

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

GCB Cocoa Production Facility, Glemsford

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influence



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INF_N0746(08)004-007

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1 Introduction

Outline

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared by Influence Environmental Limited, a chartered Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning practice.
- 1.2 Influence has been appointed to carry out this report for the proposed reconfiguration of the existing site at the former Phillips Avent factory, south of Glemsford.
- 1.3 Although the Site is located on the edge of the town and has been the site of an existing factory for over 50 years, the overriding considerations when judging the potential impacts of the proposals are the introduction of a 40m high parapet and those impacts on views from the surrounding countryside.
- 1.4 This LVA has been undertaken as a stand-alone report based upon the guidance contained within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA)¹. It provides an appraisal of the proposed development within the identified Application Site and surrounding study area.

Project Description

- 1.5 This report has been prepared to appraise the landscape and visual amenity of the Application Site (the Site) and resulting potential impact of the proposed development upon the receiving landscape and visual resource.
- 1.6 The location of the proposed development is shown on figure INF_N0746(08)001 and detailed layout drawings are supplied within the Supporting Planning Statement².
- 1.7 The proposed development consists of an existing production facilities conversion which comprises of:
 - New production facilities for cocoa production on existing building footprint;
 - New biomass boiler on existing car park; and
 - Existing access maintained from the A1092 with one reconfigured entrance for HGV access.
- 1.8 The location of the proposed development is shown on figure INF_ N0746(08)002 Context and Designation Plan and a full description of the proposals and potential associated effects is provided in section 6 of this report.

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013

² Supporting Planning Statement, BE Design, 2021

2 Planning Context

Local Planning Policy

- 2.1 The Application Site is located within the administrative jurisdiction of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council. The River Stour south of the Site marks the district boundary to Essex County Council.
- 2.2 Babergh and Mid Suffolk have separately adopted Local Plans but are currently working towards a new Joint Local Plan.

The Babergh Core Strategy

- 2.3 The published Core Strategy was adopted on 2014, however a number of policies have been saved from the Babergh Local Plan (BLP 2006), particularly those relating to landscape and the countryside. The Core Strategy sets out text relative to the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the Special Landscape Area (SLA) and the wider countryside. The detailed policy is saved from the BLP and set out below.
- 2.4 Those relevant policies are set out below.

Policy CR04: Special Landscape Areas

2.5 This policy sets out expectations for development proposals in Special Landscape Areas. Development should maintain or enhance the special landscape qualities of the area in accordance with the relevant landscape appraisal.

Policy CR18: Buildings in the Countryside (Non Residential)

2.6 This policy outlines that countryside development will be permissible if certain criteria are not adversely impacted. These include: 'landscape characteristics and biodiversity cultural heritage; highway safety; residential amenity; the location of the building relative to public transport infrastructure, urban centres and whether the use represents sustainable development'³.

Policy CN08: Development In or Near Conservation Areas

- 2.7 The policy offers guidance for development within a Conservation Area or where views into or out of the Conservation Area are affected. These include the implementation of measures to:
 - 'Preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area or its setting;
 - Retain all elements and components including spaces which contribute to the special character of the area;
 - Be of an appropriate scale, form and detail design to harmonise with its setting;
 - Use materials and components that complement or harmonise with the character and appearance of the area; and



³ Babergh Core Strategy, 2014, Babergh District Council

Ensure that natural features such as trees and hedges are retained and integrated into development proposals'.

Policy CS14: Green Infrastructure

- 2.8 This policy states that developments will be permitted where provisions are made to protect and enhance green infrastructure. The policy reinstates the importance of the implementation of green infrastructure of new development, where on the larger sites it will be central to the character and layout of development. Further guidance on all development reinforces:
 - 'The provision of high quality, multifunctional green infrastructure appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal;
 - The consideration to ensure the new provision establishes links with existing green infrastructure;
 - The provision of a well-connected network of green infrastructure in urban and rural areas'.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan, Pre-Submission Document

- 2.9 The Joint Local Plan is the proposed strategy for the growth of the districts. The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Pre-submission document (Regulation 19) (November 2020) was approved by Babergh full Council on 10 November 2020 and Mid Suffolk full Council on 11 November 2020.
- 2.10 The following emerging plan policies are of relevance:

SP09 - Enhancement and Management of the Environment

2.11 This policy reinforces development to support the enhancement and management of the natural and local environment and green infrastructure networks.

LP18 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

2.12 This policy states a hierarchy of development seeking firstly to; enhance habitats, avoid impacts, mitigate against harmful impacts, or as a last resort compensate for losses that cannot be avoided or mitigated for. The policy further reinforces that any development with adverse impacts on species protected by legislation will not be permitted.

LP19 - Landscape

- 2.13 This policy seeks to protect and enhance the local landscape character and seeks that any proposed development must:
 - 'a. Integrate positively with the existing landscape character of the area and reinforce the local distinctiveness and identity of individual settlements.
 - b. Proposals must be sensitive to their landscape and visual amenity impacts (including on dark skies and tranquil areas); subject to siting, design, lighting, use of materials and colour, along with the associated mitigation measures.
 - c. Enhance and protect landscape character and values and heritage assets such as; locally characteristic landscape features, for example by use of materials which complement the local individual landscape character, archaeological and historic patterns of settlement and land use and designations; being demonstrably informed by local

guidance, in particular the Council's Joint Landscape Guidance, the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment.

- d. Consider the topographical cumulative impact on landscape sensitivity'⁴.
 LP20 AONB
- 2.14 This policy reinforces the above policy LP19- Landscape.

LP21 - The Historic Environment

2.15 This policy serves to protect and enhance the historic environment, including its setting.

LP24 - New Agricultural/rural Buildings in the Countryside

2.16 This policy serves to ensure that proposed development is compatible with its surroundings, including, habitat sites, heritage assets and their settings.

Designations and Registered Sites

2.17 The Application Site is not located within any local or national designations however there are several relevant landscape designations within the study area.

Special Landscape Area

2.18 To the east of the Site lies a Special Landscape Area. At the nearest point to the Site is its boundary along Hobbs Lane, approximately 200m away. The Special Landscape Area is a designation founded on the high quality of the undulating countryside which is the result of landscape erosion by the various watercourses within the wider Glem and Stour valleys – which are particularly vulnerable to change. The significant habitats of the area include: ancient woodland; ancient hedgerows (species rich); lowland hay meadows; Stour and Orwell inter-tidal mudflats and salt marsh (the habitat for wildfowland water fowl); farmland pond; graxing marsh; cereal field margins. The Special Landscape Area is addressed in the Adopted and saved Local Plan Policy CRO4.

Stour Valley Project Area

- 2.19 The Application Site is outside of the AONB but within the Stour Valley Project Area.
- 2.20 The Project Area does not benefit from the same statutory protection as the AONB. Parts of it however are considered to exhibit similar qualifying characteristics as the nationally designated AONB and it is therefore considered a Valued Landscape.
- 2.21 The AONB team commissioned Alison Farmer Associates to undertake a Valued Landscape Assessment of the Stour Valley Project Area. The assessment was commissioned to ensure that the Project Area, as a Valued Landscape, is properly considered at the plan making and planning application stages.
- 2.22 The Stour Valley Project area resembles Dedham Vale (Area of Natural Beauty) and is described in the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan 2016-2021 as;
- 2.23 The Project area is predominately rural and often demonstrates medieval settlement patterns. In places the growth of villages and changes to agricultural practices have altered the



⁴ Joint Local Plan, Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils, November 2020

landscape but not fundamentally changed it. Many of the villages retain their historic centres and have timber framed buildings, imposing churches and village greens. Historic hamlets and isolated farm

- 2.24 The area has many woodlands situated within the tributary valleys but much of the valley floor is given over to arable crops with the notable exception of Sudbury Common Lands where large tracts of water meadows remain as an important feature of the landscape.
- 2.25 Pressures identified on the Stour Valley Project area come from a number of aspects such as tourism, infrastructure, housing and settlements and development.
- 2.26 The Stour Valley Project Area is recognised as a highly sensitive landscape.

