High</li> <li>• Agree Magnitude of change at 6aii = Medium</li> <li>• Agree Magnitude of change at 6aiii = Medium to High</li> <li>• Agree Magnitude of change at 7 = Medium to High</li> <li>• Agree Magnitude of change at 9bii = Medium to High</li> <li>• Agree Magnitude of change at 12 = Medium to High</li> <li>• Agree Magnitude of change at 15 = Medium to High</li> </ul> <p>For Viewpoint 7 while the railway embankment does contain views to the whole site there would still be a notable effect of units and construction on the skyline.</p> <p>The Addendum states that regarding View 9bii that a High magnitude of effect was identified. This does not seem</p>	<p>None.</p> <p>Difference in professional judgement</p> <p>None</p> <p>Clarify</p>

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
		<p>correspond with the summary table where it states it is Medium to High.</p> <p>White House – As previously stated TLP have not viewed the situation from within the property. However, by walking the site in winter it appeared there would be some relatively open albeit oblique views to the end unit L. NPA indicate that planting could now be carried out here at Year 1. This is seen as a benefit and would have 8-10 years to mature. With an appropriate planning condition and scheme in place at Year 1 and with management this should reduce the impact to an acceptable level.</p>	None
<b>Operation Effects and Mitigation</b>			
9.6.3	Avoidance, Reduction and Remedial measures	<p>NPA – propose additional advanced planting for White House Farm at Year 1 by way of a condition.</p> <p>TLP support this approach to reduce the effect on residents of White House Farm. Details and location of the scheme would need agreeing with HDC and potentially the occupants of White Horse Farm if located 'off-site'.</p>	None prior to determination of planning application
<b>Operation Effects and Mitigation</b>			
9.6.56-59 9.7 Residual Effects ( 9.7.52 Appendix F5.3b	Visual effects	<p>TLP note NPAs comments. TLP have reconsidered the NPA assessment and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viewpoint 7 – Agree level of effect Major to Moderate at Short term but not reducing sustainably in medium term due to continued spread of effect and on skyline.</li> <li>• Viewpoint 9b – Disagree that Medium magnitude reducing to Medium to Low. Still consider that High reducing to High to Moderate. This due to the spread of effect on the views.</li> <li>• Viewpoint 12 – Disagree that low to medium in mid-term. Rather High to Low depending on location along route. Thereafter reducing to low to moderate along much of the route.</li> </ul> <p>TLP clarify that significant visual effects are noted in the ES in the mid-term onwards at Viewpoints 4bii, 16a and parts of W92 and W88 including 9a and 9bi.</p>	None.  Difference in professional judgement on some viewpoints remain

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
		<p>TLP consider significant effects would continue in the mid-term from Viewpoints 4bii, 7, 16a, 4cv-vi, 6ai, 7, 9a, 9b and locally on 12 and other parts of W88 and W92.</p> <p>As NPA record the following locations are the main residual differences:  <b>Views 4cv-vi-</b> TLP consider there would be significant effects. However, it is possible these could be considered neutral effects in the mid-term - balancing loss of rural outlook (although views contained by landform) and introduction of built development in the locality of this route with open space enhancements in the medium term onwards.</p> <p><b>View 6ai –</b> This is one of the most elevated views where the extent of the development would be appreciated. The mitigation would reduce the adverse effects over time but TLP consider this will not be sufficient from a location distant from any mitigation and where the built form would break the skyline.</p> <p><b>View 7 –</b> This is a relatively High sensitivity view. TLP accept the Medium to high sensitivity rating but that the magnitude of change is higher than Medium in mid-term remaining at High to Medium and a significant effect at Major to Moderate remains. The retention of Bittesby House and associated vegetation reduces the adverse effects to a degree but does not in TLP’s opinion significantly change the overall quantum of magnitude of change.</p> <p><b>Views 12– Mere Lane –</b> The magnitude of change will vary along Mere Lane. The greatest effects will be at new access points and while planting established. TLP agree that the effects will reduce to Moderate levels of effect by mid-term.</p>	
<b>Residual Effects</b>			

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
9.7.56	Night time effects	<p>NPA have provided a reasonable response to the points a)-d) raised</p> <p>TLP would seek suitable conditions on the type and location of lighting used including in yards, access roads and roundabouts to minimise artificial lighting effects.</p> <p>Playing pitches – noted that lighting is not proposed</p>	None
<b>Cumulative effects – Supplemental Information – 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016</b>			
3.3-3.9 and 3.20	Cumulative Landscape Effects	<p>It is noted that NPA consider there would be a significant cumulative effect (of moderate to major sites) if both the IDI Hybrid application and DB Symmetry are approved and come forward.</p> <p>The comments previously made by TLP relates the way in which the Supplemental Information (Paras 3.3 to 3.9) described adding the DB Symmetry scheme to a situation where the IDI Hybrid seemed to be in place. This is not the approach TLP are used to in assessing cumulative effects. Rather the proposal is added to other proposed schemes.</p> <p>The conclusion appears to be that either scheme could result in a significant cumulative effect if combined with the other scheme i.e. significant cumulative impact and it does not only arise from DB Symmetry but would also be from the IDI scheme too.</p> <p>NPA reaffirm their view that the construction of the IDI Hybrid scheme in itself would not result in any significant landscape impacts after the mid-term.</p> <p>TLP consider the cumulative effects in visual terms would relate primarily to sequential effects along the A5 which would continue to the mid-term after completion of the development (c. 20 years allowing for 10 year build out + 10 to mid-term).</p> <p>As noted in previous reviews TLP consider there would be a significant landscape impact after the mid-term</p>	None

