



GP PLANNING LTD

ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSULTANTS

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PROPOSED MODIFICATION TO AN EXISTING PLANNING PERMISSION FOR A RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION FACILITY (REGF)

PEBBLE HALL FARM, BOSWORTH ROAD, THEDDINGWORTH,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, LE17 6NJ

CARBONARIUS LTD

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 GP Planning Ltd has been instructed by Carbonarius Ltd (the Applicant) to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the modification to an existing planning permission for a Renewable Energy Generation Facility (REGF Facility), on land at Pebble Hall Farm, Theddingworth, Northamptonshire (the Application Site).
- 1.1.2 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will form one of a number of components of an Environmental Statement, reporting on the outcomes of an Environmental Impact Assessment, to support a planning application submitted to Northamptonshire County Council.

1.2 Purpose of the Report

- 1.2.1 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment concentrates on key landscape and visual issues, including impacts on the landscape resource and impacts on the visual amenity. Landscape impacts are those that occur upon the landscape character and resource, whereas visual impacts are those that arise from changes in the appearance of the landscape and have a resulting impact on visual amenity.
- 1.2.2 This assessment aims to:
- Define the existing landscape environment.
 - Identify the existing visual resource and Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).
 - Indicate the sensitivity to change of the existing landscape and visual resource.
 - Describe the key landscape and visually related aspects of the development.
 - Describe the nature of the anticipated change upon the existing landscape, visual resource and visual receptor groups.
 - Assess the magnitude and significance of the changes as a result of the proposed development.
 - Describe the mitigation measures that will be incorporated within the proposed development to assist in reducing any potential impacts upon the existing landscape, the visual resource and visual receptor groups. Consider any secondary mitigation measures and residual impacts.
- 1.2.3 The scope of work for the assessment has been identified in order to be in accordance with the relevant guidance documents and prescribed methodology, identified in Section 2. The scope of work was agreed with Northamptonshire County Council through the formal scoping process associated with the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and subsequent correspondence. Further information is included in Appendix 1.

1.3 The Application Site

- 1.3.1 Pebble Hall Farm is located South of the A4304 (Bosworth Road), Theddingworth in the Northern part of the District of Daventry, shown on Drawing GPP-C-PH-REGF-13-01 (Site Location Plan). It is approximately 1.8 km east of the village of Husbands Bosworth and 750 metres south-west of Theddingworth. The Application Site is located 3.4ha in area, located in the south and east portions of the Pebble Hall complex. The proposed Application Site is currently used for wood reception, workshops and as a general yard area. The existing site

layout is illustrated on Drawing GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/03, and the numbers the existing buildings on site.

- 1.3.2 There is existing access to the Application Site, from the A4304. This existing access crosses the Northamptonshire and Leicestershire county boundaries, is surfaced in concrete and is approximately 560 metres long from its junction with the A4304.
- 1.3.3 Pebble Hall Farm is an agriculturally based operation that has been the subject of farm diversification, mainly as a result of the BSE crisis. By a series of grants of planning permission over a number of years, the site has established a variety of industrial/commercial concerns and a waste management operation as part of the diversification of the farm. The site currently operates in composting and has various workshops which are rented out. The development area already has existing permission for a gasification renewable energy generation facility. A planning application was submitted to Northamptonshire County Council for a Thermal Aerobic Digester (TAD) adjacent to the Application Site; it has been withdrawn and is being resubmitted to be considered at the same time as this application.

1.4 Site Setting and Context

- 1.4.1 The site is located in a predominantly rural location, although the site itself is used for various industrial/commercial and waste related operations. The closest residential property is located over 600 metres north of the site. The landscape is rolling and scattered with various landscape features such as hedgerows and trees. The site is located in an area of open countryside, which by virtue of Policy EN1 of the Daventry Local Plan (saved policies), is designated as being in an area of 'Special Landscape'. Pebble Hall Farm has been extensively landscaped in recent years.
- 1.4.2 There is an existing Public Footpath located approximately 1600 metres south east of the site through the Hothorpe Hills. There is an SSSI located approximately 2km to the south east, called Coombe Hill Hollow. There is one Scheduled Monument in the form of medieval settlement remains located 750 metres east of the site. This monument cannot be seen from the site, or vice versa. There are no international or European designated nature conservation sites within 2km of the application site. There are no national designated nature conservation sites within 2km of the application site.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction and Outline of Approach

2.1.1 The following methodology describes the way in which the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

Guidance

2.1.2 The approach to assessing landscape and visual impacts is informed by the following guidance documents:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013)
- Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, published by the Countryside Agency, 2002
- Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment, Advice Note 01/11, published by the Landscape Institute, 2011

Data Sources

2.1.3 The following data sources have been used to compile the LVIA:

- Ordnance Survey Landranger (1:50,000) and Explorer (1:25,000) maps
- Countryside Agency (1999), Countryside Character Volume 4
- Natural England, Nature on the Map
- MAGIC Interactive Map, Defra and Natural England
- Site Survey Data

2.2 Field Survey Methodology

Field survey work has been undertaken by a suitably qualified Landscape Architect (CMLI) and has been undertaken across the study area over a number of visits in different weather conditions in Summer 2013. A site visits was undertaken on 19th June, 20th June, 22nd July.

2.3 Zone of Theoretical Visibility

2.3.1 The term 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' (ZTV) is used to describe the area over which a development can theoretically be seen. It maps land that may potentially be visually connected with the development proposal. This is also sometimes known as a Zone of Visual Influence or a Visual Envelope Map. In this case the Zone of Theoretical Visibility describes the area over which the Application Site and the potential development can theoretically be seen.

2.3.2 The Zone of Theoretical Visibility was determined using a manual approach. This included:

- map interpretation
- field survey visits (mapping the land that is visible from within the site)
- topographical studies

2.4 Viewpoints and Photomontages

Selection of Viewpoints

- 2.4.1 Viewpoints are selected to be representative of the range of potential impacts likely to arise as a result of the proposed development, to show specific viewpoints, or to illustrate a particular effect or specific issues. The selection ensures that no potential impacts are under or over represented and that short, medium and long range views are considered, therefore covering a wide range of situations to cover the likely significant effects.
- 2.4.2 Selection of viewpoints is informed by
- Consultation with Northamptonshire County Council (see Appendix 1)
 - ZTV analysis
 - Fieldwork
 - Desk top research

Photography

- 2.4.3 Photographs were taken using a digital camera at a height approximate to eye level of the viewer, above ground level. The location of the photographer was also taken using a hand held GPS device. Photographs were taken with a Nikon D40 Digital Camera, with an 18-55mm variable lens set to auto focus. The photographs were stitched together with Adobe Photoshop software to create a panorama.
- 2.4.4 Additional information associated with each photograph is recorded, including angle and direction of view, date, time, and weather conditions, for example.
- 2.4.5 Weather conditions and visibility are an important consideration in determining the appropriate time to take photographs used in the construction of photomontages. Where possible, photographs were taken on clear sunny days with good visibility. Viewpoint locations were then, where possible, visited according to the time of day and the orientation of the sun to ensure that the scene was lit from behind or to one side of the photographer.

2.5 Baseline Condition and Sensitivity of the Resource

- 2.5.1 The first task in the LVIA involves describing the character, condition and sensitivity of the landscape and the nature of existing views and visual amenity as a baseline against which the impacts can be assessed. This includes:
- desk study of existing documents and guidance;
 - identification of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the potential development;
 - a review of landscape character assessments within the ZTV, including the Countryside Agency's Countryside Character Areas / Natural England's National Character Areas, county assessments and district/borough assessments;
 - identification of national and local landscape designations (including nature and justification of designation);
 - identification of the sensitivity of the landscape resource;
 - identification of representative, specific and illustrative viewpoints; and
 - identification of viewpoint sensitivity.

Sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity

- 2.5.2 The Landscape Institute's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment advise that in order to reach an understanding of the impacts of development on a landscape resource, it is necessary to consider different aspects of the landscape i.e. the individual elements that make up the landscape, characteristics, and character. For the purposes of this assessment the sensitivity of the landscape resource is based on an evaluation of each aspect of the landscape resource likely to be affected. This includes:
- the landscape character;
 - the landscape components or elements of the Application Site; and
 - the landscape designations.
- 2.5.3 Landscape sensitivity is considered to be a combination of:
- the susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed
 - the value attached to the landscape
- 2.5.4 The susceptibility of landscape receptors to change is classified as High, Medium or Low, according to the table below.

Table 2.1: Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors to Change

Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	Key features/characteristics that make up the landscape are likely to be greatly affected by introduction of development such that landscape character is substantially changed.
Medium	Some key features/characteristics that make up the landscape are likely to be affected by introduction of development such that landscape character may be changed to some degree.
Low	Key features/characteristics that make up the landscape are unlikely to be affected by introduction of development. The landscape is robust and the landscape character is unlikely to change.

- 2.5.5 The value attached to the landscape, both character and individual contributors to character, is to some degree reflected by landscape designations and the level of importance that they hold. The value attached to the landscape is classified as International, National, Local, Community, according to the table below.

Table 2.2: Value of Landscape Receptors

Value	Definition
International	Internationally valued landscapes (recognised as World Heritage Sites)
National	Nationally valued landscapes (National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Scenic Areas or equivalent)
Local	Locally valued landscapes (Local Authority Landscape Designations or landscapes of equivalent value)
Community	Landscapes valued by the local community

- 2.5.6 The sensitivity of the landscape receptor is defined as a combination of both the susceptibility to change and the value attached to the landscape. Sensitivity is defined as High, Medium, Low, and is established using the matrix in the table below.

Table 2.3: Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

	High Susceptibility to Change	Medium Susceptibility to Change	Low Susceptibility to Change
International Value	High Sensitivity	High Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity
National Value	High Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity
Local Value	Medium Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity
Community Value	Medium Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity

Visual Sensitivity

2.5.7 Visual sensitivity is considered to be a combination of:

- The susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity of the visual receptor i.e. people
- The value attached to particular views

2.5.8 The susceptibility to change of views and visual amenity is classified as High, Medium or Low, according to the table below.

Table 2.4: Susceptibility to Change of Views

Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	There are few overt or intrusive man made elements in the view. The view is experienced by a large number of receptors and/or is of particular importance to the viewers affected (e.g. located in a residential area or in an AONB/National Park, or on a National Trail).
Medium	There are some overt or intrusive man made elements in the view. The view is experienced by a medium number of receptors and/or is located in a recreational area (e.g. on a local footpath, including Long Distance / Regional footpaths), or experienced by travellers on road, rail or other transport routes.
Low	There are a number of overt or intrusive man made elements already in the view. The view is experienced by a small number of receptors, and is experienced by those engage in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape, and people at their place of work.