Relevant Designations

- 2.27 There is one small group of TPO trees (ref. BT291) within the Site boundary.
- 2.28 The Site lies approximately 400m from the edge of the Conservation Area of Glemsford Village, see section 2.30. The listed buildings within the Conservation Area are mostly Grade II listed.
- 2.29 The nearest listed building to the Site is Potash House, a domestic residence, situated on Skate's Hill, outside of the Conservation Area, and approximately 300m to the north east of the Site.
- 2.30 There are several other listed assets within the study area. A number of listed buildings lie to the south of the Site as well as to the north of the Roman Road.
- 2.31 The most significant ecological designation is the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Glemsford Pits (former gravel pits) which lies directly south and east of the Site. It is wooded wetland area and contains a series of ponds and follows the course of the River Stour. Courts Wood SSSI is a small woodland block approximately 900m to the north of the Site, it is also ancient woodland. Other ancient woodland is situated along the River Glem which runs to the east of the Site and Links with the SSSI.
- 2.32 Directly south of the SSSI is Foxearth Meadows Local Nature Reserve. There are a number of ponds and public footpaths running through the wetland reserve, one currently elevated and forming a boardwalk. The northern boundary of the reserve is the River Stour and dismantled railway, and woodland separates the reserve from the Site.
- 2.33 There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) running across the Site, however there is an extensive network of PRoW running across the valley away from the Site. The nearest footpath runs west of the Site and leads into Glemsford and connects with the Stour Valley Way. The Stour Valley Way is a long distance path and runs in an east west direction north of the Site, its nearest point at approximately 1km away.

Other Supporting Guidance

Glemsford Conservation Area Appraisal⁵

- 2.34 Glemsford Conservation Area is mostly set well within the settlement limits of the village of Glemsford and whilst linear in shape it is centred around the historic nuclei of the village, along Egremont Street. At the southern corner of the Conservation Area a few back gardens of properties lie at the settlement edge of Glemsford.
- 2.35 It is stated in the Conservation Area Appraisal that the three villages greens situated within the Conservation Area provide the setting to the historic core which contains many listed buildings.

⁵ Glemsford Conservation Area Appraisal, Babergh District Council, 2008

3 Methodology

Guidance

- 3.1 The format of this LVA is based on the principles set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition, the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland and An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. A detailed methodology is provided in Appendix A.
- 3.2 Viewpoint photographs have been presented in accordance with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/09 Visual Representation of development proposals.⁶

Study Area

- 3.3 Following the initial desktop study, a site visit was carried out and the actual visibility of the Application Site and the proposed development, where townscape and visual impacts could potentially occur, was found to be considerably restricted by the surrounding built development, topography and vegetation. Based on this information and the consultation advise set out below, the study area of the LVA has been defined as a maximum of 2km from the Application Site.
- 3.4 Only landscape and visual receptors within the LVA study area have been considered in the assessment, as there is no potential for any significant landscape and/or visual effects to be incurred beyond that area.

Consultation

3.5 A selection of viewpoints was agreed with the LPA prior to the site visit. After the site visit in December 2020 a final set of representative viewpoints was chosen again in agreement with Almudena Quiralte, Landscape Architect at Place Services.

⁶ Published 17/09/19 by the Landscape Institute

4 Landscape Baseline

Landscape Character Assessment

Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Landscape Guidance 2015

- 4.1 The overriding aim and purpose of the Landscape Guidance is to improve the quality of development coming forward in the countryside as defined in the Core Strategy. It should be read in conjunction with:
 - The Babergh Draft Landscape Assessment and Action Programme 2004
 - National Character Area Profiles by Natural England (NCA no.82 Suffolk Coast & Heaths, no.83 South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands and no.86 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland) <u>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-characterarea-profiles-data-forlocal-decision-making</u>

The Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (SLCA) <u>http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk</u>

- 4.2 This Landscape Guidance has divided the district into nine landscape typologies for Babergh and twelve landscape typologies for Mid Suffolk as identified in the Suffolk County Council Landscape Character Assessment. Each landscape character provides a brief description on the essential defining characteristics of the landscape and settlements, i.e. what makes each landscape distinct from the surrounding landscapes and which elements are important. Each section also identifies actions/design objectives for each landscape type.
- 4.3 The Landscape Guidance has used the Landscape Character Assessment areas as defined by Suffolk County Council and then included information and detail to ensure each Landscape character is clearly relating to the Babergh District.
- 4.4 The north western half of the Site lies within (18) Rolling Valley Farmlands Landscape Character Type (LCT) and the south eastern half of the Site lies within (23) - Valley Meadowlands Landscape Character Type.

Rolling Valley Farmlands LCT

- 4.5 The Rolling Valley Farmlands landscape typology is located within the Site and directly to the north and also to the south. It is defined by:
 - Valley sides with some complex and steep slopes in some places with deep well drained loamy soils and often sunken lanes;
 - Easily worked soils that are ideal for farming and have been divided up into small and medium sized fields;
 - Ancient woodlands that exist in small clusters on the upper slopes of the valleys;
 - Excavations of minerals is evident with disused chalk pits and lime kilns; and
 - Substantial views are obtained from elevated locations. This area is considered to have a wide zone visual impact.

- 4.6 Landscape aims and objective for this LCT are to maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape and settlement pattern, in particular to strengthen the rolling valley landscape.
- 4.7 Key design principles for this LCT are to consider the visual impact of any proposed development upon Conservation Areas and to protect and maintain woodlands.

Valley Meadowlands LCT

- 4.8 This landscape characteristic makes up the valley floor of the Rolling Valley Farmlands and is located within the Site and directly south of the Site. The key features include:
 - Flat river valley floor landscapes that bank along The River Stour and the River Glem;
 - Meadow patterns divided by ditches and dykes;
 - Woodlands, are few and consist of alder carrs and plantations;
 - Pristine and picturesque meadows in a wider farmed landscape;
 - Development of the adjacent rolling valley landscapes, which are a focus for settlement and development and can affect tranquillity levels;
 - Floodplains that provide a valuable service to the countryside and create variety through the seasons; and
 - This area also serves as a valuable ecological environment.
- 4.9 The aims and objectives of this LCT are to retain, enhance and restore the meadowlands landscape and to protect and safeguard the historic features, enhance the ecological environment, as well as safeguarding the level of tranquillity.
- 4.10 Key design principles are to mitigate against any changes or developments that will have a significant effect on the landscape in order to minimise any detrimental landscape or visual effects. Any proposed development must consider the cultural, historic and ecological environment, as well as retaining any tranquil properties.

