

Rebuttal Note

Northney Marina

Rebuttal Note on Landscape Character and
Visual Matters prepared for MDL Ltd

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This note has been written by Andrew Smith, joint MD of fabrik. My qualifications include a BSc (Hons) degree and an MSc in Landscape Ecology Design and Management. I am a member of the Landscape Institute and a Chartered Landscape Architect (CMLI).
- 1.2 I have over 25 years post qualification experience in landscape planning and design. I have prepared landscape and visual assessments either as standalone documents or co-ordinated as part of environmental statements; and both the outline and detailed design of a range of residential, commercial, mineral and waste development projects throughout the UK. I have appeared as an expert witness on both landscape and visual issues.
- 1.3 I am familiar with the Site and its surroundings having undertaken the preparation of this report and additionally I was involved in the preparation of the baseline evidence - both the LVA and the Northney Marina Vision document.
- 1.4 This note provides a rebuttal to the to the Chichester Harbour Conservancy (CHC) commentary outlined in the Statement of Common Ground, Feb 2021 (SOCG) between themselves and Havant Borough Council (HBC) in relation to the Pre-Submission Havant Borough Local Plan (HBLP) and the representations submitted by Chichester Harbour Conservancy (respondent no. R281) in response to both Regulation 19 consultations in 2019 and 2020.
- 1.5 The rebuttal responds to Para 172 of the NPPF and its associated criteria. It is of note that the SOCG omits the reference to the final part of the criteria (as underlined below, my emphasis) c). The full clause should read:

'c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated'.
- 1.6 The rebuttal response is drawn from fabrik's preparation of a Vision for the Site, that in itself was underpinned by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal.
- 1.7 In summary, whilst it is agreed that the Site is within the AONB, it is common ground that it is 'predominantly brownfield land'. The allocation will enable new homes to be provided on part of this brownfield land, an area of limited scale and extent. In doing so, through meeting the requirements of draft policy KP3, Northney Marina, potential detrimental effects on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities will be successfully moderated and in several instances to the extent that there will be a beneficial outcomes.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In 2018 fabrik were commissioned to prepare a vision for the Marina. This work was underpinned by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (September 2018). Site work associated with this was undertaken in July of 2018. This was carried out in accordance with GLVIA (3rd). This robust approach informed the subsequent Northney Marina Vision Document (Sept 2018).

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal

- 2.2 The LVA has been updated in line with policy and guidance published since 2018, with an impact overview and associated conclusions to support this rebuttal. It is appended to this note.
- 2.3 In overview the LVA reports that the site is a small, developed element of the AONB. Its character is that of a Marina development, of low to medium value. It is a site that is in part visually disassociated from its immediate context and the wider CHAONB.

Chichester Harbour Management Plan 2019-2024.

- 2.4 The site's contextual landscape is inclusive of the Special Qualities of the AONB as outlined in the Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan 2019-2024. An assessment against these qualities is provided later in this rebuttal.
- 2.5 What is evident but not so well captured by the AONB Management Plan is that settlements are very much part of the water's edge. The CHC do recognise settlement where it is of high quality, and this is primality through heritage association. In such locations it is apparent that there can be a positive relationship between built form and the waters edge. Of course, the converse can also be true.

Northney Marina Vision Document

- 2.6 The vision was informed by the LVA and wider constraints. All such baseline was translated into 'Issues and Opportunities' which subsequently informed the Vision and its associated placemaking principles:

VISION

The vision for the regeneration of Northney Marina is to create a high-quality sustainable place to live, which sits in harmony with strengthened marina operations. Every part of the scheme will be of high quality, and it will provide for a balanced community with a range of housing types for a variety of tenures, a mix of fit-for-purpose employment space, boat yards, and will provide open space amenity space, located so as to respect the site's setting within a sensitive landscape.

The character of the scheme will be determined by a range of variables unique to Northney Marina, including the density of development, its architectural character, the treatment of its public realm, streets and public spaces, and the character of its open spaces and boat yards. The development will combine urban and rural, giving clarity between built and soft landscape. Two options have been prepared which provide a loose framework for discussion. They are not intended to be definitive, but merely shows examples of how the MDL's land might be developed to provide up to 40 new dwellings, set within a network of attractive open space.

