LIZ LAKE
ASSOCIATES
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Land south of Rangell Gate and east of A16, Spalding, Lincolnshire

Naylor Farms

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Prepared by:	Mark Flatman
Position:	Director, Chartered Landscape Architect
Qualifications:	CMLI, Dip LA (Hons), BA (Hons)
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by Liz Lake Associates on behalf of Naylor Farms to address the landscape and visual issues relevant to 'land south of Rangell Gate (B1165) and east of A16, Spalding', Lincolnshire (the Site). The Site is located on open agricultural land to the east of Spalding and the A16, and to the west of Low Fulney Estate, a former farm that has grown to become a large area dominated by agricultural processing businesses, including glasshouses and growing facilities as well as plant nurseries.

1.1.2 The principal objective of the assessment is to identify the landscape and visual issues of the potential development site, to identify the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed scheme and to assess the significance of those effects.

1.1.3 The report considers the existing baseline conditions and seeks to identify the relevant landscape and visual issues applicable to the Site. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken to assess the likely effects upon the landscape resource, specific views and visual amenity.

1.1.4 Site visits were undertaken during the course of 2021 to appraise the character and condition of the Site and the landscape context, and to identify key visual receptors. Once the design was developed sufficiently, the assessment was undertaken by an experienced Chartered Landscape Architect. The weather was clear with good visibility.

1.1.5 All photographs were taken with a digital camera, a Canon EOS 1100D with a 30mm fixed lens. The 30mm lens is the digital equivalent to a standard 50mm focal length lens with a single lens reflex camera.

1.1.6 Liz Lake Associates is a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy with over 30 years' experience of master planning, landscape, ecology, urban design, heritage and environmental impact assessment. The company is a registered practice of the Landscape Institute.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 An LVIA of the Site and the development proposals has been prepared, encompassing the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA) third edition (published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013), and 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (published by Natural England, 2014). In summary, the approach combines information and desktop reviews with on-site surveys and appraisal.

2.1.2 The Site based assessment involves the recording of both objective description and subjective impressions of the landscape, as well as details of the existing landscape condition. It includes an assessment of the extent and nature of views to and from the Site and the type of receptors that experience these views.

2.1.3 The following relevant studies and documents have been considered as part of the desk-based review and subsequent assessment:

- Natural England National Character Area - NCA46: The Fens
- East Midlands Regional LCA – LCA 2a Settled Fens and Marshes
- South Holland Strategic LCS – Settled Fens LCT

2.1.4 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed development has been based upon the proposals illustrated on drawings prepared by Portess and Richardson Architects and Landscape Masterplan by Andrew Belson.

3 EXISTING SITUATION

3.1 Context

3.1.1 The Site is located on agricultural land to the east of the market town of Spalding, a rural town in the South Holland district of Lincolnshire. The town is situated equidistant between the City of Peterborough and the port town of Boston on the east coast to the northeast. The town lies on the A16 a strategically important route linking Peterborough with Grimsby on the coast.

3.1.2 The Site is broadly rectilinear in shape and covers an area of approximately 2.86Ha. It currently forms part of an agricultural field, adjacent to the A16. To the west of the A16 and the Coronation Channel, lies the eastern edge of the town. The eastern boundary is formed by Rangell Gate, beyond which lies a large area of allotments. To the south of the allotments, Rangell Gate and Kellet Gate lead towards Low Fulney, a (former) rural hamlet, which has been totally engulfed by modern large-scale buildings associated with the production and processing of flowers and crops, resulting in growing fields, sheds, nurseries, warehouses, commercial premises and glasshouses, which proliferate the areas landscape.

3.1.3 The Site forms part of the edge of the Settled Fens and Marshes, which occupies low-lying land (at approximately 3m AOD) to the east of the settlement in a central part of the South Holland, a rich agricultural district, and a location that is long established as a centre for horticulture and crop production.

3.2 Published Landscape Character Assessments

3.2.1 A summary of the published landscape character assessments in the context of the Site is outlined below.

National Character Area

3.2.2 The Site lies in National Character Area profile (46) The Fens as defined by Natural England. The NCA profile gives the following as a general description for the area:

"The Fens National Character Area (NCA) is a distinctive, historic and human-influenced wetland landscape lying to the west of the Wash estuary, which formerly constituted the largest wetland area in England. The area is notable for its large-scale, flat, open landscape with extensive vistas to level horizons. The level, open topography shapes the impression of huge skies which convey a strong sense of place, tranquillity and inspiration. One per cent of the NCA falls within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It is a large, low-lying, flat landscape with many drainage ditches, dykes and rivers that slowly drain towards the Wash, England's largest tidal estuary. The single obvious factor uniting the Fens is the low-lying, level terrain reflecting its geological past. With the exception of the Isle of Ely, which reaches above 20 m, elevations rarely pass the 10 m contour, and typically vary by little more than one or two metres over long distances. Much of the land is below sea level, relying on pumped drainage and the control of sluices at high and low tides to maintain its agricultural viability. The level horizons and the huge scale of the landscape create a strong sense of isolation and tranquillity, and a distinctive sense of place. There are, typically, large open panoramas and enormous skies, whose changing weather patterns have a strong influence on the observer. Four major rivers drain into the Wash: the Witham, Welland, Nene and Great Ouse. All rivers now have artificial canalised courses that run straight for long distances and are bounded by high banks to contain the watercourse from the lower adjacent fields."[1]

