

Mr P. Smith

rdc
Robert Doughty
Consultancy

Landscape Review
Land south of Moulton Chapel Road, Cowbit

1207 1/LR/WB/fv

January 2016

32 High Street
Helpringham
Sleaford
NG34 0RA

Tel: 01529 421646
Fax: 01529 421358
Email: admin@rdc-landplan.co.uk
Web: www.rdc-landplan.co.uk

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Robert Doughty Consultancy has been asked to carry out a Landscape Review of the suitability of an area of land south of Moulton Chapel Road, Cowbit, for residential development. The site, identified on drawing no 1207 1 VP01, is approximately 0.88 hectares, and was included within the East Lincolnshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment as site COW006.
- 1.2. My name is Wendy Buckingham. I have a BA (Hons) degree and a Master of Philosophy degree (MPhil) in Landscape Design. I have been a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute since 1991. I have been the Principal Landscape Architect at the Robert Doughty Consultancy since August 2007, having previously worked in both the public and private sectors. I am a Member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. I have 23 years' experience of a wide range of projects for a variety of clients, from inception to completion. I am experienced in carrying out landscape and visual impact assessment work for a range of developments.
- 1.3. This review is intended to assess the impact on the local landscape the development of the site may have.

2. SITE AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

- 2.1. The site is agricultural land which is currently cultivated. The southern boundary of the site is formed by an established native hedgerow, with an open drainage ditch beyond. The northern boundary is formed by Moulton Chapel Road, with a commercial agricultural business and a single dwelling lying immediately to the north of this road. The A16 roundabout junction with Moulton Chapel Road lies to the east of the site, with a small buffer of grassland and immature tree and shrub planting separating the site from the junction. Cowbit lies to the west of the site, beyond a single residential property and associated mature tree planting which lies immediately and adjacent to the western boundary of the site.
- 2.2. The site falls within the National Landscape Character Area 46, The **Fens**. This area is described as a "**large scale, flat, open landscape with extensive vistas to level horizons and huge skies, with sparse woodland cover and a hierarchy of rivers, drains and**

ditches providing a strong influence throughout the area. Shelter belts, including poplar, willow and leylandii are often found around farmsteads”.

- 2.3. There is no local level detailed landscape character assessment available for the South Holland District, but the National Character Area description accurately describes the locality of the site. The landscape surrounding the site is generally typical of the drained fenland that surrounds the Wash and land to the south, being virtually flat pond low lying. It is characterised by its simplicity and relative remoteness, with expansive and peaceful panoramas and big skies. Small blocks of deciduous woodland are also typical of this locality.
- 2.4. However, at a very local level, the character of the site is greatly influenced by its proximity to the developed edge of Cowbit, the A16, and development on Moulton Chapel Road to the east. The only land directly surrounding the site which remains undeveloped is that which lies to the south, and this is physically and visually disconnected from the site by the sites southern native hedgerows.

3. LANDSCAPE IMPACT OF PROPOSALS

- 3.1. The most recent Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) classified the site as undevelopable, based solely on the very general assessment that the development of the site would increase the visual impact and perceived impact of the village's built up area when viewed from the bypass, and would extend the village towards the roundabout on the bypass.
- 3.2. However, a more detailed assessment looking specifically at the potential visual impact of developing the site clearly demonstrates that, due to the existing landscape character of the locality, the landscape qualities individual to the site, and the fact that the site is clearly associated with the settlement edge of Cowbit rather than the open countryside, its residential development would neither increase the visual impact of Cowbit nor have the impression of extending the village towards the A16 bypass.
- 3.3. As can be seen on the Google extract in Appendix A, ribbon development along the roads both to the north and east of the main village (Mill Drove S, Moulton Chapel Road and the B1357) is characteristic of the locality. The development of the site would not represent an extension of

development into open countryside, but would equate to the infilling of a discrete gap in the existing development pattern, and would mirror the development on the opposite site of Moulton Chapel Road.

- 3.4. The development of the site would leave the grassed area which lies between the eastern boundary of the site and the A16 roundabout undeveloped. This area is similar in size and character to the other 3 parcels of undeveloped land which surround the remainder of the roundabout junction.
- 3.5. Regarding views to Cowbit and the site from the A16. As can be seen from Viewpoint 1 in Appendix B, the developed edge of Cowbit is prominent along the site's western and northern boundaries. The mature hedge to the site's southern boundary blocks views to the bulk of Cowbit from Viewpoint 1, and likewise, would block views of the site from the A16 south of the Viewpoint 1 location.
- 3.6. Views to the site are on the whole limited to the roundabout junction on the A16 adjacent to the site, and a short length of the B1357 east of the roundabout. Existing development and fencing on the northern side of Moulton Chapel Road blocks views of Cowbit and the site from the A16 north of the roundabout, and likewise, the site's southern boundary hedge blocks views of the site from the A16 south of the roundabout, although the bulk of Cowbit would be visible.
- 3.7. Additionally, once the existing immature tree and shrub planting directly to the east of the site matures, the site will be screened to a much greater degree than it is now from the small section of the A16 from which it can be currently viewed.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND MITIGATION

- 4.1. The site, which, due to the screening qualities of its long southern boundary hedgerow and surrounding development is a very discrete parcel of land, is visible from a very limited section of the A16, namely the roundabout junction which lies to the east of the site.
- 4.2. Views to the site from the A16 roundabout are characterised by the settlement edges of Cowbit being clearly visible in the background, so although the development of the site to residential use may slightly alter the view, the character of the view will not be altered. Additionally, the development of the site would not give the impression of extending the

village towards the A16 roundabout, as the village, on the opposite side of Moulton Chapel Road to the site, has already extended east.

- 4.3. Any perceived increase in the visual impact of the village edge would be extremely localised, for example, from the A16 roundabout east of the site, where visual receptors will be concentrating on driving. Any visual impact arising from the development when viewed from the east would be mitigated against when the existing young planting to the east of the site matures. Additionally, new planting to the site's eastern boundary and tree planting within the site itself would both soften and screen any new built development, assisting with its assimilation into the landscape.
- 4.4. In order to avoid the creation of an overbearing character along Moulton Chapel Road, the development would be set back from the road, allowing for the added benefit of the provision of a footway along the southern side of the road, which would link into the footway located at the A16 roundabout.
- 4.5. The landscape characteristics specific to this particular site and locality allow the site to accommodate this type and scale of development.
- 4.6. Additionally, the maturing of the existing young planting to the east of the site, and the mitigation measures to be put in place such as tree and shrub planting and the pulling back of development from the roadside, will assist in assimilating this development into the landscape without adversely affecting its character and without having any sort of significant visual impact.



rdc
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© Steaford, Lincolnshire NG34 0RA
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Client: Mr P Smith

Project: Land south of Moulton Chapel Road,
Cowbit

Drawing title: Appendix A Site Location/
Photographic Viewpoints

Job No. 1207/1	Drawing No. VP01	Rev.	Drawn JR
Scale Not to scale		Date 25/01/2016	Checked

DO NOT SCALE from this drawing. All measurements should be checked against on site conditions and any discrepancies should be brought to the attention of the Robert Doughty Consultancy.

Photographs



VP 1 View of site from A16



VP 2 View of site from Moulton Chapel Road