Landscape Appraisal of the Application Site and Study Area

- 4.11 The Site is an existing factory which closed in July 2020 sited on the valley floor between the A1092 (a Roman Road) and a dismantled railway line. It comprises of two large buildings at 12 metres high, is set back from the A1092, and is clad in a neutral colour metal fabric with glass windows to the frontage. The Site sits on a level pad slightly lower than the adjacent main road. The frontage has two access points, a HGV access to the east and the western access point leads to staff parking (whole area is asphalt) for approximately 300 cars. The frontage has some grass, trees and shrubs and hard standing for parking. There is a greater density of vegetation at the north east and north western corners of the Site. Wire security fencing surrounds the buildings at the other perimeters.
- 4.12 The immediate southern boundary area is wooded with several ponds and is designated as SSSI. Similarly, to the east, the SSSI extends towards disused gravels pits. There is a small cul de sac of houses next to the Site to the west on Stour Close. Stone Cottages lie off the A1092 adjacent to the north eastern corner of the Site. The Site itself is well contained by vegetation at its perimeter boundary with a more open aspect at the central frontage area.
- 4.13 Glemsford village lies on rising ground north of the Site, it extends up Skate's Hill from the A1092. Between the Site and Glemsford there is arable farmland and a farm track leads

directly to Lodge Farm, a small farmstead adjacent to the Site. Several houses and farmsteads are scattered across the valley landscape. This valley landscape is deeply agricultural, small rivers and streams meeting the River Stour south of the Site. Fields surrounding Site are irregular and small to medium in size with most field boundaries bordered by hedgerow and trees. Other small woodlands are dotted around and there is an extensive network of lanes and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) surrounding the Site.

- 4.14 The A1092 is a fast and busy road with no roadside pedestrian footpaths. The road impedes PRoW connectivity across the valley and it is only away from this road and away from the network of linked minor roads that there is the possibility of a more tranquil experience.
- 4.15 The Site is situated near to the edge of rural settlements and built form and other industrial development such as sewage works situated along this length of valley floor. The surrounding landscape is very undulating, has deeply rural qualities in that there are large undeveloped areas outside of settlement limits. The landscape is moderately vegetated so that the existing built form on the valley floor is visible in most surrounding views. Built form on the tops of valley slopes is more noticeable and the edge of Glemsford settlement is prominent in views where there is less intervening vegetation.
- 4.16 Considering the landscape to the north of the Site, the eastern and southern edge of Glemsford is not well screened by vegetation and properties are generally modern and indistinct. Older and more distinct properties are largely within the Conservation Area away from the settlement edge and look inwards towards the settlement core. The landscape between the Site and Glemsford is not unique or unusual, generally comprising of ordinary agricultural land. The presence of the existing factory building, pylons across the landscape and the movement of busy roads combine to reduce the value of this parcel of LCT surrounding the Site. It is considered that here the LCT has medium susceptibility to change.
- 4.17 South of the Site, the Valley Meadowlands LCT, runs east-west between the two parcels of the Rolling Farmland LCT, generally washing over the SSSI. Due to the development history of the Site it is not considered to be well aligned to the characteristics of this LCT.
- 4.18 The Rolling Valley Farmlands LCT continues up the valley slope south of the Site, the SSSI and the LNR. It is less dynamic here and feels more remote. Wider views, including of Glemsford are available from the higher topography and it is assessed as having a higher susceptibility to change and having a higher sensitivity to the proposed changes.
- 4.19 The Special Landscape Area to the east of the Site is considered to have a high sensitivity to the type of change proposed as it aligns well to the general landscape descriptions. The landscape has a comfortable human scale due to the undulating nature of the valley sides and the vegetated nature of watercourses and field boundaries. The landscape feels more remote, built form is largely screened and the area is deeply rural. Closer to the settlement edge the sensitivity is slightly reduced where industrial development and edge of settlement is visible across the valley.
- 4.20 The Stour Valley Project Area is a valued landscape and, although not offered the same level of protection as the AONB designation, it exhibits many similar qualities and is considered to have a high sensitivity to the proposals. In this part of the project area there is slightly less sensitivity due to modern influences, such as modern housing growth on the edge of

settlement, industrial development and a busy road network, however the sensitivity remains high.

Summary of the Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.21 It is considered that the Site itself has a **low** sensitivity to the proposed changes as the footprint of built form at the Site is changing only at the south western end where a new biomass building is sited, this will mostly incur into the existing car parking, and all development is within or as a part of the fabric of the existing buildings or is located on the existing hardstanding.
- 4.22 The widening of the entrance to accommodate HGVs will involve some loss of a mainly grassed area. Recent ecological report states that the Site itself has a low value for local wildlife and no data on protected species were found on the Site or in the vicinity of the Site.
- 4.23 Half of the Site lies within the Valley Meadowlands LCT and there is no incursion of the existing building footprint into it. The Valley Meadowlands LCT has a history of industrial type development within the study area and the proposed development is not materially changing its land use.
- 4.24 It is considered that the surrounding landscape overall has a **medium to high** sensitivity to change, due to the proximity of the Site to the Special Landscape Area, the adjacent SSSI and LNR and being sited within the wider Stour Valley Project Area. There are mainly oblique and filtered views from these designations, with greater visibility close to Site at elevated positions within parts of the Rolling Valley Farmlands LCT, a landscape valued for its substantial views.
- 4.25 Glemsford Conservation Area is mostly contained within the settlement limits with only limited intervisibility to the Site. This reduces its sensitivity to the type of change proposed.

5 Visual Baseline

- 5.1 The visibility of the proposed development has been established by combining desktop study, ZTV analysis and information attained by the assessor during the field assessment on 8 and 9 December 2020.
- 5.2 Figure INF_N0746(08)001 sets out the location of viewpoints selected as representative of the key sensitive receptors of the proposed development and suitable to form the visual baseline.
- 5.3 Consultation has been undertaken with the Landscape Officer representing the local planning authority and this is set out in paragraph 3.5.

Viewpoints

- 5.4 A series of viewpoints, representing different types of views and groups of receptors within both the immediate area and wider surroundings have been identified to consider the potential visual impact of the proposed development.
- 5.5 The visual envelope is affected by the valley topography, the local screening elements of built form at Glemsford settlement edge and vegetative screening elements such as field boundaries, woodland blocks and related to watercourses. This reduces the visual envelope considerably and effectively screens the existing Site from the majority with most key views arising from within 2km of the Site boundary. The most sensitive receptors identified are:
 - Local residential receptors; and
 - Local PRoW receptors.
- 5.6 Several of the locations agreed for consideration in the assessment yielded no views. These are described below:
 - Locations on local PRoW to the east off the A1092. The vegetation cover along the PRoW restricts views;
 - Locations on the Stour Valley Path looking south towards the Site. The Site was not visible through a combination of high hedges and local topography;
 - Locations to the south of the Site within Foxearth Meadows Local Nature Reserve vegetation impeded views; and
 - Locations at lower ground to the west of the Site on local PRoW where intervening vegetation again impeded views.
- 5.7 Daytime Wireline Montages have been carried out on two of the recorded views.
 - Montage 02W represents visual receptors at the edge of Glemsford settlement along a section of the Stour Valley Path where there was no hedgerow to impede views towards the Site;
 - Montage 07W represents the visual receptors using local PRoWs within the Special Landscape Area looking south west towards the proposed development.

