

APP/L2250/V/10/2131934 & APP/L2250/V/10/2131936

SECTION 77 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 – REFERENCE
OF APPLICATIONS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMUNITIES
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND)
RULES 2000

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF CLIVE SELF
Dip LA CMLI MA (Urb Des)

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

In respect of:

Planning Application Reference: Y06/1647/SH (New Terminal
Building)

Planning Application Reference: Y06/1648/SH (Runway
Extension)

relating to land at London Ashford Airport, Lydd, Romney Marsh,
Kent, TN29 9QL

Qualifications and Experience

- S1 I am a Chartered Landscape Architect and an Urban Designer. I hold a Diploma in Landscape Architecture and a Masters Degree in Urban Design. I have 28 years experience in landscape and townscape assessment and design.

Scope of Evidence

- S2 My evidence addresses the landscape and visual effects of the proposed runway extension development and new terminal building development submitted pursuant to two planning applications ("The Applications"). The Applications were accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) and by supplementary landscape information. Whilst I was not involved in the preparation of the ES or supplementary environmental information, I am in agreement with its conclusions in respect of landscape and visual effects. I have also undertaken my own assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposals pursuant to the Applications including those of aircraft in flight.

The Existing Situation

- S3 The Airport lies at the south-eastern tip of Kent on the edge of Romney Marsh. To the south and east is the shingle promontory of Dungeness.
- S4 The surrounding landscape of Dungeness and Romney Marsh is relatively flat. Approximately 12 kilometres to the north of the Airport the land rises steeply to the escarpment of the Old Romney Shoreline which is designated as part of the Kent Downs AONB. Approximately 13 kilometres to the west is the High Weald AONB.
- S5 To the north and northeast of the Airport is predominantly farmland and to the east and southeast is the shingle promontory of Dungeness, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation. To the south is Denge Marsh and Dungeness Nature Reserve, a low-lying area of farmland and lagoons. To the west and southwest is farmland, the settlement of Lydd and a wind farm.

- S6 In terms of the landscape character of the wider area, the Airport lies within an extensive area identified as 'Romney Marshes: Character Area 123' in The Character of England: Landscape, Wildlife and Natural Features; 1999. The neighbouring area of Dungeness is noted in the Character Map for its remoteness and the fact that much of the 'area is dominated by the imposing power station and associated powerlines of Dungeness', and that 'past gravel extraction pits, now flooded, military uses and expanding resorts add to the general clutter along the coast'.

Built Development

- S7 Built development within and surrounding the Airport is generally of an undistinguished or utilitarian appearance. Domestic architecture within the surrounding area largely dates from the post-war period.

Tranquillity

- S8 The concept of tranquillity is highly subjective as it is entirely dependent upon an individual's perception of what constitutes tranquillity. It cannot be measured in an objective way and forms no part of national or local plan policy.
- S9 I do not consider the area to be particularly tranquil and I say that because of the activity associated with the existing Airport and the fact that urban development is already readily visible in the local area. Whilst the proposed Development will result in increased activity this has to be seen within the context of existing operations at the Airport. As such, I do not consider that increased activity associated with the proposals will have a material effect on the tranquillity of the area, whatever that is judged to be.

Landscape Planning Policy Context

- S10 Statutorily designated landscapes within the wider area comprise the Kent Downs AONB and the High Weald AONB. The non statutory designation of the Romney Marsh Local Landscape Area ('LLA') washes over the northern tip of the Airport site and Dungeness is identified as a Special Landscape

Area ('SLA'). Both policies seek to protect or enhance the character of the areas.

Landscape Character and Quality

S11 From my assessment of the area, I consider the Application Site to be of low landscape quality and I say that for the following reasons:

- the greater part of the Site is free from any statutory designation for landscape character or quality;
- the Site is an operational airport with associated vehicular and air traffic;
- the existing buildings and structures within the Site are of a utilitarian appearance; and
- the runway, car park and apron are lit.

S12 In terms of the neighbouring area, I consider that to be of medium to low landscape quality, on account of the fact that the area contains urban development and has been scarred by past and present mineral extraction.

Visibility

S13 The low-lying nature of the area is such that the existing hangars and terminal buildings can be seen from a number of locations in the surrounding landscape. The new terminal building will be seen from similar vantage points, but its impact on the landscape will be significantly less than the existing hangars mainly because of the curved roof and the fact that the eaves on the landside of the building are considerably lower than on the airside.

S14 The effect of the car park and circulation areas will be limited on account of the fact that they occupy a similar area to the existing areas of hardstanding and are in part screened by vegetation and landform.

Aircraft in Flight

- S15 In considering the effects of aircraft in flight, my evidence focuses on the effects of the larger aircraft as these currently do not regularly fly from the Airport.
- S16 With the Airport operating at a throughput of 500,000 ppa there would be, on average, approximately 16 movements a day (eight arrivals and eight departures) of larger aircraft, of which eight movements would be from the largest proposed aircraft such as Boeing 737s.
- S17 Whilst there would be a slight increase in aviation activity (beyond anticipated growth) as a result of the runway extension and terminal building the main change from a visual perspective would be the increase in the number of larger aircraft such as B737. Whilst the proposed aircraft are larger than the existing fleet, they are not significantly so.
- S18 The change resulting from the increased aircraft movements would have no material effect on the character of the area. I say that because:
- there are already existing aircraft movements;
 - the fact that the Airport will experience some growth, irrespective of whether or not the proposed development goes ahead;
 - the total number of movements will be capped at 40,000 mpa; and
 - larger aircraft have good climbing characteristics and are therefore present in the landscape for a short time only.

Built Development

- S19 The proposed terminal building is of a contemporary design with smooth uncluttered lines. The building responds to the surrounding landscape with the mono pitched curved roof reflecting the wind formed landscape of Dungeness. On the airside the façade is translucent allowing views over Romney Marsh and Dungeness and on the landside coloured composite aluminium panels are to be used to complement the colours of the

surrounding landscape. The landscape strategy demonstrates how the building and external areas will be assimilated into the local landscape.

S20 My overall conclusion in respect of the new terminal building is that it is of high quality design, responds sensitively to its site and surroundings and as such will not appear discordant with the local landscape.

Built Development – Landscape Effects

S21 In terms of the effects of the Development on the character of the wider area I do not believe it would give rise to any significant effects and I say that for the following reasons:

- the Airport is an active airport with associated infrastructure;
- the new terminal building is of a sympathetic design;
- the runway extension does not result in the loss of any significant landscape features;
- the new circulation and parking areas are closely related to the terminal and their effects can be mitigated by new landscaping;
and
- the site is not covered by any statutory designation for landscape character or quality.

Effects in Terms of Landscape Policies

S22 There will be no direct effects on the AONB's as a result of the Development but some indirect effects from overflying aircraft, albeit at some considerable height. Given that the AONB's are over 12 kilometres from the Airport the impact will be negligible.

Overall Conclusion

S23 For the foregoing reasons, in landscape, visual and so-called tranquillity terms, I consider that the proposals will not result in any material harm to either the character or quality of the Site or the surrounding landscape.