



MAGNA PARK Extension

HYBRID APPLICATION:

15/01531/OUT

Landscape and Visual Effects:

Update Addendum to the Environmental Statement Chapter 9

21 April 2016

Hybrid Planning Application (15/01531/OUT,
15/01531/FUL)

**Landscape & Visual Effects:
Update Addendum to the Environmental
Statement Chapter 9**

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This update addendum to Chapter 9 of the Environmental Statement (ES), submitted in support of the hybrid planning application 15/01531/OUT, considers any changes to judgements reached regarding the landscape and visual effects of the application proposals on the site's landscape and visual assets with the retention of Bittesby House and its immediate surroundings. A separate additional addendum provides clarifications for the already submitted ES Chapter 9, requested by The Landscape Partnership (TLP) in their comments of 21 March 2016 on behalf of Harborough District Council (HDC). Both addenda have been prepared by Nicholas Pearson Associates on behalf of IDI Gazeley UK Limited.
- 1.2 This update to ES Chapter 9 is organized in section 2, below, under the main headings of the Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment.

2.0 Updates to ES Chapter 9

The nature of updates to the scheme

- 2.1 The updates to the scheme of relevance from a landscape and visual perspective are principally the following:
- The retention of Bittesby House together with its principal outbuildings, its grounds in the immediate vicinity and associated existing trees;
 - An extension of the Bittesby House grounds into the edge of the arable field to the north to provide space for an attenuation area and to maintain an open aspect to the house from the north and north west;
 - A corresponding reduction in the scale of Parcel I, the previously anticipated earthworks, including filling to accommodate the previous Parcel I building and yard which extended over the site of Bittesby House and a reduction in the proposed new building envelope extent (Note: Floor levels and maximum building heights for Parcel I remain the same);
 - The retention of views toward Bittesby House and its immediate grounds.
- 2.2 The above changes are illustrated on the amended Parameter Plans, an amended illustrative masterplan and landscape masterplan, which form part of the resubmission (the separate Cover Report includes a full account of the submission). In addition to this, **ES Volume 3, Technical Appendix F.1, VVM Figures 9.6zzs-9.6zzzzzt Rev A**, includes visually verified montages which have been updated to reflect the changes and together these form associated parts of the Regulation 22 submission. The following assessment of the anticipated changes in terms of landscape and visual effects should be considered in conjunction with these documents.
- 2.3 The **ES Volume 3 Technical Appendix F.5 LVIA Impact Summary Tables Rev A**, covering the construction and operation stages, have also been updated to take account of changes and to reflect the assessment update below.

Landscape Effects Update

Scope of Update Landscape Assessment

- 2.4 The scope of the updated landscape effects assessment, has been informed by a review of potential changes and is accordingly limited to a consideration of changes to judgements associated with direct effects on the low lying clay vale arable farmland landscape type which lies within the Upper Soar Landscape character area and falls within Zone 1 of the application site. There would also be some indirect effects on the Soar tributary flat floodplains and terrace landscape type. These are considered to be limited and not to affect previous judgements, having regard to the intervening railway, woodland blocks and the other proposed changes around Bittesby House. We take the same view of the anticipated indirect effects on the High Cross plateau offsite to the west of the A5. There are also no effects anticipated on the Lutterworth Lowlands Character Area. The judgements on these also remain unchanged.
- 2.5 The scale and nature of effects are not anticipated to change judgements previously reached regarding the level of landscape cumulative effects.

