

**COMMENTARY
ABNORMALS**

WIGNAL'S GATE, HOLBEACH

CP VIABILITY

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1.00 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 Thornton Firkin LLP have been instructed by CP Viability to undertake a review of the Abnormal Costs in relation to a residential development scheme at Wignal's Gate, Holbeach, Spalding.
- 1.02 The development comprises 57 Nr affordable dwellings and associated works on a green field site.
- 1.03 For the avoidance of doubt, we have adopted the definition of 'abnormal' – otherwise referred to as 'site abnormalities' in the Homes for England Development Appraisal Tool User Guide as being ONLY items not normally expected for sites of its kind. We consider abnormalities to exclude items typically specified, encountered or considered normal on other development sites. For clarity, we consider abnormal costs to be by their very nature limited in scope and definition.

2.00 BASIS OF INFORMATION

- 2.01 Alongside the Financial Viability Appraisal produced by rg+p, we have reviewed planning drawings available through the South Holland District Council planning portal relating to Planning Application reference: H09-0721-25.
- 2.02 We have also reviewed the Abnormal Cost Summary and associated Abnormal Cost Buildups, also produced by rg+p, and dated December 2025.

3.00 COST INFORMATION

- 3.01 In reviewing the costs provided by rg+p, we have utilised a combination of the following cost information in compiling our commentary on the abnormal costs:
- T-F cost database for residential projects – Based upon over 350 projects completed within the last 3 years.
 - Spon's Price Book/s
 - BCIS cost databases
- 3.02 As a general observation, we note that the abnormal costs provided by rg+p are a mix of lump sum items and measured/rates, however we have not been afforded sight of full measures calculations.

4.00 ABNORMAL COSTS

4.01 Additional items to achieve new building regs, client specification; £313,500

The updated requirements introduced in the Building Regulations 2026 will apply to all residential housing developments, and we would therefore consider these to comprise part of the normal construction cost. We do not consider the works covered by this item to be abnormal.

4.02 Vehicle charging include stand if required; £39,200

Provision of electric vehicle charging is a Building Regulation mandated requirement, and as such it would be considered a typical construction cost, and we do not consider this to be an abnormal.

4.03 Additional PV to meet EPC A

Provision of photovoltaic /solar panels is a Building Regulation mandated requirement, and as such it would be considered a typical construction cost, and we do not consider this to be an abnormal.

We also consider an improved specification to meet EPC A is a developer choice to satisfy their end user's specification, and we maintain that this is not an abnormal cost.

4.04 De-watering for initial infrastructure; £40,000

We are unable to verify how ground water levels affect the site, and we would need further information to corroborate this as an abnormal cost. Pending our verification of this item as an abnormal, we would note that the £40k is a lump sum allowance and would include a risk element within.

We would also note that high ground water levels are common within Holbeach and the surrounding areas and it is normal practice to undertake works to mitigate this on the majority of new build projects in this locality.

4.05 Surface water pump station including civils and concrete capping; £135,000

We note a pump station along the southern boundary adjacent the proposed new substation. We accept that the pump station is required to allow the drainage to function correctly, as the existing levels are not sufficient to manage without.

We consider the £135k to be a lump sum, and we understand this is based on costs from previous projects. In our experience, we consider this £135k allowance to be reasonable.

4.06 Site clearance to remove farmer's crop; £97,095.45

We note that the productive use for the site has already lapsed, and that the land is given over to grass and weeds. We consider clearance of any so-called farmer's crops to be similar to typical site clearance, and not an abnormal.

4.07 Raising of dwellings; £68,490.06

We note that the Flood Risk Assessment advises that finished floor levels to be set at 300 mm above external ground levels. We also note the FRA acknowledges that finished floor levels will [would] be finalised as part of the detailed design stage. We are therefore unable to verify a requirement, need, or basis to consider raising internal floor levels to be justified as an abnormal cost. The FRA also indicates that the site is not at risk from the flood events.

In our experience, we consider a 150-300 mm differential between internal and external levels to be normal, and we do not consider raising of dwellings to warrant classifying as an abnormal cost.

