

APPENDIX 1

Landscaping and Visual Assessment, Landscaping Plan and Photomontages

For inspection purposes only.
Consent of copyright owner required for any other use.

21 AUG 2014 562



NEW STACK AT BRANDON PRODUCTS LIMITED

Visual Impact Assessment Report

For inspection purposes only.
Consent of copyright owner required for any other use.

21 AUG 2014 5 6 2



BRADY SHIPMAN MARTIN
Landscape, Planning and Environmental Consultants





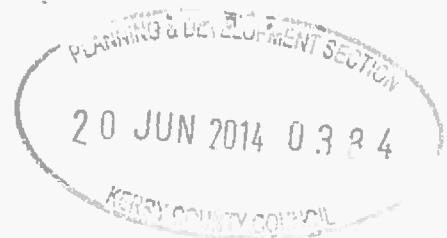
CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction and Landscape and Visual Assessment	1
2.0	Introduction and Landscape and Visual Assessment	2
3.0	Landscape and Visual Setting	2
4.0	Kerry County Development Plan 2009-2015	2
5.0	Landscape Character Assessment	3
6.0	Landscape and Visual Impact of the Proposed Development	4
7.0	Summary and Conclusion	7

APPENDIX 1 : PHOTOMONTAGES (See Separate Report)

APPENDIX 2 : EXTRACT FROM COUNTY KERRY RENEWABLE ENERGY STRATEGY – LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT – Ballylongford Creek

21 AUG 2014 5 6 2



Visual Impact Assessment Report

1.0 Introduction and Landscape and Visual Assessment

- 1.1 Brandon Products Limited is a small commercial facility located along the north side of the Curraghdarrig Cross / Beale (Kilcolman) Local Road some 1.3km west of Astee in North County Kerry. The facility is located circa 220m west of Curraghdarrig Cross and circa 500m west of the local road junction with the R551 Ballylongford – Ballybunion Regional Road. The Brandon Products facility is located circa 1.8km south of Letter Beach on the Shannon Estuary and the access road to the beach passes south to north circa 120m to the east of the facility.
- 1.2 The proposed development entails the provision of a new 25m high stainless steel chimney stack. The structure is to be located to the rear (north) of the main building. The new chimney stack will have a diameter of 0.7m and will replace an existing circa 15m high stack, which is to be removed.
- 1.3 This report provides an assessment of the likely visual impact of the proposed development. The report is supported by a series of Photomontages of the development as viewed from some of the most open and representative vantage points in the surrounding area. The Photomontages (which are included in Appendix 1) provide an 'As existing' and an 'As proposed' version from each viewpoint.
- 1.4 The landscape and visual impact assessment criteria as set out in the EPA Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment have been used for the purpose of this assessment. Refer to Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Criteria

Significance	Criteria
Profound	An impact which obliterates sensitive characteristics
Significant	An impact, which by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Moderate	An impact that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends.
Slight	An impact, which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Imperceptible	An impact capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.

- 1.5 As per the EPA Guidelines, impacts are considered as being negative, neutral or positive in nature. Duration of impact is considered as being Temporary (up to one year), Short-term (from 1 to 7 years), Medium-term (7 to 15 years), Long-term (from 15 to 60 years) or Permanent (in excess of 60 years).

2.0 Landscape and Visual Context

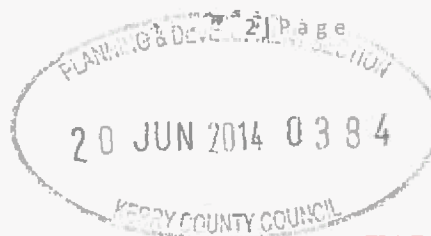
- 2.1 Brandon Projects Limited is located on a relatively flat site of just under 0.4ha. The site has open frontage to the Kilcolman Local Road and is also relatively open to the east / northeast. The site has strong field boundary hedgerows to the west/northwest and to the immediate southeast. A new hedgerow recently planted along the eastern/ north-eastern boundary has yet to establish in order to provide screening.
- 2.2 The facility comprises a range of masonry and metal clad buildings / warehouses arranged as a single unit at the centre of the site. An old cottage style structure has been incorporated into the western end of facility. A concrete carparking/forecourt area is located to the front (south) while various tanks and associated support facilities lie to the rear (north) of the main building.
- 2.3 The main part of the building rises to circa 8.6m (maximum 12.2m) over ground, with a small section at the eastern end rising to 12.2m. The majority of the tanks/support facilities to the rear are less than 7.5m in height. An existing chimney stack rises to circa 15m over ground from the rear of the building.