Sensitive Receptors

- 5.8 Glemsford Conservation Area, users of the Stour Valley Path and Residential Edge
- 5.9 Viewpoint 02 is taken from the eastern edge of Glemsford settlement at the intersection of a local PRoW and the Stour Valley Path which traverses east at this point towards Sudbury. To some extent this viewpoint represents the view from Glemsford Conservation Area as the boundary of the Conservation Area (CA) is reached a short distance away within the settlement boundary.
- 5.10 Direct views toward the Site from the eastern edge of the Conservation Area itself are not available in the main, as the urban grain of the village contains views outwards. The CA extends south along Skate Hill and views become available from the rear of a small number of properties on the southern edge of Glemsford as described below.
- 5.11 In the main the residential properties back onto the countryside edge and their views are focused street side.
- 5.12 Glemsford residents at the location of Viewpoint 02 have mainly oblique views of the Site. The edge of settlement has varying vegetative cover and expansive views of the local landscape are interrupted by linear strips of hedgerow and trees at field boundaries. At this elevated location, the Site is largely filtered by this vegetation, with a section of roofline visible in gaps through the intervening vegetation and rooftops of Glemsford settlement. A horizon line of higher land to the south of the Site is clearly visible in this rural view from the edge of settlement, above a moderately vegetated farmed local landscape.
- 5.13 Residential receptors at this location, and to a lesser degree, at Glemsford Conservation Area, are judged to be **highly** sensitive to the changes in the local landscape. This is due to the prolonged opportunity to appreciate views at this location.
- 5.14 Those users of the Stour Valley Path, a long distance path through Cambridgeshire, Essex and Suffolk, experience views across the agricultural landscape surrounding the village. Views are relatively long distance from this slightly higher ground when looking south and capture the vegetated valley along the River Stour and the Stour Brook. Travelling west the PRoW users are aware of the approach to the settlement edge which is less vegetated in this northern portion having moved through quite rural landscapes. These receptors also have a **high** sensitivity to the proposed development.

Users of the Public Rights of Way to the south of Glemsford

- 5.15 Viewpoints 01 and 03 are taken from local PRoW to the north of the Site. Viewpoint 01 is recorded at lower ground to the east of Skate Hill however both views look in the same direction. The built outline of the Site is clearly seen, albeit broken up by hedgerow trees at the intervening field boundary and at the Site frontage. The Site sits well within the local landscape and there are views beyond of higher ground to the south. Domestic sized properties along the A1092 close to the Site make this a settled landscape and middle distance views are to the higher slopes of the valley to the south and south east.
- 5.16 Viewpoint 03 is recorded from PRoW at the western edge residential of Glemsford, looking south east across the valley towards the Site. The sloping topography in the foreground is evident, representing the context of the village on the higher ground in relation to the Site in

the valley and clearly shows the landscape rising again to the south. In the middle distance, the Site is visible with its built form filtered by intervening mature trees at field boundaries. The vegetation in the river valley wraps the existing built form. Long distance views to the east are available of the rising land surrounding the Site above this vegetation.

- 5.17 These are typical views from the surrounding PRoW network particularly to the south, south west and south east of the Site which encompass many similar features the gently sloping and rising topography, the well vegetated river valley, the edge of the settlement and the existing factory. These receptors have a **high** sensitivity to the proposals.
- 5.18 Users of the Public Rights of Way to the South of the Application Site
- 5.19 Viewpoint 04 is taken from local PRoW on rising ground to the south of the Site. The white coloured render of properties at the edge of Glemsford settlement and a less conspicuous outline of the Site are visible at this elevated position and is a clear view of the typical elements on the valley floor and slopes in the local landscape, as previously described. The built form at the Site is filtered by intervening vegetation, by trees close to the Site and by vegetation at field boundaries.
- 5.20 Further south the Site is not visible from this direction.
- 5.21 Viewpoint 05 is also taken from local PRoW on a high point of land to the south of the Site, close to Weston Hall. The Site is overlooked and the indistinct outline of built form at the Site is visible through the winter form of trees on the edge of the LNR. Longer distance views looking north are of the southern edge of Glemsford settlement on the higher slopes of the valley. In both views from this direction the land surrounding the Site is farmed and there is a patchwork of irregular shaped fields with small groups of woodland on the horizon line.
- 5.22 These receptors have a **high** sensitivity to the proposals.
- 5.23 Users of the Public Rights of Way to the North and North East of the Application Site
- 5.24 Viewpoint 06 and 07 are taken from a northerly direction to the Site on local PRoWs. Viewpoint 06 is taken north of the Site, at Cutt's Lane, an unclassified country road, roads that are generally regarded as having vehicular, cycle and pedestrian permissive access. This track runs at the edge of Court Wood, where there is a gap in the trackside vegetation. From this elevated position the rooftops of the buildings at the Site are just visible at lower ground, marginally filtered by trees close to the Site. Longer distance views are foreshortened by the ridge of higher ground south of the Site.
- 5.25 Viewpoint 07 is taken on PRoW near to Cranmore Hill looking south west towards the Site. The lighter colour of the buildings at the Site help in locating the Site and are heavily filtered by intervening vegetation, with the buildings sitting below on the valley floor.
- 5.26 Longer distance views of the undulating valley sides further east are available at this viewpoint alongside glimpses of Glemsford settlement edge. It is a very rural view with few detracting elements and is in line with the landscape description of the SLA. Views remain curtailed by the landscape features and in these locations contained somewhat to the immediate features.

PRoW receptors at the above locations have a **high** sensitivity to the proposals due to the importance of views for this recreational receptor.

6 Potential Sources of Landscape and Visual Impact

6.1 The LVA baseline provides an appraisal of the existing landscape and visual resource within the Application Site and the wider LVA study area. The following section of the report identifies the potential landscape and visual effects that would arise due to the construction and operation of the proposed development.

The Proposed Development

- 6.2 As set out previously, this application is for a factory conversion to cocoa production with the introduction of a biomass boiler. The design proposal for the Site includes the following:
 - Remodel / refurbish existing buildings to accommodate new process and storage requirements including new external delivery canopy;
 - Part demolition and replacement of existing workshop forming the new Cocoa Building totalling 10260m2;
 - New Biomass Boiler and Maintenance Building totalling 1837m2;
 - Waste Water Treatment Building of 155m2;
 - Ino. New Gatehouse and 2no. Weighbridge Offices each at 18m2;
 - Remodel of the existing external works to suit access and process requirements;
 - Remodelled car parking reducing the overall car parking to 106 spaces;
 - Remodelled external car park lighting to suit new layout;
 - Widened and re-levelled entrance to west vehicle entrance to facilitate HGV access requirements; and
 - Remodel of internal spaces and external door positions to the large existing building to the east totalling 9866m2. In addition to the internal remodel there is 170m2 of new building to upper floors extending a small section of the roof to the south elevation up to 19m.
- 6.3 Site plans show elevations increasing on the reconfigured built form, with elevations increasing from the current 12m maximum height which is broadly consistent across the existing built form. The proposed development site plans show a building frontage which is unchanged with existing building heights increasing towards the south, to a maximum of 40m high at the central building and a maximum of 19m high at a small section of the eastern most building. At the existing car park, in the south western corner of the Site, a new biomass building is proposed. This new building has a maximum elevation of 26m.
- 6.4 The erection of the 40m high parapet are the primary concern of the LPA and the interested parties. The relevant aspects of the proposals, when considering the impact on the landscape and visual resource, are:
 - Views from the surrounding sensitive receptors;
 - The expansion of the built facilities and the carparking quantum; and

- The attraction of formal recreation in this location.
- 6.5 The landscape character assessments that cover the study area outline guidance and recommendations in relation to future development or other pressures. The key consideration is the retention and enhancement of local distinctiveness, in relation to the identified key characteristics pertaining to the Site and study area, and enhancements to green infrastructure.