[1] National Character Area 46. Natural England. 2014. P3

3.2.3 This is a national scale assessment and though it provides a useful broad scale overview of landscape character, the detail of more local scale landscape character assessment studies is more relevant to LVIA for development proposals of this scale.

Regional Landscape Character Assessment

3.2.4 The East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) places the site primarily within the Settled Fens and Marshes landscape character type. This character type is described as:

"The organic pattern of enclosure boundaries and roads of the 'Townlands' provide a tangible link to the origins of the well settled agricultural landscape. Here, ancient villages and outlying hamlets mark the first of several successive waves of drainage, enclosure and settlement, culminating in the more geometric patterns associated with 19th and 20th century enclosures towards the coast".

"Land use is typically arable, the area being particularly fertile and productive. This has resulted in only small areas of land being noted for their habitat value. Wide areas are well settled and busy, notably coastal resorts during the summer months.

"*Land cover is dominated by productive agriculture comprising predominantly wheat, barley, legumes and brassicas. However, some pasture is evident in smaller hedged fields close to villages and along seabanks. Bulb growing is also notable, with fields of flowers providing seasonal colour and visual interest. Intensive agriculture has resulted in only limited retention of semi-natural habitats, but with the close proximity of internationally important coastal and marine habitat, this highlights the importance of good agricultural practices across the landscape"*

"Whilst superficially there is a great unity of character across the Settled Fens and Marshes, largely as a result of its simple landform and intensive arable land use, there is great contrast in the way the landscape is perceived at local level. The sinuous and ancient character of the Townlands is evocative of a long and continuous settlement history stretching back over a thousand years, whereas

elsewhere the geometric field patterns and industrial scale farm complexes creates an altogether more modern character".

"By contrast, in close proximity to the Townlands villages and arterial roads, tranquillity is all but lost and the landscape is perceived as well settled, busy and active. Across much of the landscape, many long views are foreshortened by tree belts. Whilst not extensive, these merge in views at ground level to form a backdrop to many panoramic views to the wide horizon".

3.2.5 One of the Forces for Change in built development terms is that,

"*Modern built development is affecting the Townlands villages, eroding their architectural and historic character. Development on settlement margins can be particularly damaging, creating visual intrusion, resulting in the loss of surrounding landscape features and increasing the risk of coalescence. Proliferation of smaller, unplanned residential development along arterial roads is also changing the landscape, reducing the sense of remoteness and enclosing views"*[2]

3.2.6 In Agriculture and Land Management, it is recognised that,

"There is marked evidence of agricultural intensification and farm amalgamation, accompanied by a move towards arable production. This has resulted in the loss or damage of many typical landscape features, including traditional patterns of field boundaries and remnants of ridge and furrow, contributing to a more homogenous landscape. Soil erosion associated with the large and exposed open fields is an ongoing problem and may be exacerbated by further agricultural intensification and also the effects of climate change. The loss of pasture is particularly evident around settlements, where grazing animals and smaller field sizes contribute to the setting and structure of several villages"

[2] East Midlands Regional LCA, 2010; p.103

"There is also a proliferation of new large scale agricultural buildings, reflecting the loss of small holdings and the general increase in farm size. The popularity in bulb growing is also notable, with an increase in the number of poly-tunnels and glass houses. Such structures can reduce the sense of remoteness in rural areas and cause visual intrusion, enclosing previously open views"

3.2.7 As with the national scale assessment above, this is a larger scale landscape assessment that provides a broad overview of some relevance to the scale of the development and context.

District Landscape Character Assessment

3.2.8 The South Holland Strategic Landscape Capacity Study identifies the Site as lying within Landscape Settled Fens Landscape Character Type[3] which is described as,

"Predominantly flat topography, dissected by main roads, rivers, drainage channels and drainage ditches often on raised banks(1-3m). Primarily nucleated settlements with associated mature trees. Church spires-and towers often rise above the mature vegetation to provide prominent landmark features. Medium to large fields with intensive market garden crops. Locally strong hedgerow elements. Views are restricted or foreshortened by shelterbelts and woodland or mature hedgerows".