2.5.9 The value attached to views should also be considered. These are categorised as High, Medium, and Low according to the table below.

Table 2.5: Value of Views

Value	Definition
High	An advertised or designated viewpoint from which there is a view with high scenic quality (this may include views across, or within, a National Park, AONB or Historic Park/Garden on English Heritage's Register).
Medium	A viewpoint from which there is a view with some scenic quality (this may include views across, or within, a locally designated landscape).
Low	A viewpoint from which there is a view with low scenic quality.

2.5.10 The sensitivity of the visual amenity is defined as a combination of both the susceptibility to change of the view and the value attached to the view. Sensitivity is defined as High, Medium, Low, and is established using the matrix in the table below.

Table 2.6: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

	High Susceptibility to Change	Medium Susceptibility to Change	Low Susceptibility to Change
High Value	High Sensitivity	High Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity
Medium Value	High Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity
Low Value	Medium Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity

2.6 Magnitude of Effects and Significance

Magnitude of Change of the Landscape Resource

2.6.1 Each effect on the landscape receptors is assessed in terms of the following:

- Size or Scale of Change in the Landscape
- Geographical Extent of the Effect
- Duration and Reversibility of the Effect

Size or Scale of Change in the Landscape

2.6.2 The size or scale of a change in the landscape that is likely to be experienced as a result of an effect on the landscape is identified, and categorised a Major, Moderate, Minor, None, as set out in the table below.

Table 2.7: Size or Scale of Effect

Size or Scale of Change in the Landscape	Definition
Major	The proposed scheme would completely change the character of the landscape. Elements of the landscape would be completely removed or changed as a result of the proposed development.
Moderate	The proposed scheme would cause a noticeable difference to the character of the landscape. Elements of the landscape would be partially removed or changed as a result of the proposed development.
Minor	The proposed scheme would cause a very small change to the character of the landscape. There would be a very small change to the elements of the landscape as a result of the proposed development.
None	The proposed scheme is barely perceptible or entirely appropriate in its context. There would be no change to the elements of the landscape as a result of the proposed development.

Geographical Extent of Effect

- 2.6.3 The geographical extent or area over which the landscape effects will be felt is identified, and these are categorised as Site, Immediate Setting, Landscape Type or Character Area and Large Scale. These are set out Table 2.8.

Table 2.8: Geographical Extent of Effect

Geographical Extent of Effect	Definition
Large Scale	A change notable over a large geographical area, influencing several landscape types of character areas.
Landscape Type or Character Area	A change notable within the landscape character type or character area within which the proposal lies.
Immediate Setting	A change notable within the immediate setting of the site.
Site	A change within the development site itself.

Duration and Reversibility of Landscape Effects

- 2.6.4 The duration of the effect is the period over which the change would occur, and the reversibility considers the likelihood and practicality of the particular effect being reversed. The duration of the effect is considered to be either short, medium or long term, and the reversibility noted as either a permanent change, partially reversible or temporary / reversible.

Magnitude of Change

- 2.6.5 The magnitude of change is therefore a combination of the size and scale of effect, the geographical extent and duration and reversibility of the effect. This is categorised as High, Medium, Low and Negligible, according to the criteria set out in Table 2.9 below. In assigning a category for the magnitude of change a judgement is made using the results of the assessment of effects, not just applying a matrix for the decision making process.

Table 2.9: Magnitude of Change of the Landscape Resource

Magnitude of Change	Definition
High	A major change in the landscape, over a large geographical area.
Medium	A moderate change in the landscape, within a landscape character type or character area.
Low	A minor change in the landscape, notable within the immediate setting of the site or within the development site itself.
Negligible	No or very little change in the landscape, within the immediate setting of the site or within the development site itself.

Magnitude of Change on Visual Amenity

2.6.6 Each of the visual effects is assessed in terms of the following:

- Size or Scale of Change in the View
- Geographical Extent of the Effect
- Duration and Reversibility of the Effect

Size or Scale of Change in the View

2.6.7 The size or scale of a change in the view that is likely to be experienced as a result of an effect on the landscape is identified, and categorised as Major, Moderate, Minor, None, as set out in the table below.

Table 2.10: Size or Scale of Effect

Size or Scale of Change in the View	Definition
Major	The proposed scheme would completely change the features within the view and the composition of the view. A large proportion of the view would be occupied by the proposed scheme. A high degree of contrast between the new features or changes in the view with the existing and remaining characteristics of the view. There would be a full view of the changes.
Moderate	The proposed scheme would cause a noticeable difference to the features within the view and the composition of the view. A noticeable proportion of the view would be occupied by the proposed scheme. A relative degree of contrast between the new features or changes in the view with the existing and remaining characteristics of the view. There would be a full or partial view of the changes.
Minor	The proposed scheme would cause a very small change to the features within the view and the composition of the view. A small proportion of the view would be occupied by the proposed scheme. A little or no contrast between the new features or changes in the view with the existing and remaining characteristics of the view. There would be only partial or glimpsed views of the changes.
None	The proposed scheme is barely perceptible in the view.

Geographical Extent of Effect

- 2.6.8 The geographical extent of the visual effects will be considered and identified, noting the angle of the view, the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development and the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.

Duration and Reversibility of Visual Effects

- 2.6.9 The duration of the effect is the period over which the change would occur, and the reversibility considers the likelihood and practicality of the particular effect being reversed. The duration of the effect is considered to be either short, medium or long term, and the reversibility noted as either a permanent change, partially reversible or temporary / reversible.

Magnitude of Change

- 2.6.10 The magnitude of change is therefore a combination of the size and scale of effect, the geographical extent and duration and reversibility of the effect. This is categorised as High, Medium, Low and Negligible, according to the criteria set out in Table 2.11 below. In assigning a category for the magnitude of change a judgement is made using the results of the assessment of effects, not just applying a matrix for the decision making process.

Table 2.11: Magnitude of Change on Visual Amenity

Magnitude of Change	Definition
High	A major change in the view, with the changes visible over a large area.
Medium	A moderate change in the view, with the changes visible over an area of moderate size.
Low	A minor change in the view, notable within the immediate setting of the site or within the development site itself.
Negligible	No or very little change in the view, within the immediate setting of the site or within the development site itself.

Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

- 2.6.11 The significance of the landscape effects is described in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013) as follows:
- *Major loss or irreversible negative effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes are likely to be of the greatest significance;*
 - *Reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key characteristics of the character of the landscapes of community value are likely to be of the least significance and may, depending on the circumstances, be judged as not significant.*
- 2.6.12 The significance of the visual effects is described in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013) as follows:
- *Effects on people who are particularly sensitivity to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant.*
 - *Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant.*

- *Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.*

2.6.13 In order to identify the significance of landscape and visual effects the magnitude and sensitivity are combined, set out in Table 2.12 below.

Table 2.12: Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

	With High Landscape/ Visual Sensitivity	With Medium Landscape/ Visual Sensitivity	With Low Landscape/ Visual Sensitivity
High Magnitude of Change	<i>Major impact</i>	<i>Major impact</i>	<i>Moderate impact</i>
Medium Magnitude of Change	<i>Major impact</i>	<i>Moderate impact</i>	Minor impact
Low Magnitude of Change	<i>Moderate impact</i>	Minor impact	Minor impact
Negligible Change	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

2.6.14 It is noted that this matrix is a starting point to guide decisions on significance of impact. Decisions are based on professional judgement and in some exceptional circumstances it may be judged necessary to deviate from the matrix. Any deviations from the matrix will be clearly recorded and justified.

2.6.15 These levels of significance are used to standardise the results of the assessment. Any **Moderate** or **Major** impact is considered to be significant for the purposes of the EIA.

3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1.1 This section provides a summary of the planning policies of relevance to the landscape and visual amenity, including national through to local policies.

3.2 National Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy

3.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted at the end of March 2012 and is designed to consolidate policy statements, circulars and guidance documents into a single concise document.

3.2.2 Included within the NPPF there is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**. Sustainable principles are at the heart of the planning system, which should be central to the approach taken to both plan-making and decision-taking.

3.2.3 Section 7 of the NPPF provides guidance on good design, and Section 8 on promoting health communities. Paragraph 58 states that *Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments...are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping*. It goes on to state in Para 61 that *planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment*.

3.2.4 Section 8 paragraph 75 states that *planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails*.

3.2.5 Section 11 of the NPPF provides guidance on conserving and enhancing the natural environment. In paragraph 109 it states *the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*.

3.3 Local Policy Guidance

Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (2010)

3.3.1 Policy CS14: Addressing the impact of proposed minerals and waste development
Proposals for minerals and waste development must demonstrate that the following matters have been addressed:

- *minimising environmental impact and protecting Northamptonshire's key environmental designations,*
- *protecting natural resources or ensuring that any unavoidable loss or reduction is mitigated,*
- *ensuring built development is of a design and layout that has regard to its visual appearance in the context of the defining characteristics of the local area,*
- *ensuring access is sustainable, safe and environmentally acceptable, and ensuring that local amenity is protected.*

The Control and Management of Development, Development Plan Document (2011)

3.3.2 Policy CMD7: Natural assets and resources

Minerals and waste development should seek to (where possible) achieve a net gain in assets and resources, through:

- *delivery of wider environmental benefits in the vicinity where development would adversely affect any regional or locally designated sites or other features of local interest,*
- *protecting and enhancing green infrastructure and strategic biodiversity networks, in particular the River Nene and other sub -regional corridors*

3.3.3 Policy CMD8: Landscape character

Minerals and waste development should seek to reflect Northamptonshire's landscape character.

Development should mitigate potentially adverse impacts on the local character and distinctiveness of Northamptonshire's landscape where necessary during the development, operational life, restoration, aftercare, and after - use. Opportunities for enhancement should be maximised through restoration, aftercare, and after - use.

Proposals for minerals and waste development will be required to undertake a landscape impact assessment (where appropriate) based on the landscape character assessment in order to identify:

- *the presence of landscape values (including their nature, extent, and level of importance) and determine any potential impacts,*
- *any necessary measures to mitigate potentially adverse impacts, and*
- *opportunities to protect and enhance particular features that create a specific aspect of local distinctiveness or character.*

3.3.4 Policy CMD10: Layout and design quality

The layout and overall appearance of waste management facilities, and where appropriate minerals development, will be required to demonstrate that the development:

- *supports local identity and relates well to neighbouring sites and buildings,*
- *is set in the context of the area in which it is to be sited in a manner that enhances the overall townscape, landscape, or streetscape (as appropriate),*
- *utilises local building materials as appropriate,*
- *incorporates specific elements of visual interest, and*
- *builds - in safety and security.*

Development and Implementation Principles Supplementary Planning Document (2011)

- 3.3.5 This policy document provides further policy in relation to the layout and design of facilities, in Box SPD 3. In particular, it makes reference to environmental protection and enhancement, and high quality landscape and boundary treatments.