Potential Sources of Landscape and Visual Impacts

Construction

- 6.6 In the short term the potential effects on landscape character, specific landscape features and the visual receptors associated with the proposed development will be from demolition and construction activities. Principle landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed development are likely to arise from:
 - Adverse effect on the key characteristics of the local landscape, due to changes in the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape;
 - Temporary adverse landscape effects due to the appearance and movement of construction machinery and vehicles on and off the Site;
 - Introduction of built form including any perimeter fencing and/or site hoarding, site compound and office, areas set aside for storage of materials; and
 - Disruption to landform appearance of areas of disturbed ground and storage mounds.

Completion

- 6.7 In the longer term, the development proposals are likely to give rise to a number of more permanent landscape and visual effects. These will be associated with:
 - The new form of the proposed development will change its general appearance within the local landscape. The stepped design, with roof height rising to the south, will mean that the building will be more prominent in views from landscape designations and other receptors;
 - Other landscape effects are limited due to the previous land use at the Site.

Proposed Mitigation and Landscape Strategy

6.8 Mitigation measures that aim to avoid, minimise and compensate for the potential adverse landscape and visual impacts resulting from the development proposals have been incorporated within the general design and proposed operation of the scheme. Principal measures pertaining to each phase of the development are set out in detail below.

Mitigation of Construction Effects

- 6.9 The following mitigation measures are proposed during construction of the proposed development:
 - Retention of existing hedgerow, shrubs and trees at Site;

- Placement and organisation of stockpiles and materials for least visual impact and management of the Site to maintain a tidy appearance and to limit the visible area of disturbed ground;
- Restriction of the number of the vehicular movements to practicable minimum and confinement of operations to normal working hours;
- Safeguarding of existing vegetation to be retained, tree protection zones would be created and fenced off to ensure that the development would not encroach onto the root protection areas. Existing vegetation would be protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction;
- Construction and security lighting would be shielded where possible and directed downwards in order to minimise light pollution;
- Temporary site security fencing/hoarding would be provided around the perimeter of the Site, in order to restrict public access during construction works.

Mitigation of Operational Effects

- 6.10 A number of mitigation measures can be incorporated within the development proposals in order to reduce the impacts arising from the proposed development including:
 - The design of the new build on the central building is stepped, with the frontage to the A1092 remaining low and stepped up to reach 40m in height. The other buildings are subordinate to the central building with only small parapets that exceed the current building height. By siting the taller elements to the south the scale and mass of the building is sympathetic to local topography of a valley floor and breaks up the mass of the building to views east to west along the valley channel;
 - Traditional building materials not applied in this instance due to their inappropriateness to the function of the building, and instead a low reflective finish is given to the new build elements. The metal finish is corrugated, and this aims to diffuse the light. The intention is to reflect the immediate surroundings in views surrounding the Site, to minimise the visual impact of the proposed development.
 - The building remains anchored within its landscape setting, it is a mostly an enclosed site with substantial visual barriers to the greater mass of the buildings and there is no loss of this vegetative cover due to the proposed development;
 - No trees are to be removed at Site or at the boundary of the Site. Ecological mitigation measures include creating areas of dry acid grassland to areas to the south where the new biomass building is sited. Bat and insect boxes to be installed as per ecologist instructions and the southern walls of the proposed development to have green walls, to replace naturalised climbers that have taken hold on the existing building;
 - Existing lighting to be replaced with LED down lighters to be of further benefit to wildlife.

7 Landscape and Visual Impacts

Landscape Effects

7.1 This section describes the landscape effects. The assessment of the magnitude of effect and the overall significance of effect is provided for the local landscape character area, the Stour Valley Project Area, the SLA, landscape elements and other relevant designations.

Local Landscape Character Area

- 7.2 The Site is set within (18) Rolling Valley Farmlands LCT and (23) Valley Meadowlands LCT. They are both assessed as having high sensitivity to changes in the local landscape and key green infrastructure links of nature importance and ancient woodlands are within these LCTs. The impact of the Valley Meadows is assessed as low due to the containment of the visual impacts through the existing vegetation, running along the river valley, which are the most impactful element of the proposals. The introduction of the taller element does have an impact on the character to a slight degree however the site functions as an existing factory, so the built element is already legible.
- 7.3 There are some expansive and unfiltered views of the taller element of the Proposals from elevated or close range within the Rolling Valley Farmlands LCT. The characteristics and resulting quality of views from this LCT will be changed to include a taller structure, a new element in local views, upon completion of the proposed development. Overall, the features, qualities and experience of the wider LCT are not affected and there is no significant effect on the field pattern experience. However, views to Glemsford are interrupted by the proposals and therefore the effect is judged as medium to high from this near location.

Stour Valley Project Area and Special Landscape Area

- 7.4 The description of the impact has been combined for the Stour Valley and the SLA as largely they cover the same landscape and have similar attributes and qualities.
- 7.5 Changes because of the proposed development in the wider Stour Valley Area are small and the key characteristics and overall quality of the landscape will not be greatly affected. The effects are the introduction of a tall, modern built element into views which are predominantly deeply rural and do not contain similar features. No physical features are impacted and the relative tranquillity and overall experience of the landscape to visitors is not greatly impacted. However, views from these higher areas within the Project Area, looking down into the valley of the river, represented by VP07 and the associated wireline montage, will be impacted by the new aspect of the building. It is a modern feature in an intact landscape.

Montage 07W

7.6 The introduction of a taller portion of the central building introduces a new element into the rural landscape and breaks a section of the skyline in the view down the valley. The proposals for the taller element would cause a noticeable change in the existing view, albeit it is able to be absorbed due to the vegetative nature of the view and the broader landscape

experience for the receptors. The perceptual qualities of this landscape are adversely affected in part as the existing factory is largely screened and has no protruding features.

7.7 It is judged that the effect of the change is medium to high adverse however the combination of the surrounding vegetation and the dipping and rising topography almost envelope the building and the reflective nature of the materials used help to try and create a seamless interface with the contiguous landscape. This mitigates the impact and although the building is modern, it is contemporary and innovative and does not present as a bulky or incongruous component in the view.

Montage 02W

7.8 This view shows the stepped form of the extended central building in relation to the edge of settlement and the surrounding valley landscape. Although not a new element it will be an introduction of a taller element in this view. The roofline of building runs at approximately the same height as the skyline and does not break it. The proposed diffused reflective finish of the building is designed to minimise the impact of the building and make it settle more into the landscape and read as part of the landscape.

Glemsford Conservation Area

- 7.9 The Conservation Area is centred around a historic core within Glemsford settlement and there is little intervisibility between this and the Site, and its setting is not influenced by any changes at the Site. Listed buildings in Glemsford outside of the Conservation Area are generally inward focussed on the settlement and again there is little intervisibility with the Site. Properties within the Conservation Area near to the southern settlement edge may have views of the higher form of the proposed development from the rear of properties.
- 7.10 The high sensitivity of Glemsford Conservation Area is tempered with the low level of intervisibility within the Site. Low adverse effects are expected during the construction and upon completion of the proposed development.

Application Site

- 7.11 The Site is not well aligned with the description of the Valley Meadowlands LCT as it is an existing industrial site with 50 years of production history. This makes the Site itself a little more diverse, urban-influenced and dynamic than the typical landscape of both LCTs. The location of the Site aligned to the busy main road further enhances this character.
- 7.12 The Site is generally well maintained and has mature and healthy structural vegetation within and on the perimeter boundaries. During construction there will be some disturbance on the Application Site, however much of the work is internal reconfiguration and the Site has been an active working factory for many years.
- 7.13 Upon completion the proposed development is expected to have a negligible impact upon the Site itself.