We also note that the requirement to raise floor levels in this locality is the norm rather than the exception and therefore should not be considered as an abnormal.

4.08 Raising of shared external areas; £65,570.10

As per our comment above for raising of dwellings, we do not consider there to be sufficient justification to support the raising of external areas to be an abnormal cost.

4.09 Attenuation system to suit drainage strategy; £143,435.54

In our experience, an attenuation system is typical for residential developments of this size, and we do not consider this to be an abnormal cost.

4.10 BNG off-site credits; £42,000

We note this is one of several items relating to BNG, and we note that both on and off-site BNG measures are required to achieve statutory compliancy.

We consider the £42k to be a reasonable allowance in providing 1.09 habitat units to achieve the 10% BNG required, however this is part of a statutory obligation rather than an abnormal.

4.11 Enhanced landscaping for BNG – Mature trees; £11,475

We consider the provision of trees a normal typical part of landscaping the external areas, and we do not consider this to be an abnormal cost, as enhancement to achieve a statutory obligation is not an abnormal.

4.12 Enhanced landscaping for BNG – Seeding; £7,649.25

We consider that seeding grassed areas is a normal typical part of landscaping the external areas, and we do not consider this to be an abnormal cost, as enhancement to achieve a statutory obligation is not an abnormal.

4.13 Enhanced Landscaping for BNG – Hedging; £7,758.29

We consider that planting hedging is a normal typical part of landscaping the external areas, and we do not consider this to be an abnormal cost, as enhancement to achieve a statutory obligation is not an abnormal.

4.14 Enhanced Ecology – Hedgehog highways; £361.95

We note that the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal recognises hedgehog activity in the area and recommends on site provision. We are happy to accept this as an abnormal and consider the £361.95 to be reasonable.

4.15 Enhanced ecology - Water Vole Surveys; £2,500

We note from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal produced by Weddles that whilst water voles are mentioned, it states that “no further surveys are required for water voles”. We assume the £2,500 allowance would be to cover future water vole surveys, however now that these are no longer required, we do not consider this to be an abnormal.

4.16 Enhanced Ecology - Bird and bat boxes; £2,508

Whilst we note the mention of bat boxes, bird boxes are absent from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. However, it does mention swift bricks (catering for a variety of bird species, including swifts). We also note that as part of a planning consultation note, a BNG/Senior Ecologist with South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership has commented that the proposals submitted by the Developer are robust, and with specific mention of bird boxes.

In this instance, we are happy to consider bird boxes as an abnormal cost and are happy to accept the claimed cost as reasonable.

4.17 Enhanced Ecology - Soil remediation/removal of harmful vegetation species; £24,900

We note that the land has been left fallow, with no current crops or cultivation, and we note open site access off the main highway (due to lack of gates/walls/fences).

We would therefore accept that there is a potential risk of localised soil contamination, together with potential risk of invasive species of vegetation becoming established, to support this item as an abnormal. The £24.9k is a reasonable allowance for such risks at this stage in the planning process.

4.18 Sub-station; £97,074

We note a new substation along the southern boundary (adjacent a new pump station). The Developer acknowledges that this is required to accommodate the energy requirements of the development. However, providing power to the new dwellings includes the mandatory requirement to supply EV charger points arising from Building Regulations. We do not consider this to be an abnormal cost, and in our experience developments of this size are by default requiring new substations or enhancements to the local infrastructure network.

4.19 French drain to perimeter of existing dwellings; £4,639.45

Whilst we note the close proximity of an attenuation pond to the nearest existing property outside the proposed development (Nr 53 Wignal's Gate), despite requesting such, we have not received verification as to which, or any, of the existing properties adjacent the site require French Drains. We are unable to verify this as an abnormal.

4.20 Archaeology dig to site; £16,750

We note that the Gradiometer Survey Report does not raise any significant archaeological issues. Whilst the report identifies some pit-like findings, most of what was found relate to recent agriculture activity and modern utility excavation. However, in this instance, we consider the conclusions of the Gradiometer Survey Report warrant archaeological investigation and support the inclusion as an abnormal. We consider the £16,750 to be a reasonable allowance.