Daventry District Council Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)

- 3.3.1 The relevant policies are:

- Policy GN2 – Criteria for granting planning permission: development will normally be granted provided the proposal will be in-keeping with the locality and does not detract from its amenities.
- Policy EN1 – Special Landscape Areas

In recognition of their special environmental qualities, certain areas are designated on the proposals map as special landscape areas. In these areas planning permission will normally be granted for development provided that:

- A. It comprises agricultural, forestry, recreation or tourism development; or*
- B. It relates to settlements within these areas. In assessing such proposals detailed design, materials, siting and in particular, landscaping, will be material considerations fundamental to the granting of planning permission; or*
- C. It relates to the re-use or adaptation of rural buildings provided their finished form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings*
- D. It does not adversely affect the character of the local landscape.*

3.3.2 The Northamptonshire Control and Management of Development DPD states that *Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), which have local status, only remain over parts of Daventry and South Northamptonshire local authority areas (as of 1 January 2009). National guidance states that such designations should only be maintained or, exceptionally, extended where it can be clearly shown that the necessary protection cannot be provided by policy alone. Where designated in an adopted LDF (DPD) they will form a material planning consideration.*

3.3.3 An adopted LDF is not available at a local level, from Daventry District Council, and therefore the value of the landscape is determined using the Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment.

4 BASELINE LANDSCAPE ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The baseline landscape environment can be described in terms of:
- Landscape character
 - Landscape elements
 - Landscape designations

4.2 Landscape Character

- 4.2.1 A number of landscape character assessments have been identified that are of relevance to this assessment. The hierarchy of landscape character assessment has been examined from a national to a local level.

National Landscape Character

- 4.2.2 The top tier in the assessment hierarchy is represented by the National Countryside Character Assessment undertaken by the Countryside Agency. This assessment identifies 159 Countryside Character Areas and descriptive text is provided in 8 regional volumes. These Countryside Character Areas are currently being reviewed and updated by Natural England, and are now known as National Character Areas (NCA). Where this process is ongoing environmental data for an NCA is provided in a Key Facts & Data document.
- 4.2.3 The Application Site is located within the National Character Area 89: Northamptonshire Vales, in close proximity to the boundary of National Character Areas 95 Northamptonshire Uplands and 94 Leicestershire Vales. The study area for this assessment includes all three of these National Character Areas, and therefore each is considered in this assessment. The boundary of the areas is shown on Drawing GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 National Character Areas.
- 4.2.4 National Character Area 89 Northamptonshire Vales is noted for the following key characteristics:
- *Gentle clay ridges and valleys with little woodland and strong patterns of Tudor and parliamentary enclosure.*
 - *Distinctive river valleys of Soar, Welland and Nene with flat floodplains and gravel terraces.*
 - *Large towns of Leicester and Northampton dominate much of the landscape.*
 - *Frequent small towns and large villages, often characterised by red brick buildings.*
 - *Prominent parks and country houses.*
 - *Frequent imposing, spired churches.*
 - *Attractive stone buildings in older village centres and eastern towns and villages.*
 - *Great diversity of landscape and settlement pattern with many sub units, e.g. Nene Valley and Welland Valley.*
- 4.2.5 National Character Area 95 Northamptonshire Uplands are noted for the following key characteristics:
- *Rounded, undulating hills with many long, low ridgelines.*
 - *Abundant and prominent ridge and furrow with frequent deserted and shrunken settlements.*

- *Sparse settlement of nucleated villages on hilltops or valley heads.*
- *Mixed farming: open arable contrasts with pasture enclosed by good hedges with frequent hedgerow trees.*
- *Wide views from the edges and across the ridge tops.*
- *Straight, wide, enclosure roads, often following ridges.*
- *Little woodland, but prominent coverts on higher ground.*
- *Ironstone and limestone older buildings with a transition across the area. Brick buildings in some villages.*
- *Great variety of landform with distinctive local features like Hemplow Hills.*
- *Large and nationally-important historic parks.*

4.2.6 The key characteristics of National Character Area 94 Leicestershire Vales are noted as follows:

- *Gentle clay ridges and valleys with little woodland and strong patterns of Tudor and parliamentary enclosure.*
- *Distinctive river valleys of Soar, Welland and Nene with flat floodplains and gravel terraces.*
- *Large towns of Leicester and Northampton dominate much of the landscape.*
- *Frequent small towns and large villages, often characterised by red brick buildings.*
- *Prominent parks and country houses.*
- *Frequent imposing, spired churches.*
- *Attractive stone buildings in older village centres and eastern towns and villages.*
- *Great diversity of landscape and settlement pattern with many sub units, e.g. Nene Valley and Welland Valley.*

Regional and Local Landscape Character

Environmental Character Assessment and Key Issues (2006)

4.2.7 This document provides an Environmental Character Assessment of the Northamptonshire area and the Key Issues that it faces. The key issues are:

- *Despite the river [Welland] itself being relatively narrow and gently flowing, the valley is a significant feature of the wider landscape and land management should seek to preserve and enhance the visual distinctiveness of the river corridor through the wider agricultural landscape.*
- *At locations along the Welland, prominent and sometimes steeply sloping valley sides form a striking backdrop to the floodplain. The upper slopes of the valley sides offer vantage points from where dramatic panoramic views across the Welland are possible, contrasting with more intimate landscapes in the valley floor where long distance views are restricted by landform and vegetation. Woodland planting, new development and land management should seek to enhance differences between valley sides and valley floor.*
- *Small woodlands, along with rough grassland, characterise a number of the steeper upper valley slopes and these distinctive habitats should be enhanced where possible. The distribution of varying drift deposits are displayed in marked changes in agricultural land use along the course of the river. To the west of Market Harborough, extensive sand and gravel river terrace deposits are evident bordering the Welland, which is well suited to arable farming that extends down the gentler valley sides into the valley floor. Land use should conserve the patchwork pattern that marks variations in the underlying geology and contributes to the landscape's visual appeal.*

- *Hedgerow trees are mainly ash, oak and field maple along with waterside willows. Hedgerow and river side trees make up much of the floodplain landscapes.*

Current Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.2.8 This document makes comments on Northamptonshire's landscape in general before making comments on specific Landscape Character Areas. On Northamptonshire's landscape it states: *Northamptonshire contains a number of distinctive and contrasting landscapes. Undulating, elevated land with ironstone villages in the west and north of the county contrast with the lower, broad river valleys that extend across the central and eastern part of the county, and also along its northern margin.*
- 4.2.9 It also states that: *Northamptonshire is a rural county with a rich and varied landscape heritage. Whilst not widely regarded for its scenic beauty, the county contains a wealth of attractive rural landscapes, the most notable of which are located in close proximity to the River Nene, the county's principal river, and its tributary, the River Ise.*
- 4.2.10 Pebble Hall Farm is identified as located within the Broad Unwooded Vale Landscape Type (19) within the Welland Vale Landscape Character Area (19C). The key characteristics of the character type are:
- *extensive landscape defining the western boundary of the county;*
 - *expansive long distance and panoramic views across the open vale landscape;*
 - *landscape drained by numerous small watercourses that flow within shallow undulations into the rivers and streams on the county boundary;*
 - *minor undulations gain prominence in an otherwise broad flat landscape;*
 - *predominance of Lias Group Charmouth Mudstone and Blue Lias formation geology, which extends north and westwards and underlies much of the lowland landscapes of Dunsmore and Feldon, and the Leicestershire Vale;*
 - *woodland cover extremely limited, with tree cover confined mainly to hedgerow trees and overgrown hedgerows;*
 - *productive arable and pastoral farmland in generally equal proportions in fields of varying size;*
 - *hedgerows generally low and well clipped, although limited sections show evidence of decline with reinforcing post and wire fences;*
 - *sparsely settled with small villages and isolated farms and dwellings prevalent, although large urban areas are evident in distant views;*
 - *significant communication routes evident, including motorways and major 'A' roads;*
 - *infrastructure elements such as telecommunication stations provide significant vertical elements in an otherwise flat landscape; and*
 - *recreational opportunities generally limited despite the close proximity of large urban areas.*
- 4.2.11 This document sets out the main human influences that have affected the landscape. It provides that settlements across the Broad Unwooded Vale are sparse, limited to small scale village settlements and isolated farms and dwellings. There are not many heritage features, although it is acknowledged that structures such as churches provide important local landscape features. In terms of hedgerows, there is a predominance of low, well clipped hawthorn hedgerows that enclose fields of varying size across the landscape type. Whilst the majority retain a well-managed appearance, others have become gappy or overgrown and show

evidence of decline. The occurrence of hedgerow trees varies across the landscape. In a number of places they are more abundant and provide reasonable tree cover. In other areas, however, tree cover is extremely sparse, emphasising the broad and open nature of the vale. Field sizes vary considerably across the Broad Unwooded Vale from small to large scale enclosures, although the majority are either regular or sub regular in shape, with only limited areas of discontinuous field patterns.

4.2.12 The character type is described as

a simple and unified landscape, although intrusive vertical features such as masts provide distracting features. Where particularly long distance views are possible over this broad landscape, a sense of openness and exposure prevails. Views are particularly expansive beyond the county boundary, as the rising landform and vegetation of the surrounding landscape types can limit views into Northamptonshire. Infrastructure and communications provide significant manmade features which, on occasions, result in an unsettling and noisy landscape. Despite such features, areas of the landscape remain inaccessible ... Overall, the landscape is well maintained and managed. Strength of character diminishes, however, where field boundaries have become gappy or overgrown. At a county scale, the landscape is generally unremarkable, although wide panoramic views are important to local distinctiveness and character. The development of significant manmade features, including motorways and radio stations, has had a significant impact on landscape character in recent years. Despite significant changes in the landscape, there is evidence of occupation dating from the medieval period, most notably in the form of the sites of medieval villages and areas of ridge and furrow.

