



The Great Grid Upgrade

Sea Link

Sea Link

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Executive Summary

- Ex1.0.1 This Report contains an assessment of the effects of the Proposed Project on the Grade II* listed Church of St John the Baptist in Saxmundham (NHLE1268184) as an individual heritage asset separate to the assessment of the asset as within Saxmundham Conservation Area.
- Ex1.0.2 The assessment concludes that the effect of the Proposed Project on this asset would be minor adverse (at year 1 of Operation), which is not significant. With the additional mitigation measures in place, including screening planting, the residual effect would reduce to neutral (by year 15 of operation), which is not significant. This residual effect would result in no harm to the heritage asset.

1. Introduction

- 1.1.1 This report has been produced to provide further clarity on the heritage baseline and assessment of impact of the Proposed Project on the Grade II* listed Church of St John the Baptist in Saxmundham (NHLE1268184). The report provides an individual assessment of this building as a heritage asset separate to the Saxmundham Conservation Area. In **Application Document 6.2.2.3 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage [APP-050]** and the supporting **Application Document 6.3.2.3.A ES Appendix 2.3.A Cultural Heritage Baseline Report [APP-109]** the assessment of the church is dealt with as part of the assessment of the Saxmundham Conservation Area within which the asset is located. The two assets were grouped for assessment. Assessing the church as part of the Conservation Area is deemed to be a robust and proportionate approach to assessing the asset based on its spatial relationship with the Conservation Area and their shared setting to the south; however, in light of representations by Interested Parties, it is considered that further clarity would be provided by submission of this separate assessment in relation to the church as an individual asset..

2. Relevant Application Documents

2.1.1 This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- **Application Document 6.2.2.3 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage [APP-050]** – Paragraphs 3.9.101 - 3.9.104.
- **Application Document 6.3.2.3.A ES Appendix 2.3.A Cultural Heritage Baseline Report [APP-109]** – Paragraphs 6.1.8 - 6.1.11.
- **Application Document 7.1 (C) Planning Statement [AS-057]** – Paragraphs 7.5.24 and 7.5.26.
- **Application Document 7.5.7.1 (B) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [AS-059].**

3. Assessment of Impact - Grade II* Church of St John the Baptist (NHLE1268184)

3.1.1 Plates referred to in the following text are contained in Appendix A of this report.

3.1.2 The Grade II* listed Church of St John the Baptist (NHLE1268184) is the parish church for Saxmundham. The earliest fabric in the church is the south chapel at the south end of the south aisle. It dates to 1308 and was constructed for Robert Swan. The west tower also dates from the 14th century. The remainder is largely 15th century, but it is much altered externally by restorations in the mid- and late-19th century, by architects Henry Roberts and RM Phipson respectively. The church is constructed in flint and conglomerate with ashlar detailing. It comprises a three-stage west tower, nave with north and south aisles and north vestry, chancel south chapel and south porch. Internally, the church retains its 15th century timber hammerbeam roof supported on moulded wall posts resting on corbels in form of singing angels, and a 15th century font and piscina. Memorials inside the church mainly date to the 19th century and include a number of belongings to members of the Long family of the nearby Grade II listed Hurts Hall (NHLE1268178). It has architectural and historic interests as an example of a medieval rural parish church and archaeological interest in its phases of development. Artistic interest is provided in the craftsmanship of its 15th century nave roof, font and piscina and in the quality of its internal 19th century memorials. It is of high heritage value.

3.1.3 The church is located in a slightly elevated position on the eastern side of the settlement of Saxmundham, with the land falling away to the River Fromus to the west and rising to the east. It is set within a roughly oval-shaped grassed churchyard with upstanding grave memorials and mature trees throughout and along the boundary (Plate 1 and Plate 2). The extent of the church has not altered from its appearance on late 19th century OS maps, although the boundary to the east is now more open. To the north of the churchyard is bordered by the B1119 (Church Lane) with the boundary formed by a metal estate railing with one surviving stone gate pier, although this is substantially overgrown with trees and hedgerow. Views of the church from within the settlement of Saxmundham are extremely limited by the mature vegetation on the boundary of the churchyard, as well as buildings within the settlement. The trees are deciduous so more open views of the church are available in the winter. To the south the boundary of the churchyard is also formed by mature trees, however distant views of the church tower are still achievable from some locations on approach to the settlement from the south on the B1121 in areas where the tall hedge that flanks the B1121 has been removed (Plate 3). These views from the B1121 showcase the tower in areas where the dense bank of trees around the church are broken, however, woodland as well the undulating topography does limit views from the B1121 (Plate 4). There is also a track providing one of two accesses to Hurts Hall from the north that runs immediately to the west of the churchyard, the other access leading from a lodge to the north-west within the settlement. The track between the church and the hall provides a physical and visual setting relationship between the church and the hall that augments the relationship already established through the surviving monuments to the Long family within the church. The access formerly formed part of the parkland associated with the hall and part of its formal approach. Views of the church when travelling north from the hall would have formed part of this landscape design and therefore part of the later post-

medieval setting of the church. Although these views are now limited, they are still available from the northern end of the formal access (Plate 5), where the church tower appears set within a dense backdrop of mature trees, however some intervening buildings have been added along the track diminishing understanding of this design intention (Plate 6). Elements of the setting that contribute to the heritage value of the asset comprise its place within the wider settlement and parish of Saxmundham, its churchyard with its memorials, and the functional and visual setting relationship between it and Hurts Hall.