"This contributes to a sense of enclosure with a more open feel between settlements. The main visual detractors are the 440kV and 132 kV overhead lines on towers, electricity sub stations and power stations and urban fringe visual clutter (dominated by light industry and glasshouse horticulture). Note that within the larger settlements, there are no views of adjacent fenland and this introspective quality reduces the awareness of place within the wider fenland landscape".

[3] South Holland LCS. Landscape Character Type Settled Fens LCT, 2003 p.36

3.2.9 The Landscape Characteristics of the LCA are described as follows,

"***Key Characteristics:*** *flat landform, nucleated settlements with mature vegetations and church spires, organic lines dominate, e.g. winding roads".*

"***Condition:*** *average but ranges from good (farmland) to poor (urban fringe).*

3.2.10 The appraisal of the Settled Fen area recognises the vast array of 'Dominant Land Cover and Landscape Elements' making up this flat landscape as being,

"Buildings: *farms, masts, poles, pylons, industrial, commercial, settlements, urban.*

Heritage/vernacular: *buildings, country houses, field systems, ecclesiastical.*

Farming: *Hedges, fields, fences, arable, shelterbelts, hedgerows, orchards, clumps and alien coniferous screens.*

Hydrology: *rivers, drainage channels, ditches.*

Communication: *roads, railways, airfields, pylons, masts."*

3.2.11 Although part of the South Holland Landscape Capacity Study's purpose was to look at capacity in relation to future large scale wind turbine development (c.100m turbines), as was being anticipated by the LPA back in 2003, the following conclusion regarding the Settled Fens Landscape Type is still relevant to this development since,

"…. *However, there are some tracts of land within the Settled Fens Landscape Character Type which have been classified as moderately suitable for such developments, typically those affected adversely by the landscape and visual impact of high voltage electricity transmission lines. and associated infrastructure, urban fringe clutter and large scale industrial and commercial developments. This has occurred to such an extent that the integrity of the landscape has been compromised and there is consequently a reduced sensitivity to change*"[4]. [underlining added]

[4] South Holland SLCA 'Conclusions & Recommendations; para 5.2, p.16.

3.2.12 The above conclusion and the mapping that accompanied it, identified that by comparison the landscape capacity of land to the east of Spalding was greater than much of the wider landscape beyond and thus more able to accommodate development, even a large-scale development in the context of wind turbines.

3.2.13 Furthermore, the report acknowledged the visual consequences of an engineered eastern edge around the settlement since,

"…*To the east, the raised banks of the River Welland provide visual containment*"[5].

3.2.14 The documents outlined above, together with the Site appraisal, have been utilised to establish the baseline conditions for the Site and its surroundings in order to inform this assessment.

3.3 Statutory Designations

3.3.1 **Scheduled Monuments:** There are no Scheduled Monuments on the Site or close to it. (Refer to **Figure 3: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way**).

3.3.2 **Listed Buildings**: There are no Listed Buildings on the Site. There are a number of Listed Buildings to the west of the Site associated with Spalding's Conservation Area and historic core, which are all at least 1km away, including St Paul's Church. To the southeast of the Site (approx. 1km away), there is a Listed Building within the Low Fulney Estate, which is subsumed by commercial glasshouses and growing facilities (Refer to **Figure 3: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way**).

3.3.3 **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** The Site is not covered by any SSSI's. (Refer to **Figure 2 Statutory Designations**).

[5] South Holland SLCA 'Conclusions & Recommendations; para 5.4, p.17.

3.3.4 **Registered Parks and Gardens**: There are no Registered Parks and Gardens on the Site or within 2km of the Site.

3.3.5 **Conservation Areas**: The Site is not located within a Conservation Area. The Spalding Conservation Area is focused on the historic core of the town and includes the Church of St Paul, whose spire is visible in the landscape beyond the town. (Refer to **Figure 3: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way**).

3.3.6 **Environmental Designations**: There are no Environmental Designations across the Site. Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh lie to the north of the Site associated the low-lying land adjacent to the Coronation Channel, (Refer to **Figure 4: Environmental Designations**).

3.3.7 **Public Rights of Way (PRoW):** There are no Public Rights of Way across the Site itself. A footpath runs northwest through the allotments to the east of the Site, from Kellet Gate. There are a number of PRoW linking the wider landscape, including Bridleways to the south (which cross the A16, Coronation Channel and connect with the east edge of the town, as well as routes to the north, around the Abattoir and east within the Low Fulney Estate. PRoW information is taken from *County Council PRoW Interactive Map* (Refer to **Figure 3: Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way**).

