



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

relating to

Land west of Selsfield Road

Ardingly, West Sussex

on behalf of

Charterhouse Strategic Land and
The South of England Agricultural Society

May 2020

Date of Issue: 13th May 2020
Status/Revision: FINAL A
File ref: 825 / reports / 825 Landscape + Visual Appraisal –
Land at west of Selsfield Rd.doc
Checked: ARH **Approved:** NB

No part of this report may be copied or reproduced by any means without the prior written permission of Huskinson Brown Associates. This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning party and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Huskinson Brown Associates, no other party may use, make use of or rely on the contents of this report. No liability is accepted by Huskinson Brown Associates for any use of this report, other than for the purpose for which it was originally prepared and provided.

| CONTENTS | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 1 Introduction and background | 1 |
| 2 Location and baseline context..... | 3 |
| 3 Landscape and Visual considerations..... | 23 |
| 4 Conclusion | 27 |

FIGURES

- HBA Figure 1: Site Location (Ordnance Survey Mapping)
HBA Figure 2: Aerial Photo
HBA Figure 3: Conservation Area boundary (green outline and hatch)
HBA Figure 4: Listed buildings in proximity to the site (Extract from Magic.gov.uk)
HBA Figure 5: Built form characteristics of Ardingly settlement (Extract from High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide)
HBA Figure 6: Area HW1 from the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex
HBA Figure 7: Detailed Assessment Plan from the Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment
HBA Figure 8: Extract from HDA7 of Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment
HBA Figure 9: Extract from Figure HDA 13 of the Mid Sussex Landscape
HBA Figure 10: Extract from Table 2 Landscape Value (Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study)
HBA Figure 11: Extract from Table 1 Landscape Sensitivity (Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study)
HBA Figure 12: Extract from Figure HDA 5 in the Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment

IMAGES:

- HBA Photograph 1: Looking east along tree line on northern boundary
HBA Photograph 2: Looking west along public footpath 9AR and the western end of the southern site boundary
HBA Photograph 3: Looking north-east from southern site boundary to hedgerow boundary around the recreation ground
HBA Photograph 4: Looking south along the eastern site boundary from Selsfield Road
HBA Photograph 5: From southern side of the site looking north to tree lined boundary, standard Oak tree and poplar belt on the showground
HBA Photograph 6: Looking south from the site to the play area and housing
HBA Photograph 7: Trees on northern site boundary
HBA Photograph 8: Trees on Selsfield Road (offsite)
HBA Photograph 9: Tree planting in wedge of land to the west

APPENDICES

- HBA Appendix 1: Draft Policy SA25 (Mid-Sussex Site Allocations DPD, Draft Submission Regulation 19, Scrutiny Committee - 11th March 2020)
HBA Appendix 2: Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment (June 2012) by Hankinson Duckett Associates
HBA Appendix 3: High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024 Assessment
HBA Appendix 4: Photographs of winter views from identified key viewpoints

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Huskisson Brown Associates (HBA) is a firm of Chartered Landscape Architects, established in 1987 and registered since then with the Landscape Institute. HBA has been a member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment since 1992. The practice is Quality Assured to BS ISO 9001:2015. All directors of the practice are Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute.
- 1.2 The practice has undertaken a range of landscape and visual assessment work for many clients including public bodies, private companies and individuals. This includes projects in the commercial, industrial, retail, recreational, healthcare, agricultural, infrastructure and residential development sectors including the presentation of evidence at Public Inquiries. The Practice has also given extensive development control advice to Local Planning Authorities on a wide range of projects.
- 1.3 HBA is now retained by Charterhouse Strategic Land and The South of England Agricultural Society to provide a 'high level' landscape and visual appraisal of their site which lies upon land to the west of Selsfield Road at the northern edge of Ardingly. The client is supporting the proposed allocation of the site by Mid Sussex District Council in their Mid Sussex Draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document (Draft Sites DPD). The Draft Sites DPD identifies the site (under Policy SA25) as one of twenty two sites allocated to meet the residual housing requirement for the district.
- 1.4 The purpose of this Landscape and Visual Appraisal is to advise on the potential landscape and visual implications of residential development on the site in order to help demonstrate site suitability (from a landscape and visual perspective) and to inform the development of a future scheme proposal.
- 1.5 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal records the landscape and visual baseline, identifying the key landscape and visual attributes and sensitivities of the site and its landscape context. It considers the range of landscape and visual opportunities and constraints that might inform the development potential of the site. Where appropriate, broad landscape and visual mitigation measures and parameters for development are identified, in particular with regard to overcoming potential landscape and visual constraints.
- 1.6 The site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and therefore a 'High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Assessment' is also provided as part of this Landscape and Visual Appraisal. This uses the template provided at Appendix 1 of the High Weald AONB Unit Advice Note 'Legislation and Planning Policy in the High Weald AONB'. The assessment identifies how a development proposal on this site could be developed to contribute positively to meeting the objectives of the AONB Management Plan.
- 1.7 The preparation of this Landscape and Visual Appraisal has involved both desk-based and site work. Site work involved a walkover review of the site and walking some of the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and roads in the local area to help determine the landscape character and visual context of the site and surrounding area, and to start to evaluate the degree of change that might be expected to arise from any proposed development. Site visits were originally carried

out in October 2019 in fair weather conditions, with vegetation partially in leaf. A subsequent visit was carried out in February 2020 in mixed weather conditions (overcast and showery with sunny spells), when vegetation was defoliated.

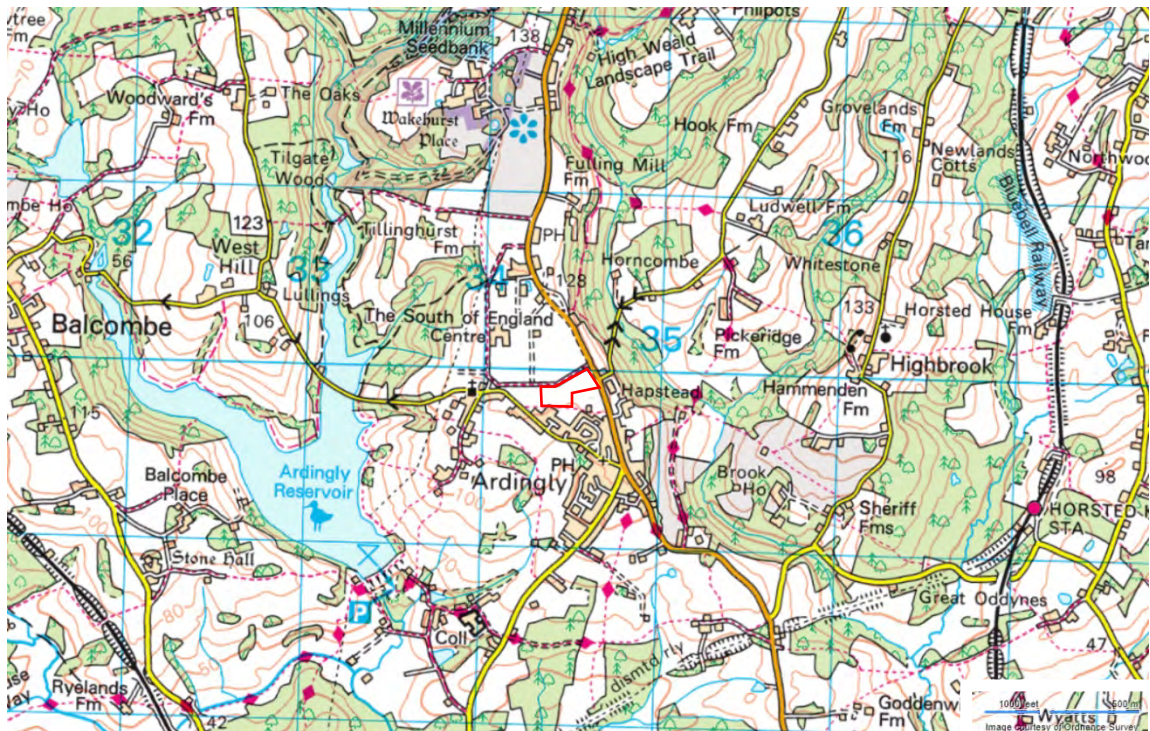
1.8 The following documents and sources are considered primary ones of relevance to the landscape and visual context of the site and its immediately surrounding area:

- National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012 (updated Feb 2019);
- National Planning Practice Guidance;
- National Design Guide (October 2019);
- National Character Area Profile 122 High Weald (December 2013), Natural England;
- West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment 2003;
- Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (November 2005) West Sussex County Council;
- The West Sussex Landscape, Land Management Guidelines, Sheet HW1, High Weald;
- The Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (2010);
- Mid-Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (Adopted March 2018) and supporting evidence base documents;
- Mid-Sussex Site Allocations DPD. Draft Submission (Regulation 19) Scrutiny Committee, 11th March 2020;
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 - 2024;
- High Weald AONB Advice Note – Legislation and Planning Policy in the High Weald AONB, (Revised February 2019);
- High Weald AONB Unit, Parish Information, Ardingly Landscape Character Maps;
- High Weald Housing Design Guide: Building better, building beautiful in the AONB, (November 2019);
- High Weald AONB Unit, Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development, (September 2017);
- Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan 2013 – 2031, and supporting documents;
- MAGIC website;
- Historic England website;
- On line review of Historic Ordnance Survey mapping;
- Bing & Google Earth and Google Maps;
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (GLVIA3) published in April 2013 by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; and
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (17 September 2019) by the Landscape Institute.

1.9 This report was originally prepared for the client in October/November 2019 and has been subsequently updated to address information requested by Mid Sussex District Council and in particular in response to queries raised by the High Weald AONB Unit with regard to Draft Policy SA25.

2 LOCATION AND BASELINE CONTEXT

- 2.1 The site and its local context is illustrated on the Ordnance Survey map extract and aerial photograph below.



HBA Figure 1 - Site Location (OS mapping from Bing.com)



HBA Figure 2 - Aerial photo (from Google Earth)

Site Location and Description

- 2.2 The site covers an area of approximately 3.41 hectares of greenfield land to the south of the South of England Event Centre and showground, lying to the west of the B2028 Selsfield Road in the village of Ardingly, West Sussex.

- 2.3 The site is irregular in shape, essentially spanning the eastern and central parts of a single field which extends from Selsfield Road in the east to Street Lane in the west and wraps around the northern and western side of the village recreation ground. The site provides overflow parking for the showground and is separated from the South of England Event Centre and showground by a surfaced track (forming public footpath 43AR/7AR) which follows the northern site boundary and provides gated access from the B2028 to other overflow parking areas to the north-west.
- 2.4 The site is subdivided by a number of tracks/pathways which split the site into four broad areas (as can be seen in the aerial photograph above at Figure HBA2) and also allow for an element of informal recreation.
- 2.5 The site and surrounding area, including the village of Ardingly, lie within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Relevant Local Landscape Policy Background

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031

- 2.6 The Mid Sussex District Plan was adopted as a Development Plan Document in March 2018. Policies of relevance to landscape and visual matters are set out below:
- Policy DP12 – Protection & Enhancement of Countryside:
“The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District.”
 - Policy DP16 – High Weald AONB:
“Development within the High Weald AONB...will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular;
 - *..the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;*
 - *the traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;*
 - *character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and*
 - *the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.”*
 - Policy DP26 – Character and Design:
“To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District’s distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence.. and to protect values characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities.”
 - Policy DP37 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
“The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected...development that will damage or lead to loss of trees,

woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted."

and that, "Proposals for new trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of suitable species, usually native, and where required for visual, noise or light screening purposes, trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of a size and species that will achieve this purpose."

- 2.7 Part of the evidence base for the Local Plan includes the Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007 by Hankinson Duckett Associates) and a more recent Capacity Study (2014 by Land Use Consultants). The Capacity Assessments are addressed subsequently in this Technical Note under 'Landscape Capacity'.
- 2.8 The District Plan committed Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) to preparing a Site Allocations DPD to identify sufficient housing and employment sites. The Sites Allocation DPD, Draft Submission (Regulation 19), identifies the site (under Policy SA25) as a housing allocation for 70 dwellings.
- 2.9 Draft Policy SA25 (refer HBA Appendix 1) sets out the proposed policy requirements for the site, addressing matters including Objectives, Urban Design Principles, AONB, Social and Community, Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure, Access and Flood Risk and Drainage.
- 2.10 Objectives for Draft Policy SA25 are *"To deliver a sympathetic and well integrated extension to the village of Ardingly informed by a landscape led masterplan, which respects the High Weald AONB and the setting of nearby heritage assets."*
- 2.11 Urban Design Principles for the site are to:
- *"Respect the distinctive character of the village and the existing settlement pattern.*
 - *Orientate development to positively address existing and proposed areas of open space. Orientate development to have a positive edge to all site boundaries and to adjacent recreation ground, facilitated by and including the removal of the existing bund.*
 - *Providing a focal point for the development where sensitively designed higher density housing could be located; close boarded fencing should be avoided where visible from outside the site.*
 - *Provide a permeable layout and seek to enhance the connectivity of the site with Ardingly village and existing PRoW."*
- 2.12 With regard to the AONB, Draft Policy SA25 states a requirement to:
- *"Undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements, in order to conserve and enhance the landscape of the High Weald AONB, and minimise impacts on its special qualities, as set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan.*
 - *Retain and substantially enhance existing trees and hedgerows incorporating them into the landscape structure and layout of the development and reinstate the historic filed boundary through the centre of the site incorporating the existing mature tree.*

- *Incorporate retained landscape features into a strong new landscape setting, containing the new housing and limiting the impact on the wider landscape.*
- *Protect and enhance the character and amenity of existing PRow which runs along the northern and southern boundaries and provide connections from the new development."*

2.13 A number of other policy requirements in Draft Policy SA25 also overlap with landscape matters, including:

- *"In consultation with the Local Planning Authority, address requirements for suitably managed open space and equipped children's playspace, either on-site or by financial contribution to upgrade existing adjacent facilities.*
- *Provide appropriate design, layout and landscaping mitigation to protect the rural setting of the adjacent Ardingly Conservation Area and nearby listed St Peter's Church (Grade I) and the listed group which surrounding [sic] the Church (Grade II): ensure development is not dominant in views from within the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings.*
- *Retain the western end of the site as an undeveloped area of public open space in order to protect the rural setting of these assets and maintain separation of the two historic cores of the village.*
- *Undertake an holistic approach to Green Infrastructure and corridors, including retention of existing landscape features and enhancement with new native species-rich hedgerows, native tree planting and wildflower seeding in areas of open space to provide a matrix of habitats with links to the surrounding landscape.*
- *Incorporate SuDS within the Green Infrastructure to improve biodiversity and water quality."*

Ardingly Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2013-2031

2.14 The Ardingly Parish Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in March 2018. Part of the evidence base for the Ardingly Parish Neighbourhood Plan is the Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment (June 2012) by Hankinson Duckett Associates (HBA Appendix 1). The Landscape Character Assessment is addressed subsequently in this Technical Note under 'Landscape Character'.