4.2.13 In particular, the Welland Vale Character Area is described as

The Welland Vale Character Area is most northern of the Broad Unwooded Vale character areas, and is located to the south and southwest of Market Harborough, and forms part of a more extensive character area stretching beyond the county boundary. Defining the northern edge is the River Welland, whilst to the south an area of Farmed Scarp Slopes forms a backdrop to the Vale landscape. Although largely flat, subtle localised undulations are apparent along the base of the scarp slopes with two small hills located to the southwest of Hothorpe, and west of Marston Trussell. These reach a height of 138m ASL and 121m ASL respectively. The majority of the area lies between 90m ASL and 110m ASL, however, with the higher areas generally confined to the southern edge ... Characterising the landscape is a combination of arable and pastoral land, though the former does dominate with both arable cereals and horticulture. Pastoral fields are, in general, closely associated with village settlement and scattered farmsteads, though areas of improved pastures can be found to the north of Hothorpe Hills. Although field sizes vary throughout the area, the majority have a sub regular shape with occasional fields that are regular. Woodland cover in the character area is limited, though more extensive than other areas of the Broad Unwooded Vale. Confined mainly to broadleaved and mixed woodland with only scattered areas of coniferous planting, woodland is often closely associated with minor watercourses and Hothorpe Hall and Thorpe Lubenham Hall. South of the area, the well wooded Hothorpe Hills on the Farmed Scarp Slopes also create a greater sense of woodland cover within the Vale landscape and a sense of enclosure to the south. Trees located along the course of the railway and scattered ash and oak within hedgerows further contribute to overall tree cover within the area. A rural character prevails across the Vale landscape, with only limited

settlement present ... A network of minor country roads provides access to the area, connecting settlements and dwellings, and although the roads are minor, traffic levels on a number are high ... High voltage pylons are also intrusive within this simple and unified landscape ... A number of rights of way are present throughout the area, and include sections of the Jurassic Way, Brampton Valley Way, Midshires Way and Macmillan Way. Heritage features are limited to scattered fields of ridge and furrow. Although settlement within the area is limited, prominent church spires, including those found at Lubenham, Theddingworth and Marston Trussell provide important local landscape features.

Green Infrastructure

4.2.14 Pebble Hall Farm is not located in a Sub Regional Green Infrastructure (GI) Corridor, the nearest (no 8 The Brampton Arm) is located south of Market Harborough. However, it is located in proximity to two Local Green Infrastructure Corridors, Pitsford Water-North Kilworth (8) and Great Oxendon to Rugby (5). The nearest, the Great Oxendon-Rugby Local Green Infrastructure Corridor, is approximately 2km to the south east. This GI Corridor is noted for its medieval field patterns, together with the presence of Little Oxendon Village as earthworks beneath pasture fields, are evidence of the long period of settlement of the area, and its rich historic heritage.

4.3 Landscape Elements

4.3.1 Notable landscape elements within the Application Site are identified and described below.

Landform and Banks: Within and surrounding the Application Site are a series of banks and a central raised area which provides access to the agricultural fields beyond the Application Site to the south east. The existing banks are sown with a wildflower and grass mix.

Hedgerow: An existing hedgerow located within the south west portion of the Application Site, at the top of a bank, providing a boundary between the bank and the agricultural fields. This hedgerow is recently (2-5 years) planted, mixed, deciduous hedgerow (with 3 hedgerow trees (notably hawthorn)) and is approximately 185m in length. There is a mixed deciduous hedgerow forming a field boundary which extends beyond the Application Site to the south east. Within the Application Site this hedgerow contains one hedgerow tree. It is a gappy, managed hedgerow with little species diversity. This hedgerow is approximately 55m in length.

Arable Field: A portion of two arable fields (approximately 1.5 hectares) are within the Application Site. These fields are cropped on a wheat / rape rotation as part of the agricultural management within the wider farm.

Hardstanding and Concreted Yard: The majority of the Application Site is comprised of existing areas of hardstanding and concrete yard.

4.4 Landscape Designations

4.4.1 The Application Site is situated within an area 'washed over' by planning policy in relation to the 'Special Landscape Area'.

4.4.2 There are no National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Registered Parks and Gardens within the study area.

4.4.3 The Public Right of Way Network in the area is limited. However, the Jurassic Way long distance footpath passes approximately 2km south east of the Application Site in a north east - south west orientation from Weldon to Northamptonshire. There are no National Cycle Regional Routes within proximity to the Application Site. However, the towpath along the Grand Union Canal is noted as a recreational route.

4.5 Landscape Receptors

4.5.1 The Landscape Receptors are the components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the proposed development. The identified Landscape Receptors are set out as follows:

- National Character Area 89 Northamptonshire Vales
- National Character Area 95 Northamptonshire Uplands
- National Character Area 94 Leicestershire Vales
- Broad Unwooded Vale Landscape Type (19)
- Welland Vale Landscape Character Area (19C)
- Landform and Banks
- Hedgerow
- Arable Field
- Hardstanding and Concreted Yard

4.5.2 Albeit located within the study area, the Green Infrastructure Corridors identified are at a sufficient distance from the Application Site that any potential impact will be negligible. Therefore, they are not considered further in this assessment.

4.6 Sensitivity of the Landscape Receptor

4.6.1 The sensitivity of the Landscape Receptor is defined by the susceptibility of the landscape receptor to change as a result of the proposed development and the value attached to it.

4.6.2 The sensitivity of the Landscape Receptors is set out in the following table.

Table 4.1: Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptor	Susceptibility to Change	Value	Sensitivity
Landscape Character			
National Character Area 89 Northamptonshire Vales	Medium	Local	Medium
National Character Area 95 Northamptonshire Uplands	Medium	Local	Medium
National Character Area 94 Leicestershire Vales	Medium	Local	Medium
Broad Unwooded Vale Landscape Type (19)	Medium	Local	Medium
Welland Vale Landscape Character Area (19C)	Medium	Local	Medium
Landscape Elements			
Landform and Banks	Low	Community	Low
Hedgerow	Medium	Community	Low
Arable Field	Medium	Community	Low
Hardstanding, and Concreted Yard	Low	Community	Low

5 BASELINE VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Integral to understanding the baseline existing visual environment is the need to identify and define its character and the visual amenity generally for a variety of visual receptor groups. This includes an identification of the extent and nature of existing views of the Application Site from principal representative viewpoints from within the wider landscape and an assessment of their sensitivity to change.
- 5.1.2 This review defines the extent of visibility of the development (the area within which it may be possible to see any part of the Application Site or proposed development) and determines how visible the proposals would be from a range of representative viewpoints, visual receptor groups and visual amenity within the identified Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).

5.2 Extent of Visibility

Visibility of the Site

- 5.2.1 The Application Site is located on the north west facing slope of a localised area of high ground, north of the Hothorpe Hills. Consequently, there are very limited views to or from the Application Site to the south. Existing embankments to the south, south west and north east of the Application Site also limit views from within the site and provide visual screening of the Pebble Hall complex in views from these directions.
- 5.2.2 The landscape is vegetated and wooded in parts, particularly along the A4304 to the north of the Application Site, and around the settlements of Husbands Bosworth, Theddingworth and Hothorpe Hall, which reduce the visibility, particularly during the summer months.
- 5.2.3 From the north the site is intermittently visible from the A4304; views are blocked by the evergreen hedge and trees that line the A4304 and the rising land positioned in between. In addition, the existing buildings within the Pebble Hall complex screen views of the Application Site from the north and north east. There are long distance views of Pebble Hall from Mowsley Hill Farm and the Public Footpath located nearby. These are located approximately 2.5 miles north of the Application Site. The site is visible from these locations due to the fact that they are on high ground. Despite this, the existing agricultural style buildings blend into the landscape as they are not skyline development and have a backdrop of a cluster of trees. This is an undulating landscape and there are local ridgelines in all directions from the Application Site which serve to shorten and contain views to within close proximity to the site.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 5.2.4 The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) represents the approximate zone within which it may be possible to see any part of the proposed development or the actual site. The ZTV was established in the field following a number of site visits. Within the ZTV there may be a number of areas from which no views of the site or potential development will be possible as a result of intervening landform, vegetation or built form, which may obscure views. Outside the defined ZTV, there would be no perceptible views of the site or the alteration in views resulting from development would be very difficult to perceive or distinguish.

- 5.2.5 The approximate extent of the ZTV is illustrated in Drawing GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/13 Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Viewpoint Plan.
- 5.2.6 The ZTV extends north of the Application Site by up to 8km, but only 2km to the south and 4km to the east and west. To the north the ZTV extends to the Mowsley Hills and to the Hothorpe Hills to the south. To the west and east the ZTV extends towards the settlement edges of Husbands Bosworth and Theddingworth.

Visual Receptors

- 5.2.7 A wide variety of visual receptors may be expected to be affected by the proposed development. These visual receptors are those within the Zone of Theoretical Visibility who might experience the effects of the proposal on views. These receptors will vary considerably depending on the intricacies of the intervening features and will include but are not limited to local residents, those travelling through the area, those visiting the area for recreational and amenity purposes and those working outdoors.
- 5.2.8 It is noted that the extent of the impact of the proposed development upon certain visual receptor groups will vary according to their level of sensitivity to the type of development. It is expected that local residents and those whose principal preoccupation is with the enjoyment of the outdoor environment and the open countryside will be most sensitive to changes in their visual environment. In contrast, visitors to the area may not necessarily be as sensitive to any changes arising where they have no previous knowledge or experience of the area.
- 5.2.9 Visual receptors within the locality have been identified and include residents on the A4304, Workers, the Travelling Public and Recreational Visitors; these are discussed further below.

Residents

- 5.2.10 It is generally accepted that local residents will have a high level of sensitivity to changes in their landscape and visual environment. The most important views are likely to be the principal views available from their own homes.
- 5.2.11 To the north of the Application Site there are a limited number of isolated residential properties on the A4304, including Deene Lodge, Woodside Farm and Pebble Hall. These are approximately 650m from the nearest proposed building within the Application Site.
- 5.2.12 Other residents within the study area include those to the north along Mowsley Road, at Theddingworth Lodge, Lodge Farm, Mowsley Hills Farm, Mowsley Lodge and Mowsley Chase Farm.
- 5.2.13 There is also some limited intervisibility with residents on the western edge of Theddingworth.

Workers

- 5.2.14 This group includes those who work in the countryside and who travel into the area for employment. Outdoor workers will arguably be less preoccupied with the scenic quality of their surroundings than a recreational visitor, for example. For similar reasons, a worker whose point of employment is located within the ZTV is likely to be less concerned about changes to the visual environment than a local resident.

5.2.15 Particular areas of employment are noted and include Pebble Hall Farm and small commercial premises at Woodside Farm.