- 3.1.4 The Proposed Project will feature in some wider views on the approach to Saxmundham from the south on the B1121 which feature the church tower against a dense bank of mature trees as described above, although these are limited due to topography as well as the high mature hedges that flank much of the B1121. This aspect of the setting of the church, providing a sense of arrival into the settlement and Conservation Area, would experience change, as the operational above ground components of the project, including the proposed Saxmundham Converter Station and the proposed bridge over the River Fromus, may be perceptible in some approach views (see Plates 1.42 and 1.43 in **Application Document 6.3.2.3 C ES Appendix 2.3.C Site Photos**). Although these elements may be perceptible, they would not interrupt views towards the church, nor would the Saxmundham Converter Station compete with the tower or distract from the tower in views as it would not break the prevailing tree line in the area. Visualisations prepared as part of the assessment also demonstrate that the church appears in the same the field of view as the proposed Converter Station and River Fromus bridge (see Viewpoint 2, **Application Document 6.4.2.1 ES Figures Suffolk Landscape and Visual Part 2 of 7**). Other elements of the identified setting of the asset, including the churchyard and the view travelling north between the Hurts Hall and the church, would remain unchanged. The Proposed Project at year 1 of operation is therefore assessed as having a negligible magnitude of impact on the Church of St John the Baptist. On an asset of High value, this would constitute a minor adverse effect, which is not significant.
- 3.1.5 Additional mitigation measures detailed in **Application Document 7.5.7.1 (B) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [AS-059]** will reduce the visual impacts of the proposed infrastructure and reduce the level of visual change to the setting of the church. Once the planting/screening proposed to limit views of the Converter Station and the River Fromus bridge has achieved its full height, the residual effect at Year 15 of operation of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme, is assessed to be neutral/no effect, which is not significant.
- 3.1.6 The Proposed Project would therefore result in a temporary level of harm to the heritage asset which is assessed (in National Policy Statement terms) as ‘less than substantial harm’, at the lower end of the scale, of temporary duration. This would be of temporary duration whilst the proposed screening planting around the River Fromus bridge and the Saxmundham Converter Station matures. Once the additional screening planting has matured, by year 15 of operation, the residual effect of the Proposed Project would result in ‘no harm’ to the heritage value of the asset.

4. Summary

- 4.1.1 The Church of St John the Baptist was assessed as part of the overall assessment of the Saxmundham Conservation Area where a moderate adverse significant effect was identified to the Conservation Area as a result of the presence of the proposed Saxmundham Converter Station and the River Fromus bridge within its setting, in the view on approach to the Conservation Area from the B1121 from the south. These views also feature the church tower of the Church of Saint John the Baptist (see Plates 1.42 and 1.43 in **Application Document 6.3.2.3 C ES Appendix 2.3.C Site Photos**).
- 4.1.2 The assessment of the effect of the Proposed Project on the individual asset of Church of St John the Baptist presented in this SEI report concludes that the effect of the Proposed Project on this asset would be minor adverse (at year 1 of Operation), which is not significant.
- 4.1.3 With the additional mitigation measures in place, including screening planting the residual effect would reduce to neutral (by year 15 of operation), which is not significant.
- 4.1.4 The residual effect would result in no harm to the heritage asset.

Appendix A Site Photographs



Plate 1: View of the Church of St John the Baptist, Saxmundham, from the B1119 (Church Lane) to the northwest. View shows the view southeast along the main access to the church.



Plate 2: View from the front of the church facing northwest along the main access towards Saxmundham and the B1119.



Plate 3: View northeast from the B1121 towards the church demonstrating views limited to where gaps exist in the boundary planting of the church.



Plate 4: View northeast towards the church from the area of the proposed permanent access where it joins the B1121, demonstrating no views of the church due to mature woodland.



Plate 5: View from the main entrance of the church towards Hurts Hall, demonstrating screening from mature woodland as well as 20th century buildings on the south side of the church.



Plate 6: Views from the northern end of the formal access to Hurts Hall towards the church, demonstrating screening from mature woodland, as well as 20th century buildings in the foreground.

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