3.0 Landscape and Visual Setting

- 3.1 The surrounding area is predominantly low-lying and rural in character. Ground level at the facility is circa 65m over datum and while the landscape is relatively flat, it actually rises slightly towards the north (coast), west and more noticeably southwards towards Knockmore Mountain (260m) circa 4km distant. The River Shannon lies circa 1.75 kilometres to the north/northeast of the site.
- 3.2 Residential properties are a common feature along the majority of local roads and there are 11 residential properties within circa 300m of the facility. There are also a number of rural-based commercial developments in the vicinity – particularly close to Curraghdarrig Cross.
- 3.3 The facility is relatively low-lying, well-screened and is not visually prominent, particularly when viewed from any distance. The facility is most visible in passing views along the immediate Kilcolman road frontage and also from along the Letter Beach local access road to the east.

4.0 Kerry County Development Plan 2009-2015

- 4.1 Objective ZL 12-1 of Development Plan seeks to protect the landscape of the county as a major economic asset as well as for its invaluable amenity value and beauty. Likewise, Objective ZL 12-4 states that it is an objective of the council to determine the zoning of lands in rural areas having regard to the sensitivity of the landscape as well as its capacity to absorb further development.



- 4.2 The Brandon Products Limited facility lies along (within) the southern edge of a designated **Secondary Special Amenity Area** as set out in Kerry County Development Plan 2009-2015 (refer Map 12.1a of the Development Plan), see Figure 1 for extract of Map. While the facility is located within the edge of the designation, the existing development is neither prominent nor openly visible across a wide landscape.
- 4.3 In discussing areas of Rural Secondary Special Amenity, the Plan at Section 12.2.8 (page 12-3) notes that *"the landscape of areas in this designation is generally sensitive to development. Accordingly, development in these areas must be designed so as to minimise the effect on the landscape. Proposed developments should in their designs take account of the topography, vegetation, existing boundaries and features of the area. Permission will not be granted for development which cannot be integrated into its surroundings."*
- 4.4 **Rural Prime Special Amenity** are the highest category of sensitive and valued landscapes in the county. However, there are no such landscapes located in the vicinity of the Brandon Products facility, the nearest being the coast near Doon / Bromore circa 6km to the southwest of the Brandon Products Facility.
- 4.5 Likewise the facility does not fall within the visual context of any identified **Views and Prospects** (refer Map 12.1a of the Development Plan), see Figure 1 for extract of Map. The nearest such views are north towards the coast off the Beale Local Road circa 2km + to the west of the Brandon Products Facility.

5.0 Landscape Character Assessment

- 5.1 A **Landscape Character Assessment** of County Kerry was prepared for the 'Renewable Energy Strategy 2012 & Adopted / Proposed Archaeological Landscapes Study'. This assessment locates the area surrounding the Brandon Products facility within Character Area 1: Ballylongford Creek an area described as 'Hilly & Flat Farmland, Coast' as follows:

"The extent of this landscape area is relatively small. The landscape within this area is comprised of small features such as fields, walls, hedges and individual houses. These elements break up the landscape into small-scale units, with the height and scale of Knockanure Mountain being the dominant feature."

- 5.2 Knockanore Mountain (to the southwest) and the River Shannon Estuary (to the north) are the dominant features. The beach at Letter is the principal amenity & recreation feature. The area exhibits a high degree of human influence and is a managed landscape with numerous dwellings located outside of settlements in the area.
- 5.3 The Development Capacity Assessment (page A15 of Landscape Character Assessment) notes in summary that:



- The landscape north of the R551 is designated as a Secondary Special Amenity area.
- The landscape is not important for scenery, tourism or recreation and such a particular landscape is not limited within the county as a whole.
- The landscape is not considered to be of national or county importance.
- The landscape is important as a setting for the settlements of Ballylongford and Astee.