Travelling Public

5.2.16 This category of visual receptor overlaps to a degree with the other two general categories in that it embraces local residents, workers and those who come to visit the area. This group of visual receptors will be predominately limited to those using the A4304 and the local road network, and the Grand Union Canal. Generally, this visual receptor category is judged to be less sensitive to changes within their visual environment and it is noted that the visual experience will be different given the transient and changing nature of the available views. For the travelling public views of the development may well be sequential and intermittent and the extent of any impacts will vary according to their principal direction and speed of travel.

Visitors and Recreational Users

5.2.17 This visual receptor group embraces a broad category with often different objectives, and thus levels of sensitivity. It includes those who are primarily concerned with the enjoyment of the outdoor environment but also those who may pursue indoor recreational pursuits and is anticipated to include the following:

- visitors whose sole preoccupation is the enjoyment of scenery;
- recreational walkers;
- those visitors engaged in cultural pursuits;
- cyclists; and
- equestrians.

5.2.18 Visitors and users of the countryside within the ZTV are primarily those using the local Public Right of Way Network, and travellers along the Grand Union Canal.

5.3 Viewpoint Appraisal and Description of Visual Baseline

5.3.1 A viewpoint analysis has been undertaken to identify the baseline visual environment and to understand the effects of the development on the visual environment and amenity. A description of the visual environment is provided for each of the viewpoints and is set out in Tables 5.1-5.5. Photographs illustrating the view towards the site from each viewpoint are provided in Drawing GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 Photograph Panels 1 - 5.

Viewpoints

Table 5.1: Viewpoint 1

Viewpoint No.	1
Viewpoint Name	A4304 Woodside Farm
Type of Viewpoint	Representative
Grid Reference	52 27 33N, 01 02 02 W
Direction of View to Centre of Application Site	91 degrees E
Distance to Nearest Proposed Building, m	612
Ground Level, m AOD	122
Drawing No.	GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 Photograph Panel 1
Location and Description	
<p>Situated on the A4304 at the entrance to the Woodside Farm complex. A short range view from the north west. The foreground of the view is dominated by the A4304 (a single carriageway road with grass verges and limited footpaths to the north side) and mature roadside vegetation, including hedgerows with hedgerow trees. In the summer months this vegetation provides significant visual screening of the landscape beyond, particularly to the passing motorist and to some extent the local residents in the area. This vegetation is deciduous and the hedgerow managed and therefore, the extent of screening will be reduced in the winter months.</p> <p>A telegraph pole is also a notable feature within the foreground of this view, along with passing vehicles which animate this view.</p> <p>In the middle ground the landscape and view is dominated by the open arable fields, with small woodland copses and individual trees along hedgerows or within fields.</p> <p>The horizon is relatively close and dominated by woodland on the Hothorpe Hills.</p> <p>Existing buildings (Number 1, 2, 6 and 7) within the Pebble Hall complex are visible in this view, albeit only the rooflines, and sections of the existing litter fencing, which are seen against the wooded backdrop.</p>	
Receptors	
<p>Representative of a range of visual receptors including travellers along A4304, farmers and agricultural workers and residents at nearby residential properties.</p>	
Susceptibility to Change and Value of View	
<p>The susceptibility of the view is judged to be Medium and the value of the view judged to be Low. Therefore, the sensitivity to change is judged to be Low.</p>	

Table 5.2: Viewpoint 2

Viewpoint No.	2
Viewpoint Name	A4304 Red Barn (western edge of Theddingworth)
Type of Viewpoint	Representative
Grid Reference	52 27 47 N, 01 01 20 W
Direction of View to Centre of Application Site	109 degrees E
Distance to Nearest Proposed Building, m	925
Ground Level, m AOD	122
Drawing No.	GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 Photograph Panel 2
Location and Description	
<p>Situated on the western edge of Theddingworth, from the pavement on the north side of A4304. A short range view from the north east. The foreground of the view is dominated by the A4304 (a single carriageway road with grass verges and limited footpaths to the north side) and mature roadside vegetation, including hedgerows with regular hedgerow trees. In the summer months this vegetation provides significant visual screening of the landscape beyond, particularly to the passing motorist and to some extent the local residents in the area. This vegetation is deciduous and the hedgerow managed and therefore, the extent of screening will be reduced in the winter months. The landscape on the edge of Theddingworth in the foreground of this view is a combination of grazing land / pony paddocks with arable landuse beyond. A lamp post on the roadside is also notable.</p> <p>Due to the topography the middle ground of the view is limited and there is a relatively near horizon line dominated by woodland on the Hothorpe Hills.</p> <p>A portion of the existing litter fencing on the western edge of the Pebble Hall complex is visible through a break in roadside and field boundary vegetation, although this is seen against an arable landscape beyond. In addition, a very small proportion of an existing building (Number 2) is visible through the roadside vegetation.</p>	
Receptors	
Representative of a range of visual receptors including travellers along A4304, farmers and agricultural workers and residents on the western edge of Theddingworth.	
Susceptibility to Change and Value of View	
The susceptibility of the view is judged to be Medium and the value of the view judged to be Low. Therefore, the sensitivity to change is judged to be Low .	

Table 5.3: Viewpoint 3

Viewpoint No.	3
Viewpoint Name	Home Farm, Hothorpe
Type of Viewpoint	Representative
Grid Reference	52 37 30 N, 01 00 35 W
Direction of View to Centre of Application Site	245 degrees SW
Distance to Nearest Proposed Building, m	1,195
Ground Level, m AOD	107
Drawing No.	GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 Photograph Panel 3
Location and Description	
<p>Situated along the Theddingworth to Sibbertoft Road, at the entrance to Home Farm. A short to medium range view from the east. This is an open and expansive view to the north, west and south. Views to the east from this location are screened by roadside vegetation. Within this view the arable landscape with hedgerows and hedgerow trees along field boundaries are the dominant feature. The individual hedgerow trees add visual interest to the view in the foreground, and break up the horizon line in parts. Blocks of woodland on the Hothorpe Hills are notable landscape features towards the left of the view, along with woodland and mature trees around Hothorpe Hall. Hothorpe Hall itself is visible in this view and is notable as a horizon line feature to the right of the view. The horizon line in the centre of the view is more distant. The Pebble Hall complex is barely visible in this view. The existing litter fence on top of the bank around the existing composting area is visible against the skyline.</p>	
Receptors	
<p>Representative of a range of visual receptors, including travellers along the local road network, users of the local public right of way network, visitors and residents at Home Farm, and farmers and agricultural workers.</p>	
Susceptibility to Change and Value of View	
<p>The susceptibility of the view is judged to be Medium and the value of the view judged to be Medium. Therefore, the sensitivity to change is judged to be Medium.</p>	

Table 5.4: Viewpoint 4

Viewpoint No.	4
Viewpoint Name	Hothorpe Road
Type of Viewpoint	Representative
Grid Reference	52 27 02 N, 01 00 06 W
Direction of View to Centre of Application Site	285 degrees W
Distance to Nearest Proposed Building, m	1,785
Ground Level, m AOD	118
Drawing No.	GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 Photograph Panel 4
Location and Description	
<p>Situated along the Theddingworth to Sibbertoft Road. A short to medium range view from the south east. The foreground view is dominated by the presence of the Theddingworth to Sibbertoft Road, which is a rural road with grass verges, hedgerows and hedgerow trees on either side. There are views above the road side hedgerow across the rolling agricultural landscape to the west. The mix of arable crops and areas of woodland add variety to the view, with the woodland on the Hothorpe Hills visible on the near horizon line. The Pebble Hall complex is barely visible in this view, with the existing litter fence on top of the bank around the existing composting area visible in the far distance against the skyline.</p> <p>Other notable features, although distant, in the view include the Church Spire in the village of Theddingworth and a number of individual properties on the south eastern edge of the village.</p>	
Receptors	
Representative of a range of visual receptors, including travellers along the local road network, users of the local public right of way network and farmers and agricultural workers.	
Susceptibility to Change and Value of View	
The susceptibility of the view is judged to be Medium and the value of the view judged to be Medium. Therefore, the sensitivity to change is judged to be Medium .	

Table 5.5: Viewpoint 5

Viewpoint No.	5
Viewpoint Name	Mowsley Hills Bridleway
Type of Viewpoint	Representative
Grid Reference	52 28 57 N, 01 02 58 W
Direction of View to Centre of Application Site	162 degrees South
Distance to Nearest Proposed Building, m	3,390
Ground Level, m AOD	155m
Drawing No.	GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 Photograph Panel 5
Location and Description	
<p>Situated on a bridleway south of Mowsley Hills Farm. A long range view from the north. This is a wide, open and expansive view in virtually all directions, across an undulating rural landscape, the majority of which is within the valley of the River Welland.</p> <p>The foreground of the view appears to disappear from the viewer, the landscape sloping down towards the bottom of the river valley. There are a number of notable linear features in the foreground of the view, including telegraph poles, the Mowsley to Theddingworth rural road, hedgerow field boundaries and mature tree belts.</p> <p>The middle ground of the view is a complex mosaic of agricultural fields, in arable and pasture, with woodland blocks and vegetation, interspersed with rural settlement (Theddingworth and Husbands Bosworth) and isolated rural properties. In particular the farm complex at Theddingworth Lodge (with large agricultural buildings and silos), notable in the centre of the view. In addition, the Church Spire in Theddingworth and agricultural buildings on the northern edge of the village are notable.</p> <p>The Pebble Hall complex is located in the middle ground in the centre of the view, with a number of the existing buildings visible, seen within a wooded setting, with a woodland backdrop to the existing buildings.</p> <p>In the far distance, the horizon line is dominated by rising landform and woodland along the Hothorpe Hills and further to the east and west.</p>	
Receptors	
Representative of a range of visual receptors, including travellers along the local road network, users of the local public right of way network, residents in isolated rural properties and farmers and agricultural workers.	
Susceptibility to Change and Value of View	
The susceptibility of the view is judged to be Medium and the value of the view judged to be Medium. Therefore, the sensitivity to change is judged to be Medium .	

5.4 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 5.4.1 The sensitivity of the Visual Receptor is defined by the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change as a result of the proposed development, i.e. the change in views and visual amenity, and the value attached to a particular view.
- 5.4.2 The sensitivity of the Visual Receptors is set out in the following table.