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

2.15 The Management Plan is a statutory document and a material consideration in the determination of planning decisions. It is character-led and addresses the components of character that define the High Weald's natural beauty. The stated vision for the future of the High Weald is a landscape which:

"Retains its distinctive historic landscape character and beauty and has halted the erosion of natural beauty avoiding poor development and incremental change."

2.16 The Statement of Significance (at page 23 of the Management Plan) defines the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB, its character and the special qualities that are associated with it. The introduction to this section observes:

"The High Weald is one of the best-preserved Medieval landscapes in North West Europe"

2.17 The Statement of Significance identifies five defining key components of the AONB character “that have made the High Weald a recognisably distinct and homogenous area for at least the last 700 years”. These are:

- ***“Geology, landform and water systems:*** a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams.
- ***Settlement:*** dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.
- ***Routeways:*** a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).
- ***Woodland:*** abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings.
- ***Field and Heath:*** small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods...”

2.18 Whilst the five key components can be found within the wider landscape setting, the site itself and the adjoining East of England showground are “out of character with the High Weald landscape”, as recorded in the parish and district character studies. Whilst none of the identified special qualities of the wider AONB landscape can be found on the site itself, the settlement of Ardingly is a typical “dispersed historic settlement” of the High Weald and forms part of the context to the site. Public footpath 9AR, adjoining the southern site boundary is also identified as a ‘historic routeway – PROW’ on the AONB Unit’s Ardingly parish information maps.

2.19 The Management Plan sets objectives for each component, which act as a checklist against which proposals within the AONB can be assessed. The following objectives are of particular relevance:

- ***Settlement “Objective S2:*** To protect the historic pattern of settlement.
- ***Settlement “Objective S3:*** To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout and design.
- ***Routeways “Objective R1:*** To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways
- ***Routeways “Objective R2:*** To enhance the ecological function of routeways.

2.20 An appraisal of the site (and any potential development on it), in relation to the environmental objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan is provided at HBA Appendix 3.

Boundaries

2.21 The northern site boundary adjoins the access track (also a public footpath) which runs around the perimeter of the South of England showground. The track provides access to overflow parking and is gated at the Selsfield Road/B2028 entrance. The boundary is for the most part open, albeit marked by a line of semi-mature ornamental trees which line the route of the track and a short section of timber post and rail fence at the western end. The perimeter of the main showground site is marked by a 2m high wiremesh fence on the opposite side of the access track.



HBA Photograph 1 - Looking east along tree line on northern boundary (access track is offsite)

- 2.22 The southern site boundary is marked by a gappy hedgerow located on the northern side of public footpath 9AR, which follows the southern site boundary, linking between Selsfield Road/B2028 in the east and Street Lane in the west. The footpath separates the site from housing on the northern side of Street Lane, Holmans and Gowers Close and the grounds to St Peters CE Primary School. On the eastern side of the southern boundary, the site boundary follows the tree and hedgeline around the perimeter of the recreation ground.



HBA Photograph 2 - Looking west along public footpath 9AR and the western end of the southern site boundary



HBA Photograph 3 - Looking north-east from southern site boundary to hedgerow boundary around the recreation ground

- 2.23 To the east, the site boundary is marked by a hedgerow at the back of the wide grassed and tree lined verge to the B2028. The verge slopes such that the hedgerow and site are located at a slightly higher level than the pavement and carriageway to the road.



HBA Photograph 4 - Looking south along the eastern site boundary from Selsfield Road

- 2.24 On the western side, the site boundary is not demarcated on the ground, running through the central part of the field, the alignment following a historic field boundary.



HBA Photograph 5 - from southern side of the site looking north to tree lined boundary, standard Oak tree and poplar belt on the showground

Land cover and land use

- 2.25 The land is used for overflow parking but otherwise has an informal recreational use.
- 2.26 The site abuts a recreational ground and Ardingly Village Play Area in the south-east, with residential development and St Peter's CE Primary School lying to the south of the site. To the east, residential properties address the site on the eastern side of Selsfield Road.



HBA Photograph 6 - Looking south from the site to the play area and housing

- 2.27 To the north, the organised landscape of the South of England showground and Event Centre dominates this part of the landscape, with woodland and agricultural land beyond this.

Landform and levels

- 2.28 The site lies on a plateau at around 120m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) with an overall slight fall to the southwest. The land rises gently beyond the site to the north, to a localised ridge across the Ardingly showground at around 127m AOD. Beyond the site to the south, the land falls more steeply across the Ardingly Village Play Area and housing on Gower Close which is located at a lower level to the site.
- 2.29 The site is banked up from Selsfield Road (B2028) in the east but overall the B2028 is a ridgetop road which runs through the village.
- 2.30 There is a bund in the eastern half of the site, broadly following the southern site boundary where it wraps around the recreation ground.
- 2.31 In the wider setting, the landform is undulating and typical of the High Weald, rising to local high points of 133m AOD on the B2028 approximately 1km north of the site and 153m AOD on Hook Lane approximately 1.5km to the north-east and falling to a series of wooded valleys and ghylls.

Vegetation of landscape and visual significance

- 2.32 Significant vegetation on the site itself comprises a mature standard Oak tree which lies broadly in the centre of the site, formal predominantly ornamental trees lining the northern boundary and access track and hedgerow boundaries to the east and west and parts of the southern boundary and the hedgerow and tree belt which separates the site from the recreation ground.
- 2.33 Offsite, the tree lined verge (predominantly Chestnut) to Selsfield Road creates a strong identity and a leafy approach to Ardingly. A row of poplars along the western end of the southern boundary to the showground are also a prominent landscape feature. Beyond the western site boundary, tree groups planted in the adjoining triangular field soften this edge of the village.
- 2.34 In the wider landscape, fields and roads are generally lined by hedgerows and the landscape is well wooded. Great Racks Wood extends along a valley on the western side of the showground and Hapstead Wood provides a wooded valley to the east of Selsfield Road, both providing a degree of containment to the landscape.



HBA Photograph 7 - Trees on northern site boundary



HBA Photograph 8 - trees on Selsfield Road (offsite)



HBA Photograph 9 - tree planting in wedge of land to the west

Public Rights of Way and Open Access Land

- 2.35 The closest Public Rights of Way to the site are footpaths 7AR/43AR and 9AR which lie offsite but adjacent to the northern and southern site boundaries respectively.
- 2.36 To the north, footpath 7AR (Also recorded on the West Sussex Rights of Way Definitive Map as 43AR) follows the surfaced access track and follows the perimeter fence of the showground, heading north around the showground site to rejoin the B2028 near 'Little London'.
- 2.37 To the south, footpath 9AR follows a narrow pathway between the wire fence and hedge to the southern site boundary and the boundary hedges and fences to St Peters Primary School grounds and residential properties along the northern side of Street Lane and Holmans which back on to the footpath. At the eastern side, footpath 9AR continues along the southern edge of the adjacent recreation ground and its car park.
- 2.38 Approximately 250m south and south-west of the site, public footpath 20AR joins the end of Church Lane and follows a garden boundary and small scale fields to the south of (and running parallel to) The Street. Intervening fields, vegetation and properties on The Street and Church Lane separate the site from the footpath.
- 2.39 The informal trackways across the site are currently used for informal recreation, with use of the perimeter pathways signposted as being permitted by permission of the land owner (ie. no formal / legal access).
- 2.40 There is no open access land in the vicinity of the site.

Landscape Designations

- 2.41 The site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a statutory designation of national importance which recognises that the landscape of the area is generally of the highest quality.
- 2.42 The primary purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. The natural beauty of the AONB is defined in the High Weald AONB Management Plan (2014-2019) which also provides the criteria against which impacts on this nationally designated landscape can be judged.

Historic Landscape and Cultural Heritage

- 2.43 Refer to separate Heritage Statement by Savills.

- 2.44 The Ardingly Conservation Area covers two parts of the village. The western section of the Conservation Area includes St Peter's Church and abuts the western site boundary with Street Lane and part of the southern site boundary. The eastern section of the Conservation Area covers the main centre of the village and extends north along Selsfield Road to include the verge to the recreation ground, to the south-east of the site and extending as far as Cob Lane in the north.
- 2.45 'Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex' (2018, Mid Sussex District Council) describes the particular features that contribute to the character of the Conservation Area, including:
- *"the spacious secluded gardens which include an abundance of mature trees and hedgerows in Church Lane;*
 - *the Listed Buildings in the western section;*
 - *the views across the countryside;*
 - *the significant presence of individual trees and tree groups in Street Lane, Butchers Shaw and Oaklands Green...."*



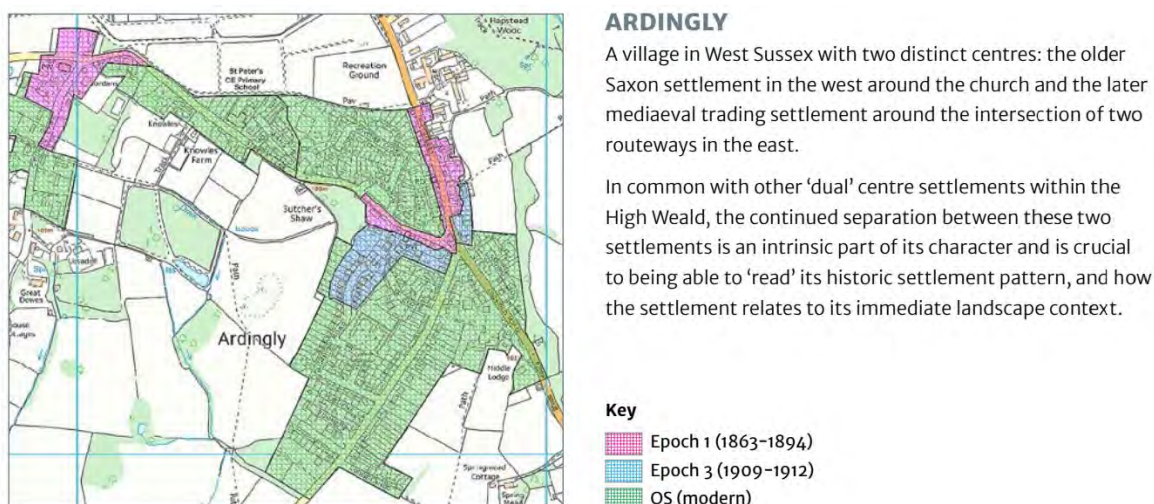
HBA Figure 3 - Conservation Area boundary (green outline and hatch)

- 2.46 There are numerous listed buildings within the village and Conservation Area, several in proximity to the site.



HBA Figure 4 - Listed buildings in proximity to the site (Extract from Magic.gov.uk)

- 2.47 Ardingly Church of England Primary School is a Grade II listed building which lies on the opposite side of Street Lane at the north-western corner of the site. Knowles Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building located on the southern side of Street Lane approximately 50m south of the site. The Grade II listed Knowle Cottages are situated to the south-east of the farmhouse. St Peter's Church is Grade I listed and lies approximately 165m west of the site. Church Cottages are Grade II listed and lie between the church and the site; approximately 100m from the western site boundary. Jordans and Jordans Cottage (both Grade II listed) also lie at the junction of Church Lane and Street Lane.
- 2.48 There are no Registered Historic Parks and Gardens in close proximity to the site.
- 2.49 The history of the formation of the settlement of Ardingly is briefly summarised and illustrated in the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide (page 7) extracted below for ease of reference.



HBA Figure 5 – Built form characteristics of Ardingly settlement (Extract from High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide)

Nature Conservation and Biodiversity

- 2.50 There are no recorded Sites of Special Scientific Interest of other biodiversity interest on or immediately surrounding the site. Site specific habitat surveys are yet to be undertaken and reported.