Landscape Effects: Construction Stage

- 2.6 During construction, the existing immediate grounds, Bittesby House and its outbuildings would be retained on existing ground levels. Whilst the avenue feature alongside would not be retained, the following trees can in the grounds of the house can now be conserved:
- 1 No Cat A Tree (T031)
 - 4 No Cat B Trees (T054, T056, T059 and T060)
 - 2 No Cat B Groups (G004 and G010)
 - 4 No Cat C Trees (T027, T028, T029 and T030)
 - 1 No Cat C Group (G003)
 - 2 No Cat C Areas in part (A005 and A006).
- 2.7 For the heritage and commercial reasons explained in the Cover Report no more of the avenue of trees can be retained. We also note that a large proportion of the avenue's trees are classified as quality category C; although there are some better quality trees as well, these are clustered in the part of the avenue that is most distant from the house and which straddles both Parcels I and H.
- 2.8 The degree of earthworks, principally fill, previously anticipated to create a level platform for Parcel I to the east would now be limited with the retention Bittesby House. The footprint of construction activity will be reduced on the site and within this landscape type. Creation of an additional attenuation area would be limited to former arable land set away from Bittesby House to the north-west.
- 2.9 Therefore, a reduction in the scale of adverse effects on the landscape and existing positive features during construction would be anticipated. The changes to the scheme have provided an opportunity to conserve some trees of value and to maintain a built feature that will contribute positively in terms of a sense of place. The positive influences of the retention of the Bittesby house and existing mature trees are also considered to extend beyond the low lying clay vales landscape type into the Soar tributary flat floodplains and terrace landscape type, including the Bittesby Scheduled Monument to the north and east.
- 2.10 These effects are considered to give rise to a reduction in the size/scale of effect anticipated that would reduce the previous judgement of the scale of effects, on the site, from high adverse to **high to medium**. The changes, however, are not considered to be great enough to alter judgements regarding the geographic extent (**medium**) or the duration of construction effects (**medium**) across the whole of the low lying clay vale landscape type, in Zone 1 of the application site. Therefore, the overall **magnitude** of construction effects on the landscape of the low lying clay vale farmland is considered to remain as **high** at the Site level as the scheme updates are not considered to be a large enough positive change to alter judgements previously reached regarding the level of landscape effect. The level of landscape effect judgement therefore would remain as **locally significant (moderate to major adverse)**, at the site level in the construction stage.

Landscape Effects: Operation Stage

- 2.11 During operation, Bittesby House, the surrounding mature trees and the immediate grounds would be retained and utilised. These changes conserve a built element with some local distinctiveness, some surrounding mature trees and the immediate lawn and rear garden areas; all of these contribute positively in terms of visual amenity. Through the incorporation of extended grounds, an open setting will be conserved to the north, and the sole line of sight maintained between a part of the Bittesby Deserted Medieval Village Scheduled Monument (SM) and the house. An additional new landscape framework established between the house and adjacent logistics building parcels will establish by the mid-term to provide further containment between the house, its grounds and adjacent parking areas and building units. An open landscape setting will also be maintained in the adjacent valley bottom to the east.
- 2.12 The incorporation of the house, its principal outbuildings and the retention of the mature trees around it are considered to reduce the scale of adverse effects on the local landscape, during operation. At the same time, Bittesby House would positively contribute by reinforcing a sense of place into the new country park and would create a positive focal point in the heart of the new logistics park at the juncture of the Logistics Institute of Technology and the site of the Innovation Centre and Holovis expansion space. These beneficial effects are considered to reduce the scale of effect, but not enough to reduce the level across this landscape type, at a site level, in the immediate and short term. The extent and scale of the proposed completed buildings, therefore, leaves the judgement unchanged at **high adverse** at year 1 of the operation stage until the mid-term. As the new landscape framework around the house supplements existing retained trees, the effects over time, however, reduce the judgements on the scale of effect to **medium** from high, by the mid-term. The geographic extent of effects are not anticipated to change enough to warrant a reduced level (i.e., it remains as **medium**) across the landscape type within the site; and in terms of effects on the locality and the duration of effects would continue to be **high**.
- 2.13 The improvement in terms of the **magnitude** of impacts on the application site alone, whilst positive, would in our view, not warrant a change to the conclusions in terms of overall level of effect on this character type. Therefore, it is our judgement that there would continue to be **significant local adverse effects** on this landscape type at a site level, until the mid-term when the proposed landscape becomes established. The effects on this landscape type during operation are still considered to be **not significant**, after this time once the new landscape framework has established. The additional improvements now incorporated are considered to add further weight to this conclusion.

Visual Effects Update

Scope of Update Visual Assessment

- 2.14 The scope of the update visual effects assessment has been informed by a review of the potential for changes to the judgements previously reached for each identified and agreed visual receptor and representative viewpoint. The scale and nature of the changes proposed have meant that whilst the visual receptors represented by the following viewpoints: **4aii,4aiv, 4bi-4bii,4cvi, 6b,8aii,9bii,12a-f,13,14b,15 and 16a-16eii** would experience some change in the view it would be of a magnitude that would not change the existing ES Chapter 9 judgements, in both construction and operation stages. Also, whilst there would be some changes anticipated on users of the of the Bridleway from Chuckey Hall to Willey, represented by **viewpoints 9a and 9bi**, with the size/scale of change expected to reduce from very high to high (during construction), this would not change the previously reported conclusions of there being significant visual effects during construction and in operation from these sections of the route.