The following placemaking principles guide our approach to Northney Marina and also reflect best practice at a national level:

- *Placemaking – all design should proactively plan to create a unique sense of place which builds on the character of Hayling Island and its environs, whilst creating a layout which is legible and therefore easy to orientate oneself in and move through.*
- *Think local – local building traditions, scale, urban form, density and materials should be respected unless there are good reasons for doing otherwise. The characteristics of the locality should inform the design of the development, including heights, massing, building lines and plot sizes.*
- *Respect the landscape – all landscape features such as trees, woodland and shelterbelts should be retained and strengthened where possible to enhance a sense of place and support wildlife, with buildings set below the tree line. Appropriate buffers should be in place between areas of new development and Chichester Harbour.*
- *Clear limits – all new development should have clear and defensible edges, with the appropriate offsets from designated areas respected.*
- *Mitigate impacts - negative environmental impacts should be mitigated through sustainable design and construction methods, and resource efficiencies.*
- *Provide shelter – in this relatively exposed location, planting design should plan for an enhanced microclimate.*
- *Enhance the marina – the proposals should enhance the needs of the marina, including providing boat storage, access to the water via slipways and other supporting uses.*
- *Promoting mixed uses – the masterplan should allow for the provision of appropriate marine-related commercial uses, as well as residential dwellings.*
- *Enhance biodiversity – design of open spaces should meet the needs of all, including setting aside specific areas for enhancing biodiversity.*
- *Sustainable movement – movement planning should be in line with the Manual for Streets, with priority for pedestrians, then cyclists and public transport in that order. The proposals should be well connected to, and integrate with, the immediate local area and wider area by linking to existing pedestrian and cycle routes and encouraging people to use public transport.*
- *Streets for People – design should prioritise streets and spaces rather than roads for cars.*
- *Healthy living – design of all areas should encourage residents to lead healthy lifestyles as a matter of course, with all houses close to open space and public rights of way.*
- *Housing variety – a range of housing sizes, mix and tenures should be provided, with affordable housing seamlessly integrated into the plan.*
- *Energy – where practical, buildings should be orientated to allow for passive solar radiation, as well as the positioning of solar energy devices to meet renewable targets.*
- *Sustainable drainage – all parts of the plan should allow space for Sustainable Urban Drainage methods.*
- *Inclusive - the needs of those with disabilities should be considered, ensuring safe and convenient access for all.*
- *Surveillance by design - all buildings should be orientated to overlook streets, footpaths and open spaces to ensure passive surveillance and reduce opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour.*

2.7 The above principles informed a series of design rationale and ultimately an illustrative masterplan.

2.8 The resulting benefits arising from the Vision were as follows:

- To reduce the visual impact of the Mallard Building, particularly when viewed from the north.

- Through proximity to the England Coast Path, the potential to extend footpaths which connect to this through the site.
- The opportunity to provide better quality and more appropriate employment space, alongside supporting facilities.
- The opportunity to provide up to 40 new dwellings, helping to address housing needs within the borough, along with approximately 1,000 sqm of additional employment space.
- The above to be provided 5 minutes' walk of bus stops on Langstone Road.
- Through the presence of existing trees within and surrounding the site the ability to conserve and enhance the mature vegetation backdrop and is characteristic of other developments along the coast, which are set below the tree line.
- The potential to create areas of public open space with pedestrian links within the development and wider landscape beyond, as well as buffer areas to the Chichester Harbour AONB, SSSI and Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and North Common and Saltmarsh SINC.
- The potential to create a positive interface with Chichester Harbour, where development plots are set within green infrastructure, and breaking down the mass of built form that currently sits within the site, particularly the Round House.
- The ability to create a well-designed, discrete, and accessible development at Northney Marina, which sits within a strong landscape setting and is well contained by proposed boundary vegetation.
- The ability to conserve and enhance connectivity through green infrastructure and improve the boundary edge treatment of the site, to reduce the visual dominance of existing retained built form.
- To deliver a high-quality scheme that responds to locally distinctive styles and materials, reflecting the best of the AONB.
- To create a positive interface with the landscape where development parcels front the green infrastructure and sit below the treed horizon of North Hayling.
- The potential to realise greatly needed improvements to the facilities at both Northney and Sparkes Marinas, securing their long-term futures.

2.9 The outcome of the Vision was that a scheme could be achieved on the site, one where further positive dialogue with Havant Borough Council, Chichester Harbour Conservancy and the local community could see *'Northney Marina regenerated into an attractive new part of Hayling Island and Chichester Harbour, which meets the Conservancy's and Borough Council's aspirations, brings real community benefits and could be delivered within the Plan period. The delivery of up to 40 dwellings and 1,000 sqm of commercial space provides a sensible and pragmatic balance between retaining and enhancing both marinas and making more efficient use of these brownfield sites.'*

Chichester Harbour Special Qualities

- 2.10 The outcome is a scheme that has recognised and is able to respond positively to the AONB and its special qualities.