Table of Landscape Effects

| Landscape receptor | Sensitivity | Construction effects | Operational effects |
|---|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Rolling Valley Farmlands LCT | High | Medium adverse | Low to Medium adverse |
| Valley Meadowlands LCT | High | Medium adverse | Low to Medium adverse |
| Stour Valley Project Area (within the study area) | High | Medium - High adverse | Low to Medium adverse |
| SLA (within the study area) | High | Medium – High adverse | Medium adverse |
| Glemsford Conservation Area | High | Low adverse | Low adverse |
| Application Site | Low | Negligible adverse | Negligible adverse |

Visual Effects

7.14 The visual envelope is restricted and highly influenced by topography and local screening elements. The key sensitive receptors identified for this report include residential edge receptors and local PRoW receptors.

Glemsford Conservation Area, Users of the Stour Valley Way and the Residential Edge of Glemsford

7.15 Residential receptors at this location, and to a lesser degree, at Glemsford Conservation Area, are judged to be highly sensitive to the changes in the local landscape. The view is described above and for the residential receptor the impact of a taller element in the view will cause a noticeable and long lasting change, adversely impacting upon views. The nature of the change is a moderate change, affecting only part of the view and affecting a relatively small number of receptors at the settlement edge. Views at the settlement edge towards the Site are often oblique with the focus across the valley landscape. It is judged to be of a medium adverse impact for those residents who receive a view. The users of the Stour Valley Path at this close proximity to the proposals, both for the construction period and upon completion of the proposed development may experience more adverse effects. The view is not highly complex and construction activity at the Site will be, in the main, internal or at such low level as to not be visible and with only the taller elements noticeable. The steel reflective cladding is expected to minimise the change upon completion of the taller central building element.

Users of the Public Rights of Way to the South of Glemsford

7.16 At Viewpoint 01, upon completion of the proposed development, the rear of the central building and the new biomass building will be elevated to a greater extent above the roof line of domestic sized properties next to the Site along the A1092. These extensions will also break the skyline at this location and will be centrally prominent in views, although not

affecting elements around the Site. The change is an alteration to an element of the views but not a complete change in the type of elements present in the view.

- 7.17 Viewpoint 03 is taken from PRoW at the western edge residential of Glemsford looking south east across the valley towards the Site. The nature of change of the proposed development at this location again is an alteration to existing views, the extension of the central building is expected to be a break to the skyline and will affect this part of the wider view and views down the valley will be mostly unimpeded. The reflective finish could further minimise the impact.
- 7.18 This effect is judged overall as medium adverse for both phases of the proposed development as the walkers on the routes still enjoy the same level of viewshed as preproposals – the longer views to the higher ground, the views of Glemsford and the overall context of the public route and its landscape setting.

Users of the Public Rights of Way to the South of the Site

- 7.19 Both viewpoints south of the Site are taken from local PRoW and the receptors in these locations are assessed as highly sensitive to changes within the local landscape. In both views the extension of the central building is expected to break the skyline at the Site. This will alter views across the valley rather than down the valley resulting in a smaller degree of change to views from Viewpoint 04 as compared to the closer range view at Viewpoint 05. However, there is a clear and noticeable change to the experience and the view of receptors in this location and the completed development will be prominent in views.
- 7.20 This effect is judged as low high adverse for the construction phase. Much of the work is internal reconfiguration or at ground level which will not materially alter the views, although will introduce some audible impacts. It is judged as medium adverse upon completion as the overall appreciation of the views components is not greatly changed.

Users of the Public Rights of Way to the North and North East of the Site

- 7.21 Viewpoints 06 and 07 are taken from elevated locations, north east of the Site and on local PRoW, with viewpoint 07 at a highly sensitive location within the SLA.
- 7.22 PRoW users at Viewpoint 07 are travelling in a direction so to have oblique views of the proposed development where there are gaps in the trackside vegetation. The extension of the central building is expected to break the skyline at the Site and be unfiltered in views. The extension will be clearly noticeable and will alter some of the perceptual qualities of the views. However, the physical features within the view such as the vegetated valley and the topography in the foreground dilute the impact slightly along with the materials chosen to clad the building.
- 7.23 Montage 07W demonstrates this change at the Site at completion of the proposed development. PRoW users are directly looking towards the Site along this path. The taller extension of the central building will be prominent in views as the gaze is directed down the valley. Other features in this view are not affected and it is considered a moderate alteration to the view, albeit that the proposed development will stand out in the view.
- 7.24 The metal low reflective finish of the proposed development is expected to minimise this impact.

7.25 This effect is judged as low - high adverse for the construction phase of the proposed development as previously set out and it is temporary whereas it is judged overall as medium adverse upon completion due only to the introduction of the taller element which is to a degree tempered by the material choices. The effects will range between low and high depending on proximity, focus of the view and level of intervening vegetation.

Table of Visual Effects

| Visual receptor | Sensitivity | Construction effects | Operational effects |
|---|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Glemsford Conservation Area, the Stour Valley Way and Residential Edge | High | Low to Medium adverse | Low to Medium adverse |
| Users of the Public rights of Way to the south of Glemsford | High | Medium adverse | Medium adverse |
| Users of the Public rights of Way to the south of the Site | High | Low to High adverse | Low to High adverse |
| Users of the Public rights of Way to the north and north east of the Site | High | Low to High adverse | Low to High adverse |

8 Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1 The Site is situated near to the edge of the rural settlement of Glemsford in the District of Babergh, Suffolk. The Site is an existing factory sited along the A1092 and closed in July 2020.
- 8.2 The Development Proposals consist of an upward extension to the existing factory in order to accommodate a gravity fed system for cocoa production with the addition of a new biomass boiler sited on existing hard standing at the existing car park.
- 8.3 Mitigation proposals consist of ecological enhancements to the boundary area with Glemsford Pits SSSI and using innovative metal cladding of the new build in order to minimise the impact on local landscape and visual receptors.
- 8.4 The visual envelope is restricted due to the valley topography and vegetative screening in the landscape by trees and hedgerow, some ancient, at rivers and stream, at field boundaries, and along lanes and small woodland blocks.
- 8.5 The main sensitive landscape receptors are the Stour Valley Project Area, which covers the whole of the study area, a Special Landscape Area near to the eastern boundary of the Site and Glemsford Conservation Area which sits within the settlement limits.
- 8.6 Landscape and visual effects include the introduction of a taller element in the local landscape and to local views. The greatest impact is on the following receptors:
 - Stour Valley Project Area;
 - Special Landscape Area;
 - Recreational receptors at Public Rights of Way at close range or at elevated positions at points within the 2km study area; and
 - Residential receptors close to the Site.
- 8.7 Wireframe Montages describe the effect upon completion of the proposed development of a medium adverse nature on the Stour Valley Project Area and the Special Landscape Area. They also describe the effect upon completion of the proposed development of a medium adverse nature on visual receptors to the north east of the Site and at Glemsford residential edge.
- 8.8 It is acknowledged that the introduction of the taller element into the landscape and visual resource is a new, modern feature which in some sensitive locations introduces an increased scale from the existing buildings on the proposed site unfamiliar to a deeply rural location. However, the design requires the building to have robust and fire-retardant materials and seeks to clad the building in a diffused metal that provide a subtle reflective appearance that seeks to blend the building into its surroundings and help to reduce it visibility and impact as the building increases in height. The qualities of the landscape primarily the vegetated river valley and the dipping and rising landscape help to envelope the new taller element of the building, reducing the overall impact.
- 8.9 The Site is a built factory site which was active until very recently. The tall element is the factor to which the level and nature of change is attributed.