- 2.15 In contrast with the above, noticeable change is anticipated in the view south from the permissive path alongside the Bittesby Schedule Monument, represented by **viewpoint 7** south. These anticipated visual effects are therefore considered in more detail below.
- 2.16 Viewers at the following locations: viewpoints **1a-b, 2a-b, 3, 4ai, 4aiii, 4ci-4cv, 6ai-6aiv, 8ai, 8aiii, 8b, 10a-b, 11, 14a, 14c-d, 14e, and 17** would not experience any change due to the angle of view, interrupting local ridges, the railway embankment, intervening dense vegetation and/or the distance involved. Due to the location of the Bittesby House within the application site no changes to judgements in respect of night time visual effects, are anticipated.
- 2.17 Bittesby House and its farm buildings have been purchased by the applicant and the future use of the buildings is to be established. The current users of the buildings are therefore not considered to be a baseline visual receptor, in this addendum.
- 2.18 The scale and nature of effects are not anticipated to change the judgements on the level of cumulative visual effects in the submitted ES Chapter 9.

Visual Effects: Construction Stage

- 2.19 During construction, the size/scale of visual effect on users of the permissive right of way and permissive open access land represented by **view 7** would be reduced in a southerly direction where Bittesby House and trees in the vicinity would now be retained. These features would also now partially filter views toward Parcel H beyond and some of the construction activity at lower levels including along the A5. These changes to the scheme are anticipated to have the effect of reducing the scale of effect to **medium adverse** from medium to high. However, the geographic extent of visible activity is anticipated to remain as **medium to high adverse**, given the widespread nature of activities and the visibility of building works and cranes at higher levels beyond the Bittesby House and in the wider scene. The duration of effect would also remain the same. Therefore, during construction, despite a reduction in the scale of construction effect experienced from view 7, this is not anticipated to change the conclusions previously reached regarding magnitude (medium to high) nor the judgement regarding level of effect which would **continue to be major to moderate and significant** at this stage.

Visual Effects: Operation Stage

- 2.20 During operation in the short term, the presence of Bittesby House and mature trees in the vicinity would reduce the scale of adverse visual effects in a southerly direction experienced from **view 7**. Bittesby House would remain as a feature of the view and existing large scale trees will provide some filtering of the view beyond to Parcel H. The shortening of Parcel I and the associated building has the effect of reducing the apparent height of the building ridge line from this angle of view. There would therefore be positive visual effects arising from the retention of these features. The change in scale of adverse effect is noticeable but together with the geographic extent of the view effected, is not anticipated to reduce enough to change the submitted judgements on the magnitude of effect (**high to medium**) in the short to medium term. This is principally due to the limitations to the establishment in the short term of new planting in the surrounding area, including alongside Parcels I. However, in the mid-term, once the new landscape framework has established around Parcel I and in the LIT Parcel E, the magnitude of visual effect, with the addition of the retention of Bittesby House and the large scale trees around it, is anticipated to reduce from medium to **medium to low adverse**. Therefore, **locally significant adverse** effects during operation continue to be anticipated in views experienced from the *worst case* location at viewpoint 7 until the mid-term. Thereafter, visual effects are still considered to be **not significant**, and would be anticipated to reduce from **moderate to moderate to minor adverse**, from the worst case location represented by view 7 with the retention of Bittesby House and trees in the vicinity. The visual effects would also continue to be **not significant** from elsewhere, where there is currently permissive access in and alongside the SM.

Residual Effects Update

- 2.21 Given the assessment above, the only residual level of effect that will change is the level of visual effect associated with walkers on a permissive path and permissive open access land, represented by View 7 in the vicinity of the SM. The amendments to the application (the retention of Bittesby House, principal outbuildings and grounds) would reduce effects by the mid-term from moderate to moderate to **minor adverse**. With the retention of the Bittesby House and the existing and developing landscape around it, these effects are judged to be **not significant** by year 10 - in line with the submitted ES.

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