Landscape Character

- 2.51 The site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 122 High Weald, as defined by Natural England, the NCA Profile being published on 18th December 2013. Some of the key characteristics of NCA 122 that are relevant to the overall character of the landscape surrounding the site are:
- "A faulted landform of clays, sand and soft sandstones with outcrops of fissured sandrock and ridges running east-west, deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams..."
 - Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a dense system of radiating droveways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wild-flower-rich verges and boundary banks.
 - An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far-reaching views, giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.

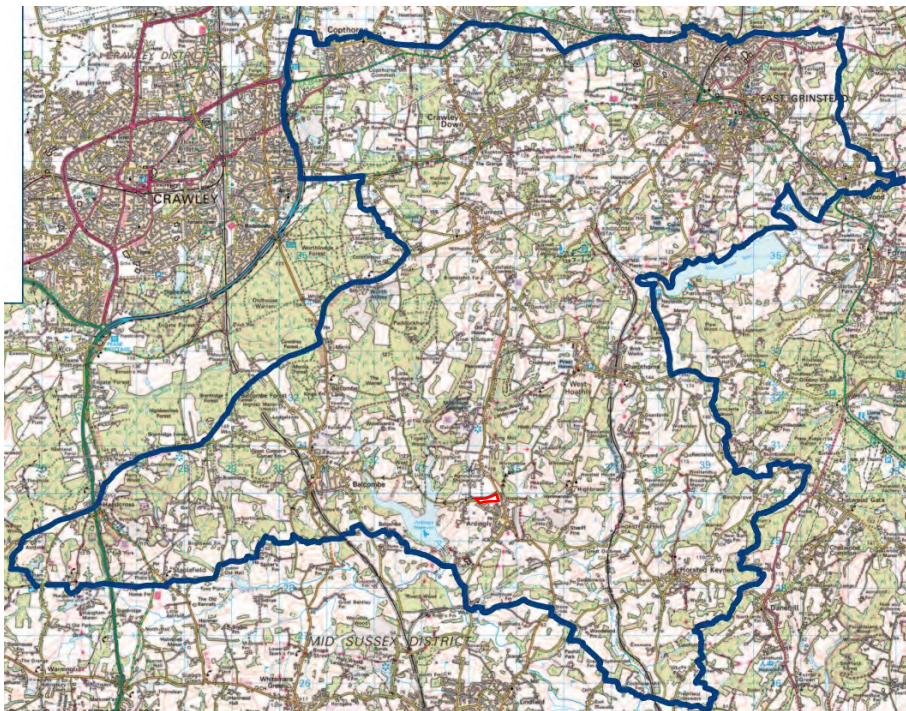
- *Extensive broadleaved woodland cover with a very high proportion of ancient woodland with high forest, small woods and shaws, plus steep valleys with gill woodland.*
- *Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin and managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing.*
- *An essentially medieval landscape reflected in the patterns of settlement, fields and woodland."*

2.52 At a county level, the Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme has carried out a series of character studies of the County, which are published in several separate but linked documents that are read in conjunction with each other and include:

- A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (WSCC October 2005)
- The Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (Chris Blandford Associates for WSCC, 2003) with supporting Land Management Guidelines.
- Local Distinctiveness Study of West Sussex (WSCC, Ongoing)

2.53 A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape sets out the vision for the landscape of the County and defines strategies "to protect and enhance the landscape of West Sussex as an asset for future generations" (Para 1.5). It considers the landscape in relation to the five national landscape character types found in the County and draws directly from earlier landscape character studies carried out in West Sussex.

2.54 The Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex identifies and maps 42 unique landscape character areas within West Sussex and provides Land Management Guidelines for each character area. The site and the village of Ardingly within character area HW1 High Weald.



HBA Figure 6 - Area HW1 from the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (with site highlighted in red)

2.55 Key characteristics of HW1 High Weald include:

- *“Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);*
- *Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees;*
- *Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland;*
- *Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead and some expanded and smaller villages”*

2.56 Landscape and visual sensitivities are noted as including:

- *“Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.”*

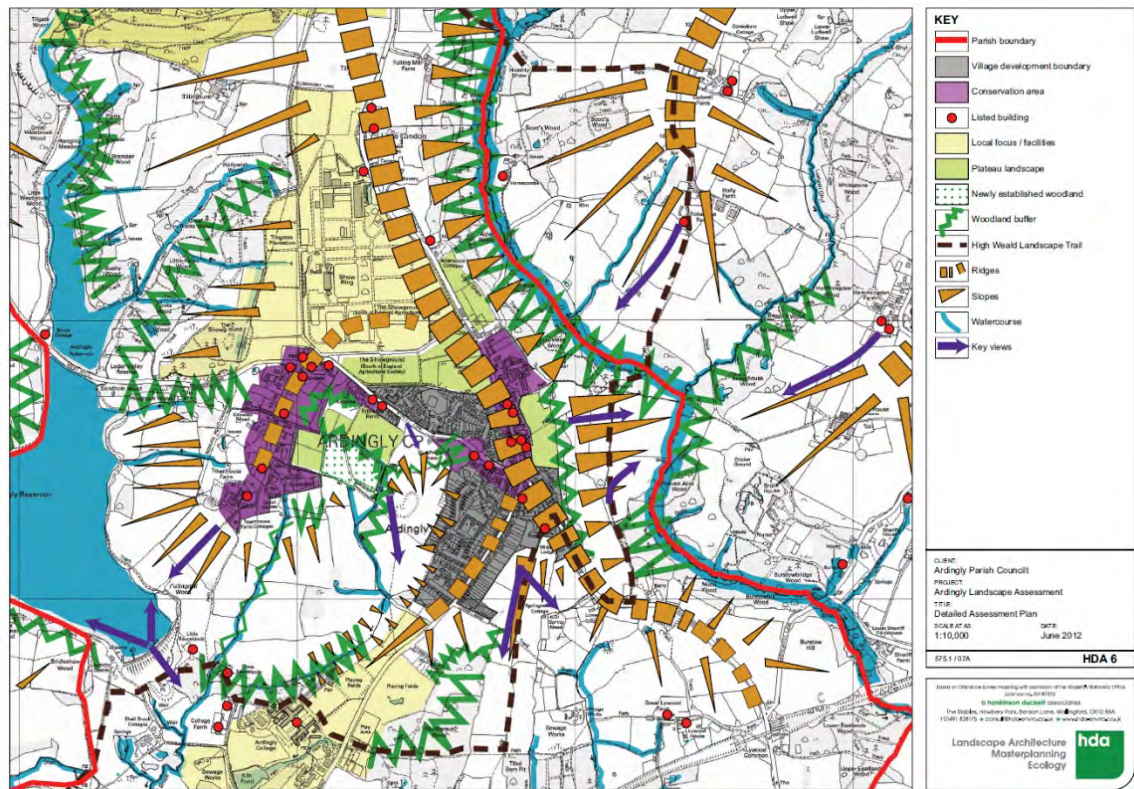
2.57 Land Management Guidelines include:

- *“Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on long and other views and is integrated within the landscape, paying particular attention to the siting of communications masts.*
- *Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes....*
- *Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.*
- *Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.*
- *Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.”*

2.58 At a district scale, ‘A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex 2005’ locates the proposed site in Landscape Character Area 6 ‘High Weald’. Relevant key characteristics, key issues for change and management objectives directly reflect those identified in the West Sussex study.

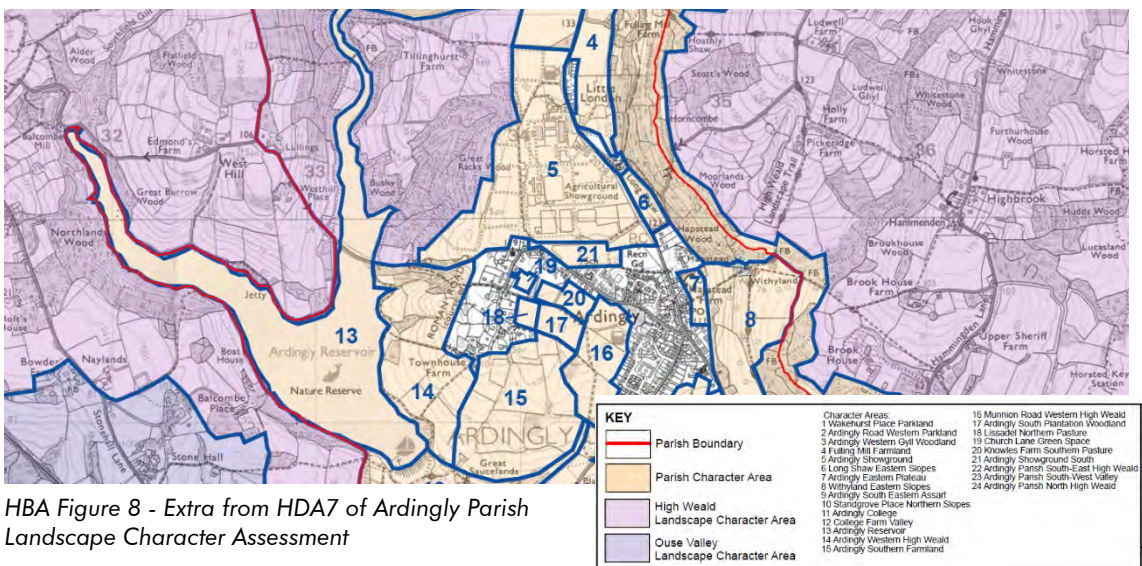
2.59 The Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment (July 2012 by Hankinson Duckett) provides a parish wide landscape study. It was carried out to inform and support the Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan and provides an assessment of the landscape character of the parish and its sensitivity and capacity to accommodate change and future development. Relevant extracts are provided in Appendix HBA2.

- 2.60 A “Detailed Assessment Plan” is included of the whole parish, identifying key landscape and visual characteristics and constraints. This in particular highlights the overall well-wooded nature of the parish and encircling landform. It illustrates how the whole of the site lies on a ‘plateau’ and is distinct from the village and showground.



HBA Figure 7 - Detailed Assessment Plan from the Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.61 The majority of the site forms its own parish character area, parish LCA 21 ‘Ardingly Showground South’, whilst the eastern part of the site is considered to have the same character as the adjoining showground and therefore lies in parish LCA 5 ‘Ardingly Showground’.



HBA Figure 8 - Extra from HDA7 of Ardingly Parish Landscape Character Assessment

2.62 The Ardingly Character Assessment includes the following 'Landscape analysis' of Area 21:

- *"Located to the north of Ardingly and south of the main Ardingly Showground character area. Bordered by Street Lane to the west and the High Street to the east*
- *Situated on a plateau at 115-125m AOD. Gently sloping to the south.*
- *Flat organised landscape with linear pattern of tracks and paths. Used for recreation and overflow car parking for the South of England Agricultural Show.*
- *Formal linear tree planting along routeways and strong hedgerow boundaries along the roadside boundaries to east and west.*
- *Closely mown grass.*
- *Public footpaths are located to the north and south with informal paths running through it.*
- *Formal and open landscape influenced by Ardingly village and its use. The character is pleasant but is not representative of the wider AONB or High Weald.*
- *Visual links and urban influence from Ardingly village to the south - forms part of the village edge. Views from the conservation area to the south-west are blocked by vegetation."*

2.63 In considering the characteristics that fall in line with the AONB and Regional assessment, the parish study considers that Area 21 is

- *"Out of character with High Weald landscape*
- *Part of Ardingly Showground, which is named as a visitor attraction in the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment for the 'High Weald' character areas.*
- *Village edge landscape"*

2.64 The landscape analysis for Area 5 'Ardingly Showground describes a landscape:

- *"Situated on a plateau at 125m AOD Gently sloping to the south.*
- *Flat organised landscape with linear pattern of roads, tracks and paths used for the South of England Agricultural Show*
- *Linear tree planting along routeways*
- *Closely mown grass*
- *Public footpaths run through it*
- *Some large low level buildings and car parking*
- *Areas of showground are fenced*
- *Recreation ground and school playing field to the south share characteristics"*

2.65 In terms of characteristics that fall in line with AONB/regional assessment, the parish assessment considers that Area 5 is a "locally distinctive / important development / facility".

HBA comment on character

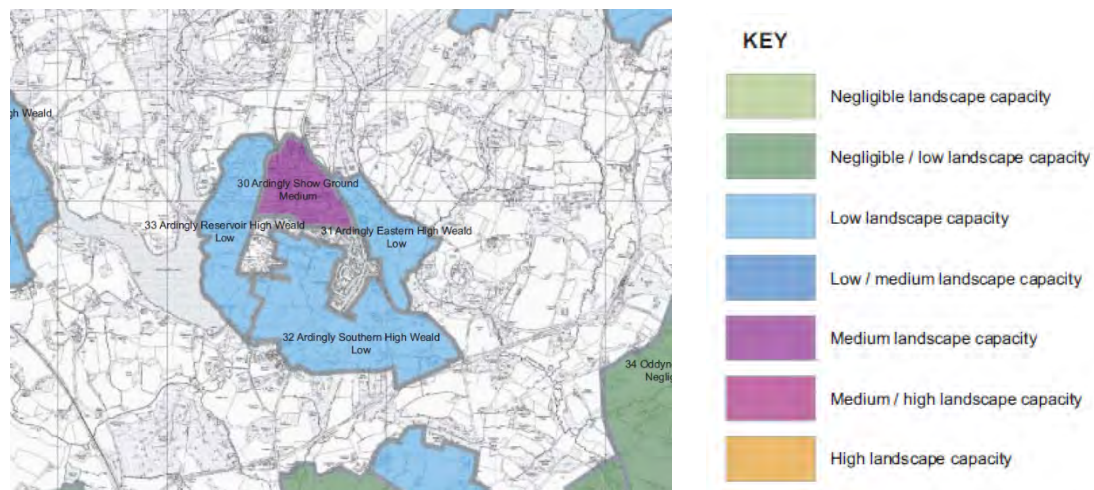
2.66 The above published characterisation studies are considered to be a good overall summary of the wider landscape character of the site's surrounding area.