Table 5.6: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Visual Receptor	Susceptibility to Change	Value	Sensitivity
Viewpoint 1	Medium	Low	Low
Viewpoint 2	Medium	Low	Low
Viewpoint 3	Medium	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 4	Medium	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 5	Medium	Medium	Medium

6 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 This proposal is for the modification of the existing planning permission for a Renewable Energy Generation Facility (REGF). The REGF building is to be re-sited in the south-west corner of the Pebble Hall complex, beyond the boundary of the consented facility. The location of this building is shown on the Site Layout Plan GPP/C/PH/EFW/13/03.

6.1.2 The following table compares the components of the consented facility with the proposed facility.

Table 6.1: Comparison of Consented and Proposed REGF

	Consented REGF	Proposed REGF
Wood waste input	40,000 tonnes per annum	72,000 tonnes per annum
Output	4-5 MW	10.4 MW
Technology	Pyrolysis with gas engines	Gasification with steam boiler
Building footprint	1890 square metres	3295 square metres
Stack height	15m	30m
Weighbridge	1	2

6.2 Building Components

Plant Hall, Fuel Hall & Turbine Hall

6.2.1 The facility will be of a scale typical of modern agricultural buildings such as a grain store. The facility will be constructed with a steel frame and clad with juniper green steel cladding. The components are of the following sizes:

- Fuel Hall – 25m x 25m x 10.5m(H)
- Plant Hall – 85m x 25m x 18.5m(H). This building will have 3 fast acting roller shutter doors (6m x 6m) and 6 pedestrian access doors (1m x 2m).
- Turbine Hall – 15m x 18m x 9.5m(H)

6.2.2 On the roof of the Turbine Hall there will be three air coolers and adjacent to the wall of the hall there will be a Transformer Compound.

Office, Control Room, Control Panels & Workshop

6.2.3 This two-storey building will house on its ground floor a workshop for maintenance purposes and on its first floor, an administration office with operations and monitoring facilities. This building will be built with a brick base and profiled wall cladding. This building will have 1 fast acting roller shutter door (6m x 6m) and 4 pedestrian access doors (1m x 2m). There will be 8 PVC double glazed window units installed.

Flue Stack

6.2.4 The process flue stack will project through the Turbine Hall roof and will be 1.41m diameter and 30m in height from ground level.

Cooling Plant

- 6.2.5 This will be 15m x 26m x 18m, with an enclosed section above a supporting steel frame. It will be connected to the Turbine Hall via a feed pipe.

Working Yard and Other Ancillary Features

- 6.2.6 The outside working yard will be surfaced with concrete. Fourteen parking spaces will be provided. There may be a conveyor between the wood waste shredding area and the Fuel Hall. In addition, there will be a slab for the storage of gas cylinders and a small substation for the connection to the electricity cables to be laid for the connection to the grid. A second weighbridge will be constructed on the access road.

6.3 Construction of the Facility

- 6.3.1 It is anticipated that the construction of the REGF building and the installation of the plant and equipment will take 18 months.

Site Preparation and Construction Works

- 6.3.2 The construction of the facility will require the removal of a block of workshop/storage units. Following this, material from the access ramp through the site to the fields to the south will be excavated and placed on top of the bank around the southern and western boundaries of the complex. This will involve moving 31,500m³ of material. This area will be planted with native woodland and shrubs. Details of the proposed ground modelling and landscape planting are illustrated on Drawing GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/05.
- 6.3.3 Following the provision of a level yard area, the REGF building will be constructed and the outside yard area laid to concrete, with the drainage provided as part of the construction contract.

6.4 Levels and Topography

- 6.4.1 The level of the Wood Reception and Processing Area will be at 125m AOD, which is 11m below the height of the existing land to the north east and 9m below the height of the existing land to the south east. The level of the REGF buildings will be at 123m AOD, which is 11m below the height of the proposed bank to the south west and south east. The top of the proposed bank will be at 134m AOD, which is approximately 8m above the height of the surrounding arable farmland. Taking this into account the maximum height of the proposed buildings will be at 141.5m AOD and the height of the proposed stack at 153m AOD. The relationship between the proposed buildings and surrounding landform is illustrated on Drawing GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/17 Cross Sections.

7 LANDSCAPE IMPACTS

7.1.1 The likely magnitude and significance of landscape impacts of both the construction and operation phases of the proposed development have been assessed.

7.2 Sources of Impacts

7.2.1 Having considered the character and sensitivity of the landscape against the type and arrangement of development, potential sources of impact are likely to arise as a result of both the construction of the AD Facility and its operation. The likely sources of impact include:

Construction Sources

- Movement of material to create a flat development platform and extended bank with raised contours and the surface water attenuation pond
- Surfacing works
- Engineering works and building of the components of the REGF Facility

Operational Sources

- The presence of the infrastructure, buildings and ancillary features associated with the REGF Facility
- The presence of the surface water attenuation pond
- Movement of vehicles to and from the Application Site, and the within the site
- Wood processing

7.3 Predicted Impacts on Landscape Character

7.3.1 Impacts on landscape character are determined by the likely change to elements or features of the landscape as a result of development, in particular:

- The size or scale of the change in the landscape
- The geographical extent of the effect
- The duration and reversibility of the effect

The National Perspective

7.3.2 The Application Site is located within National Character Area 89: Northamptonshire Vales, within which the Application Site only occupies a small proportion. It is noted as a rural landscape, with a great diversity in the landscape and settlement pattern, with frequent villages and settlements.

7.3.3 The proposed REGF Facility will be located within an existing complex, which is one of a few isolated areas of settlement and agricultural industry within the Welland Valley. Due to its position within an area of rural development, in the context of the wider National Character Area it is only likely to cause a small change to the character of the landscape of the area as a whole. In particular, the change is only likely to be notable within the immediate setting of the site and certainly will not be experienced over the whole geographical area of the National Character Area. Therefore, the size or scale of effect is judged to be **Minor**, and the geographical extent of effect judged to be **Immediate Setting**. The effect is noted as medium to long term, with the change permanent.

- 7.3.4 The Application Site is located on the boundary of the National Character Area 94 Leicestershire Vales. This area is very similar in character to National Character Area 89 and therefore the predicted impacts on landscape character will be the same. Therefore, the size or scale of effect is judged to be **Minor**, and the geographical extent of effect judged to be **Immediate Setting**. The effect is noted as medium to long term, with the change permanent.
- 7.3.5 The National Character Area 95 Northamptonshire Vales is located on the very edge of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility and the boundary of the character area is greater than 2km from the site. As a result of this distance, the nature of the proposed development and the lack of intervisibility the impact on the landscape character is **negligible**.

The Regional and Local Perspective

- 7.3.6 The Application Site is located within the Broad Unwooded Vale Landscape Type (19). At a county scale this landscape is noted as being generally unremarkable, with infrastructure development having an impact on the landscape character in recent years. The area is noted as being simple and unified with intrusive vertical features such as masts providing distraction. The proposed REGF Facility will be located within an existing complex, which is one of a few isolated areas of settlement and agricultural industry within the Welland Valley. Due to its position within an area of rural development, in the context of the wider landscape it is only likely to cause a small change to the character of the landscape of the area as a whole. Due to the location and nature of the proposed development it is considered likely that the development would only cause a small change to the character of the landscape, and that any change would only be notable within the immediate setting of the site. The change would not be notable across the whole extent of each of these character areas. Therefore, the size or scale of change in the landscape is judged to be **Minor** and the geographical extent within the **Immediate Setting**. Any change is likely to occur over the medium to long term, and will be permanent.
- 7.3.7 At a local scale the Application Site is located within the Welland Valley Character Area (19C), which is noted as being rural in character with limited settlement in the area. Although, it is noted as having a more wooded character than other areas within the Character Type, particularly to the south of the character area, combined with arable and pastoral fields and vegetation field boundaries there is a complex landscape mosaic which provides screening, interest and variety within the character area. At this local scale the type of development proposed, albeit within an existing complex of buildings and commercial facilities, will contribute to a perceived increase in built form within the landscape. As a result the size of scale of change in the landscape is judged to be **Moderate** and the geographical extent within the **Immediate Setting**. Any change is likely to occur over the medium to long term, and will be permanent.
- 7.3.8 There will be no impact on the local Green Infrastructure corridors, due to the nature and scale of the development proposed and the distance from the corridors. It is noted however, that the proposed landscape planting, coupled with the existing planting, will create a continuous corridor of trees and shrubs from the east to the west of the Pebble Hall complex, connecting existing field boundaries and hedgerows. This will contribute positively to local level Green Infrastructure.

7.4 Predicted Impacts on Landscape Elements

7.4.1 The predicted impacts on the elements of the landscape within the Application Site as a result of the proposed AD Facility, are set out as follows:

- **Landform and Banks:** The landform and contours within the Application Site will be altered, with material being removed from the central access ramp and relocated to the southern and western areas of the Application Site, increasing the height of the bank, and to create a level development platform. This will be a noticeable change and therefore the size or scale of the change is judged to be **Moderate**. The extent of the change will be confined to the Application Site itself but is likely to be noticeable within the immediate setting of the site, and possibly within parts of the character area within which the site is located. Therefore, the geographical extent is **Landscape Type or Character Area**. The duration of the effect will be medium to long term and will be permanent.
- **Hedgerow:** The existing hedgerows within the Application Site will be removed to facilitate the development. The plants from the recently planted hedgerow will be translocated and used within the landscape planting scheme proposed. Therefore, the size or scale of the change is judged to be **Major**, and the geographical extent **Immediate Setting**. The duration of the effect will be medium to long term and will be permanent.
- **Arable Field:** The existing arable fields within the Application Site will be removed to facilitate the development. Therefore, the size or scale of the change is judged to be **Major**, and the geographical extent **Immediate Setting**. The duration of the effect will be medium to long term and will be permanent.
- **Hardstanding and Concrete Yard:** The area around the proposed buildings and within the wood processing area and the access will be laid to concrete. There will be some change to the existing hardstanding areas within the Application Site, however this will only be a small change. Therefore, the size or scale of the change is judged to be **Minor**, and the geographical extent **Site**. The duration of the effect will be medium to long term and will be partially reversible.

7.5 Predicted Impacts on Landscape Designations

7.5.1 There are no landscape designations within the study area. The Public Rights of Way within the study area are considered through the analysis of visual amenity from the representative viewpoints, notably Viewpoint 5.