See Appendix 2 for full extract of Landscape Character Assessment for Ballylongford Creek area.

6.0 Landscape and Visual Impact of the Proposed Development

- 6.1 As previously noted, the proposed development entails the provision of a new 25m high stainless steel chimney stack. The structure is to be located to the rear (north) of the main building. The new chimney stack will have a diameter of 0.7m and will replace an existing circa 15m high stack which is to be removed. The development also includes for the provision of new planting for screening along the boundary of the landholding with the Letter Beach Access Road. The detail of this planting is set out in the accompanying Landscape Screening Report, Landscape Drawing 6057-300 (Proposed Screen Planting Plan and Section) and illustrated 5 years post planting and 10 years post planting on Photomontages 2 & 9, both of which are both from the Letter Beach Access Road. (Refer to Figures 1.2.3 & 1.2.4 and 1.9.3 and 1.9.4 respectively).
- 6.2 In essence, the proposed replacement stack is the only aspect of the proposed development of a landscape or visual consequence. Lower aspects of the proposed development are to be located to the rear (north) of the existing building, an area where existing similar support plant is already sited.
- 6.3 It is considered that proposed development will have little or no impact on the landscape character of either Secondary Special Amenity Area or on the local landscape character area of the Ballylongford Creek Character Area. Brandon Products Facility is an existing relatively small and well-screened development, particularly as viewed within its landscape setting. The facility is located at the southern edge of what is a large and expansive Secondary Special Amenity Area, the sensitive aspect of which is focused on the coastal edge further north - and to views thereof. There are no views of the coast from the local road passing the Brandon Products Facility.
- 6.4 Other commercial and residential development is also a feature of the local area in the vicinity of Curragharrig Cross area, thereby reducing the sensitivity of the local landscape. That said the increased stack height will increase the perception of industrial character, which already exists to some degree, within a small and localised area of circa 300 to 500m around the facility.

121 AUG 2014

562

20 JUN 2014 03 34

KEFFRY COUNTY COUNCIL

- 6.5 A low setting for the site, together with rising land between the site and the coast means that the existing and the proposed development are not visible from the Letter Beach or the immediate coast.
- 6.6 While it may be possible to locate the existing facility in views from Knockanore Mountain, it would not be possible to visually distinguish the proposed development within such views. In any case, the view from the upland is expansive and panoramic and drawn over the landscape surrounding the Brandon Products Facility to the more visually significant setting of the Shannon Estuary further north. In addition protected views from the upland are directed east over the lowland of north Kerry / east Limerick and as such are not in the direction of the facility or proposed development.
- 6.7 Therefore, impact from the proposed development is related to a localised visual impact from immediately surrounding roads and properties. Potential for such impact is discussed with reference to the Photomontages (Appendix 1: Separate document).
- 6.8 As previously noted the principle aspect of visual interest is the proposed replacement stack. While some 10m higher than the existing stack, the proposed stack is a slender (circa 700mm) structure and as such, it will not be visually prominent or distinct from distances over circa 1km (refer to Photomontage Views 5 & 6).
- 6.9 Depending on weather conditions, the structure may occasionally reflect sunlight, thereby increasing visibility, particularly from the south, where properties are more distant in any case.
- 6.10 **Photomontage 1** is south from the northern end of the access road to Letter Beach. As the land rises towards the coast the view is over a general lowland agricultural landscape with Knockanore Upland in the background. The existing facility is clearly visible in the lower middleground of the view. While the increased height of the stack will be visible it does not impact on the wider landscape views or the background skyline of Knockanore Mountain.

Visual assessment View 1: Slight, neutral impact.

- 6.11 **Photomontages 2 & 9** are views from Letter Beach access road directly east of facility. The rear of the existing facility is openly visible in the views which are from within 200m of the site. Both views are short-ranging and largely un-screened at present. The proposed development, and particularly the increased stack, will be openly visible from a circa 250m section of the road and from properties along this section of road.

