



SITE AND SURROUNDINGS 2

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2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Introduction

2.1 This Chapter describes the site and the surrounding area and is intended to provide the reader with an understanding of its setting in the local area and how it presently looks. This chapter of the Environment Statement should be read in conjunction with the planning application drawings provided as part of the Planning Statement (PS).

2.2 For identification purposes, the proposed development would be located on agricultural land to the north of Spring Grove Farm, Withersfield, north-west of Haverhill, CB9 7SW at NGR TL 63984 46977 – as shown on Figure 2-1 Site Location Plan (Drawing Number 29351-P-9001 rev. C). Figure 2-2 presents an aerial photograph of the Site location.

Figure 2-1:
Site Location Plan

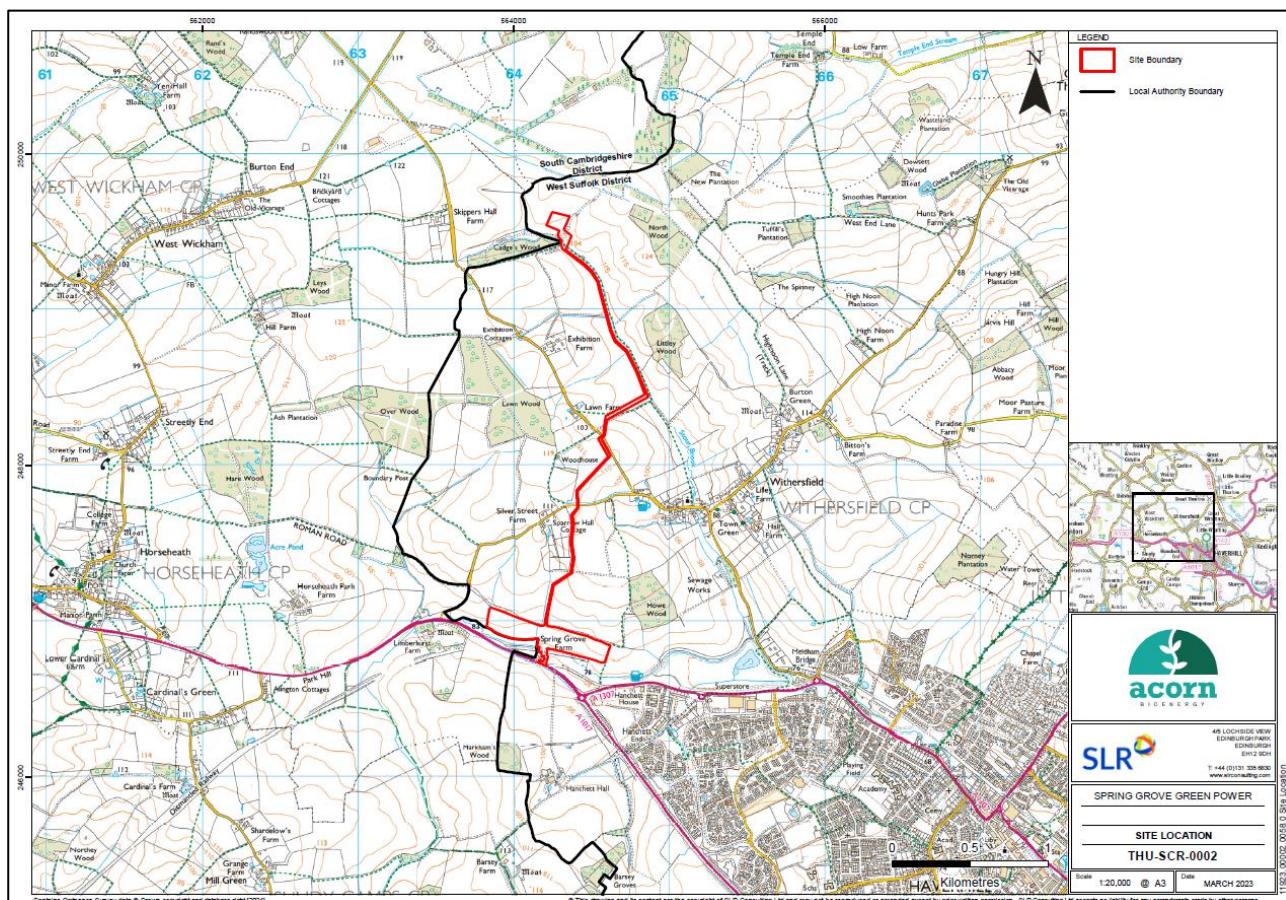


Figure 2-2:
Satellite Imagery of the Site



Application Site

2.3 The application site comprises two adjoining arable fields, approximately 9.3ha of which at Bowsey Field (to the west of the main access) and 3.2ha at Spring Grove Field (to the east of the main access). In addition to this, a pipeline of approximately 3055m leading from the northern boundary of the site to an offsite lagoon area of approximately, 1.5ha will be needed. Overall, Bowsey Field would be the primary area assigned to the proposed development with a marginal overlap into Spring Grove to accommodate some of the lower-level infrastructure.