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Landscape and Visual Appraisal

GCB Cocoa Production Facility, Glemsford

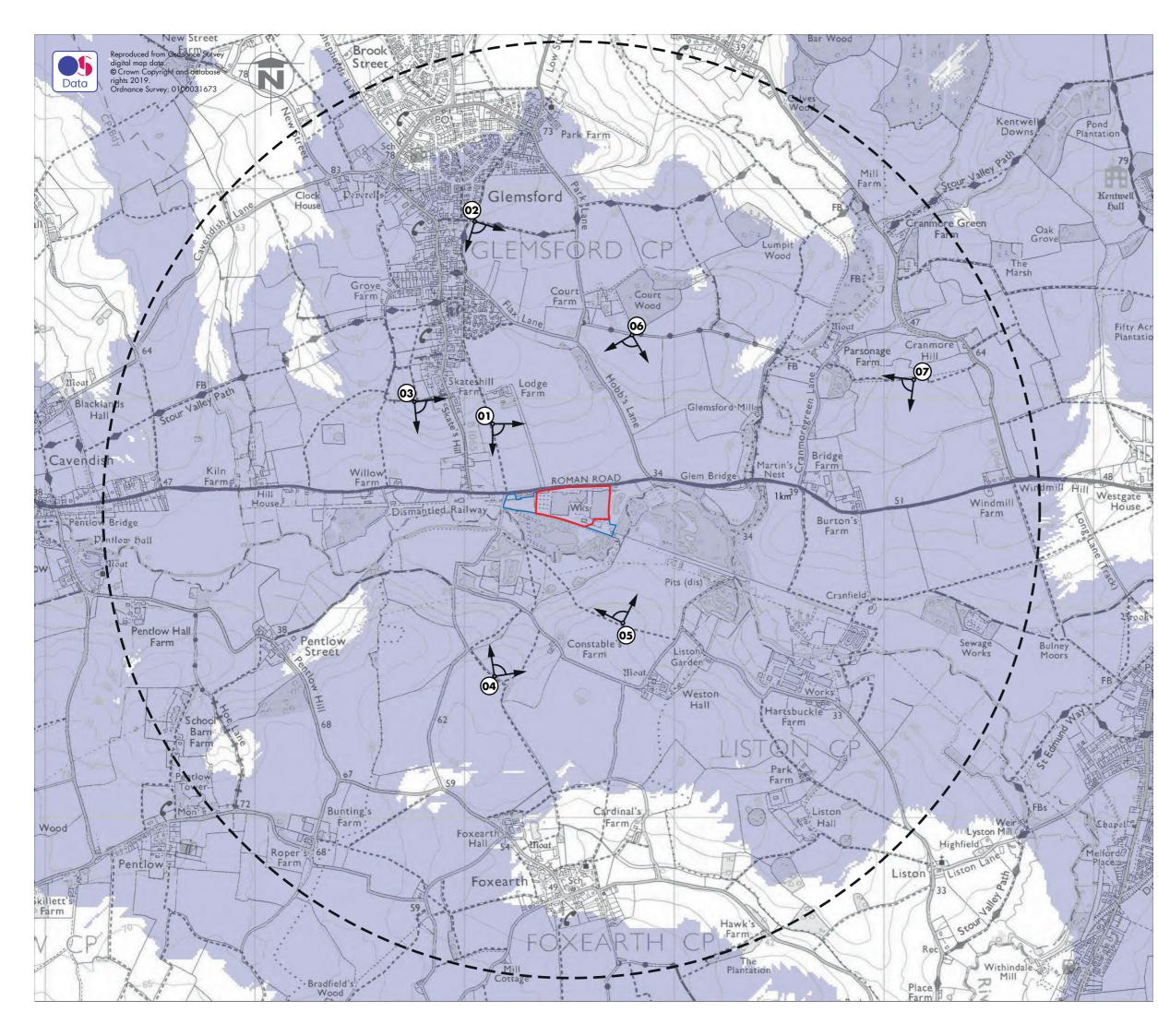
Figures

January 2021 INF_N0746_R01

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Figures

INF_N0746(08)001 INF_N0746(08)002 INF_N0746(08)003 INF_N0746(08)004-010 ZTV and Viewpoint Location Landscape Features and Designations Plan Landscape Character Plan Representative Viewpoints



Legend



The ZTV illustrates the potential visibility of the proposed development based on topographical (bare earth) data only. Therefore, it does not take into account objects that may occur in the landscape, such as woodland or buildings, which may affect lines of sight.

The ZTV has been run to a height of 40m, taking in to account the height of the proposed buildings.







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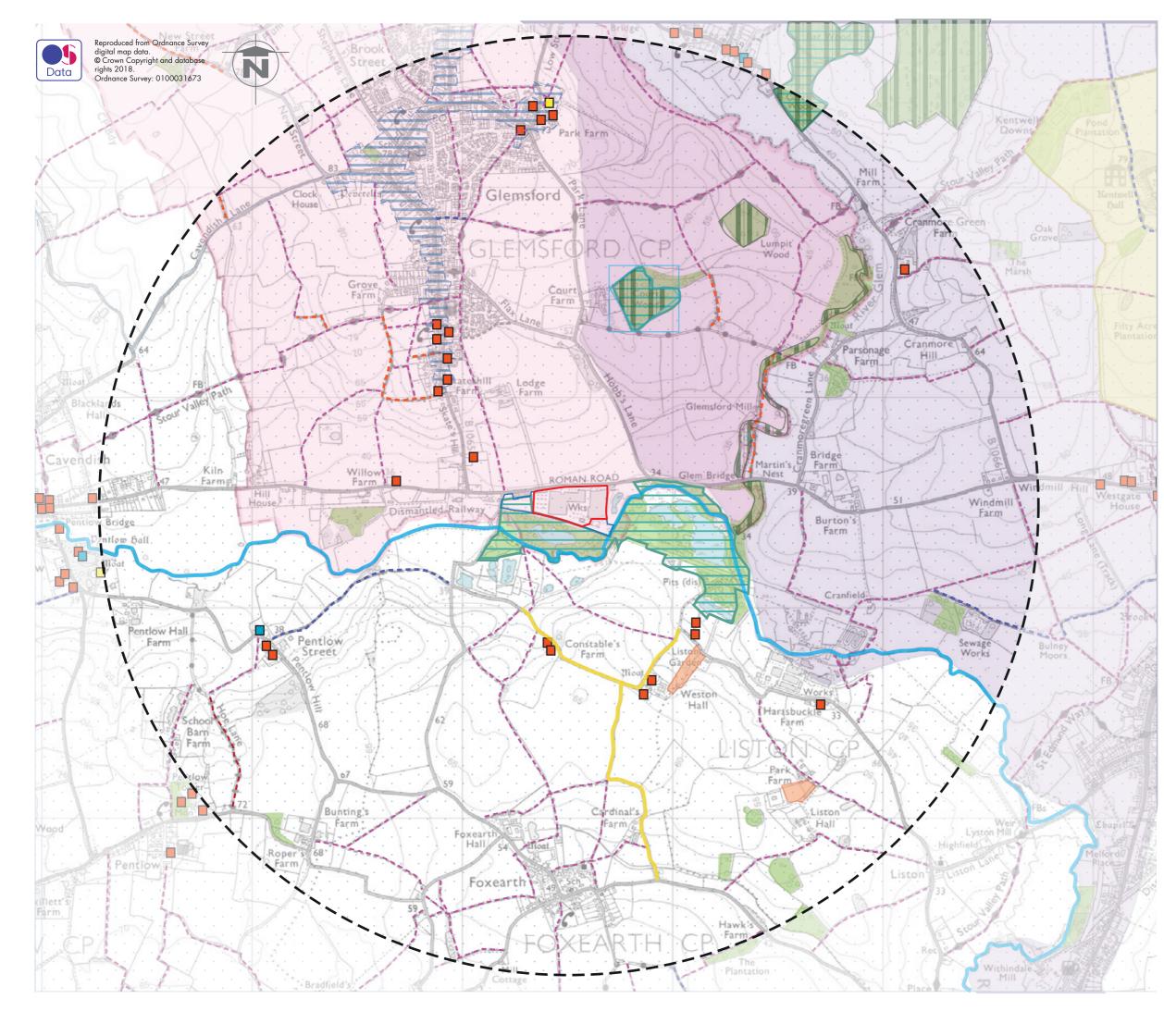
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PROJECT Glemsford