2.67 At a parish scale, we note that whilst the eastern side of the site falls in the same parish Character Area as the wider showground landscape, it lies on the same plateau and shares

the same characteristics as the remainder of the site in the adjoining Area 21. Whilst the eastern part of the site (and the rest of Area 21) provide overflow parking for the showground, this part of the site clearly lacks the permanent built form of organised roads and low level buildings and enclosure by fencing that are characteristic of the main showground in Area 5.

Landscape Capacity

- 2.68 The Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007 by Hankinson Duckett Associates) was undertaken to identify the capacity of the district landscape to accommodate future development in relation to development zones that were being considered at the time. The site lies within 'Zone 30 Ardingly Showground', which also covers a wider tranche of land spanning the north of Ardingly village and extending north across the showground. The 2007 Landscape Capacity Study assessed this wider area of Zone 30 as having 'Medium' landscape capacity.



HBA Figure 9 - Extract from Figure HDA 13 of the Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study

- 2.69 The Mid Sussex Study considers landscape capacity on the basis of combining assessment rankings of landscape value and landscape sensitivity for each site. Site 30 was considered to have overall 'Moderate' landscape value.

| No | Landscape Character Area | Landscape Designation ²⁵ | | Other Designation (nature conservation, heritage, amenity, including flood zone) | Contribution to setting of 'outstanding assets' | Special cultural/ historic associations | Perceptual aspects (eg. scenic beauty, tranquillity, wildness) | Landscape Value 1-5 Negligible 6-10 Slight 11-15 Moderate 16-20 Substantial 21-25 Major | Final Assessment Landscape Value |
|----|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|--|---|---|--|--|----------------------------------|
| | | low | high | | | | | | |
| 30 | Ardingly Show Ground | ACNB | | Setting to LBS, setting to Conservation Area | | ACNB | | 11-15 Moderate | MODERATE |

HBA Figure 10 - Extract from Table 2 Landscape Value (Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study)

- 2.70 Site 30 was assessed of having 'Moderate' Sensitivity to development, based upon a standard assumption in the Study that:

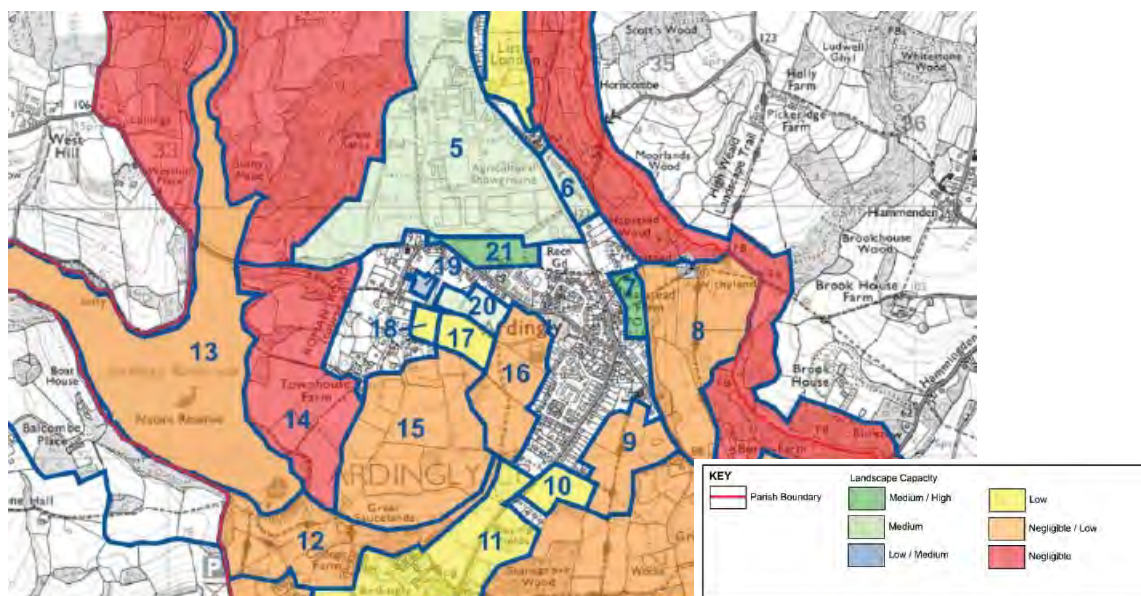
- buildings would be 2 or 3 storeys in height with occasional landmark buildings of 4-5 storeys;

- there would be open space provision and a strong landscape framework with tree planting of appropriate scale, area and design to ensure that the development achieves a good fit in the landscape.

| No | Landscape Character Area | Inherent Landscape Qualities (intactness ¹⁴ and condition) low high | Contribution to distinctive settlement setting | Inconsistency with existing settlement form / pattern | Contribution to rurality of surrounding landscape | Contribution to separation between settlements | Sensitivity 1-5 Negligible 6-10 Slight 11-15 Moderate 16-20 Substantial 21-25 Major | Final Assessment Landscape Sensitivity |
|----|--------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| 30 | Ardingly Show Ground | Low intactness | Northern high ground setting to Ardingly, not overly distinct in this context. | On top of ridge, mostly above settlement. | Pleasant but artificial. | | 5 10 15 20 25 | MODERATE |

HBA Figure 11 - Extract from Table 1 Landscape Sensitivity (Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study)

- 2.71 A more recent Capacity Study (2014, by Land Use Consultants), includes an assessment of areas that were not included in the 2007 study and reviewed the previously assessed areas against a revised scale for landscape capacity. The 2014 Study confirmed the wider area of Zone 30 as having 'Moderate' landscape sensitivity, 'Moderate' landscape value and 'Medium' landscape capacity (for housing). By comparison, the majority of the surroundings of Ardingly village are considered to have 'Low /Medium' capacity (for housing).
- 2.72 At a parish level, the Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment also considers landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity albeit at a finer grain than the district-wide studies.
- 2.73 Area 21 comprises the majority of the site and is assessed as having 'Medium – High' landscape capacity to accommodate residential development. The remainder of the site lies in Area 5, assessed as having 'Medium' landscape capacity to accommodate residential development. At this finer level of detail, the majority of the rest of the surroundings to Ardingly village are considered to have low, negligible/low or negligible capacity to accommodate development.



HBA Figure 12 - Extract from Figure HDA 5 in the Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.74 The Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment describes that *“The high level of tree cover is an important factor within Ardingly Parish. Much of the existing settlement is screened from view from the wider landscape, by woodland (plan HDA 6). Any future development would need the appropriate level of screening in order to fit in with existing settlement patterns and minimize the impacts on the surrounding AONB landscape”*.
- 2.75 At paragraph 4.3.9, the parish assessment notes that the plateau landscapes (such as the site) mark areas where *“new development may fit with the existing settlement pattern”* and development on those sites *“would have substantially less impact on the surrounding areas of AONB”*.
- 2.76 With regard to the landscape of the majority of the site (Area 21) it summarises that *“New development would have little influence on the character of AONB”*.
- 2.77 Area 5 is summarised as an *“urban influenced landscape on ridge top- although settlement would be inconsistent with [sic] due to existing built form, style and pattern of agricultural buildings”*. As noted above, the part of Area 5 which includes the site does not contain any buildings.
- 2.78 The Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment concludes by identifying a ‘preferred option’ for development at paragraph 7.5. It states that Area 21 (the site) *“is the most suitable area for new development. New housing would be in keeping with the existing settlement pattern of Ardingly and would be close to local services. In addition the area has the potential to be developed without significant impact to the character or appearance of the wider AONB. This character area displays few of the characteristics of the High Weald. Development in this location would have little effect on the landscape as it is bound to the south by existing housing and to the north by Ardingly Showground, which in itself is not representative of the AONB landscape”*

Visual Amenity

Landscape and visual attributes

- 2.79 The perimeter tree lines and hedgerows and lone Oak tree are the key landscape attributes of the site. The eastern site boundary hedge, combined with the offsite tree lined verge of Selsfield Road contribute to an attractive ‘green’ approach to the village of Ardingly and also contain and create a soft edge to the recreation ground.
- 2.80 The nearby Ardingly Conservation Area, including numerous listed buildings, has an attractive and relatively tranquil character. The hedgerows to the southern and western site boundaries contribute to the character of Street Lane and along with the offsite wedge of tree planting, provide a green buffer to this edge of the village and the Conservation Area.
- 2.81 The offsite recreation ground, playgrounds, public footpaths and informal use of the paths across the site provide amenity and recreational value, the footpaths linking to the wider landscape of the showground and beyond.

Landscape and visual detractors

- 2.82 The main landscape and visual detractors are the seasonal use of the site for overflow parking, and the presence of the showground and Selsfield Road/B2028 to the east of the site (visual and auditory detractor).

- 2.83 Offsite, the South of England showground and associated buildings, wire mesh fencing, caravans, organised tracks, hardstanding and large signed entrance gates do not enhance the character of Selsfield Road or the AONB within which they lie.
- 2.84 The general flatness of the site and the artificial bund gives this part of the landscape a somewhat 'man-made' character and does not contribute to the wider naturally undulating landform of the wider countryside and High Weald.

Visibility and Key Views

- 2.85 As noted in the various published landscape character assessments and landscape capacity study, the settlement of Ardingly is, for the most part, well contained in the wider landscape due to the incised and ridged landform with a high level of woodland cover on the ridge slopes; all typically characteristic of the wider High Weald AONB.
- 2.86 The site itself lies on a more open plateau but is generally contained by the hedgerow boundaries on the site, together with the undulating topography and high level of woodland cover in the wider AONB and countryside setting which essentially limits the visibility of the site. The primary visual envelope of the site is localised and limited to locations in close proximity to the site.
- 2.87 Although there are several high points, including ridgetop public rights of way and roads, in the wider countryside of the AONB to the east of the site and village, the site is nestled beyond wooded valley slopes and therefore is not visible from those locations.
- 2.88 To the north of the site, the hedge and tree-lined road verge (which is also banked in places) and built forms on the showground create a visual barrier to views of the site and the northern edge of Ardingly from the wider countryside of the AONB and on approach to the village from the B2028 Selsfield Road. From the B2028, the site is not readily appreciated, more the hedgerow and trees on the eastern site boundary contribute to a sense of a green approach to the village. The gated entrance to the track/footpath 7AR appears part of the showground site.
- 2.89 To the south and west, the built edge of Ardingly (including the Conservation Area) screens any wider countryside views to and from the site. The more open character of the western site boundary with Street Lane allows for transient and glimpsed views into the site over the hedgerow and through the field gates.
- 2.90 Public footpaths 7AR/43AR and 9AR run parallel and adjacent to the northern and southern site boundaries respectively and allow for predominantly open and short distance views across the site. Footpath 7AR continues along the western edge of the showground where glimpsed views are available of the site however these are predominantly screened or filtered by the high fencing and buildings at the showground as well as a line of offsite conifers.
- 2.91 Parts of footpath 9AR are separated from the site by a hedgerow and fence that creates a narrow 'tunnel' effect to the path. The eastern side of footpath 9AR passes along the northern edge of the Ardingly Play Area and amenity space and through the recreation ground. Views from here are therefore dominated by the intervening recreational uses.
- 2.92 From public footpath 20AR south of Street Lane, the site itself is not discernible beyond the

intervening fields, vegetation and properties on Street Lane and Church Lane. The canopies to several mature trees in the vicinity of Street Lane and footpath 9AR, form part of the skyline and backdrop to views from a short section of the footpath.

- 2.93 The following locations and their associated visual receptors (people) have been identified as the main public viewpoints from which there are views of the site or from which a development proposal (as envisaged by draft Policy SA25) could potentially be seen:
- Pedestrians using public footpath 7AR/43AR adjacent to the northern site boundary,
 - Pedestrians using public footpath 9AR adjacent to the southern site boundary
 - Pedestrians using public footpath 7AR west of the showground,
 - Users of the recreation ground and play area,
 - Pupils, staff and visitors to St Peter's School,
 - Pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists and motorists using the B2028 heading south from Little London, passing the site and on entry/exit from Ardingly,
 - Pedestrians, equestrians, cyclist and motorists using Street Lane, where it passes the western site boundary,
 - Pedestrians using public footpath 20AR
- 2.94 Annotated baseline photographs of winter views from the above viewpoints (with the exception of St Peter's School), are illustrated at HBA Appendix 4. A number of photographs are provided from the adjoining public footpath and roads in order to help demonstrate the sequence of views and visual amenity of the routes.
- 2.95 Key public views would be subject to visual impact assessment should a scheme proposal come forward.
- 2.96 The following private properties are likely to have views of parts of the site or have potential to see development upon it:
- Private properties at the western end of Street Lane.
 - 2 properties on Wakehurst Lane at the western side of the site.
 - Properties at the northern end of Holmans that currently address the amenity/play areas and footpath 9AR.
 - Properties at the northern end of Gowers Close (overlooking the play areas).
 - Cobb Cottages at the junction with Selsfield Road and Cob Lane.
 - Little Deerswood, Whiteoaks and Mascalls on the eastern side of Selsfield Road south-east of the site are set within well vegetated gardens and views heavily filtered by both garden vegetation and the tree and hedge line to Selsfield Road.
 - Properties around Hett Place, Turnpike Court and Hapstead Cottages may have upstairs views towards the eastern edge of the site, but these are likely to be heavily filtered by vegetation on the site and recreation ground.
- 2.97 The need for any Residential Visual Amenity Assessment as part of any planning application would be agreed with Mid Sussex District Council.