7.6 Magnitude of Change and Significance of Effect on Landscape Receptors

7.6.1 The magnitude of change on the landscape receptors as a result of the proposed development is set out in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Magnitude of Change on Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptor	Size or Scale of Change in the Landscape	Geographical Extent of Effect	Magnitude
Landscape Character			
National Character Area 89 Northamptonshire Vales	Minor	Immediate Setting	Low
National Character Area 95 Northamptonshire	Negligible		

Landscape Receptor	Size or Scale of Change in the Landscape	Geographical Extent of Effect	Magnitude
Uplands			
National Character Area 94 Leicestershire Vales	Minor	Immediate Setting	Low
Broad Unwooded Vale Landscape Type (19)	Minor	Immediate Setting	Low
Welland Vale Landscape Character Area (19C)	Moderate	Immediate Setting	Low-Medium
Landscape Elements			
Landform and Banks	Moderate	Landscape Type or Character Area	Medium
Hedgerow	Major	Immediate Setting	Medium
Arable Field	Major	Immediate Setting	Medium
Hardstanding and Concreted Yard	Minor	Site	Low

7.6.2 The significance on the landscape receptors as a result of the proposed development is set out in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Significance of Effects on Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect
Landscape Character			
National Character Area 89 Northamptonshire Vales	Medium	Low	Minor
National Character Area 95 Northamptonshire Uplands	Medium	Negligible	Negligible
National Character Area 94 Leicestershire Vales	Medium	Low	Minor
Broad Unwooded Vale Landscape Type (19)	Medium	Low	Minor
Welland Vale Landscape Character Area (19C)	Medium	Low-Medium	Minor-Moderate
Landscape Elements			
Landform and Banks	Low	Medium	Minor
Hedgerow	Low	Medium	Minor
Arable Field	Low	Medium	Minor
Hardstanding and Concreted Yard	Low	Low	Minor

8 VISUAL IMPACTS

8.1.1 The likely magnitude and significance of visual impacts of both the construction and operation phases of the proposed development have been assessed.

8.2 Sources of Impacts

8.2.1 Having considered the presence of visual receptors and nature of the visual amenity within the study area against the type and arrangement of development, potential sources of impact are likely to arise as a result of both the construction and operation of the AD Facility. The likely sources of impact include:

Construction Sources

- Movement of material to create a flat development platform and extended bank with raised contours and the surface water attenuation pond
- Surfacing works
- Engineering works and building of the components of the REGF Facility

Operational Sources

- The presence of the infrastructure, buildings and ancillary features associated with the REGF Facility
- The presence of the surface water attenuation pond
- Movement of vehicles to and from the Application Site, and the within the site
- Wood processing

8.3 Predicted Operational Impacts on Views and Visual Amenity

8.3.1 The impacts of the proposed development is considered for receptors at each of the representative viewpoint locations.

Impacts on Receptors at Viewpoints

8.3.2 The visual impacts and impacts upon receptors arising from the proposed development, are presented in Tables 8.1 – 8.5 below, for the each of the viewpoints, taking due account of the level of sensitivity to change and the perceived magnitude of the impact.

8.3.3 Judgements made about the potential impacts have been informed by a 3D model of the proposed development and site sections, included in Drawing GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/09 and Drawing GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/17 respectively.

Table 8.1: Viewpoint 1

Viewpoint No.	1
Viewpoint Name	A4304 Woodside Farm
Type of Viewpoint	Representative
Grid Reference	52 27 33N, 01 02 02 W
Direction of View to Centre of Application Site	91 degrees E
Distance to Development Boundary, m	612
Ground Level, m AOD	122
Drawing No.	GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 Photograph Panel 1
Description of Impact on Visual Amenity	
<p>The Application Site will be located within the centre and middle ground of this view. As a result of the foreground vegetation and intervening undulating topography between the A4304 and the River Welland the ground level operations and structures will not be visible. Therefore, the wood processing operations will not be visible, and construction works associated with the movement of material within the site and creation of building foundations etc., will not be visible. In this view the removal of the existing workshop building (Number 5) will be small but notable change to the view.</p> <p>The proposed REGF Plant Hall will be visible above the roof line of the existing building (Number 6). This existing building is 9m to the ridgeline, and therefore the majority of the proposed Plant Hall (which is 18.5m to the ridge) will be visible. In addition, the majority of the proposed stack (at 30m) will be visible in this view. It is noted that these buildings and structures will be seen with mature vegetation in the foreground and middle ground, which will break up the appearance of the overall mass of the building. In addition, they will be seen against a wooded backdrop on elevated land to the south of the Application Site. The proposed buildings will be Juniper Green in colour and therefore, will in part visually blend with the woodland behind. The proposed stack will be a silver colour, and therefore has the potential to be more visually prominent against the wooded backdrop in this view. The proposed stack may puncture the horizon line, and this colour will allow the stack to blend with the skyline during most atmospheric conditions.</p> <p>The other proposed buildings (the Fuel Hall, Turbine Hall and Air Cooled Condenser) are unlikely to be discernible in this view due to the intervening landform and vegetation. Due to distance from the viewer and appearance of the proposed buildings the roof lines of these structures will not be discernible against the Plant Hall behind.</p> <p>During the winter months the foreground and middle ground vegetation will reduce the visual screening in this view, and the wooded backdrop will change from a green to a brown colour, as leaves fall from the trees. Therefore, the extent of visibility is likely to be higher during these months. During the construction period cranes, scaffolding or other operations associated with the construction of the buildings may be visible in this view, but only for short periods of time.</p> <p><u>Mitigation</u></p> <p>The proposed landscape planting will over time increase the visual screening to the north of the proposed development and will further strengthen the appearance of the wooded backdrop in views from this direction.</p>	
Magnitude of Change	
Therefore, overall the size or scale of change in the view is judged to be Moderate . The duration of effect will be long term and permanent. As a result, the magnitude of change is judged to be Moderate .	
Significance of Effect	
The significance of visual effect is judged to be Minor .	

Table 8.2: Viewpoint 2

Viewpoint No.	2
Viewpoint Name	A4304 Red Barn (western edge of Theddingworth)
Type of Viewpoint	Representative
Grid Reference	52 27 47 N, 01 01 20 W
Direction of View to Centre of Application Site	109 degrees E
Distance to Development Boundary, m	925
Ground Level, m AOD	122
Drawing No.	GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 Photograph Panel 2
Description of Impact on Visual Amenity	
<p>From this location the Application Site will occupy a small portion of the view, and will be located in the middle ground. The majority of the Application Site will be screened by foreground vegetation, although it is noted that during the winter months this level of screening will be reduced. The Application Site will be seen against a backdrop of rising land, under arable use, with horizon line woodland blocks to the south west.</p> <p>As a result of the foreground vegetation and intervening undulating topography between the A4304 and the River Welland the ground level operations and structures will not be visible. Therefore, the wood processing operations will not be visible, and construction works associated with the movement of material within the site and creation of building foundations etc., will not be visible.</p> <p>In this view a small portion of the roof line of the proposed Plant Hall is likely to be visible, along with the proposed stack. These features will only occupy a small portion of the view. The proposed stack will not puncture the horizon line in this view, and therefore will be seen against an arable backdrop, which will change in colour throughout the seasons.</p> <p>The other proposed buildings (the Fuel Hall, Turbine Hall and Air Cooled Condenser) are unlikely to be discernible in this view due to the intervening landform and vegetation.</p> <p>There may be some glimpsed views of cranes, scaffolding or other construction operations, but these will be very limited and only likely to occur for short periods of time.</p> <p><u>Mitigation</u></p> <p>The proposed landscape planting will over time further strengthen the appearance of the wooded backdrop in views from this direction.</p>	
Magnitude of Change	
Therefore, overall the size or scale of change in the view is judged to be Minor . The duration of effect will be long term and permanent. As a result, the magnitude of change is judged to be Low .	
Significance of Effect	
The significance of visual effect is judged to be Minor .	

Table 8.3: Viewpoint 3

Viewpoint No.	3
Viewpoint Name	Home Farm, Hothorpe
Type of Viewpoint	Representative
Grid Reference	52 37 30 N, 01 00 35 W
Direction of View to Centre of Application Site	245 degrees SW
Distance to Development Boundary, m	1,195
Ground Level, m AOD	107
Drawing No.	GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 Photograph Panel 3
Description of Impact on Visual Amenity	
<p>From this location the Application Site would occupy a small proportion of the view and would be located in the far distance on the horizon line.</p> <p>In this view the existing litter fence along the southern and eastern boundaries of the Application Site is visible. The existing topography provides significant screening of the vast majority of the proposed development. The ground level operations and structures will not be visible. Therefore, the wood processing operations will not be visible, and construction works associated with the movement of material within the site and creation of building foundations etc., will not be visible. In addition, the majority of the proposed buildings will not be visible. It is possible that there may be long distance glimpsed views of the ridgeline of the proposed Plant Hall at its eastern gable end. There may also be glimpsed views of the proposed stack, against the skyline above the distant horizon. The stack will be a distant feature in the view and therefore is considered to be only a very small change to the composition of the view.</p> <p>Due to the position of the Application Site within the view and distance from the viewer the level of visibility is unlikely to change across the seasons.</p> <p>In addition, the construction works will not be discernible in this view.</p> <p>Mitigation</p> <p>In the long term the propose landscape planting along the southern and eastern boundaries of the Application Site will be notable in the view. Over time the tree and shrub planting will screen the existing litter fence and proposed Plant Hall and stack, and will be seen as a continuation of the existing horizon line and middle ground mature woodland and field boundary vegetation. This will increase the presence of vegetation in this view, causing a noticeable difference to the features within the view, but this is considered to be a positive change.</p>	
Magnitude of Change	
Therefore, overall the size or scale of change in the view is judged to be Minor . The duration of effect will be long term and permanent. As a result, the magnitude of change is judged to be Low .	
Significance of Effect	
The significance of visual effect is judged to be Minor .	

