

Davies Landscape Architects were instructed by the Norfolk Estate to peer review the Landscape and Visual chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) submitted by Terrance O'Rourke. This review has been undertaken by chartered members of the Landscape Institute. The review has been based on a desktop study of the ES chapter and appendices. No site visits were undertaken. The review considers the assessment of magnitude and significance described within the ES assessment to provide an accurate representation of the potential landscape and visual effects.

Existing Application

The effects of the original application were restricted to a 2.5km study area with the built form similar in scale to the existing buildings at 22m in height with a dual 50m stack. This resulted in localised Slight Adverse Effects on landscape character and Moderate Adverse Effects to visual amenity within the study area.

Mitigation could be provided against some effects through tree planting which, as it matured, would provide an appropriately scaled setting.

Current Proposals

The revised proposals substantially increase the built form height, rising to a ridgeline at 51.22m high (circa 30m above the existing buildings and original proposals). The stack is extended to 85m high. This has resulted in views and experiences of the proposals being visible from the majority of unwooded land within a 4.5km radii (including Arundel) and several locations within (and just beyond) 10km (including the South Downs National Park – SDNP). This has significantly increased the range and number of receptors as well as the amount of visible built form. The stack forms a minor component of the new visible form.

The proposals are set within a wide reaching, low lying landscape with limited woodland cover. Vegetation is limited to hedged field boundaries and tree belts which generally do not exceed 15-20m in height and afford negligible screening opportunities beyond the immediate locality. Neither the topography, built context or mature vegetation framework provide any features of scale to assimilate or mitigate the effects. The building would remain approximately 30m above any surrounding vegetative network, even at maturity. The assessment identifies some development of larger scale within the views; however this building will form a standalone, prominent and easily identifiable new feature.

The mitigation strategy has been to provide a high architectural quality that will have an association with the airfield and create a 'sculptural landmark'. As described within the assessment, this is a very subjective approach and is based on the viewer understanding the background narrative. This would be unlikely for receptors within the wider context and particularly in the case of views from tourists and visitors to Arundel and the SDNP. From these distances and views, the 'architectural form' would likely not be appreciated and instead would be viewed as a substantial large-scale built form at odds with the wider landscape and horizon.

In terms of mitigating Landscape and Visual effects, a fundamental flaw appears to derive from the design decision to reduce the footprint of the proposals by increasing the height and scale in comparison to the surrounding landscape. This will be driven by the functionality but is not considered an appropriate landscape and visual mitigation measure when considered against the wide arc of predicted middle and long distance negative effects. In visual terms, a lower lying larger building within the context of a former airfield and potential new urban setting, may afford

opportunities to assimilate the built form into a landscaped framework with less intrusion into the skyline and horizon. The latter being the source of all of the adverse and significant effects.

Landscape Character

The proposals contribute to the visual experiences of 12 LCA's within the Arun Landscape Study (2006) and the South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2011). Of these, 8 are considered to be of medium/medium high sensitivity with the proposals resulting in an adverse medium or medium/large magnitude of change. Using the criteria set out within the assessment this equates to Moderate and Moderate/Substantial Significance of effect, the Substantial effects arising from the medium/high sensitivity LCA's. Substantial being the highest degree of effect beyond a high sensitivity landscape character such as the SDNP.

The significance of effects on the SDNP LCA within the study area is also considered Medium, deriving from a lesser adverse magnitude (Small/Medium) but a higher sensitivity receptor due to its landscape designation status.

Of the remaining 4 LCA's only 2 (including the airfield) are considered to have a 'not significant' effect, with the remaining 2 being considered to having an adverse Slight/Moderate significance due to their reduced sensitivity.

Whilst the development will not impact upon the key physical features which contribute to the character the development will potentially alter the experiences and perception of the LCA's.

Overall, it is considered that the proposals have a potential to afford a **significant adverse Moderate or Moderate Substantial effect on the experiences of a wide swathe of the district's landscape character.**

Visual Amenity

The scope for potential visual effects has increased from 2.5km to 10km, and beyond in the case of Viewpoint Locations 1 & 2 within the SDNP (circa 11km). Due to the scale of the built form it is still distinguishable at this distance and forms a new large-scale industrial feature that is out of scale with the surrounding context and clearly visible above the existing skyline.

As previously outlined, it is not considered that the potential receptors within these radii will have an understanding of the relevance of the form or its association with the airfield, a justification given for a potential subjective rational to the effects.

The new heights afford opportunities for a substantial increase in the range and extent of visual receptors from residential properties, Public Rights of Way and transport routes. Opportunities for views beyond 4.5km to the south are truncated by the coastline, however the extension increases the potential for views to Arundel, Middleton on Sea, Shipney, Littlehampton, Barnham and Westergate as well as the small hamlets in between. Whilst the majority of views will be from upperstorey windows reducing the sensitivity, the assessment still considers the potential magnitude of change to be adverse Moderate to Moderate/substantial. These are considered permanent effects that cannot be mitigated.

The extended height will become an identifiable large-scale feature within views from areas that are frequented by visitors and where the main focus and attraction is likely to be the landscape and associated opportunities for views. These include areas of the SDNP, Arundel (including the castle)

and the River Arun Valley. The review considers the described adverse Medium and permanent changes to these views a fair representation. This will result in a **Moderate to Moderate Substantial Effect that cannot be mitigated.**

Of particular relevance to the Norfolk Estate is the potential to impact upon the experiences of the thousands of visitors each year to the town and castle. Representative views from the castle were agreed with the LPA prior to the assessment, however due to the Covid-19 restrictions these were unable to be taken within the submission timescales. The report does, however, give reference to a photograph^[1] taken from Arundel Castle undertaken as part of the Ford Airfield residential application (F/4/20/OUT). Due to the limitations at the time of the LVIA this is considered a good representation of the existing views from the castle. Again, the peer review concurs with the findings of the visual assessment in that the new development will form a new visible industrial feature, albeit within a wide panorama. The magnitude of change is assessed as permanent Medium Adverse resulting in the Moderate/Substantial Adverse significance.

Overall, it is considered that the extended building heights will have an unacceptable and significant irreversible adverse effect on the experiences of the landscape and visual amenity of a wide area of the district. This includes areas that contribute to the tourist industry along with high and moderate quality landscape experiences such as the SDNP, Arundel and the Arun valley plains.

[1] Representative Viewpoint 11 (Right) - Arundel Castle, Arundel (4km, north east)