3 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Whilst the site is proposed to be allocated for development, it lies in the High Weald AONB, has some informal recreational use and adjoins the Ardingly Conservation Area, with nearby listed buildings.
- 3.2 The wider area around the site is assessed in the 2007 Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study as having Medium landscape capacity to accommodate housing development and subsequently in the 2014 Capacity Study as having 'Medium' landscape capacity to accommodate development, both documents forming Evidence Papers to the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan. This is the highest level of capacity assessed around the village of Ardingly; with the majority of the countryside around Ardingly being considered to have low or low/medium capacity to accommodate housing development.
- 3.3 At a more local level, the supporting evidence for the Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan assessed the site as having a Medium/High and Medium capacity to accommodate development and identifies the majority of the site (Area 21) as *"the most suitable area for new development. New housing would be in keeping with the existing settlement pattern of Ardingly and would be close to local services. In addition the area has the potential to be developed without significant impact to the character or appearance of the wider AONB. This character area displays few of the characteristics of the High Weald. Development in this location would have little effect on the landscape as it is bound to the south by existing housing and to the north by Ardingly Showground, which in itself is not representative of the AONB landscape"*.
- 3.4 Whilst the eastern part of the site to the north of the recreation ground is considered as a separate and wider character area in the parish study (Area 5), it is notable that this area is still assessed as having Medium capacity to accommodate development. The observations noted in the study regarding *"very high cultural associations with a long established use"* and *"that settlement would be inconsistent with due to existing built form, style and pattern of agricultural buildings"* clearly do not apply to the part of Area 5 that includes the site, this being devoid of buildings, not forming a part of the main fenced showground site and relating more closely in character to Area 21.
- 3.5 In the context of the parish, the majority of the rest of the surroundings to Ardingly village are considered to have low, negligible/low or negligible capacity to accommodate development. The site/Area 21 is assessed as having the highest landscape capacity to accommodate development with just one other site equalling this.
- 3.6 The baseline landscape and visual considerations identified in this Landscape and Visual Appraisal support the identification of the site as a proposed housing allocation. In the context of the existing landscape and taking into account the policy requirements of draft Policy SA 25, it is considered that there is scope for residential development to be sensitivity accommodated on the site, respecting the relationship with the Conservation Area and listed buildings as well as nearby residential area and recreational uses whilst also responding to the visual amenity of the locality, including the rural approach to Ardingly.

- 3.7 The site has a limited existing relationship with the AONB and is for the most part distinctly different in character from the wider countryside beyond the showground. Whilst the showground and its distinctive character would remain a physical barrier to the wider AONB, opportunities could be taken within any new development to respond to the wider landscape features of the AONB and create a settlement edge that more strongly relates to the special qualities of the AONB and the identity of Ardingly.
- 3.8 Despite the flat plateau-like nature of the site, it is generally well contained in the wider landscape by the tree line/hedgerow along the site boundaries, the presence of the showground and the undulating and well wooded nature of the surrounding countryside. The boundary vegetation to the site should be retained and enhanced and incorporated within publicly managed green space in any new development proposal. Any new development should be set back from the road frontage with Selsfield Road to retain a green edge to the road corridor and approach to the village.
- 3.9 Any development proposal for the site would need to follow the policy requirements of draft Policy SA 25 to achieve the objective *“to deliver a sympathetic and well integrated extension to the village of Ardingly informed by a landscape led masterplan, which respects the High Weald AONB and the setting of nearby heritage assets”*.
- 3.10 Any development proposal should respect the key sensitivities outlined in the various published landscape characterisation studies, AONB Housing Design Guide and Colour Study, the Landscape Capacity Study and within this Landscape and Visual Appraisal and supporting appendices, in particular:
- Retention and augmentation of existing significant boundary hedgerows and trees, the mature lone Oak and creation of a new tree and hedgerow framework which complements and contributes to the wider landscape of the AONB and village edge. The single avenue of ornamental cherry (and other species) is less important to retain from a landscape perspective and could be replaced (depending upon scheme design) with locally sourced/grown or locally provenanced native species or climate robust tree species (as recommended by Kew Gardens).
 - The proposal would utilise the existing showground access from Selsfield Road, therefore retaining the existing strong green frontage and approach to the village. Built form should be set back from the inside edge of the frontage tree cover. Consideration should be given to locating further tree and hedgerow planting along the northern site boundary and at the junction with the new road access/Selsfield Road to help soften the edge of any new development and integrate new development into the wider landscape setting.
 - In the south-west, the existing hedgerow frontage to the Conservation Area and listed buildings should be retained and enhanced with an open space/green buffer incorporated within any scheme proposals. Some limited additional tree planting may be appropriate at the eastern edge of the existing hedgerow but otherwise the generally more open edge to this interface with Street Lane and Conservation Area should be retained. New built forms should be set back from this boundary beyond an area of open space. The open space should ideally follow an organic line, tapering towards the offsite conifers (to the

north) which currently screen views of the neighbouring showground infrastructure and would help to create a green boundary to the open space. New dwellings and/or a community building should face on to the open space to allow passive surveillance. New tree planting should be carefully positioned to help establish a sense of connection with the countryside/showground.

- A strong defensible landscape edge (including native hedgerow and trees) should be established to the built edge of the new open space to both soften the appearance and setting of built forms and promote legibility between public and private domains.
- The potential for allowing a viewing corridor/line of sight to the church tower from within the a development proposal should be explored.
- Further guidance and consideration of heritage matters, in particular in relation to the treatment of the western side of the site, is set out in the Heritage Statement by Savills and should continue to influence the ongoing design of a scheme masterplan and detailed design proposals.
- The amenity of public footpath 9AR which runs offsite along the southern site boundary could be enhanced through creation of a stronger and more open landscape edge (on site) to the north and allowing natural surveillance of the footpath from overlooking properties and/or spaces. Consideration to be given to opening up views from part of the hedgerow to improve the current 'tunnel' effect and allow more surveillance.
- The amenity of public footpath 7AR to the north of the site should be respected in any development proposal through the creation of a robust landscape edge and by allowing passive surveillance from properties looking onto the pathway.
- The loss of the current informal access/use of the paths on the site should be compensated for by the inclusion of new connecting routes between the existing public footpaths to the northern and southern site boundaries. New pedestrian connections should be provided through the development to allow more formal access across the site and between existing recreational spaces and to retain permeability with the wider rights of way network.
- Careful consideration to be given to the layout and juxtaposition of roads, landscape treatments, open space and built forms to respect existing settlement patterns and open spaces and allow some views out of the development whilst ensuring new built forms do not create dominant features in their own right.
- Existing landscape features and the overall framework of new trees, hedgerow and scrub belts should be retained in green space/landscape buffers that should remain outside of private curtilages in the layout for any new development.
- Natural water management should form a key component of the scheme design with SuDS features such as ditches, swales, detention ponds and rain-water gardens forming an integral part of the scheme masterplan and detailed design.
- New open spaces should be managed for wildlife and opportunities to create new habitats and linkages explored. Consideration also to be given to incorporating community growing (such as orchard trees) within the proposal and how these might be managed by the community. A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan should be provided as

- part of a detailed design proposal.
- The noted policy requirements to provide open space, children's play, a replacement scout hut and associated parking, as well as optimising connectivity and Green Infrastructure should take the opportunity to link to the existing offsite provision at the recreation ground and play area as well as the offsite footpath links which include a connection to the primary school and its grounds. A contribution to improving the existing off-site play facilities could result in a more focused concentration and greater variety of high quality play provision for the village (and any new development) rather than providing separate smaller provision of equipped play within the site. The client has made contact with the Parish Council to discuss parish requirements.
 - The use of materials and pattern of spaces and built forms should respect the existing built character and local distinctiveness in Ardingly and avoid pastiche. Where appropriate, locally sourced materials which support AONB conservation (such as timber) should be used in a development proposal.
 - Measures should be taken during the design process to minimise climate impacts through the use of sustainable design and carbon calculation. Any development proposal should use locally sourced materials where possible. All plants and seeding should be of local known provenance.
 - Any development proposal should respect the existing generally flat landform of the site, with consideration given to the removal/reprofiling of the existing artificial bunds. A Soils Management Plan or drawing should be developed as part of a detailed design proposal to outline proposals for the protection and movement of top and/or subsoils.
 - Consideration could be given to incorporating small-scale domestic renewable energy generation (for example solar panels) where these would not be visually prominent or intrusive, as part of any scheme design.
 - Light pollution should be minimised through sensitive lighting design as part of a detailed design proposal.
- 3.11 The overarching objective of the landscape strategy should be to protect and enhance the rural/settlement edge and respond to the wider AONB landscape setting and ensure that the inevitable changes arising from the development would be appropriately mitigated over time.
- 3.12 The overall planting strategy objective should be to embed the development into a landscape framework that respects the character of the village and AONB and creates a sensitive transition between a new settlement edge, the showground and the wider countryside.
- 3.13 The development of any scheme masterplan and detailed design proposals should be subject to an iterative design and landscape and visual impact assessment process in order to ensure landscape and visual matters both help to drive the scheme design and ensure effects on landscape character and visual amenity are minimised. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be submitted with any planning application for scheme proposals.

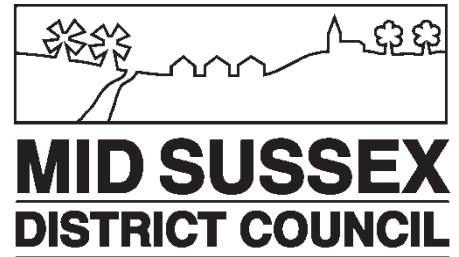
4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The site is proposed to be allocated for housing in the Draft Site Allocations DPD (Policy SA25), the policy requirements stating a site objective *“to deliver a sympathetic and well integrated extension to the village of Ardingly informed by a landscape led masterplan, which respects the High Weald AONB and the setting of nearby heritage assets”*.
- 4.2 The wider area around the site is assessed in the 2007 Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study as having Medium landscape capacity to accommodate housing development and subsequently in the 2014 Capacity Study as having Medium landscape capacity to accommodate development, both documents forming Evidence Papers to the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan. This is the highest level of capacity assessed around the village of Ardingly.
- 4.3 At a more local level, the supporting evidence for the Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan assessed the site as having a Medium/High and Medium capacity to accommodate development and identifies the majority of the site as the preferred location for housing development in the parish.
- 4.4 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal has considered the landscape and visual baseline and supports the identification of the site as a proposed housing allocation. The site is a relatively flat ‘plateau’ significantly influenced by the showground to the north and residential and recreational uses to the south. Although pleasant, it is uncharacteristic and quite distinct from the wider countryside and recognised special qualities of the AONB. Development on the site would have limited impact upon the character of the AONB at a wider scale but at a more local scale, could help to deliver a stronger and more in-character edge to the settlement that also contributes positively to meeting the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan.
- 4.5 In the context of the existing landscape and taking into account the policy requirements of draft Policy SA25, it is considered that there is scope for residential development to be sensitivity accommodated on the site, respecting the relationship with the Conservation Area and listed buildings as well as nearby residential area and recreational uses whilst also responding to the visual amenity of the locality, including the rural approach to Ardingly. Recommendations for developing a scheme masterplan and subsequent detail design proposals are set out in this Landscape and Visual Appraisal and supporting appendices and should inform future scheme design development as part of an iterative assessment and design process.
- 4.6 From a landscape and visual perspective, it is considered that the site could accommodate residential development set within an appropriate and robust landscape strategy as part of an integrated scheme masterplan, to ensure landscape and visual effects are minimised and landscape enhancements are delivered as envisaged by draft Policy SA25.

