

LATE PAPERS

DC/21/02067 Land at Blackacre Hill, Bramford Road, Great Blakenham

Members will note that within the committee report, Officers recommended that the horizontal bands of cladding be reversed so that the lightest layer appears on the top and the darkest on the bottom on the basis of the view from Bramford Road.

However, upon further consideration and discussions with both the Agent and the Applicant, it is considered that the previous rationale which saw the darker colour on the top is now the preferred option.

The reasoning for this is due to the views of the site from the wider area, particularly on the valley sides. The dark banding ensures that the proposed warehouse(s) will blend into the existing tree line and vegetation.

The recommended condition relating to banding is now suggested to be removed, and the scheme (with regards to the boarding) remain as submitted.

The Agent has submitted the following information with regards to the banding:

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PORT ONE – UNIT 3

RESERVED MATTERS APPLICATION DC/21/02067

ELEVATION TREATMENT

Discussions first began with the Council about the development of what is now the Port One Logistics Park in 2013. The site lies on the eastern slope of the Gripping Valley and whilst close and medium distance views are largely contained by commercial buildings (including the Energy to Waste plant) and landscape features (such as mature hedge and tree lines and copses), the site is open to long-distance views – particularly from the eastern valley slopes and the upper parts of Claydon. Accordingly, the Council identified, at a very early stage, that a key to the development of the site would be the ability to mitigate impacts in the wider landscape.

Figure 1 is an extract from the latest Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The great majority of views that the Council asked the Applicant to assess are from a long-distance. This is because there are very few medium-distance views, whilst close-up views are limited to a short stretch of Bramford Road (edged blue).