2.4 Spring Grove Farm is on the rural outskirts of Haverhill market town, West Suffolk - approximately 2km north west of the town centre. The Site falls within the administrative boundary of Suffolk County Council. Cambridge lies approximately 17km to the north west and Bury St Edmunds 26km north east.

2.5 Access and egress are likely to be achieved from the A1307 Cambridge Road, via the existing Spring Grove Farm access point. Although the Site is some distance from any national transport routeways, including the A11 (12km to the west) - the A1307 Cambridge Road runs adjacent to the south boundary, at a proximity of c. 90m, connecting Haverhill to Linton in the west (c.7km).

2.6 Bounded by established trees and hedgerow of varying density to the north and west, the field is bordered with additional tree belt of substantial depth extending along southern boundary (approximate depths of between 75m-122m). The Stour Brook runs west to east along the southern boundary of the Site and is flanked by a broadleaved woodland/riparian corridor with adjoining tree belt. The Site effectively lies on southwest facing slopes of a small valley edged by the Stour Brook which eventually feeds into the River Stour. Bowsey field and Spring Grove fields are shown to be Grade 2 agricultural land on Natural England mapping.

2.7 The area surrounding the Proposed Development is primarily rural agricultural land, with isolated commercial and residential properties. Hatchet End, a more densely populated residential area, is located at a distance of approximately 500m to the southeast of the Proposed Development.

2.8 The nearest human (commercial/business) receptor, The Epicentre at Haverhill, is located approximately 245m south east of the Site. The closest residential receptors (within approximately 400m) include four properties on the A1307 at approximately 325m south west; 330m south east; 390m south west; and 405m west of the proposed site. Further residential receptors (and a commercial receptor) are located between approximately 625m and 1250m from the Site.

Surrounding Area

2.9 Despite a connected location on the north west fringe of Haverhill market town, the wider area forms an expansive complex of agricultural estate interspersed with woodland copse and scattered hamlets - namely Horseheath, Shudy and Castle Camps, Bartlow and larger villages such as Linton (within the Cambridgeshire administrative boundary).

2.10 The closest residential property is Spring Grove Farm and associated buildings c.80m to the south of the main red line boundary. These buildings are proposed to be associated staff accommodation and site offices for the AD plant operations and are subsequently not considered to be residential receptors for the purposes of environmental assessment. Residential receptors to the west are at approximate distances of 320m, 400m and 406m. To the east, residential receptors are present from approximately 600m from site boundary. To the north the nearest residential receptors are located on Silver Street approximately 650m from the site boundary.

Landscape Designations

2.11 The site is not located within or within 2km of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or National Park. The Landscape Character Typology of the Site and surrounds is described as No23. Rolling

Estate Farmlands and/or No.24 Undulating Estate Farmlands in the Rural Vision Policy 1 for West Suffolk Council.

2.12 There are six areas of ancient woodland within a 2km radius of the Site. Howe Wood lies circa 0.3km to the north east of the AD Plant site, to the east of the PRoW linking Haverhill with Withersfield. Hare Wood, Over Wood, Lawn Wood and Littley Wood all are located to the north west of the Site, at in excess of 1km from the Site boundary. The pipeline routeing would pass between ancient woodland blocks of Howe Wood, Lawn Wood and Littley Wood, with at least 150 m standoffs to each. There are no TPOs within or edging the Site.

Geology

2.13 Soil and subsoils on the Site are derived from glacial till, are described as 'deep' and can be dug to depths of more than 1m. Described as lime-rich, loamy, clayey soils which are locally chalky with impeded drainage in field areas. Soils are noted to be more freely draining in the areas underlying associated woodland and the Stour Brook (GeoIndex).

2.14 Underlying bedrock is noted to comprise of undifferentiated Lewes Nodular Chalk and Seaford Chalk formations. Superficial deposits (of glacial till) are of Lowestoft formation (diamicton).

Topography

2.15 Elevations along the northern boundary are typically 95-98m AOD and contours are noted to slope southwards near Stour Brook to an approximate height of 81-83m AOD. As typical elevation range across the Site is 14m AOD, site-wide cut/fill and levelling works would be required prior to the commencement of construction works. Excavated soils would be utilised for bunding as required around the Site.

Hydrology

2.16 The proposed development falls within the planning jurisdiction of Suffolk County Council (SCC) who are the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for the area.

2.17 Stour Brook, a tributary of River Stour, flows from west to east along the south boundary of the site. The Site is located within Flood Zone 1, is approximately 550m from the nearest flood zones 2 and 3 to the south associated with the Stour Brook. The Site is largely low risk in terms of pluvial - surface water flooding, with only a small area along the north western boundary experiencing medium or high risk. These risks are known to be associated with the drain (located 625m north west) that follows the north western boundary, eventually leading to the Stour Brook.

