

Elsham Tech Park

B072764

Review of updated Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

First Issue

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 Tetra Tech was instructed by North Lincolnshire Council to review the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared by MHP Design Ltd, dated May 2025 for the proposed Elsham Tech Park, an approx. 849,587 sqm technology park at a site to the immediate east and south east of Elsham Wolds Industrial Estate.
- 1.1.2 A report summarising that review was issued in June 2025 (Tetra Tech, 26/06/25). MHP Design Ltd responded to the review by providing a number of updated documents, dated July 2025. This report responds to the updated documents provided and provides a closing summary of the work provided to date in relation to the submitted LVIA.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

- 1.2.1 This updated review addresses the following documents provided by MHP Design Ltd:
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, V4 May 2025 updated July 2025;
 - Appendix A Assessment Methodology V3, updated July 2025;
 - Appendix B ZTV Analysis V3, May 2025 (not updated from previous issue);
 - Appendix C Figures V3, July 2025; and
 - Appendix D Andy Maw Design Photomontages, July 2025.
- 1.2.2 This report does not aim to repeat any of the review work previously carried out for the purpose of the original review, it addresses the updates provided by MHP Design Ltd only and provides a closing summary on the LVIA for North Lincolnshire Council. This report should be read in conjunction with the Elsham Tech Park, Review of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (Tetra Tech), 26th June 2025.
- 1.2.3 The review was carried out by Chartered Landscape Architects experienced in undertaking and reviewing landscape and visual impact assessment.

2.0 REVIEW

2.1.1 Commentary has been provided below on each of the items provided in the update as follows:

2.2 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT, V3, JULY 2025

Section 1.2: Aims and Scope of Assessment

2.2.1 The report now provides clear rationale with regards to the assessment study area, which relates to theoretical visibility of higher sensitivity receptors.

Section 3: Landscape Baseline

2.2.2 The discrepancy with regards to the formerly designated Area of High Landscape Value to the west of the Site has been amended. The report now consistently refers to the former designated landscape.

Section 4: Visual baseline

2.2.3 The LVIA now provides clear reasoning regarding the use of Google imagery relating to Viewpoints 33-35.

2.2.4 The LVIA has been updated to provide a clear narrative with regards to value, susceptibility and sensitivity of visual receptors.

2.2.5 The residential properties of Wooton Grange, Medley Cottages and Dale Farm Cottages have now been included as a visual receptor.

Section 6.2: Landscape Assessment

2.2.6 The LVIA has been updated to provide clearer justification with regards to landscape effects, although the assessment remains brief.

2.2.7 It has also been made clearer that the overall landscape effect relates to residual effects, i.e. reliant on mitigation planting being successfully established.

Section 6.3: Visual assessment

2.2.8 The LVIA has been updated to provide clearer justification with regards to visual effects, although the assessment remains brief. Previously missing assessment has also now been provided.

2.2.9 It has also been made clearer that the overall visual effect relates to residual effects, i.e. reliant on mitigation planting being successfully established.

Cumulative

2.2.10 The cumulative assessment has been simplified to include one other scheme of similar size. The assessment is brief, but justification is provided. The assessment scopes out the consideration of all other development approved or development under construction within the locality. The inclusion of the one development and scoping out of other developments from the cumulative

assessment appears reasonable in landscape and visual terms. Consideration of existing development has been removed.

2.3 APPENDIX A ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY, UPDATED JULY 2025

- 2.3.1 The discrepancies identified between the assessment methodology presented at Appendix A and the terminology used within the updated LVIA and ZTV Analysis at Appendix B have been addressed within the document.
- 2.3.2 The LVIA methodology refers to the significance of effects. However, determining the significance is only a requirement of EIA projects and therefore not relevant.

2.4 APPENDIX B ZTV ANALYSIS, DATED MAY 2025

- 2.4.1 Whilst the ZTV Analysis information has not been updated, the information now corresponds with the ZTV methodology as provided in Appendix A.
- 2.4.2 It is noted that no 'bare earth' ZTV has been provided as previously identified as missing from the assessment within our previous review.

2.5 APPENDIX C VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHY AND SUPPORTING GRAPHICS, JUNE 2024

- 2.5.1 The position of the assessment viewpoint locations in relation to Viewpoints 6 and 10 remain in a different position on Figure 3 Appendix C than the positions shown on the photomontages for the corresponding locations - Appendix D. The location of Viewpoint 17 now corresponds across figures in both Appendix C and D.
- 2.5.2 In relation to the Figures at Appendix C, a request was made to provide a panoramic context photo for Viewpoint 1 for consistency, but this has not been provided. The single frame views aren't all fully centred on the study site. With regards to Figure 68 – Single Frame View, the box has not been updated to correlate with the extent of the view at Figure 67.
- 2.5.3 Although these discrepancies have been identified, it is still possible to work out which is the correct viewpoint location position. The lack of context photo for viewpoint 1 and photos not being fully centred on the site does somewhat alter the baseline context to the information presented however, it is not sufficient to detract from the overall outcome of the assessment.