HBA Appendix 1

Draft Policy SA25 (Mid-Sussex Site Allocations DPD, Draft Submission (Regulation 18),
Scrutiny Committee, 11th March 2020

Mid Sussex



Site Allocations Development Plan Document

Draft Submission (Regulation 19)

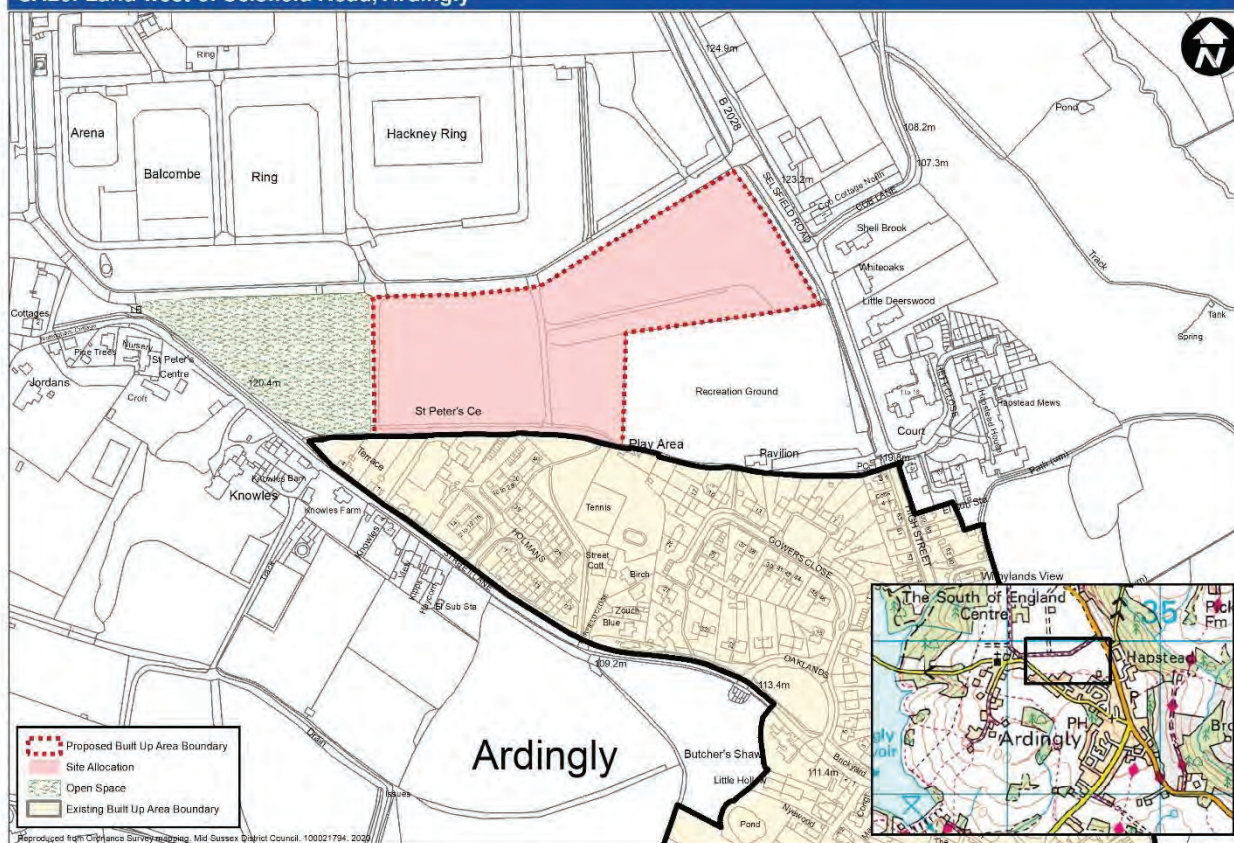
Scrutiny Committee – 11th March

SA 25

Land west of Selsfield Road, Ardingly

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| SHELAA: | 832 | Settlement: | Ardingly |
| Gross Site Area (ha): | 5.17 | Number of Units: | 70400 dwellings |
| Description: | Housing allocation with on site public open space, equipped children's playspace and scout hut and parking. | | |
| Ownership: | Private land owner | | |
| Current Use: | Greenfield/parking for showground | Indicative Phasing: | 6 to 10 |
| Delivery Mechanisms: | Land owner has confirmed intent to bring the site forward for development. | | |

SA25: Land west of Selsfield Road, Ardingly

**Objectives**

- To deliver a sympathetic and well integrated extension to the village of Ardingly informed by a landscape led masterplan, which respects the High Weald AONB and the setting of nearby heritage assets.

Urban Design Principles

- Respect the distinctive character of the village and the existing settlement pattern.
- ~~Development should be o~~Orientated ~~development~~ to positively address existing and proposed areas of open space.
- ~~Orientate development to have~~ Provide a positive ~~and soft~~ edge to all site boundaries and with buildings that front on to the boundaries of the adjacent recreation ground, facilitated by and including the removal of the existing bund.
- ~~Providing a focal point for the development where sensitively designed higher density housing could be located; close boarded fencing should be avoided where visible from outside the site, test the character of the rural approach to Ardingly Village from the north and along Street Lane through enhanced boundary planting.~~
- Provide a permeable layout and sSeek to enhance the connectivity of the site with Ardingly village and existing PRoW.

| |
|--|
| AONB |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements, in order to conserve and enhance the landscape of the High Weald AONB, and minimise impacts on its special qualities, as set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan. Retain and <u>substantially enhance existing trees and hedgerows, mature trees and landscaping along the boundaries and within the site incorporating them into the landscape structure and layout of the development and reinstate the historic field boundary through the centre of the site adjacent to the area of open space, with native species-rich hedgerow and native trees, incorporating the existing mature tree, and</u> Incorporate <u>these retained landscape features</u> into a strong new landscape setting, containing the new housing and limiting the impact on the wider landscape. <u>Development proposals shall protect and enhance</u> the character and amenity of existing PRoW which runs along the northern and southern boundaries and provide connections from the new development. |
| Landscape Considerations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>See AONB requirements.</u> |
| Social and Community |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>In consultation with the Local Planning Authority, address requirements for Provision of</u> suitably managed open space and equipped children's playspace, <u>either on-site or by financial contribution to upgrade existing adjacent facilities.</u> <u>Provision of replacement Scout hut and associated parking.</u> <u>Standard financial contributions apply.</u> |
| Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide appropriate design, layout and landscaping mitigation <u>to protect the rural setting of the adjacent Ardingly Conservation Area and nearby listed St Peter's Church (Grade I) and the listed group which surrounding the Church (Grade II); by ensuring ensure</u> development is not dominant in views from within the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings. <u>Retain the western end of the site as an undeveloped triangular portion of the site area of public open space shall remain undeveloped open space</u> in order to protect the rural setting of these assets <u>and maintain separation of the two historic cores of the village.</u> Archaeological pre-determination evaluation and appropriate mitigation may be required and a geophysical survey shall be undertaken, the results of which will identify appropriate archaeological mitigation. |
| Air Quality / Noise |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise assessment shall inform any necessary mitigation required to provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for each of the dwellings, arising from the Ardingly Showground operations. |
| Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an holistic approach to Green Infrastructure and corridors, including <u>biodiversity and landscape enhancements within the site connecting to the surrounding area retention of existing landscape features and enhancement with new native species-rich hedgerows, native tree planting and wildflower seeding in areas of open space to provide a matrix of habitats with links to the surrounding landscape.</u> <u>Conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value to ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity. Avoid, mitigate and compensate for any loss to biodiversity through ecological protection, enhancement and mitigation measures. Conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value and ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity. Avoid any loss of biodiversity through ecological protection and good design. Where it is not possible, mitigate and as a last resort compensate for any loss through ecological protection, enhancement and mitigation measures.</u> Incorporate SuDS within the Green Infrastructure to improve biodiversity and water quality. |
| Highways and Access |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Provide a sustainable Transport Strategy which identifies sustainable transport infrastructure improvements and demonstrates how the development will integrate with and enhance the existing network providing safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport</u> |

| |
|---|
| <p><u>through the development and linking with existing networks in Ardingly.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Mitigate development impacts by maximising sustainable transport enhancements; where addition impacts remain, highway mitigation measures will be considered.</u> • Investigate access arrangements onto Selsfield Road and make necessary safety improvements. • <u>Optimise connectivity with nearby settlement of Ardingly for sustainable modes of transport including providing any necessary pedestrian crossings and contributing towards improvements of the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) adjacent to the vicinity of the site.</u> |
| <p>Flood Risk and Drainage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>This site is situated on a Cuckfield Stone Member— Sandstone so there is potential for the use of infiltration SuDS. There do not appear to be any other options for the disposal of surface water from the site so gProvide a Flood Risk Assessment which includes details of ground investigations and permeability testings to inform an appropriate method for disposal of surface water and explores the potential use of infiltration SuDS. should be carried out and be submitted as part of the required flood risk assessment.</u> |
| <p>Contaminated Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The land may be contaminated due to present or historical on site or adjacent land uses.</u> Provide a detailed investigation into possible sources of <u>adjacent</u>/on-site contamination together with any remedial works that are required. |
| <p>Minerals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The site is not in a Mineral Safeguarding Zone or Consultation Area. The site lies within the building stone (Cuckfield and Ardingly stone) Minerals Safeguarding Area, therefore the potential for mineral sterilisation should be considered in accordance with policy M9 of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018) and the associated Safeguarding Guidance.</u> |
| <p>Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Reinforcement of the sewerage network is required. Occupation of development will be phased to align with the delivery of necessary sewerage infrastructure, in liaison with the service provider.</u> • Southern Water's Infrastructure crosses the site. Easements may be required with the layout to be planned to ensure future access for maintenance and/or improvement work, unless diversion of the sewer is possible. • <u>Standard utility requirements apply.</u> |

HBA Appendix 2

Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment (June 2012) by Hankinson Duckett Associates

Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment for Ardingly Parish Council



July 2012


| Contents | Page |
|--|-------------|
| 1 Introduction..... | 2 |
| 2 Approach..... | 3 |
| 3 Background..... | 4 |
| 4 Landscape Structure Analysis | 5 |
| 5 Ardingly Parish Landscape Assessment | 9 |
| 6 Landscape Character Areas: analysis, capacity appraisal and photographs | 10 |
| 7 Summary and Conclusions | 11 |
| 8 References | 14 |

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Figures | HDA 1 Existing Character Areas |
| | HDA 2 Aerial photograph |
| | HDA 3 Topography |
| | HDA 4 Local designations |
| | HDA 5 Parish Survey |
| | HDA 6 Detailed Assessment Plan |
| | HDA 7 Local Landscape Character Areas |
| | HDA8 Landscape capacity |

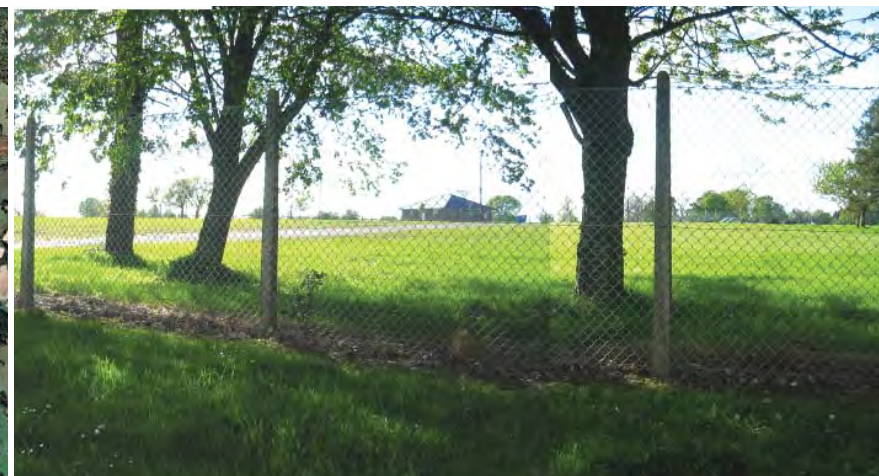
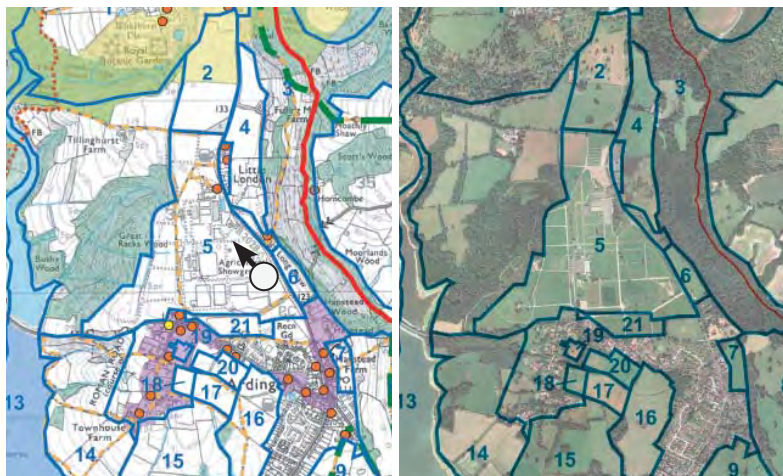
Appendix 1 – Existing Landscape Character Assessments

Appendix 2 – Analysis of Landscape Capacity

| Character Area | Designations and policy | Historic Landscape Characterization | Landscape analysis | Characteristics that fall in line with AONB / Regional assessment | Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis) |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| 5 Ardingly Showground | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AONB - Borders Ardingly Conservation areas to south-west and south-east - Bolney Farm Listed building is located to the north-east of the character area. - Mid Sussex Local Plan; Policy AR5 - further development will not be permitted where excessive traffic would be generated | <p>Sports fields</p> <p>Late 20th Century</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located to the north of Ardingly and south of Wakehurst Place. Bordered by Selsfield Road to the east and Great Racks Wood to the west. • Situated on a plateau at 125m AOD. Gently sloping to the south. • Flat organised landscape with linear pattern of roads, tracks and paths used for the South of England Agricultural Show. • Linear tree planting along routeways • Closely mown grass • Public footpaths run through it • Some large low level buildings and car parking • Areas of Showground are fenced - 2m weldmesh • Recreation ground and school playing field to the south share characteristics • Low hedge forms eastern boundary. There is intervisibility between Showground and Selsfield Road. Signing and entrance features at vehicular entry points. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Locally distinctive / important development / facility - Named as a visitor attraction in the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment for the 'High Weald' character areas. | <p>Urban influenced landscape on ridge top- although settlement would be inconsistent with due to existing built form, style and pattern of agricultural buildings.</p> <p>Sensitivity = Moderate</p> <p>Landscape Value = Moderate</p> <p>Capacity = Medium</p> |