2.18 In terms of drainage, the Site seems to be located on the southern side of a very small valley, where local to the site, elevations decline to the north and west (towards the drain). The drain

¹ West Suffolk Local Plan-Rural Vision (2015)

flows into a larger valley, which declines towards the south, to Stour Brook. The drain follows the base of this valley and merges with the Stour Brook near the A1307.

2.19 In keeping with ground conditions the underlying geology seems suitable for either infiltration or surface water drainage. As bedrock is a 'Principal' aquifer, it would be difficult not to recommend infiltration. Groundwater is associated with the North Essex Chalk waterbody (WFD Ref: GB40501G400700).

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

2.20 The extent of the PRoW network is limited within 5 km of the Site. A footpath runs along the western edge of Howe Wood and to the east of the Site, terminating at the A1307. The Icknield Way Trail and Harcamlow Way both run to the west of the Site with the Stour Valley Path running roughly north south and cutting through the eastern side of the Site.

2.21 More information on the PRoW network is set out in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) chapter of the ES.

Archaeological Designations and Listed Buildings

2.22 There are no scheduled monuments, World Heritage Sites or Registered Parks and Gardens located within the application boundary or within the 1km Study Area.

2.23 A review of Historic England datasets returned 13 Grade II Listed Buildings and Withersfield Conservation Area within 1km. These are set out below:

Number	Name	Designation
NHLE reference 1236073	Little Thatch	Grade II Listed Building
NHLE reference 1236072	The Grange	Grade II Listed Building
NHLE reference 1236071	13,14 and 14A, Church Street	Grade II Listed Building
NHLE reference 1236070	Elm Lea	Grade II Listed Building
NHLE reference 1375499	Hanchet End Farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building
NHLE reference 1375498	Hanchet End Cottage	Grade II Listed Building
NHLE reference 1331011	Limberhurst Thatch	Grade II Listed Building
NHLE reference 1264841	Turnpike House	Grade II Listed Building

NHLE reference 1264778	Four Cottages Immediately West of Little Thatch	Grade II Listed Building
NHLE reference 1264776	Long Cottage	Grade II Listed Building
NHLE reference 1264777	Church Farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building
NHLE reference 1236109	Silver Street Farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building
NHLE reference 1236074	White Horse Inn	Grade II Listed Building
n/a	Witherfield Conservation Area	Conservation Area

2.24 One asset, Silver Street Farmhouse (NHLE 1236109), was subject to the preparation of a significance statement. It was concluded that, though the development would result in a slight change to peripheral views from the asset there would be no impact on the important setting elements associated with the asset such that the ability to understand and appreciate the asset would be wholly unaffected. There would be no harm to the asset.

2.25 Archaeological potential for the site was shown to be generally limited, with the exception of the possible presence of Worsted Street - which may be located along the northern boundary of the Site or its vicinity. With respect to this it is noted that the geophysical survey did not reveal any anomalies indicative of the presence of particularly significant remains albeit a single anomaly parallel to the conjectured route of the road may be associated with it (either as a contemporary field boundary or a truncated road feature).

2.26 Other anomalies may represent truncated features, albeit the baseline evidence for pre and post Roman activity is sparse, with other remains most likely limited to post medieval field boundaries. In conclusion, it is not assessed that the archaeological potential within the Site would preclude development, any reasonably predicted remains not being worthy of preservation in situ.

Ecological Designations

2.27 One statutory designated site was noted within 2km of the Site – Over and Lawn Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located 1km to the north.

2.28 The data search identified a further 6 non-statutory designated sites within 2km. These sites have been designated as County Wildlife Sites (CWS), many of which comprise Ancient Woodland (AW). The non-designated sites within 2km include Howe Wood CWS (310m north east); Haverhill Flood Park CWS (426m east); Markhams Wood CSW and AW (665m south); Chimsowell Ditch CWS (746m south); Hare Wood CWS and AW (1529m north west); and Littley Wood CWS and AW (1820m north).

Planning History

2.29 No planning history is indicated for the Site as shown on the West Suffolk Council planning portal which includes records since 2006.

2.30 Permission was granted in April 2021 for up to 155 dwellings and associated infrastructure on land approximately 500m to the south east of the AD facility at Haverhill Research Park.

ES Baseline

2.31 The above summary of baseline conditions represents a brief overview of much more detailed consideration of current circumstances set out in the Environmental Statement chapters, notably:

- Chapter 4: Noise;
- Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA);
- Chapter 6: Traffic;
- Chapter 7: Air Quality;
- Chapter 8: Ecology;
- Chapter 9: Land Quality;
- Chapter 10: Hydrology; and
- Chapter 11: Archaeology and Heritage.

2.32 In addition, the following technical reports accompany this planning application:

- Lighting Assessment (Strenger);
- Statement of Community Involvement (Instinctif);
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (CBA Trees).

CONCLUSIONS

2.33 This Chapter has described the Site and the surrounding area and provided the reader with aspects of setting and constraints which could be impacted by the proposed development. These considerations are assessed in more detail within the accompanying technical reports submitted in support of the planning application and the remaining chapters of this Environmental Statement.



SITE AND SURROUNDINGS 2