2.6 APPENDIX D PHOTOMONTAGES, JULY 2025

- 2.6.1 The photomontages have been updated to amend the appearance of the proposed planting, particularly at Year 1, and is more representative of the initial planting in relation to the appearance of the planting shown at Year 15. It is now stated in the methodology that the Year 1 planting is shown as a mix of whips and small trees.
- 2.6.2 The tree growth after 15 years has been reduced in height to a maximum of 8-10m and no longer appears too mature for the timeframe.

- 2.6.3 The methodology now states that the camera locations were surveyed using GNSS equipment. According to the manufacturer's website, the device used (Emlid Reach RS3 GNSS) is accurate to within 20mm, so the location coordinates ought to be provided to 2 decimal places not 3 (but this is a minor criticism).
- 2.6.4 The visualisation images are still not presented to the Landscape Institute (LI) current guidance (e.g. two 90 degree images on an A3 sheet – the sheet should be A1 wide by A3 height with one image per sheet). It is acknowledged that the methodology states that A1 versions are available on request.
- 2.6.5 The dimensions of each image, page size and the principal viewing distance are also still omitted. Direction is now given as a bearing from north rather than a compass point.
- 2.6.6 Overall, whilst there remain omissions to accepted practice guidance on the presentation of the visualisations, the images appear to have been produced correctly, and they do not appear to misrepresent the development proposals. It is suggested that an additional set of the A1 size visualisations is provided as an additional appendix.

3.0 OVERALL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

3.1 SUMMARY

3.1.1 The revised LVIA considers the comments made in the review of the LVIA prepared by Tetra Tech (June 2025). The updates address most of the previously identified omitted information or inconsistencies within the report and methodology. Overall, the vast majority of the points previously raised have been addressed.

3.1.2 The following points are raised where amendments haven't been made:

- There remain discrepancies with regards to the position of the assessment viewpoint locations in relation to Viewpoints 6 and 10. The locations remain in a different position on Figure 3 Appendix C than on the photomontages for the corresponding locations - Appendix D.
- In relation to the Figures at Appendix C, it was raised that a panoramic context photo for Viewpoint 1 hadn't been provided and therefore wasn't consistent with the rest of the viewpoint photography. It was also previously raised that the single frame views aren't all fully centred on the study site, which skews the baseline context of the view, favouring the existing industrial estate in the wider view. There is also an inconsistency with regards to Figure 68 in that single frame view indicator does not correlate with the extent of the view at Figure 67.
- No 'bare earth' ZTV has been provided.
- Consideration regarding the likely colour of the proposed built form in terms of landscape and visual mitigation hasn't been provided (such as a colour assessment).
- Details with regards to tree selection and size relating to landscape mitigation remain absent, over and above the information provided within the methodology relating to the visualisations.
- The photomontages have not been presented in accordance with LI guidance.
- The assessment of landscape and visual effects has been better justified but the overall justification remains brief.
- The findings of the landscape and visual assessment tables are weighted towards residual effects (year 15) which is heavily reliant on the success of the landscape mitigation proposals.

3.1.3 Notwithstanding the above points raised, the overall findings of the LVIA appear to be reasonable.

3.2 CONCLUSION

3.2.1 In relation to Landscape effects, the LVIA concludes that:

- ‘Operational phase landscape effects are recorded to a large number of potential landscape receptors due to the scale of the proposed development. However, the majority of landscape receptors beyond the site and immediate landscape context are identified to experience effects which are limited by distance, landcover or topography and landform’;
- ‘At operational phase the development is assessed to have a substantial adverse effect at year one on the landscape character of the site itself which reduces to a residual substantial moderate adverse with establishment of internal site landscape mitigation. The loss of open arable land within the site itself cannot be mitigated’.
- ‘Landscape effects on the immediate contextual landscape to the site were assessed and a moderate adverse residual effect was assessed for the landscapes to the immediate north and east of the site due to the introduction of the development features which will be seen to form an extension of the existing industrial estate. A substantial moderate adverse landscape effect was assessed for the landscape to the immediate south of the site. This is due to the limited exposure presently to the industrial estate buildings and the potential greater prominence of new development due to topography. A moderate adverse landscape effect was assessed to the immediate contextual landscape to the east (excluding Elsham village) to areas which will have visual connectivity with the development’.
- ‘At both construction and operational phase no harm was assessed to the landscape setting of the Lincolnshire Wolds National Landscape arising from the development proposals. The assessment at both construction phase and operation phases assessed a ‘negligible’ landscape effect...and results in no discernible deterioration or improvement to the landscape or view. As such the proposals conserve the character and scenic beauty of the National Landscape in accordance with requirements of the NPPF’; and
- ‘Overall, the assessment identifies potential residual landscape effects that are quite limited in the context of the scale and nature of the development proposals’.