3.4 Landscape Resource and Contribution of the Site to Landscape Character

3.4.1 The Site forms part of the characteristic edge of settlement character located at the edge of Spalding, in a location where the proliferation of commercial buildings and agricultural land uses generally imparts strong influences across the land that forms the transition between the town and the wider fens to the east of the town. The settlement itself is largely masked behind the linear embankments of the Coronation Channel providing containment. The key features beyond the edge of the untidy settlement edge are the Coronation Channel which cuts through the landscape, forming a localised recreational resource for local residents, and providing a connected series of public routes. In addition, vegetation associated with the A16 results in limited visual influence in relation to the north or west. The open nature of

the land to the south and east clearly reflects the nature of the fens, and there are also views back towards the spires of both local churches within the town to the north and west, which form characteristic features above and in between tree cover.

3.4.2 The Site itself is made up of agricultural parcels of land under arable cultivation, with redundant former farm buildings in the western portion of the land. Overall, although the Site is somewhat open, the nature of the surrounding parcels of land and nearby land uses, which include buildings and agricultural commercial business, mean that the land is partially contained strong features, including a distinctive linear belt of trees to the east along Kellet Gate, partial vegetation cover along the A16, as well as linear tree belts to the south, which separate the Low Fulney area from the fens lying to the east and south.

3.4.3 As such, the Site contains a number of attributes that are representative of the local landscape character, beyond which there are numerous incongruous elements (in terms of built form) that are part of the untidy local landscape character, and of low quality and condition.

3.5 Visual Resource

3.5.1 The visual amenity experienced by people (visual receptors) in the locality of the Site differs according to many factors. Visual receptors of higher sensitivity with greater susceptibility to change include residents at home (private viewpoints), people engaged in outdoor recreation (including use of PROWs), visitors to heritage assets and other attractions, travellers on recognised scenic routes (public viewpoints) and people at their workplace where views are an important contributor to the setting and quality of their working life.

3.5.2 Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes are considered less sensitive to changes in visual amenity.

3.5.3 Consideration of the study area, via desk research and field survey identified locations from which the Site and the proposed scheme would potentially be visible.

3.5.4 Desktop work using mapping, Figures and aerial survey established a broad area of search at the outset of approximately 2km, which was then reviewed and rationalised during field survey work, resulting in the following,

- To the north of Low Road, the A16 roundabout and Fulney Lane South, views are limited by vegetation to either side of the A16, the Coronation Channel and within the gardens and the small-scale patchwork of field pasture that are divided by hedges and trees.
- To the south, the Site is open resulting in an arc (broadly east to southwest) of short-range views extending east back to a thick wooded belt alongside Kellet Gate at Fulney Lodge. To the southeast and south, the presence of large-scale commercial buildings at Low Fulney serves to interrupt almost all views of the Site. Around the A16 to the south, a combination of strong tree belts and roadside vegetation also limit further views.
- To the west and southwest of the Site, an open section of the A16 results in views of the Site extending back to the banks of the Coronation Channel in the vicinity of the former railway line, as well as a bridleway to the southwest.
- The raised nature of the engineered banks (c.3m+) of the Welland's relief channel compared to the settlement, together with its ad-hoc tree lines, serve to limit views from the town behind the strong line of the watercourse.

3.5.5 The visual work was developed to inform the specific, representative and illustrative views to be selected for inclusion in the report to illustrate the visual effects of the proposed development, as shown on **Figure 7: Photo Location Plan.**

Private viewpoints

Properties along Low Road and Fulney Lane South (Four Winds, La Notre and Denva House to the northeast, and Cottage Farm to the northwest) close to the Site (no photos - private views).

Properties along Kellet Gate (The Lodge and Fulney House)

Properties along Rangell Gate (The Bungalow, Bramble Lodge and adj. to School of Dance)

Public viewpoints

Bridleway on Childers South Drove

Coronation Channel paths

Footpath within Allotment gardens

Bridleway to edge of Low Fulney Estate

Transport routes

Rangell Gate

Kellet Gate

Low Road (west of A16)

Low Road (east of A16), Fulney Lane South, Fulney Lane

A16 (eastern bypass)

4 THE PROPOSALS

4.1 General Principles

4.1.1 This section of the report considers the results of the initial baseline work in the context of the future development of the Site.

4.1.2 The design of the proposed scheme should be well-integrated into the landscape which surrounds the site; it is important to seek to retain the existing Site features that contribute to the character of the area – these include the existing tree and hedgerow boundaries, ditches along the road frontage, including the key features associated with the Settled Fen landscape; the treatment of the Site boundaries are also important, paying particular attention to the structural spaces as well as the relationship with the existing settlement edge, will be key to maintaining and enhancing the quality of that transition to the fen landscape beyond.

4.1.3 The district level LCA does not appear to contain guidelines for landscape change or management; however, the 'Agriculture and Land Management' Guidelines from the East Midlands Regional LCA 'Shaping the Future Landscape' include to:

"*The aim should be to protect existing rural landscape features, whilst encouraging positive management of those features lost or under threat. In particular the restoration of hedgerows should be given priority around urban areas, along with an increase in grassland and pasture, creating a stronger and more mixed pattern of land use, whilst helping to integrate new development into the landscape. This will also help to limit the occurrence and effects of soil erosion. However, care should be given not to disrupt the characteristic wide horizons and panoramas in more remote locations*"[6].