 Parish character area with photograph location

Photograph showing key characteristics



Example of Showground buildings and fencing

| Character Area | Designations and policy | Historic Landscape Characterization | Landscape analysis | Characteristics that fall in line with AONB / Regional assessment | Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis) |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| 21 Ardingly Showground South | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AONB - Public rights of way along northern and southern boundaries - Conservation area to south-west along Street Lane - Mid Sussex Local Plan; Policy AR5 - further development will not be permitted where excessive traffic would be generated | <p>Sports fields</p> <p>Late 20th Century</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located to the north of Ardingly and south of the main Ardingly Showground character area. Bordered by Street Lane to the west and the High Street to the east • Situated on a plateau at 115-125m AOD. Gently sloping to the south. • Flat organised landscape with linear pattern of tracks and paths. Used for recreation and overflow car parking for the South of England Agricultural Show. • Formal linear tree planting along routeways and strong hedgerow boundaries along the roadside boundaries to east and west. • Closely mown grass. • Public footpaths are located to the north and south with informal paths running through it. • Formal and open landscape influenced by Ardingly village and its use. The character is pleasant but is not representative of the wider AONB or High Weald. • Visual links and urban influence from Ardingly village to the south - forms part of the village edge. Views from the conservation area to the south-west are blocked by vegetation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Out of character with High Weald landscape - Part of Ardingly Showground, which is named as a visitor attraction in the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment for the 'High Weald' character areas. - Village edge landscape | <p>Flat organised landscape on ridge top with urban influences from Ardingly village. New development would have little influence on character of AONB</p> <p>Sensitivity = Sight</p> <p>Landscape Value = Moderate</p> <p>Capacity = Medium / High</p> |

Parish character area with photograph location



Photograph showing key characteristics



| Character Area | Designations and policy | Historic Landscape Characterization | Landscape analysis | Characteristics that fall in line with AONB / Regional assessment | Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis) |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| 22 Ardingly Parish South-East High Weald | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AONB - Numerous footpaths including the High Weald Landscape Trail - Bluebell Railway line runs through it - Mid Sussex Local Plan; Policy AR2 - Council wish to retain Bluebell railway site for possible reinstatement - contains listed buildings | Mixture of Assart and informal landscapes Medieval / late 20th Century | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landform of ridges and valleys, but with gentler slopes than those to the north of the parish. • Pockets of woodland, including Ancient and Ghyll woodland. Woodland generally located in valleys or along the railway line. • Bluebell railway line runs across the character area. • Settlement is limited to isolated farms, many of which are listed. • Only two roads within character area, but numerous public rights of way, including the High Weald Landscape Trail. • Frequent small watercourses and ponds. • Fields are generally small and irregular in shape. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dispersed settlement - Historic farmsteads - Ancient tracks - Ancient woodland - Small irregularly shaped fields - Medieval landscape - Gill streams | Landscape that is characteristic of the High Weald AONB Sensitivity = Substantial Landscape Value = Substantial Capacity = Negligible / Low |




Parish character area with photograph location



Photograph showing key characteristics



| Character Area | Designations and policy | Historic Landscape Characterization | Landscape analysis | Characteristics that fall in line with AONB / Regional assessment | Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis) |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| 23 Ardingly Parish South-West Valley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AONB - The High Weald Landscape Trail runs through it - Contains Rivers Farmhouse Listed building | <p>Mixture of Assart and informal landscapes</p> <p>Medieval / late 20th Century</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural valley landscape with undulating landform in place of the steep ridges and narrow valleys of the High Weald. • Extensive tree cover including pockets of woodland, with a large portion being Ancient woodland. • Two railway lines run across the character area. Roads are limited and there are fewer public rights of way in this character than in the High Weald. The High Weald Landscape Trail does run through the area - at the south west corner of Ardingly Parish. • Settlement is limited to isolated farms, many of which are listed. • Frequent small watercourses and ponds. • Fields are generally small and irregular in shape. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dispersed settlement - Historic farmsteads - Ancient tracks - Ancient woodland - Small irregularly shaped fields - Broad, undulating landform - Wide river valleys | <p>Rural valley landscape with many of the characteristics of the High Weald AONB</p> <p>Sensitivity = Substantial</p> <p>Landscape Value = Substantial</p> <p>Capacity = Negligible / Low</p> |

 Parish character area with photograph location

Photograph showing key characteristics



| Character Area | Designations and policy | Historic Landscape Characterization | Landscape analysis | Characteristics that fall in line with AONB / Regional assessment | Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis) |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| 24 Ardingly Parish North High Weald | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AONB - Large portion of woodland is a designated SSSI - Ancient woodland - Numerous public rights of way | Mixture of Assart and informal landscapes Medieval / late 20th Century | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemplary landscape of the High Weald AONB. • Generally enclosed and intimate but with some long views across valleys from ridge tops. • Well wooded landscape with irregular fields bound by hedgerows or woodland. Contains Wakehurst and Chiddingly Wood SSSI • Scattered farms and large houses joined by winding rural lanes, bound by hedges to either side. • Dramatic landform of ridges and steep sided valleys. Ghyll woodland present in valleys. • Good network of footpaths. • Frequent scattered ponds and Gill streams running through valleys. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dispersed settlement - Historic farmsteads - Ancient tracks - Ancient woodland - Small irregularly shaped fields - Medieval landscape - Deeply incised ridged and faulted landform - Gill streams | Exemplary landscape of the High Weald AONB Sensitivity = Major Landscape Value = Major Capacity = Negligible |



Parish character area with photograph location

Photograph showing key characteristics



7 Summary and Conclusions

The summary and conclusions set out below relate to the brief described in the introduction of this report. The study has identified that the majority of landscape surrounding Ardingly has substantial landscape sensitivity and low landscape capacity for development (plan HDA 8). They are rural areas, inconsistent with the exiting settlement pattern of Ardingly and have limited existing urban influence. This falls in line with the High Weald AONB designation that extends across the Parish.

7.1 Key views

7.1.1 There are prominent views of the wider AONB landscape from a number of character areas, most notably numbers 8, 9 and 14. Areas 4, 6, 13, 16, and 24 also have long views out to the surrounding landscape. The ridgelines and densely wooded landscape limit views of Ardingly village settlement from most of the character areas. Any development within areas 4, 6, 7 and 8 would need to consider the views from the ridgelines to the east of the village. These areas currently form part of the wider view from locations including Pickeridge Farm and Highbrook.

7.2 Gap

The gap between the west and east sides of Ardingly village is maintained by character area 16 (Munnion Road Western High Weald), area 17 (Ardingly Southern Woodland) and, to a lesser extent, area 15 (Ardingly Southern Farmland). The high sensitivity of these landscapes, along with the sloping topography would mean that any development would be out of keeping with the existing settlement of Ardingly. Character areas 18 (Lissadell Northern Pasture), 19 (Church Lane Green Space) and 20 (Knowles Farm Southern Pasture) are much more enclosed and do not add significantly to the perception of a 'gap' between the two areas of settlement.

7.3 Sites with inherent landscape quality

7.3.1 Significant parts of the study area are intact, high quality landscapes (plan HDA 8). Out of the 24 character areas identified, 18 had Low to Negligible landscape Capacity. Landscape areas of particular value are: area 1 - Wakehurst Place Parkland, area 3 - Ardingly Western Ghyll Woodland, area 14 - Ardingly Western High Weald and area 24 - Ardingly Parish North High Weald. These are high quality landscapes which define the character of the Parish.

7.4 Sites that could have the capacity to accommodate further development

7.4.1 From the 24 character areas identified, 3 have been judged to have a medium landscape capacity and only two have a Medium / High landscape capacity. These have been found to be more suitable for development in landscape terms.

7.4.2 Whilst more suitable for development in landscape terms than the majority of character areas, careful consideration must be given to the extent and design of any developments within these areas, taking into account landscape conditions to avoid harmful effect on the surrounding landscape character. Below are the main advantages and disadvantages for development within each area.

7.4.3 The sites with Medium landscape capacity are:

- Area 5 – Ardingly Showground: The landscape is highly organised, artificial and in poorer condition than the surrounding countryside. It has more of an urban influence than the other character areas within the Parish. However the area also has very high cultural associations, with a long established use and is one of the key attractions of Ardingly.
- Area 6 – Long Shaw Eastern slopes: This is a small enclosed landscape to the north of Ardingly village. It is on the ridgeline, so new development would be in keeping with the general settlement pattern of the High Weald, although new housing within this area would substantially expand the village envelope to the north. Any development in this location would have to consider views from the ridgeline settlements to the east. The high quality hedgerow along the western boundary, adjacent to Selsfield Road, is an essential part of the landscape and would need to be retained.
- Area 20 – Knowles Farm Southern Pasture: These fields are flat, well contained by vegetation and are a typical village edge landscape that do not display many of the characteristics of the wider High Weald landscape character. Development within this area would have a limited impact on the surrounding AONB. This area is however close to Ardingly Conservation Area and a number of listed buildings, the setting of which would need to be considered if any development was to be proposed in this area.

7.4.4 The sites with Medium / High landscape capacity are:

- Area 7 – Ardingly Eastern Plateau: This character area is surrounded by housing on three sides, which gives it a strong urban influence. The eastern edge is well screened from much of the wider landscape, although the land use would need to take account of the limited views into the site from the ridge-tops to the east. New development in this area would be in keeping with the ridge-top settlement pattern of Ardingly and would be well placed to access local facilities. This area borders Ardingly Conservation Area (east) which also contains listed buildings, the setting of which would need to be considered if any development was to be proposed in this area. Access to any new development would also be a key issue.

- Area 21 – Ardingly Showground South: As with the Showground area to the north, the landscape is highly organised, artificial and in poorer condition than the surrounding countryside and is not typical of the character of the AONB. Its organised, artificial character and close proximity to the northern edge of Ardingly settlement present an urban influence and development within this area would be in keeping with the settlement pattern of Ardingly. The western edge of this area lies adjacent to Ardingly Conservation Area but there is a strong line of vegetation that screens any views of the character area from the road.

7.5 Preferred option

Our analysis through the character and subsequent capacity assessment has led us to the conclusion that area 21 – Ardingly Showground South is the most suitable area for new development. New housing would be in keeping with the existing settlement pattern of Ardingly and would be close to local services. In addition the area has the potential to be developed without significant impact to the character or appearance of the wider AONB. This character area displays few of the characteristics of the High Weald. Development in this location would have little effect on the landscape as it is bound to the south by existing housing and to the north by Ardingly Showground, which in itself is not representative of the AONB landscape.

- Ref 1 - Countryside Agency (now Natural England)/SNH (April 2002), '*Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland*'
- Ref 2 - Mid Sussex District Council (November 2005), '*A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex*'
- Ref 3 - Prepared for Mid Sussex District Council by Hankinson Duckett Associates (July 2007), '*Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study*'
- Ref 4 - Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012), '*National Planning Policy Framework*'
- Ref 5 - High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee (2nd Edition, adopted March 2009) '*The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2004 a 20-year strategy*'

HBA Appendix 3

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024 Assessment

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Assessment

The following assessment considers the site and development of it, in relation to the environmental objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan. It identifies how a development proposal on the site could be developed to contribute positively to meeting the objectives of the AONB Management Plan. It should be used inform the masterplanning and detailed design for any potential future development of the site. It is based upon the principles of development set out in emerging Policy SA25 and landscape design strategy outlined in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal.

