

Blankney Estates Limited

rdc
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Consultancy

Landscape Character and Setting Statement
Land associated with Village Farm, Blankney, Lincoln

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town planning



landscape architecture



architecture

1. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CHARACTER

- 1.1. The application site is located on the eastern side of the village of Blankney, approximately 175m east of the B1188, which connects the settlement of Metheringham to the north and Scopwick to the south. Drury Street, from which the site is accessed, lies immediately to the south. The application site currently comprises a number of existing stone outbuildings, various large agricultural barns and areas of hardstanding used for agricultural equipment. The land is generally flat lying at approximately 15.0m AOD towards the centre of the site. In the broader context, the application site forms part of the eastern side of the settlement of Blankney, separated from properties either side of the B1188 by the open space associated with the Blankney Cricket Ground.
- 1.2. The village is surrounded by very gently rolling open countryside of mixed land use ranging from land under agricultural production to the north and south, and leisure use in the form of the Blankney Golf course to the west. The broader character area is defined by the limestone cliff to the west and the dip slope that drops gently away to the edge of the fens in the east. The City of Lincoln lies approximately 15km to the north west of the application site and the settlement of Sleaford is located approximately 14.5km to the south.
- 1.3. The large open barns and associated areas of hardstanding within the application site are currently used for the storage of agricultural related equipment, although a number of the buildings are largely unused.
- 1.4. The northern boundary of the application site is defined by a timber post and rail fence with open fields beyond, whilst the eastern extent of the application site is demarked by fencing and an existing single storey building. The southern boundary is defined by the existing buildings and a stone garden wall, small trees and ornamental shrubs associated with the adjacent property fronting Drury Street. Large agricultural barns form the western boundary with occasional framed glimpses of Blankney Cricket Ground and the associated Pavilion, which occupy the land to the west up to the B1188 Sleaford Road.
- 1.5. In the broader context, the land to the north is characterised by intensive agricultural use in the form of arable farming with remnants of a previous parkland landscape in the form of occasional veteran specimen trees. To the east lie a number of properties including terrace houses, cottages

and outbuildings, whilst to the south an area of mature broadleaved woodland restricts views of the wider landscape beyond. Blankney Golf Club and course lies to the east, its setting characterised by the former Blankney Park.

- 1.6. No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) directly affect the application site, although a public footpath is located approximately 100 metres to the east and the Spires and Steeples Trail connecting Lincoln and Sleaford runs to the north east of the application site, crossing Blankney Cricket ground and affording views in a south easterly direction of the proposed development.
- 1.7. The site is located within Blankney Conservation Area and a number of Historic England Listed Buildings lie within 300 metres of the application site, including the Grade II Village Farmhouse and attached Railings immediately to the south. Whilst no other land based designations directly affect the proposed development area, it is acknowledged that Metheringham Heath SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) lies approximately 1.7km to the north east.
- 1.8. At a national level, the application site lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 47 Southern Lincolnshire Edge. Key landscape characteristics of relevance are:
 - Productive loamy soils on the limestone plateau, giving rise to a large-scale open landscape of arable cultivation with large, regular fields and few boundaries of tightly cut hedgerows or rubble limestone walls.
 - Heavy clay soils in the east and south-west of the area, which support more grazing land in smaller, less regular fields, along with small areas of woodland and parkland.
 - Sparse settlement on higher land, with spring line villages along the foot of the cliff, parklands and country estates such as Rauceby and Belton on lower ground, and larger settlements – including Sleaford, Ruskington and Metheringham – to the east of the dip slope.
 - Long, straight roads and tracks, often with wide verges, including Ermine Street, which follows the route of a key Roman north–south route.
 - Vernacular architecture and walling, especially in villages, of local warm-coloured limestone with dark brown pantiles.

- 1.9. The Fens National Character Area 46 lies approximately 3.5km to the east.
- 1.10. At a regional level the application site is located within the East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Area Group 2 and specifically 2C: Fen and Marsh Margin Farmlands. At the local level using the **North Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment September 2007**, it is possible to determine that the proposed development clearly falls within the Central Plateau Landscape Character Area 11 and, specifically, the Central Clays and Gravels Sub-Area. It is acknowledged within this study that Blankney has a distinctly different and strong identity as an estate village with dwellings built in dressed and coursed limestone in a pseudo-Elizabethan or Tudor style with mullioned windows and elaborate chimneys. The assessment undertaken in 2007 highlights that maintaining the distinctive character of such villages is very important in this character area and new development should use materials, and design principles that respect and reflect the existing traditional limestone building stock so that they are sympathetic to place and established vernacular.
- 1.11. The published Landscape Character Assessments provide a broad overview associated with the landscape character of the site and its wider context but do not reflect the intricacies of the site and its immediate setting. In summary, the following is considered an accurate site specific assessment of the site character and its immediate setting:

"The application site is located on the eastern side of the village of Blankney on land referred to as Village Farm forming part of a cluster of linear development running east west along Drury Street from which the area of proposed development is accessed. Blankney Cricket Ground lies immediately to the west with open countryside under intensive agricultural use further to the north. Built form and residential gardens associated with the development along Drury Street occur to the east of the application site. The area of proposed development is accessed off Drury Steet which links to the B1188 Sleaford Road to the west and provides access to the settlement of Metherringham approximately 1km to the north. Lying within Natural England's National Character Area 47, the surrounding area gently rises to the north west and forms part of a large scale generally agricultural landscape consisting of rolling topography with small areas of woodland and remnants of a parkland landscape mainly now associated with Blankney Golf Club and Course. Despite the presence of the relatively busy B1188 Sleaford Road to the west the local setting retains a reasonably strong element of tranquillity, the settlement and the buildings associated with it forming important components of the local landscape character."

1.12. Located in a landscape typically characterised by isolated settlements in a largely open agricultural landscape, the application site forms part of the existing settlement cluster lying within the Blankney Conservation Area boundary and, when viewed from the Spires and Steeples Trail PRow to the north west, appears part of and entirely associated with the existing settlement built form. Being closely associated with the surrounding agricultural land use, the existing agricultural buildings currently located on the application site form part of the village character and vernacular and represent a key narrative of the village locality. The local Landscape Character Assessment highlights that Blankney has a distinctly different and strong identity as an estate village as referred to above. It acknowledges that maintaining the distinctive character of such villages is very important in this character area and new development should use materials, and design principles that respect and reflect the existing traditional limestone building stock so that they are sympathetic to the place and established vernacular. It is the vision of the proposed development by retaining a number of the existing agricultural buildings to reflect this intention and the overall character of the local area and setting as described above whilst at the same time providing a sustainable future for the site.



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