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
		from the IDI Hybrid scheme alone but not in cumulative terms.	
<b>Further NPA comments on areas where judgements differ, as summarised in TLP's report conclusions</b>			
3.5	Landscape character effects	<p>NPA confirm that the development would take place on a sequential basis and not a continuous period of 10 years over the whole site. TLP accept this. However, the duration of the effects are longer than many construction projects and hence it is the time period is aspect that should be given weight.</p> <p>NPA highlights points that they consider TLP have not sufficiently considered in the landscape effects: including land-use, presence of disused railway, reduced effects of built development on the Soar Tributary Flat Floodplains and Terrace area and the proximity of the A5 corridor.</p> <p>The main difference between TLP and NPA relates to the sensitivity of the receiving landscape and the consequential effects on the level of effect. TLP are aware of the character of the landscape. TLP do not consider that the disused railway in its current condition is an adverse feature. Perhaps the more important point relates to the susceptibility of change and therefore sensitivity of the site to the type of development proposed -namely a very large scale logistics park that makes in TLP's opinion the landscape character sensitive to this type of change. This will involve large-scale earthworks and changes in the form and character of the whole landscape. For this reason what may 'inherently' be a medium sensitivity landscape (Low Clay Vale Farmland) is considered to be a Medium to High sensitivity landscape in respect of the proposal itself.</p> <p>There is less of a direct effect from built development within the Soar Tributary Flat Floodplains and Terrace but there</p>	Note

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
		<p>would still be a substantive change to the character of the site either within it or from development directly adjacent to which would markedly influence the character. It is noted that mitigation measures proposed would reduce the levels of effect over time.</p>	
3.12-3.15	Visual effects	<p>NPA identify a number of significant effects at construction and operation stages.</p> <p>TLP have described some adjustments to their previous judgements (relating to sensitivity, magnitude or level of effect) in regard to a number of the viewpoints. This includes some closer alignment with NPAs assessment by careful reconsideration of the points raised. However, there are still some differences in the assessed levels which reflect different professional judgement.</p> <p>TLP still consider there would be increased sensitivity at viewpoints; 4aii, 4c, 9a-c, 13, 14b, and 21.</p> <p>TLP consider the magnitude of change is likely to be higher, particularly in the mid-to longer-term at Viewpoints 4 cv-vi (albeit potentially neutral), 6ai, 7, and 12.</p>	None
3.16	Lighting	<p>TLP did not suggest that the levels of lighting would necessarily be higher than those assessed in the ES. Rather it was to ensure that locations of potentially increased light activity had been adequately accounted for in the assessment</p>	None
3.23-24	Compliant with policy	<p>Policy CS7 - TLP notes that this policy is outside of landscape and visual matters</p> <p>Policy CS17 – this policy and in particular clause c) is still considered relevant and a matter for the planning balance</p> <p>Policy EV/5 – This policy should have been referred to in TLPs report (March 2016) and not EV/7 as noted by NPA. The weight given to EV/5 is also matter for the planning balance</p>	

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
Overview 3.26-331	overview	TLP and NPA agree that adverse effects are considered alongside benefits arising from the scheme by the decision maker	None

**Update Addendum to the Environmental Statement Chapter 9**

2.4 The Update Addendum focuses upon any potential changes to the judgements reached regarding landscape and visual effects in the original application compared to the proposed amendment which allows for the retention of Bittesby House and its immediate surroundings. As part of our assessment we also considered the content of the Cover Report and Summary: The Amendment to the Planning Application, Update of the Environmental Statement and Supplemental information which sets out the wider background to the retention of Bittesby House.

2.5 The Update Addendum clarifies that the changes involve:

- ◆ retention of Bittesby House together with its principal outbuildings, its grounds and the immediate vicinity and associated existing trees
- ◆ an extension to the Bittesby House grounds to the north to allow for an attenuation area and more open aspect to the north-west
- ◆ a reduction in the scale of Parcel I
- ◆ the retention of views towards Bittesby House and immediate grounds to the east

2.6 Comments made on the Update Addendum in tabular form below.

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
<b>Landscape Effects : Construction Stage</b>			
2.6	Tree retention	Is appreciated that additional trees can be retained in the vicinity of Bittesby House. This is a beneficial change. However, it is also noted that the remainder of the substantive L shaped tree avenue leading towards the house would still be lost. The rationale for this	None