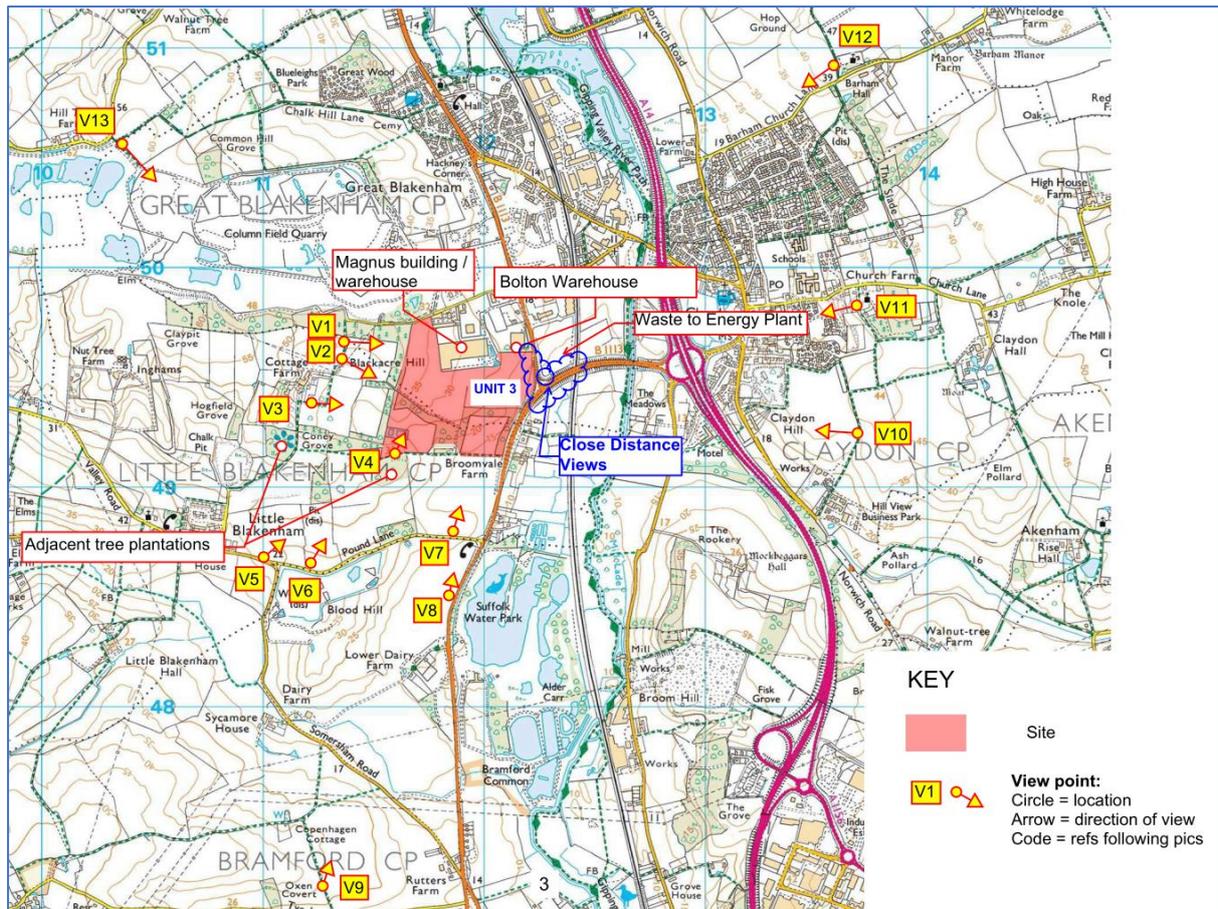


Figure 1: Extract from LVIA

During the course of the next three years, the scheme evolved, with the input from Planning Officers, to involve the creation of a series of development platforms, cut into the slope of the hill so that the buildings could be kept below the height of the trees on the western and southern boundaries of the site. A key part of the mitigation strategy was the pattern and colour of the elevations. As the buildings will largely be seen, from important public vantage points, against the backdrop of these trees, it was agreed that the 'normal' order of colours should be reversed and that the building should be light at the bottom and darker at the top.

This colour palette formed the basis of the first application for outline planning permission (reference DC/16/2351) that was submitted to the Council in May 2016. It was supported by the then Council's Landscape Officer, Planning Officers and, ultimately, Members when the application went to Committee, with planning permission being granted in November that year.

It has been further endorsed, by Planning and Landscape Officers (with Place Services latterly replacing the Council's own Landscape Officer), and by Members, through two subsequent variations to that permission (refs DC/17/1755 and

DC/20/03891), reserved matters approval for the first of the units (ref DC/19/01793) and an application for a further outline planning permission to extend the Logistics Park (DC/20/01775).

One of the goals of the Applicant is to create an attractive, modern, Logistics Park where all the buildings have a family resemblance. Whilst the request from Great Blakenham Parish Council to reverse the colour of the banding on the latest unit (so that it is lighter at the top and darker at the bottom) is noted, no other party, including the Council's landscape advisors (Place Services), has raised a similar concern.

The Applicant has a contract to deliver Unit 3 in early 2022. Accordingly, and if Members require that the banding be reversed then the Applicant will comply. However, it considers that this would be a significant retrograde step as, having two large warehouse buildings sited immediately next to each other but with differently arranged banding would look strange. It would weaken the cohesiveness of the entrance to the Logistics Park and adversely impact the short stretch of Bramford Road, in which the building will be seen.



Figure 2: Unit 4

More importantly, however, it will result in Unit 3 being significantly more visible in the wider landscape and, in particular, in long-distance views, which the Council has, throughout the gestation of this scheme, sought to protect. Figure 2 shows the view that can now be obtained of Unit 4 in the approach from Bramford Road. When the development is completed, the frontage to the single carriageway section of

Bramford Road will be planted and, accordingly, apart from the entrance into the site, Unit 3 will be viewed above the tree line (see Figure 2). It will sit 8.5m below Unit 4 and, accordingly, what will be seen, in close views, is the light top banding of the building above the tree line but below the top dark banding of Unit 4. In the Applicant's opinion, this will make the building stand out in street scene.

Figures 3, 4 and 5 show two typical views from the other side of the valley. Figure 3 shows that Unit 4 sits below the roofline of the trees behind it (further to the west) with the top banding being a similar colour to those trees and thus helping to assimilate the building into the background. Unit 3 sits lower and it can be seen how white banding at the top will make it stand out much more. Figure 4 shows the same view but with Unit 3 having dark banding at the top.



Figure 3: View from Church Lane / Highfield Close, Claydon – Unit 3 with light banding at the top.



Figure 4: Figure 5: View from Church Lane / Highfield Close, Claydon – Unit 3 with dark banding at the top.

Figure 5 is taken further up the valley. Because of the colours used, Unit 4 blends into the background of the trees and higher land behind. The lower of the two buildings which form the adjacent Waste to Energy plant can be seen to do the same. In fact, the cladding used on the two buildings is the same colour.

Whilst hand-drawn, the image shows the correct position and width of the top banding of Unit 3 (and also the further units which have outline planning permission which are to be situated along the western boundary of the site). If the panels were reversed, with the top panel being Oyster Grey, Unit 3 will be very visible in the wider landscape.

To further illustrate the point, we have marked the position of the Chassis Cab building on the image. It is the same Oyster Grey as the lightest panel used on Unit 3 (and which could become the top panel for Unit 3). Whilst a much smaller building than Unit 4, it stands out much more in the landscape because of the colour used.