[6] EMR LCA, p104, 105

"*The aim should be to protect the distinctive open character of the landscape and consider the visual impact of any new structures. New, large scale agricultural buildings should be carefully sited, away from visually prominent locations and located amongst existing buildings where possible. The opportunity to conserve and upgrade existing barns and buildings should also be explored*".

4.1.4 In respect of Forestry and Woodland, the guidelines for shaping the future landscape suggest,

"*The aim should be to protect the distinctive open character of the landscape by ensuring the type, scale and location of new woodland and tree planting is appropriate. Tree planting should generally be limited to roads margins or ditches where trees are already a local feature or in and around established settlements as part of mechanisms for visual containment of new built development. Instead, priority should be given to managing more characteristic habitats and features, such as saltmarsh and drainage ditches as part of enhanced habitat reserves*".

4.2 Proposal

4.2.1 The proposed scheme forms part of planning application comprising a change in use from agricultural land comprising the,

"Demolition of existing buildings and construction of a new plant-based protein extraction facility and ancillary office space together with landscaping, SuDs features, car park and associated infrastructure",

where proposals are illustrated on drawings prepared by Portess and Richardson Architects and Landscape Masterplan by Andrew Belson.

4.2.2 The tallest building has a proposed ridge height(s) of 11.6 m, which is similar in scale and height of some of the other commercial buildings in the local area. The scheme has been set back from the road frontage, with car parking and soft landscape features, to allow separation from nearby residential properties.

4.3 Approach to Mitigation

4.3.1 In consideration of the landscape and visual issues relevant to the Site an approach to the mitigation of the proposed scheme has been considered, incorporating the principles outlined above. The mitigation strategy would be developed in further detail, and would aim to avoid, reduce and where feasible, address the landscape and visual effects.

4.3.2 The proposals aim to mitigate potential adverse landscape and visual effects and help to integrate the proposed development into the surrounding landscape. The principles of the landscape strategy include:

- Retention and enhancement of existing native hedgerow vegetation (including hedgerow and mature tree lines) and mature vegetation along existing boundaries.
- Strengthening the character of road frontage along Low Road and Rangell Gate to maintain rural character by introducing appropriate tree planting.
- Reinstating at least one historic field boundary with native hedgerow planting and key trees (southern Site boundary) to reflect historic character.
- Create an enhanced fenland character in the area beyond the built development, which reflects the character of the fenland landscape and improves the integration of habitat and green infrastructure. Parts of the Site will remain open as meadow or pasture/grassland reflecting the low-key more open character of the fenland.
- New planting, using native trees will continue to help support integration associated with the adjacent A16 and the interchange at Low Road and Rangell Gate.
- Maintaining the rural character of the Rangell Gate, by ensuring there is an enhanced landscape fringe beyond the new built form that incorporates new planting to maintain the green and blue infrastructure resource of the drain, also

helping to integrate the buildings, which are set back within new native tree groups.

- Provision of local wildlife resource (as part of SUDs by creating new linear ditches with diverse planting mixes), open space and species rich planting and longer grass, including meadow grass and/or pasture to enhance the biodiversity and the open landscape characteristics of the area.
- Provision of orchard trees and other flowering trees on the northeast/ east side of the Site (for example) near the car park to help support the diversity of species including the allotments adjacent.
- The building finishes will be developed with an appropriate RAL colour(s), comprising muted light grey and green to grey in graduated tones to reflect the colouring in the local landscape.

4.3.3 By taking on board these principles and implementing them as part of the proposed masterplan and landscape plans, it would ensure that the proposed development of the Site can be well integrated into its surroundings and minimise any landscape and visual effects that may result from the implementation of the scheme, as well as ensuring the scheme accords with the aims of the landscape guidelines.

5 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

5.1 Identifying the Landscape Effects

5.1.1 This section of the report considers the results of the initial baseline work in the context of future potential development of the Site. The landscape effects are the changes to the Site, quantitative or qualitative, compared with a scenario without the Proposals. Effects can be adverse or beneficial, direct, indirect or cumulative.

5.1.2 The following assessment of landscape effects should be read in conjunction with the approach to mitigation (refer to Chapter 4).

5.1.3 The effect of the proposed changes to the Site, specifically on the identified landscape and townscape receptors (attributes) has been reviewed including consideration of changes to the existing landscape resource, the introduction of new elements within the landscape and changes to local perceptions of the Site.

5.2 Susceptibility

5.2.1 An important element in identifying the effects of a Proposal is to assess the ability (the susceptibility) of the existing landscape to accommodate the specific proposed changes, with regard to the consequences on the local landscape character.

