# EIA Quality Mark Case Study

**Land south of Redwall Lane, Linton, Kent**

## Key Issues
- The site (built form) lies approximately 250m from the River Beult SSSI
- No mains sewer connection within 1.3km of the site
- Whilst located in proximity to a cluster of warehouses/farm buildings for all other purposes it is within open countryside south of the Greensand Ridge special landscape area.
- Capacity of the local highway network.

## Purpose of the project
To provide a new purpose built headquarters for one of the UK’s largest berry and stone fruit production and marketing groups.

## Description of the project
A 13,991 sqm packhouse facility with 4,542 sqm of internal first floor office space and 12 loading bays including creation of a c. 8.9 ha landscape/ecological enhancement area.
Lessons learnt

The importance of baseline studies

A key site constraint related to the proximity to the SSSI and the absence of a mains sewer connection in proximity to the site. It was highlighted early in the baseline studies that without a mains connection an EA permit would be required to discharge treated sewage via a package treatment works into the SSSI. This would require very stringent requirements in terms of equipment and water quality limits and no guarantee of a successful outcome. This established early on that a mains sewer connection was imperative and would ensure an expedited approval from the EA.

A landscape led approach and iterative design

Early engagement with the project landscape architect before a layout and concept for the site was established identified that given its countryside location and important long distant views from the north the proposed building relative to existing ground level should not exceed that of the existing warehouses immediately north of the site. All efforts were therefore made by the architect to limit building height and to propose a cut and fill exercise on the site to lower the building relative to existing ground levels and thus limiting its visual envelope from key views from the greensand ridge to the north.

Lessons learnt cont. –

The importance of significant beneficial effects

Whilst EIA focuses primarily on significant adverse effects, and minimising/mitigating these, the ability to conclude significant beneficial effects should not be under estimated. In this instance with a very willing client, the creation of c.9ha of landscape/ecological enhancements whilst being able to conclude no significant adverse effects was a key achievement in subsequently securing consent.

Mitigating cumulative effects

The transport assessment identified the requirement to provide additional measures to mitigate cumulative effects over and above those required for the scheme alone to secure approval by the County Highways Authority. The cumulative effects assessment identified a key location on the highway network where mitigation measures would help to mitigate the cumulative effect of other development in south Maidstone and the existing capacity problems which was critical in securing KCC approval.

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