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
		is provided in the accompanying Cover Report which states that retention of the avenue would result in a substantial reduction of both parcels H and I consequential loss of floor space without opportunities to provide replacement of this floor space elsewhere on the site without other significant effects.	
Additional comments	Effect on setting of Bittesby House	<p>The proposed retention of Bittesby House enables the house, main outbuildings and immediate gardens to be retained. However, the current setting of the house in landscape terms would still be adversely affected since:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a large part of the tree avenue which provides a key existing feature in the approach to the house from the south would be removed</li> <li>• the principal southern elevation of the house would lose its outward vista over the open agricultural land to the south and be more contained by new planting put in place to screen views to Parcel H. This change would curtail and enclose the setting of the house.</li> <li>• the proposed approach to Bittesby House would be amended to come from the north-west along the new access track. Along this route the sense of arrival at the house would be very much reduced until leaving the car park on foot.</li> </ul>	Comments on change in setting welcome
2.9	Balance of effects	<p>Is considered that the retention of Bittesby House and its immediate grounds is a net benefit together with the potential for greater visual linkage with the Schedule Monument to the north-west.</p> <p>There will also be a consequential reduction in the adverse effects during construction and operation stages.</p>	None
2.10	Landscape character effects-zone 1	TLP agree that there would be a modest reduction in the size/scale of effect. However, TLP do not consider this change would reduce sufficiently to move from 'high' adverse to 'medium to high' adverse category within the Low Lying Clay Vale Farmland. It is also	None

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
		noted that NPA consider that on balance the effect on the Low Lying Clay Vale Farmland would remain as High resulting in a Moderate to Major adverse effect during construction stage on the site. [N.B. TLP consider this would be a Major adverse effect on the site.]	
<b>Landscape Effects: Operation Stage</b>			
2.11 -2.12	Change to setting	<p>NPA identify the creation of amenity areas close the house and for an enhanced open setting to the north providing a vista to the Scheduled Monument. This approach is welcomed although the way in which the link is created and maintained would benefit from further description/design.</p> <p>There are candidate uses suggested in the Cover Report for Bittesby Hose. It would be a benefit to include some public access to benefit from this vista between Bittesby House and The Scheduled Monument.</p> <p>NPA consider that despite the enhancements there would be no change to the assessed level of effect on landscape character at Operation Stage at Year 1 or in the mid-term with which TLP would agree. [N.B. TLP consider this would be a Major adverse effect at Year 1 reducing to Major to Moderate in the mid-term on the site.]</p>	Clarification on how the visual link between the house and the Scheduled monument is provided in the design to ensure it becomes a 'positive focal point'. This could be covered by detailed design.
<b>Visual Effects Update</b>			
2.14 Viewpoint affected	Viewpoint affected	TLP agree that while there may be minor changes to a number of viewpoints listed that these would not be notable changes. The only viewpoint where there would be a discernible difference are from Viewpoint 7.	None
2.19	Visual effects Construction Stage	Viewpoint 7 -TLP agree that there will be some reduction in the scale of adverse visual effects from this viewpoint but is not sufficient that there will be a change from High to Medium magnitude as result of the retention of Bittesby House and the associated trees. TLP agree with NPA that the effects would still be Major to Moderate during Construction period	None

Ref.	Topic	Comment to Addendum	Further Applicant Action
2.20 -21	Visual effects: Operation and Residual Stage	<p>NPA consider that in the short term during the Operation Stage that the magnitude of effect would still remain at High to Medium. However, by the mid-term NPA consider the magnitude would reduce to Medium (as recorded in the ES) with a Moderate to Minor adverse level of effect.</p> <p>TLP still consider there would be a Major to Moderate adverse effect in the mid-term. This judgement is made with reference to the submitted photomontage 9.6zzzzj Rev A. It is appreciated that beyond year 10 (mid-term) the level of effect will reduce with the further maturing of vegetation. However, this will take a number of years to effectively break up the massing of the large logistics buildings on the skyline.</p>	None

**Cover Report and Summary: The Amendment to the Planning Application, Update of the Environmental Statement and Supplemental Information**

- 2.7 TLP’s response to the content of this report is covered above under two headings above apart from the following comments.
- 2.8 The Cover Report at paragraph 4.5 states that TLP have not considered a number of factors in reaching a judgement on the landscape related merits of an extension to Magna Park (IDI Hybrid scheme) in comparison to a separate distribution park to the south (DB Symmetry Park). It should be noted that TLP have not to date carried out a specific comparative assessment of the two applications, in terms of comparative site areas and floorspace, landscape and visual effects or relative mitigation benefits. Rather TLP have evaluated each application on its own merits. However, following further recent consideration and consultation with HDC TLP will be carrying out a comparative assessment of both applications.
- 2.9 TLP would also comment that the proportion of the site given over to structural landscape at circa 48.7% is notable and includes a number of positive features in terms of public access, biodiversity and green infrastructure. Indications of future management of these areas via a s106 agreement would also bring longer term benefits. The benefits of the scheme were recognised at paragraph, 2.8-2.9, 2.14 and 3.26 of TLP’s March 2016 report. However the provision of this quantum of open space is also in part due to the site constraints resulting from the natural topography and Scheduled Monument.

The evolution of the scheme is noted as set out in Section 5 of the DAS and covered at paragraph 2.13 of TLPs March 2016 report.