client BE Design

TITLE ZTV and Representative Viewpoint Location

| STATUS | FINA | AL . | | |
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| SCALE | NTS | | DATE | 10.12.20 |
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Legend

| | Application Site |
|---|---|
| | Ownership Boundary |
| | Radius 2km Study Area |
| | Glemsford Neighbourhood Plan |
| • | Stour Valley Project Area |
| | Sites of Special Scientific Interest |
| | Glemsford Conservation Area |
| | Special Lanscape Area |
| | Registered Parks and Gardens |
| | Listed Buildings Red - Grade II Blue - Grade II* Yellow - Grade I Woodland Block |
| | Ancient Woodland |
| | Local Wildlife Site |
| | River Stour |
| | Pedestrian Rights of Way: Footpath Bridleway Restricted Byway Byway - open to all traffic |
| | Protected Lane |



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PROJECT GCB Cocoa Production Facility, Glemsford

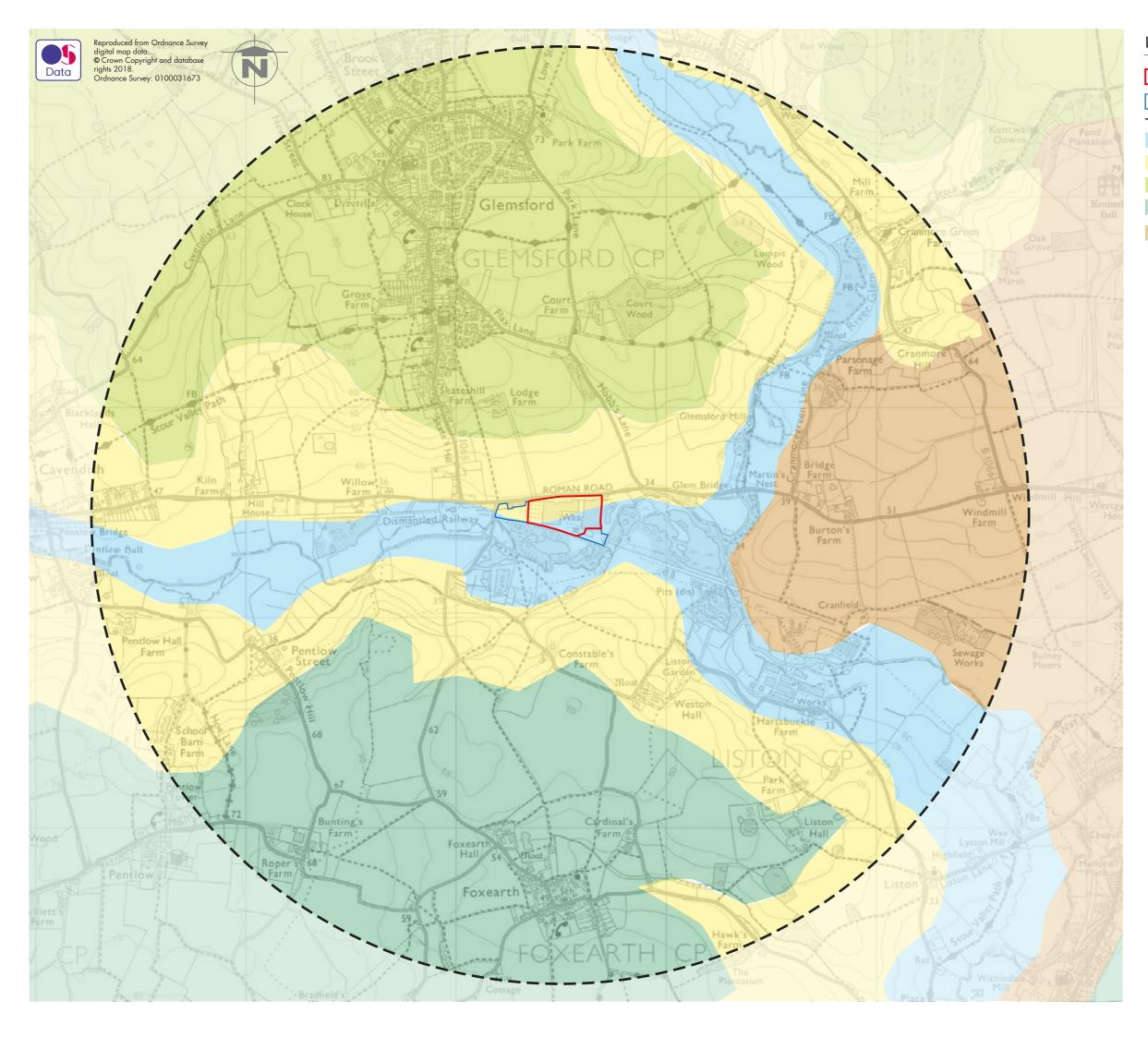
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BE Design

TITLE

Landscape Features & Designations

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Legend

| Application | Site |
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- Ownership Boundary
- --- Radius 2km Study Area
- Valley Meadowlands
- Rolling Valley Farmlands
- Undulating Ancient Farmlands
- Ancient Rolling Farmlands
- Rolling Estate Farmlands



BE Design

TITLE

Landscape Character Plan

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Viewpoint 02

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Viewpoint and Camera Details:

| Camera: Lens: Date: | Canon E EF 50m 09.12.2 | m 1:1.8 | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Time/ OS Grid Reference: Distance to Site/ Elevation | | | TL 83135 46890 TL 83037 47847 | 49m 75m |

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Viewpoint 04

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Viewpoint and Camera Details:

| Camera: Lens: Date: | Canon E EF 50m 09.12.2 | m 1:1.8 | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------|----------------|-----|
| Time/ OS Grid Reference: | VP03 | 12.15 | TL 82775 46982 | 63m |
| Distance to Site/ Elevation | VP04 | 12.39 | TL 83176 45668 | 59m |

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Viewpoint 06

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Viewpoint and Camera Details:

| Camera: Lens: Date: | Canon E EF 50m 09.12.2 | m 1:1.8 | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Time/ OS Grid Reference: Distance to Site/ Elevation | VP05 VP06 | | TL 83789 45912 TL 83815 47308 | 51m 61m |



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Viewpoint and Camera Details:

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Camera: Can Lens: EF 5 Date: 09.1

Canon EOS 6D EF 50mm 1:1.8 09.12.20

Time/ OS Grid Reference: VP07 14.29 TL 85127 47104 1543m 55m Distance to Site/ Elevation

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