Table 8.4: Viewpoint 4

Viewpoint No.	4
Viewpoint Name	Hothorpe Road
Type of Viewpoint	Representative
Grid Reference	52 27 02 N, 01 00 06 W
Direction of View to Centre of Application Site	285 degrees W
Distance to Development Boundary, m	1,785
Ground Level, m AOD	118
Drawing No.	GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 Photograph Panel 4
Description of Impact on Visual Amenity	
<p>From this location the Application Site would occupy only a very small proportion of the view and would be located in the far distance on the horizon line.</p> <p>In this view the existing litter fence along the southern and eastern boundaries of the Application Site is barely visible on the horizon line against the sky. The existing topography provides significant screening of the vast majority of the proposed development. The ground level operations and structures will not be visible. Therefore, the wood processing operations will not be visible, and construction works associated with the movement of material within the site and creation of building foundations etc., will not be visible. In addition, the proposed buildings will not be visible.</p> <p>There may be glimpsed views of the proposed stack, against the skyline above the distant horizon. The stack will be a small, distant feature in the view and therefore is considered to be only a very small change to the composition of the view.</p> <p>Due to the position of the Application Site within the view and distance from the viewer the level of visibility is unlikely to change across the seasons.</p> <p>In addition, the construction works will not be discernible in this view.</p>	
Mitigation	
<p>In the long term the propose landscape planting along the southern and eastern boundaries of the Application Site will be notable in the view. Over time the tree and shrub planting will screen the existing litter fence and will be seen as a continuation of the existing horizon line vegetation.</p>	
Magnitude of Change	
<p>Therefore, overall the size or scale of change in the view is judged to be Minor. The duration of effect will be long term and permanent. As a result, the magnitude of change is judged to be Low.</p>	
Significance of Effect	
<p>The significance of visual effect is judged to be Minor.</p>	

Table 8.5: Viewpoint 5

Viewpoint No.	5
Viewpoint Name	Mowsley Hills Bridleway
Type of Viewpoint	Representative
Grid Reference	52 28 57 N, 01 02 58 W
Direction of View to Centre of Application Site	162 degrees South
Distance to Development Boundary, m	3,390
Ground Level, m AOD	155m
Drawing No.	GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/14 Photograph Panel 5
Description of Impact on Visual Amenity	
<p>From this location the Application Site would occupy only a very small proportion of the view and would be located in the middle distance below the horizon line.</p> <p>Due to the orientation of the Application Site and the position of the viewer the view is across the Welland Valley towards the northern side of the Application Site. From this direction the visual screening provided by topography is more limited than from those views from the south and south east. However, there is existing intervening mature trees and woodland which already provide some visual screening of the Pebble Hall complex.</p> <p>The ground level operations and structures will not be visible. Therefore, the wood processing operations will not be visible, and construction works associated with the movement of material within the site and creation of building foundations etc., will not be visible.</p> <p>Although greater than 3km from the viewer the upper sections of the Plant Hall are likely to be visible along with the proposed stack. They will only occupy a small proportion of the view and due to the expansive nature of the view are only likely to cause a very small change to the composition of the view. The Plant Hall and proposed stack will be seen against a woodland backdrop, provided by Spring Hollow, and they will be below the horizon line. In addition, they will be seen situated behind the existing buildings within the complex. Therefore, it is considered that there will be little contrast between these new features and the existing features within the view.</p> <p><u>Mitigation</u> The proposed landscape planting will be barely discernible in this view.</p>	
Magnitude of Change	
<p>Therefore, overall the size or scale of change in the view is judged to be Low. The duration of effect will be long term and permanent. The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible will cover an area greater than the immediate setting of the site. As a result, the magnitude of change is judged to be Low - Medium.</p>	
Significance of Effect	
<p>The significance of visual effect is judged to be Minor-Moderate.</p>	

Significance of Effect on Visual Amenity

8.3.4 The significance of effect on the visual amenity at each viewpoint is set out in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6: Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect
Viewpoint 1	Low	Moderate	Minor
Viewpoint 2	Low	Low	Minor
Viewpoint 3	Medium	Low	Minor
Viewpoint 4	Medium	Low	Minor
Viewpoint 5	Medium	Low-Medium	Minor - Moderate

9 CUMULATIVE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

ASSESSMENT

9.1 Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

- 9.1.1 Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) is concerned with the impact of the proposed development in combination with other similar developments in the study area.
- 9.1.2 Within the Pebble Hall complex there are a range of other types of commercial activities. Existing activities at the site have been taken into account in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. There are two proposed or potential developments in the immediate vicinity of the Application Site which are considered as part of this CLVIA. This is:
- the change of use of one existing building for food waste processing by means of thermophilic aerobic digestion (TAD) with an extension to the building to accommodate the required technology
 - Planning Permission 08/00053/WAS for a Renewable Energy Generation Facility (which will be replaced by this proposed development)

Planning Application for TAD

- 9.1.3 A planning application for thermophilic aerobic digestion (TAD) of food waste has been previously submitted to Northamptonshire County Council, subsequently withdrawn and due for resubmission. It seeks a change of use of building Number 6 and an extension (building Number 7) to accommodate the TAD process.
- 9.1.4 The proposed building extension is to the north of the existing building and is 12.2 meters by 18.3 meters. In addition, the development requires a stack 17m in height, plus there will be a number of outdoor storage tanks and other ancillary equipment.
- 9.1.5 This is a small building extension in the context of the Pebble Hall complex, and therefore in combination with the proposed development is unlikely to cause a cumulative impact on landscape character.
- 9.1.6 The potential for cumulative impacts on visual amenity is considered for each of the viewpoints (1-5). From each viewpoint the proposed extension to the building will not be discernible in the view, due to the presence of either intervening landform or vegetation or both.
- 9.1.7 The proposed stack for the TAD facility may be noticeable in the views from Viewpoint 1, 2 and 5. From each of these views the stack for the TAD facility would be seen against a backdrop provided by the proposed Plant Hall, and is unlikely to be seen protruding above the roof line of the Plant Hall. This stack would appear much smaller in scale than the proposed REGF flue stack. In combination, the introduction of two new vertical structures into the landscape is considered. There are a number of other vertical elements in the landscape, including the existing litter fence, telegraph poles and electricity pylons, within the vicinity of the Application Site. The scale of the stacks are not considered large enough to detract from the presence of the Church Spires in Theddingworth and Husbands Bosworth as local landmarks.

9.1.8 Therefore, the cumulative impact of the proposed development alongside the proposed TAD facility is considered to be negligible.

Planning Permission for REGF

9.1.9 Planning permission 08/00053/WAS was granted in June 2008 for a Renewable Energy Generation Facility, on the site previously consented for In-Vessel composting, within the Pebble Hall complex. The REGF comprises a building, with a 15m stack, and some ancillary structures, and uses waste wood to generate renewable electricity. The permission was implemented when the hoggin was excavated to create the platform for the proposed REGF and subsequently the wood waste imports and processing commenced. However, the building has not yet been constructed.

9.1.10 There is a commitment from the Applicant, that should the planning permission be granted for the proposed REGF building, then this building will not be built.

9.1.11 Therefore, there is considered to be no cumulative impact as a result.

10 MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL IMPACTS

10.1 Proposed Mitigation Measures

- 10.1.1 Where effects are judged to be significant and adverse, proposals for preventing / avoiding, reducing or offsetting or compensating for them are provided. These are known as mitigation measures.
- 10.1.2 A detailed scheme of landscape improvements and biodiversity enhancement has been prepared to mitigate the potential for impacts on the landscape and visual amenity caused as a result of the REGF Facility.
- 10.1.3 The material arising from the preparation of the site (31,500m³) will be placed around the south and west part of the Application Site, creating a raised bank. The recontoured ground will be planted with native woodland and shrubs, to extend the existing woodland block around the west, north and east parts of the Pebble Hall complex. The planting will also extend down the top part of the bank facing the yard. The increase in the height of the bank and the extensive planting will provide screening to the REGF building from the south and west and a wooded backdrop to views from the north. The woodland will complete a green corridor around the Pebble Hall complex, which will link to the larger areas of woodland along the River Welland valley, via the existing field boundary hedgerows.
- 10.1.4 The details of the planting scheme are shown on Drawing GPP/C/PH/REGF/13/05. This drawing includes the planting specification, which includes woodland and shrub species.

10.2 Residual Impacts

- 10.2.1 The residual impacts are those that remain after mitigation has been taken into account. The mitigation measures have been taken into account throughout this assessment. However, it is noted that a Minor-Moderate Significant Impact has been identified as a result of the proposed development on the Welland Vale Landscape Character Area 19(C) visual amenity at Viewpoint 5. It is noted that the identified potential impact on the Welland Vale Landscape Character Area 19(C) and on the visual amenity at Viewpoint 5 will be mitigated over time through the extensive landscape planting proposed. Therefore, the level of impact identified will only result in the short term as the landscape planting becomes established.

11 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Summary of Impacts

11.1.1 The predicted impacts of the proposed development on the landscape and visual environment are summarised in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1: Summary of Impacts

Feature	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Impact
Landscape			
National Character Area 89 Northamptonshire Vales	Medium	Low	Minor
National Character Area 95 Northamptonshire Uplands	Medium	Negligible	Negligible
National Character Area 94 Leicestershire Vales	Medium	Low	Minor
Broad Unwooded Vale Landscape Type (19)	Medium	Low	Minor
Welland Vale Landscape Character Area (19C)	Medium	Low-Medium	Minor-Moderate
Landform and Banks	Low	Medium	Minor
Hedgerow	Low	Medium	Minor
Arable Field	Low	Medium	Minor
Hardstanding and Concreted Yard	Low	Low	Minor
Visual Amenity			
Viewpoint 1	Low	Moderate	Minor
Viewpoint 2	Low	Low	Minor
Viewpoint 3	Medium	Low	Minor
Viewpoint 4	Medium	Low	Minor
Viewpoint 5	Medium	Low-Medium	Minor - Moderate

11.2 Conclusion

11.2.1 GP Planning Ltd was commissioned by Carbonarius Ltd in 2013 to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the proposed REGF at Pebble Hall Farm, Theddingworth.

11.2.2 The results of this assessment are presented in this report, which will form one of a number of components of an Environmental Impact Assessment of the development, and will be submitted to the local planning authority as a part of a planning application for the proposed development.

11.2.3 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment concentrates on key landscape and visual issues, including impacts of development on the landscape resource and impacts on the visual amenity. Landscape impacts are those that occur upon the landscape character and resource, whereas

visual impacts are those that arise from changes in the appearance of the landscape and have a resulting impact on visual amenity.

- 11.2.4 The baseline or existing conditions have been considered, including identifying the sensitivity of the landscape and visual amenity. The impacts of the proposed development have been considered, and the magnitude of change as a result of the proposed development identified for both the landscape and the visual amenity. The significance of this impact is provided, and for the purposes of this assessment any moderate or major impact is considered to be significant.
- 11.2.5 The impacts identified for the landscape character and resource are minor and therefore are not significant, with the exception of one identified as minor-moderate which can be mitigated. The majority of the impacts on the visual amenity are minor and therefore not significant, with the exception of one identified as minor-moderate which can be mitigated.
- 11.2.6 In conclusion, the overall impact of the proposed REGF is considered to be not significant, principally because of the incorporated mitigation measures.

APPENDIX 1: Scope of the Assessment

Northamptonshire County Council Scoping Response

Correspondence with Leicestershire County Council and Northamptonshire

County Council