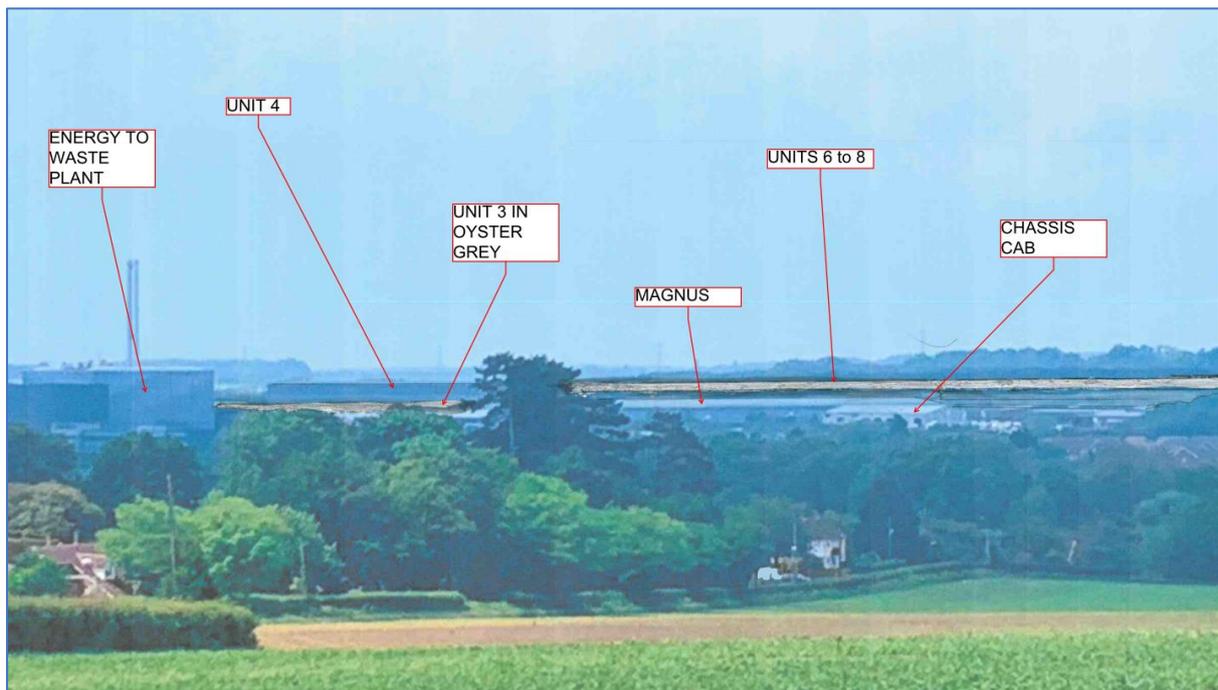


Figure 6: View from the Eastern Side of the Valley – Unit 3 with light banding at the top.

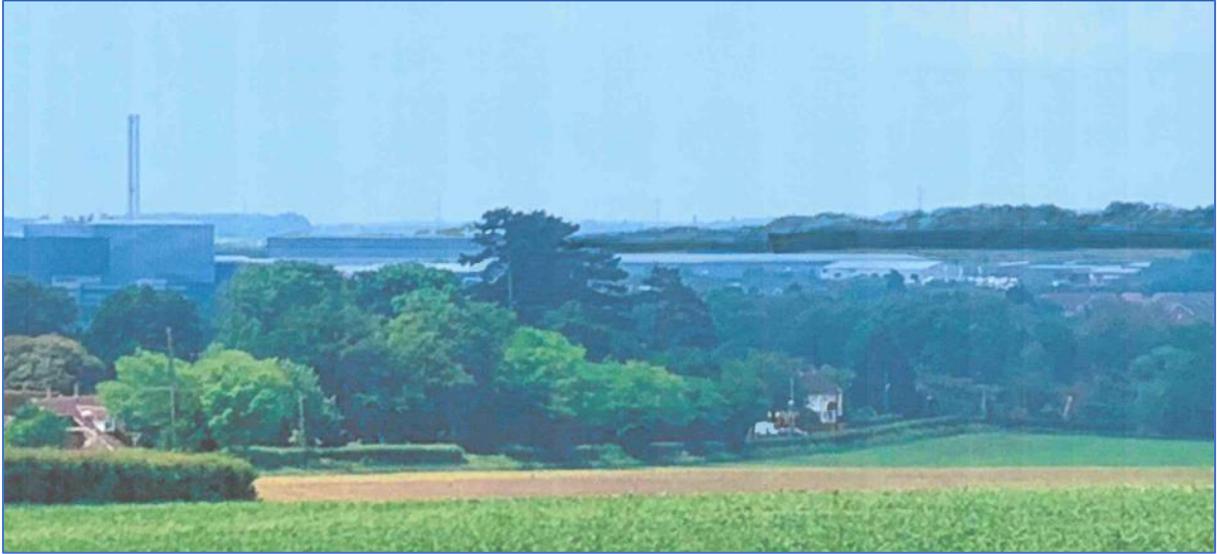


Figure 7: View from the Eastern Side of the Valley – Unit 3 with dark banding at the top.

Whilst ultimately this is a matter for Members to decide, and there is a balanced planning judgement to be had, with there being arguments for and against both options, the Applicant remains convinced that the original decision, to prioritise the protection of long-distance views and mitigate the impact of the scheme in the wider landscape, was, and remains, the correct one. This is particularly the case as there are few close-up views (none of which are from residential properties), whilst all the important public vantage points and views from residential properties are long-distance.”