Special Quality	Current relationship with Special Qualities	Outcome of scheme on special Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The unique blend of land and sea – especially the combination of expanses of open waters, narrow inlets and intimate creeks. 	Whilst there is a visual relationship with such special quality it is primarily peripheral to the site and intervening mature vegetation is to be retained and enhanced. Where there is a visual relationship, the perception is already of built form, offices and sheds associated with the marina and visitor facilities. Additionally, the marina is not a narrow inlet nor an intimate creek.	No change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The frequently wooded shoreline 	The shoreline is in part wooded, notably to the north and west.	Adherence to the Vision document and the requirements of Policy KP3 would see this conserved and enhanced.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The flatness of the landform, unusual among AONBs, accentuates the significance of sea and tide and of distant landmarks across land and water 	The land is broadly flat with localised variation and falls to the water edge, for example to marina side and to slipways. The significance of the sea and tide is influenced by the marina and associated structure in views back to the site.	The change to this quality will be negligible. Slipway access and marina edge will remain, and homes will be built to follow existing topography.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The open water of the central area of the Harbour. 	The site is not part of this special quality. Its visual relationship with the central part of the harbour is limited by existing vegetation and its location to the north west of the AONB. Where there is a visual relationship, built form of the marina is apparent.	The effect will be neutral. Existing boundary vegetation will be conserved and enhanced, and the proposed built form will be characteristic of the other high quality settlement edge to the AONB.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall sense of wilderness within the seascape. 	The site is currently a Marina, and the sense of wilderness is limited and has a limited relationship with the wider context and those parts where perception of wilderness is higher.	The transition to a mixed-use scheme will not significantly change this sense of wilderness at either the site or the contextual level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The particularly strong historic environment and heritage assets. 	Whilst the contextual landscape does have heritage assets there are none on the site. Existing mature boundary vegetation provides a good level of visual separation of the site from such assets. Where there is a partial visual relationship the marina development is already a component of those views.	The visual relationship will not change as the existing boundary vegetation is to be retained and enhanced. Where new built form is proposed it is to be characteristic of the best elements of the AONB's settled water's edge and as such has the potential to be positive.

Special Quality	Current relationship with Special Qualities	Outcome of scheme on special Quality
• The picturesque harbourside settlements.	The site is not part of a picturesque harbourside settlement. Whilst the contextual landscape is part of such a special quality, the site is visually disassociated by mature vegetation. If the vegetation were not there existing low quality-built form on site would be wholly apparent.	[The change will be as above.]
• The wealth of flora and fauna, and notably the vast flocks of wading birds add to the richness and diversity of the landscape.	Whilst there is flora and fauna an initial ecological survey has shown that the current ecological value of the site is low.	The scheme, through the conservation and enhancement of the peripheral vegetation and through the provision of positive green infrastructure has the potential to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain and subsequent outcomes could then be progressed through a Biodiversity and Ecological Management Plan.
• The unspoilt character and unobtrusive beauty	The site is developed and not part of the unspoilt character and unobstructive beauty. Whilst the contextual landscape does have elements of this the site is already perceived as a development component.	Through a robust design process the scheme is able to provide a very high-quality designed response to this limited area of the AONB, locally elevating character and improving outlook when compared to the current condition.
• The very special sense of peace and tranquillity, largely engendered by the gentle way the AONB is used and closeness to nature that is experienced.	The site sits in one of the less tranquil and more lit elements of the AONB. The area is influenced by noise and lighting associated with the A3023 and also by the activities and requirements of the Marina.	The effect on this special quality will be negligible at the contextual levels and similarly at the site level.

3.0 Summary

3.1 It is common ground that the site is “*predominantly brownfield land, already built up with an existing operational marina in the AONB comprising a mixture of single and two storey marina buildings, boat storage, car parking and other related uses*” and the evidence base for Policy KP3 has been informed by an LVA and this has led to a positive Vision for the Site. The draft allocation is one that has:

- Limited the scale and extent of change to a very localised level, on a small part of the site and to a very small part of the overall AONB.
- Where that change has occurred, the allocation is one that will be able to moderate detrimental effects.
- The scheme is one that will lead to several beneficial outcomes.

- 3.2 Adherence to Policy KP3 will enable the above outcome where the quality of design sets the bar high leading to a high-quality response commensurate with positive AONB influences. An outcome that will place an emerging scheme successfully into its wider AONB context having had regard to its landscape and scenic beauty.