Visual assessment: Moderate, locally negative impact.

As part of the proposed development it is intended to provide for additional screen planting along the boundary of the landholding along the access road to



Letter Beach. This planting, which is substantial in nature, will increasingly provide for near full screening of the facility from the access road and from properties along this road. The nature and detail of the proposed planting is set out in the accompanying Landscape Screening Report, Landscape Drawing 6057-300 (Proposed Screen Planting Plan and Section) and illustrated on representations of Photomontages 2 & 9.

Medium to longer-term visual assessment: Slight to imperceptible neutral.

- 6.12 **Photomontages 3 & 4** are relatively flat views westward along the R551 west of Astee. The existing facility is well-screened in both views and while it will be possible to pick out the proposed new stack, in reality, any views are of almost imperceptible glimpsed nature. In both images, views tend to be drawn to other foreground aspects, including roadside developments, roadside signage etc.

Visual assessment: Imperceptible or slight neutral impact.

- 6.13 **Photomontages 5 & 6** are views north-eastwards from higher ground on the R551 heading towards Astee. Both views are over intervening lowland to background of the Shannon Estuary. The existing facility is well-screened within the middle ground lowland landscape. It will be possible to pick out the proposed new stack in these views; however, again any views are of minor glimpsed nature and the development does not intrude upon or detract from the more expansive views of the estuary landscape.

Visual assessment: Slight, neutral impact.

- 6.14 **Photomontage 7** is eastwards from the Kilcolman Road heading towards the facility and Astee. The existing facility well-screened and views are dominated by existing built development along the road. The proposed new stack will be visible over boundary hedgerows, from a short section of the local road, and particularly from the nearby properties (as seen in the view). The stack is slender structure and while visible, it will not be a visually prominent element in views from the properties.

Visual assessment: Moderate, locally negative impact.

- 6.15 **Photomontage 8** is from the Kilcolman Road directly alongside the Brandon Products facility. The existing facility, with short stack, is openly visible from circa 100m section of the road. The replacement stack will be notably higher than the existing however, the view is of a passing nature from a short section of local road.

Visual assessment: Moderate, neutral impact.

7.0 Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 Brandon Products Limited is an existing small commercial facility located along the north side of the Curraghdarrig Cross / Beale (Kilcolman) Local Road. The facility is relatively low-lying, well-screened and is not visually prominent, particularly when viewed from any distance. The facility is most visible from a short section of the Letter Beach Access Road, circa 120 to 150m east of the site.
- 7.2 The presence of residential and other commercial developments are a feature of the local area in the vicinity of Curraghdarrig Cross. The facility lies along (within) the southern edge of a designated **Secondary Special Amenity Area** as set out in Kerry County Development Plan 2009-2015.
- 7.3 The proposed development entails the provision of a new 25m high stainless steel chimney stack. The structure is to be located to the rear (north) of the main building. The new chimney stack will have a diameter of 0.7m and will replace an existing circa 15m high stack, which is to be removed.
- 7.4 The proposed development will have little or no impact on landscape character or on the Secondary Special Amenity Area. Brandon Products Facility is an existing relatively small and well-screened development, particularly as viewed within its wider landscape setting. The facility is located at the southern edge of what is a large and expansive Secondary Special Amenity Area, the sensitive aspect of which is focused on the coastal edge further north.
- 7.5 In visual terms, potential for impact is limited to immediate surrounds of the site. The proposed structure will not be a prominent feature in longer range views. There are no views of the coast from the local road passing the Brandon Products Facility.
- 7.6 The increased stack height will increase the perception of an industrial character, which already exists to some degree, within a small and localised area of circa 300 to 500m around the facility. Such impact will be most readily appreciate from along the southern end of the access road to Letter Beach (east of site) and from a short section of the Kilcolman Road passing directly to the front of the facility. However, the development includes for significant new screen planting along the access road, which will in time, mitigate any such adverse visual impact.
- 7.7 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development will not constitute a visually prominent feature in the landscape and will not injure the visual amenities the area.

121 AUG 2014

562