5.2.2 The Site (landscape resource) has been deemed to be of ***Medium to Low Susceptibility*** to accommodate proposed development. Although the Site is open, it is in a location where there is a proliferation of agricultural and commercial enterprise that is considered to be compatible with and able to accommodate the proposed changes and to absorb development of this type without the loss of key characteristics, individual elements or features that inform the overall landscape character of the area.

5.3 Significance of Landscape Effects

5.3.1 Effects can be adverse or beneficial. Where the Proposals are judged to cause deterioration to the landscape resource / local landscape character this is described as an adverse effect. Where the Proposals are judged to increase the value of the Site to the landscape resource / local landscape character this is described as a beneficial effect.

5.3.2 There will be a permanent and noticeable effect to the Site itself in terms of the proposed change in land use from agricultural land to a production facility for plant based raw ingredients, which will change the openness of the land close to the A16. Although the change will be noticeable, the new facility will be located in a landscape that is already recognised for similar types of production and processing, which includes the presence of large-scale buildings and commercial premises, both at the town's fringes and in the open countryside beyond the town. Landscape features to the north and west of the Site will be retained, although there will also be new clusters of native trees required, to help integrate the scheme at the edge of the fen landscape.

5.3.3 The key characteristics and sensitivities of the wider fenland landscape beyond the Site will remain unchanged by the proposed scheme. For example, there would be no effect on the character or appreciation of the wider aspects of the Settled Fen, which lies to the east of the town and beyond Low Fulney Estate. As such, the rural open character of the remaining fenland landscape to the east will be preserved.

5.3.4 Overall, on balance the significance of the landscape effects with regard to the proposed development on land to the east of the A16 and adjacent to Rangell Gate has been assessed to represent a ***Slight Adverse Effect*** on a localised part of the landscape character area at the edge of the town, where the influences of similar agricultural land uses are readily apparent and abrupt. The key attributes of the receiving landscape are largely retained, and the proposed development will not alter to any great degree the qualities or characteristics of the wider Settled Fen landscape or key features of the local landscape.

5.3.5 Once an appropriate landscape management scheme has established and the landscape mitigation proposals have established, the significance of the landscape effects in the longer term are considered to represent a ***Slight to Negligible Effect*** to the landscape resource and landscape character of the area.

6 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

6.1 Identifying the Visual Effects

6.1.1 The visual effects are the changes to the Site, quantitative or qualitative, compared with a scenario without the Proposals. Effects can be adverse or beneficial, direct, indirect or cumulative. The assessment involves a systematic identification and description of the visual effects, supported by plans and photographs. (Refer to **Figure 9: Photographic Sheets**).

6.1.2 The following assessment of visual effects should be read in conjunction with the approach to mitigation (refer to Chapter 4).

6.1.3 The likely value placed upon views by people, or the visual amenity of the locality is evaluated to help assess the effects of proposed development.

6.1.4 Consideration of the views and visual amenity during the site visit has considered year-round views. As such, the assessment has endeavoured to make informed judgements applicable to visual amenity throughout the year and the consideration of seasonal views, e.g., in the summer months when vegetation is in leaf and during winter months without vegetation.

6.1.5 An important element in identifying the visual effects of a proposal is to assess the existing visual receptors (people who see the view) and their susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity. The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- *The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and;*

- *The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.*[7]

6.2 Significance of Visual Effects

6.2.1 Assessment of the significance of visual effects relating to the proposed development is considered with regard to the sensitivity of the visual receptor, the value attached to the views or visual amenity and the magnitude of change in view. The magnitude of change in view is considered and described in light of:

- *The sensitivity of the visual receptor (the viewer)*
- *The value attached to the views or visual amenity*
- *The size and scale of the development*
- *The geographical extent of the area influenced*
- *Duration*
- *Reversibility*

6.2.2 The significance of the change for the visual amenity of the viewer is assessed and provided as a result of the above considerations.

6.2.3 For the identified viewpoints the degree of change which the Proposals will engender is described and assessed. The following section identifies the primary viewpoints and people or visual receptors within the area that are likely to be affected by the change in views and visual amenity resulting from the proposed development. The significance of the visual effect has been assessed upon completion of the scheme and once established (i.e. 15 years plus).

[7] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Para 6.32 (2013)

6.3 Identification of Visual Effects

6.3.1 The following section identifies a range of typical receptors within the area which are likely to be affected by the change in views and visual amenity resulting from the proposed development.

6.3.2 It should be noted that for a number of assessed views the effects are considered to be short lived, sometimes because they occur on transient routes – e.g. local roads – in some instances from these locations, views are often quick or periodic glimpses through gaps in hedges whilst moving along a route.