4.21 LAP/LEAP Area; £33,000

We note the inclusion of a LEAP in the approximate centre of the site, which is shown furnished with a timber climbing frame/rope structure, 2 Nr large stone animals, a cradle-nest swing and small individual step swing, benches and log seating, fencing & gate. We consider the lump sum £33k cost to be reasonable in covering the cost of forming the activity area shown on the drawings. However, we note that the provision of a LEAP is not an uncommon planning requirement and as such should not be deemed an abnormal provision for a scheme of this nature.

4.22 Multi Surface Adopted Road; £80,115

We consider the provision of a spine access road to be a normal/typical construction cost and are unable to verify any aspect of this to be an abnormal.

4.23 Highway swales; £9,000

Whilst we have seen these on other schemes, in this instance, we would consider these to be abnormal features. We are happy with the £9k lump sum and consider this to be a reasonable allowance.

4.24 Highways upgrade, diversion of BT pole, Off Site Connections; £55,771.03

We are happy that the works comprising this item are abnormal costs. The circa £55k is a not unreasonable cost to cover highways upgrading, BT diversion and off-site drainage & utilities connections, and which is supported by quotations.

4.25 Piling; £293,308.90 (revised)

We have reviewed the Site Investigation Report and note that mini piled foundations are recommended. We are satisfied with this solution to overcome some challenging ground conditions, including ground water at between 2.00m-2.90m below ground level, and would accept this to be an abnormal in this instance.

The costs are presented per plot and show the comparison between traditional foundations and the extra over arising from piling with ring beams. We have carried out our own high level cost exercise and are satisfied that the costs presented are reasonable.

5.00 SUMMARY CONCLUSION

5.01 The benefit of an online meeting with the Applicant, together with the provision of further information has enabled us to revisit and update our previous initial comments.

5.02 We have been generally satisfied with the responses to our queries; however, we consider a number of items to be normal construction costs. Where an abnormal has been verified, we are happy with the costs and their substantiation.

5.03 We consider the value of abnormal costs to be £537,599.88 against the revised £1,700,102.02 proposed by D Brown Building Contractors/rg+p, and as shown in the Summary Cost Schedule appended.

SUMMARY COST SCHEDULE

			
Ref	Title	£	£
4.01	Additional items to achieve new building regs, client specification	313,500.00	-
4.02	Vehicle charging include stand if required	39,900.00	-
4.03	Additional PV to meet EPC A	108,300.00	-
4.04	De-watering for initial infrastructure	40,000.00	-
4.05	Surface water pump station including civils and concrete capping	135,000.00	135,000.00
4.06	Site clearance to remove farmers crop	97,095.45	-
4.07	Raising of dwellings	68,490.06	-
4.08	Raising of shared external areas	65,570.10	-
4.09	Attenuation system to suit drainage strategy	143,435.54	-
4.10	BNG off-site credits	42,000.00	-
4.11	Enhanced landscaping for BNG - Mature trees	11,475.00	-
4.12	Enhanced landscaping for BNG - Seeding	7,649.25	-
4.13	Enhanced Landscaping for BNG - Hedging	7,758.29	-
4.14	Enhanced Ecology - Hedgehog highways	361.95	-
4.15	Enhanced ecology - Water Vole Surveys	2,500.00	-
4.16	Enhanced Ecology - Bird and bat boxes	2,508.00	2,508.00
4.17	Enhanced Ecology - Soil remediation/removal of harmful vegetation species	24,900.00	24,900.00
4.18	Sub-station	97,074.00	-
4.19	French drain to perimeter of existing dwellings	4,639.45	-
4.20	Archaeology dig to site	16,750.00	16,750.00
4.21	LAP/LEAP Area	33,000.00	-
4.22	Multi Surface Adopted Road	80,115.00	-
4.23	Highway swales	9,000.00	9,000.00
4.24	Highways upgrade, diversion of BT pole, Off Site Connections	55,771.03	55,771.03
4.25	Piling	293,308.90	293,308.90
TOTALS		£ 1,700,102.02	£ 537,237.93