3.2.2 The LVIA assesses the likely operational residual effects on the local landscape context as substantial moderate adverse and moderate adverse in the long term upon the following receptors:

- Site landscape character – substantial moderate adverse;
- Lincolnshire Wolds – Open, Rolling, High Farmland LCT – moderate adverse;
- Contextual landscape to the north, west and east of the site – moderate adverse; and
- Contextual landscape west of the A15 (excluding Elsham Village) – moderate adverse.

3.2.3 This summary appears reasonable, even though the justification of change and effects within the landscape assessment is brief. The residual effects are reliant on the success of the mitigation proposals, so to achieve the effects stated, the proposed planting would need to be implemented successfully, maintained and establish as anticipated.

3.2.4 In relation to visual effects, the LVIA concludes that:

- ‘Local residents with open views of the site are generally limited and existing screening through built form and landcover exists with inherent mitigation. The assessment identified that residents at Elsham Top Lodge may experience a moderate adverse residual visual effect due to direct views to the west across the southern area of the development. Although at some distance and across Middlegate Road, the change to the view through loss of open arable landscape resulted in the adverse effect. Residents at High Wood Farm were also identified to experience moderate adverse residual visual effects due to loss of arable landscape in their view to the north. Residents at Dodds farm were also assessed to experience moderate adverse residual visual effects due to the introduction of building form into views above existing outbuildings and barn to the south. The greatest potential visual effects were identified to residents at the Listed barn within the industrial estate. The assessment identifies a substantial moderate adverse effect due to the high level of change to the views to the east although new buildings can be screened from the property through mitigation landscaping’.
- ‘Overall, there is a clear correlation between distance from development and level of potential detrimental visual harm that arises from the development proposals before mitigation objectives are achieved. Visual effects at year one are substantial or substantial moderate adverse for a number of potentially close visual receptors but with mitigation reduce to residual levels of harm that are acceptable in the context of the characteristics and value of the landscape’.
- ‘At medium distance a number of high sensitivity visual receptors will experience moderate to substantial adverse effects which will reduce to residual levels of harm that are acceptable in the context of the characteristics and value of the landscape’.
- ‘At longer distance to the south are a number of potentially high sensitivity visual receptors including users of the National Landscape. The assessment identifies that the development will be barely perceptible within the long distance views and as such will not result in any visual harm. This is due to distance from the site and the generally panoramic nature of the limited potential views. Woodland mitigation planting will build on the well treed horizon seen in some views so making a barely perceptible change to the nature of the existing view’.
- ‘Overall, although the assessment identifies a number of substantial landscape and visual effects arising from the development proposals, these are considered to be limited in the context of the scale and nature of the development. The existing industrial estate provides a distinct landscape to anchor development to which through earthworks and woodlands can be assimilated into the immediate landscape’.

3.2.5 The LVIA assesses substantial moderate and moderate adverse operational residual effects on the following the visual receptors:

- Elsham Chalk Barn (described Listed Barn, Elsham Wolds within the LVIA) - substantial moderate adverse effect;
- Walkers on the Viking Way – north, east and south – moderate adverse effects;

- Users of Race Lane – east and south – moderate adverse;
- Users of Middlegate Road – moderate adverse;
- Residents at Elsham Top Lodge – moderate adverse;
- Residents at High Wood Farm – moderate adverse; and
- Residents at Dodds Fram – moderate adverse.

3.2.6 The summary and conclusions appears reasonable, even though the justification of the visual assessment is brief. The residual effects are reliant on the success of the mitigation proposals, so to achieve the effects stated, the proposed planting would need to be implemented successfully, maintained and establish as anticipated.

3.2.7 As stated in our previous review, taking into account the proposals for a proposed development of this scale in a landscape of medium sensitivity, this appears to be an appropriate assessment for this location. The proposed development is large in scale and massing and will form a large visual presence in the landscape with mitigation planting taking time to provide any screening. The planting proposals themselves are likely to alter the landscape character of this area. Sensitive selection of colours for the building should be carried out to reduce its presence in the view and allow it to assimilate better into the surrounding landscape.

3.2.8 The establishment of the green infrastructure is key to mitigating the effects of the development and further detail should be provided at reserved matters stage to safeguard effective vegetation implementation and establishment. Details should be provided on the species proposed, size and form at planting, densities and mixes. We would anticipate a mix of trees at various sizes including some heavy standards for early screening effect alongside whip planting. Information on growing media should also be provided. Details of maintenance regimes should be provided over a minimum of 5 year period to ensure the planting health and establishment is monitored and managed. This is required in order to provide the screen planting assumed to be effective circa 15 years from implementation. Any opportunities for advanced planting works prior to the construction of the building should be considered to allow for earlier establishment of the planting.