6.3.3 Overall, the extent of views and visual influence of the proposed scheme are restricted to local views relatively close to the Site.

Private viewpoints

Properties along Low Road and Fulney Lane South (Four Winds, La Notre, Denva House and Cottage Farm) close to the Site (no photos - private views) (High Sensitivity)

6.3.4 Although the existing farm buildings will be removed, changes in visual amenity will be experienced as the open outlook across fields and allotments will be interrupted by the introduction of a new large scale commercial building and car parking in the foreground of the views, particularly opposite 'Four Winds', which has a more open front garden and will result in the most noticeable effects. Properties along Fulney Lane South (La Notre and Denva House) have the benefit of garden boundary hedges, helping to reduce the change in views to mostly upper floor windows. The scheme will utilise the existing access point off Low Road, but also incorporate generous new planting along the road frontage to minimise the effects on these properties.

Scheme Completion: **Substantial to Moderate Adverse Effect**
Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Moderate Adverse Effect**

Properties along Kellet Gate (The Lodge and Fulney House) (High Sensitivity)

6.3.5 Where change is experienced, most likely from The Lodge and parts of the large garden at Fulney House in winter (when trees have no leaves), it will most likely be in partial context with existing parts of the Low Fulney Estate, which are already highly visible in views beyond the allotments to the south; however, it is recognised the scheme will introduce a separate new built form adjacent to the hamlet until the boundary vegetation has established.

Scheme Completion: **Moderate to Slight Adverse Effect**
Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Slight Adverse to Negligible Effect**

Properties along Rangell Gate (The Bungalow, Bramble Lodge and adj. to School of Dance) (High Sensitivity)

6.3.6 Where change is experienced, most likely from The Bungalow and houses just south in close proximity to the 'School of Dance', it will mostly likely be in partial context with existing development, including glasshouses which are visible to the west of the Site, adjacent to the A16; however, it is recognised the scheme will introduce a new built form replacing the redundant farm buildings, which will be softened as boundary vegetation becomes established.

Scheme Completion: **Moderate to Slight Adverse Effect**
Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Slight Adverse Effect**

Public viewpoints

Bridleways on and adjacent to Childers South Drove (High Sensitivity)

6.3.7 Users of the bridleways east of the A16 are unlikely to experience any change in view from the network of routes, as the existing commercial buildings and strong tree lines to the west of Low Fulney Estate and around the A16 perimeter, serve to screen most views north. A very narrow gap reveals the upper part of a pylon mast in the north of town near Springfields, which may also result in glimpsed views of the proposed scheme, although softened by new boundary vegetation.

Scheme Completion: **Slight Adverse to Negligible Effect**

Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Negligible Effect**

Coronation Channel paths and connecting Bridleway (High Sensitivity)

6.3.8 Users of these routes are likely to experience only very limited changes in view as existing lines of trees along the channel embankment, and vegetation along the A16 serve to soften most views, although where the gaps occur will result in glimpsed views of the proposed scheme (for example at the former railway bridge). In some locations, the proposed scheme may be glimpsed in context with existing glasshouses, whilst to the north of Low Road, views south towards the Site are screened by vegetation and trees around the A16 and junction.

Scheme Completion: **Slight Adverse Effect**

Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Negligible Effect**

Public Footpath within Allotment gardens (High Sensitivity)

6.3.9 The footpath helping to connect Fulney Lane with Swindler's Drove via Low Fulney Estate, will have views of the proposed scheme across the open allotments. The new building to the edge of Rangell Gate, will replace the existing redundant farm buildings that are visible with a new larger building, that will also be seen alongside the spire of St Mary and St Nicolas Church, albeit being softened by new planting over time.

Scheme Completion: **Moderate to Slight Adverse Effect**

Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Slight Adverse Effect**

Bridleways to edge of Low Fulney Estate (High Sensitivity)

6.3.10 Beyond the footpath at Kellet Gate, the route becomes a series of bridleways through the Low Fulney Estate, which are subsumed with development either side of Mallard Road, preventing views. Another bridleway to the north runs along the northern edge

of the Low Fulney Estate, but a wooded belt alongside Kellet Gate screens views of the proposed development.

Scheme Completion: **Negligible Effect**

Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Negligible Effect**

Transport routes

Rangell Gate (Medium Sensitivity)

6.3.11 There will be a very apparent change to the road frontage along Rangell Gate as a result of new development into the street scene and views of the proposed scheme along the road length, including glimpses from back towards the junction with Weston Hills Road and Kellet Gate; however, to the south, these will be experienced in the context of the existing development along the road and reduce with distance. The remainder of Rangell Gate where the land is open will experience views in combination with the spire of Saint Paul's Church at Springfield approaching the Site.

Scheme Completion: **Substantial to Moderate Adverse Effect reducing with distance to Slight Adverse Effect**

Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Moderate to Slight Adverse reducing to Negligible Effect**

Kellet Gate (Medium Sensitivity)

6.3.12 The road in the vicinity of Low Fulney Estate is likely to have views of the proposed scheme across the open allotments from where the new building beyond Rangell Gate, will replace the existing redundant farm buildings that are visible with a new larger building, that may be seen alongside glimpses of the spire of St Mary and St Nicolas Church, albeit being softened by new planting over time.

Scheme Completion: **Moderate to Slight Adverse Effect**

Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Slight Adverse Effect**

Low Road (west of A16) (Medium Sensitivity)

6.3.13 From the elevated bridge over the Coronation Channel, only very limited changes in view will occur as existing lines of trees along the channel embankment, and vegetation along the A16 fringes and roundabout interchange serve to soften most views, although where gaps occur this may result in very limited but glimpsed views of the proposed scheme in winter months, although they will be seen in context with existing development between the A16 and the Coronation Channel.

Scheme Completion: **Negligible Effect**

Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Negligible Effect**

Low Road (east of A16), Fulney Lane South, Fulney Ln (Medium Sensitivity)

6.3.14 There will be a very apparent change to the road frontage along Low Road as a result of new development into the street scene and views of the proposed scheme along the road length, extending back into Fulney Lane across the hamlet of low-density dwellings, resulting in some filtered views of the proposed scheme; however, it is recognised these views will be partly experienced in the context of the existing development visible to the south.

Scheme Completion: **Substantial to Moderate Adverse Effect reducing with distance to Slight Adverse Effect**

Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Moderate to Slight Adverse reducing to Negligible Effect**

A16 (eastern bypass) (Medium to Low Sensitivity)

6.3.15 There will be an apparent change in view along a short section of the road approaching the roundabout, as a result of introducing new built forms to the east side of the carriageway on open land; however, it is recognised these views will be partly experienced in the context of the existing development visible to the west, as well as the serial nature of views experienced towards commercial developments along much of the A16 in the vicinity of Spalding. Proposed planting, on the southern

boundary of the Site will soften views of the scheme and help integrate it into the landscape. Heading south along the A16 from the north, there are likely to be be some glimpsed views of the upper portions of the building where tree cover is thinner in places.

Scheme Completion: **Moderate Adverse Effect**

Established scheme (+ 15 years summer): **Slight Adverse Effect**

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7 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

7.1.1 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has reviewed the existing landscape and visual resource of land to the east of the A16 and adjacent to Rangell Gate, Spalding (the Site) as part of a planning application for a new plant-based protein extraction facility with associated elements. The change in land use will ultimately lead to some alterations in the landscape and visual appearance of the Site, albeit the assessment has found these to be relatively localised changes in the local area. Changes are inevitable in the context of delivering further progress to meet the needs of the agricultural business.

7.1.2 The Site itself contains some attributes that are representative of the local landscape character; however, although the Site is open, the degree of enclosure afforded by localised vegetation patterns and the Low Fulney Estate to the southeast, contrasts with openness of the wider landscape character in the Settled Fen to the east. As such, the more typically open characteristic features of the fens lie beyond the industrial/commercial areas, whereas in this location there are somewhat unsympathetic influences which contain and effect the local character. The Site is considered to have a Moderate to Low Susceptibility to the proposed scheme for residential development.

7.1.3 Overall, on balance the Proposals for the Site are considered to have a limited effect on the landscape resource and local landscape character, as the proposals will see an existing agricultural parcel changed to one with commercial use at the edge of the settlement. This will result in a Slight Adverse Effect on character initially, reducing to Negligible over time, as the proposals establish.

7.1.4 The proposed development will contribute to the landscape resource and local character, without the loss of key landscape features, indeed there are a significant number of new features being introduced as part of the landscape masterplan, which will fit with the character of this location, including the provision of new habitat,

including grassland and pasture, as well as careful placement of trees and the creation of hedgerows.

7.1.5 Overall, the proposals result in a small number of visual effects of varying degree of change, but these are largely localised in the area, as set out in the assessment. Furthermore, it is recognised that the mitigation measures will be successful in ensuring the proposals become well integrated with the surroundings when viewed from various locations in the surrounding landscape. The effects range from Substantial to Moderate Adverse and Negligible and would reduce over time to Moderate to Slight Adverse or Negligible.

Stansted:
Unit 1, The Exchange,
9 Station Road,
Stansted, CM24 8BE

t +44 (0)1279 647044
e office@lizlake.com
www.lizlake.com

Bristol:
1 Host Street,
Bristol, BS1 5BU

t +44 (0)117 927 1786
e office@lizlake.com
www.lizlake.com

Nottingham:
3 Newcastle Chambers
Angel Row
Nottingham
NG1 6HL
t +44 (0)115 784 3566
e office@lizlake.com
www.lizlake.com

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