| The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives | Assessment of Impact | Examples of Mitigation and Opportunities for Enhancement |
|--|---|---|
| Geology, landform, water systems and climate – NOTE: No existing characteristic geology landform or water features on the site | | |
| Objective G1: To restore the natural function of rivers, water courses and water bodies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface water run-off quality and quantity impacts on local watercourses. • Will the natural functioning of a floodplain be hindered (such as through built development, drainage or culverts)? • How have results from archaeological surveys been used to assess the impact on historic remains in the floodplain? • Have at surface drainage methods (such as ponds, ditches and swales) been used rather than underground storage methods? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No existing rivers, water courses or water bodies on the site. • No invasive non-native species identified on the site • Any development proposal should incorporate natural water management and surface drainage methods as an integral part of the masterplan – where appropriate, providing features such as new ditches and swales, rain gardens, detention basins/ ponds, rain gardens and infiltration trenches channels and other SuDS features. These could also allow opportunities for the creation of wetland habitat |
| Objective G2: To protect and enhance soils, sandstone outcrops, and other important landform and geological features of the AONB. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will an exposed sandstone outcrop/cutting and any associated habitat be affected? • Will the proposal effect soils on the site through compaction, erosion or pollution or by sterilising soil through hard surfacing or built development? • Will the proposal impact on the natural landform of the site through cut and fill operations? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No existing sandstone outcrops or other important landform or geological features on the site. • A Soils Management Plan or drawing should be developed as part of a detailed design proposal to outline proposals for the protection and movement of top and/or subsoils. • Any development proposal should respect the existing generally flat landform of the site, with consideration given to the removal/reprofiling of the existing artificial bunds. |
| Objective G3: To help secure climatic conditions and rates of change which support continued conservation and enhancement of the High Weald's valued landscapes and habitats. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impact will the proposal have on climatic conditions through construction methods, materials, energy and water use and air pollution from associated traffic? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures would be taken during the design process to minimise climate impacts through the use of sustainable design and carbon calculation. • Any development proposal should use locally sourced materials where possible. All plants and seeding shall be of local known provenance. • Consideration should be given to incorporating small-scale domestic renewable energy generation (for example solar |

| The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives | Assessment of Impact | Examples of Mitigation and Opportunities for Enhancement |
|---|---|--|
| | | panels) where these would not be visually prominent or intrusive, as part of any scheme design. |
| Settlement | | |
| Objective S1: To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will a sense of connection with the countryside be affected through reduced views, reduced or more unattractive access or a significant change in 'sense of place'? • Does the proposal take account of or impact on the natural capital and ecosystems services of the High Weald? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where appropriate, locally sourced materials which support AONB conservation should be used in any development proposal (such as timber). • Views out of the site are of limited quality due to the neighbouring Ardingly showground which blocks much of the countryside setting. Whilst views from Street Lane (Conservation Area) are filtered by a hedgerow, the generally more open setting along this edge of the site should be retained and enhanced through careful siting of built form and carefully positioned tree planting to help establish a sense of connection with the countryside/showground. • Any development proposal should be landscape-led to ensure sensitive design for people, place and nature. A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan should be provided as part of a detailed design proposal. |
| Objective S2: To protect the historic pattern and character of settlement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does analysis of the historic pattern and character of the settlement inform the proposals? • Does it erode the historic settlement pattern? • Is the proposal informed by specialist reports on heritage and archaeology including information from the Historic Landscape Characterisation? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The High Weald AONB Design Guide and Colour Study has informed the recommendations in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal and should continue to be used to inform future scheme design. • Scheme development would be informed by a Heritage Statement and consultancy advice from Savills. • Historic routeway of footpath 9AR, Selsfield Road and Street Lane to be retained. • Limited opportunity to meaningfully reinstate field boundaries as adjacent showground and modern recreation ground has substantially disrupted the wider field pattern • Any scheme masterplan should respect the historic settlement pattern identified by the High Weald AONB Unit and allow separation between the Saxon settlement around the church and medieval trading centre along the High Street. |

| The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives | Assessment of Impact | Examples of Mitigation and Opportunities for Enhancement |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Objective S3: To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout and design.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposal maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness and the built environment character and the 'sense of place' of the High Weald? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The High Weald AONB Design Guide and Colour Study has informed the recommendations in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal and should continue to be used to inform future scheme design. The recommendations set out in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal reflect the landscape character of the wider AONB and settlement. Any development proposal would include locally sourced/grown or locally provenanced native planting or trees for climate change (Kew Gardens advice) Any development proposal should aim to use local materials, such as timber, that both enhance local distinctiveness and support the sustainable management of High Weald resources. |
| Routeways | | |
| <p>Objective R1: To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the proposal impact on public rights of way or rural lanes? Will it remove historic features such as banks and hedges, or introduce urbanising features such as wide splays, curbing and signage? Is the proposal informed by specialist reports on heritage and archaeology associated with the routeways? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified Historic routeways of Street Lane, Selsfield Road and footpath 9AR would be retained and any proposed development should respect their amenity, underlying character and function. No lost routeways are identified. Any development proposal should provide new connections between the retained routeways. |
| <p>Objective R2: To enhance the ecological function of routeways.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the proposal impact on verges or result in the removal of trees or hedgerows along routeways? Does the proposal include non-native planting along routeways (such as laurel)? Is the proposal informed by an ecological report? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verges and open spaces should be managed for wildlife. Existing significant trees and hedgerows should be retained and protected, notably the large mature Oak in the centre of the site and hedgerows to the southern boundary and along Selsfield Road. The single avenue of ornamental cherry (and other species) is less important to retain from a landscape perspective and could be replaced (depending upon scheme design) with locally sourced/grown or locally provenanced native species or climate robust tree species (as recommended by Kew Gardens). |

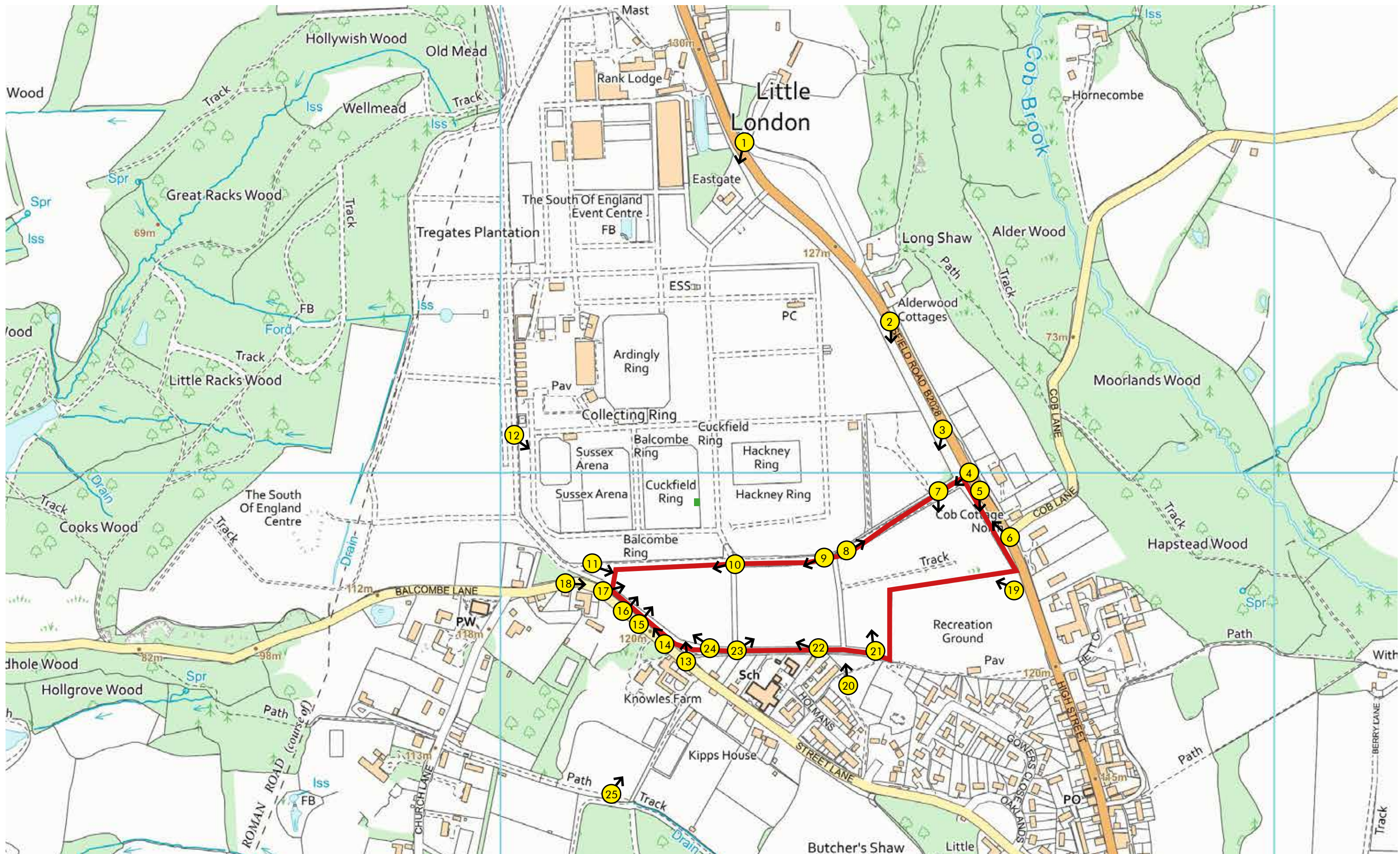
| The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives | Assessment of Impact | Examples of Mitigation and Opportunities for Enhancement |
|--|---|--|
| Woodland – NOTE: Site does not include AONB woodland | | |
| Objective W1: To maintain the existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the proposal result in a loss of woodland or a degradation of woodland such as through increased visitor pressure, predation by pets or garden waste disposal? Does the proposal impact on wood pasture or historic parkland? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No woodland on site. |
| Objective W2: To enhance the ecological quality and functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the proposal informed by an ecological report? Will the proposal result in the loss or degradation of the existing ecological quality of woodland? Will the proposal reduce the connectedness of woodland on the site to adjacent habitats? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No woodland on site New planting to reflect the wider character of the AONB and include predominantly locally sourced/grown or locally provenanced native species |
| Objective W3: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the proposal informed by specialist reports on heritage and archaeology associated with the woodland? Will the proposal have an impact on any historic and archaeological features in woodland, including the woodland boundary? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No woodland on site |
| Objective W4: To increase the output of sustainability produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposal encourage the sustainable management of woodland? Will access to woodland to enable management be made more difficult/prevented, for example by the erection of fences? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No woodland on site |
| Field and Heath – NOTE: Site is not identified as characteristic field and heath | | |
| Objective FH1: To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposal sustain or re-introduce land management practices which support the High Weald landscape character such as livestock farming and small scale horticulture? Does the proposal prevent the agriculturally productive use of fields through loss of workyards, storage barns etc? Does the proposal remove land from agricultural use? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site is currently used as overflow car park and has no agriculturally productive use. Any scheme proposal to consider opportunities to provide community growing facilities such as inclusion of orchard species/areas as part of the proposal. |

| The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives | Assessment of Impact | Examples of Mitigation and Opportunities for Enhancement |
|--|---|--|
| Objective FH2: To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has information about the age and surviving features of fields and boundaries (such as from the Historic Landscape Characterisation) informed the proposal? Does the proposal avoid the loss of intact medieval features including fields? Is the scale and design of the proposal reflective of the area's field size and pattern? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited opportunity to meaningfully reinstate field boundaries as adjacent showground and modern recreation ground has substantially disrupted the wider field pattern |
| Objective FH3: To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the proposal informed by an ecological report? Does the proposal avoid loss of species-rich grassland or heathland? Does the proposal prevent the future enhancement of semi-improved grassland through good management to produce species-rich grassland as part of a Nature Recovery Network for the High Weald? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site is not identified as characteristic field and heath but any scheme proposal would seek to enhance existing ecology of on the site |
| Objective FH4: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of field and heath. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the proposal informed by specialist reports on heritage and archaeology associated with the field or heathland? Will the proposal have an impact on any historic and archaeological features in the field or heathland? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A |
| Land-based Economy and Related Rural Life | | |
| Objective LBE1: To improve returns from, and thereby increase entry and retention in, farming, forestry, horticulture and other land management activities that conserve and enhance natural beauty. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposal support farming, forestry or small scale horticulture? Does the proposal prevent the productive use of fields or woodland through their loss to development, their isolation from the wider holding or the loss of ancillary infrastructure such as barns? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any scheme proposal to consider opportunities to provide community growing facilities such as inclusion of orchard species/areas as part of the proposal. |
| Objective LBE2: To improve amenities, infrastructure (including the provision of appropriate affordable housing), and skills development for rural communities and related sectors that contribute positively to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposal impact on existing rural community amenities or infrastructure that support the AONB such as village shops, and facilities used for land-based skills and rural crafts? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A |

| The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives | Assessment of Impact | Examples of Mitigation and Opportunities for Enhancement |
|--|---|---|
| conserving and enhancing natural beauty. | | |
| Other Qualities | | |
| Objective QQ1: To increase opportunities for learning about and celebrating the character of the High Weald. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposal open up access to areas of the High Weald previously inaccessible to the public? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A |
| Objective QQ2: To increase the contribution of individuals and communities to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will an area that was conserved and enhanced through public or private contributions be affected by the proposal? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any scheme development would be subject to ongoing consultation with the Local Planning Authority, Parish Council and other relevant local groups. Potentially opportunities to involve future residents or users of any development in the management of open areas on the site. |
| Objective QQ3: To develop and manage access to maximise opportunities for everyone to enjoy, appreciate and understand the character of the AONB while conserving its natural beauty. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the development enable pedestrian access to villages/towns and the countryside? Is public transport available and accessible? Does the development include community space for informal, open-air recreation? Is there any impact of increased use of rights of way on neighbouring land management activity? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The paths (permissive access) to the perimeter of the site and footpath 7AR and 9AR along the northern and southern site boundaries are well used by the local community and would be retained and their setting and amenity taken into account in any development proposal. Any development proposal should incorporate new routes linking to the existing public footpaths to allow continued permeability and linkages across the site and to the wider Right of Way network. |
| Objective QQ4: To protect and promote the perceptual qualities that people value. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the development protect tranquillity; dark night skies, valued viewpoints and historic and cultural features? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The client is in contact with Ardingly Parish Council and has arranged a public consultation event on 1st April 2020. Issues such as the provision of a scout hut, parking and access to the school and types of play facility have been discussed. Should a development proposal progress, further consultation and discussion with the community would continue. Consideration should be given to minimizing light pollution through sensitive design as part of more detailed design. |

HBA Appendix 4

Photographs of winter views from identified key viewpoints





VIEWPOINT 1



VIEWPOINT 2



VIEWPOINT 3



VIEWPOINT 4





VIEWPOINT 7



VIEWPOINT 8



VIEWPOINT 9



VIEWPOINT 10



VIEWPOINT 11



VIEWPOINT 12



Hedgerow to Street Lane

Conifers and poplar belt to showground

Fenceline on northern side of footpath 10AR

VIEWPOINT 13



Conifers and poplar belt to showground

Hedgerow to Street Lane

Street Lane

VIEWPOINT 14



VIEWPOINT 15



VIEWPOINT 16





VIEWPOINT 19



VIEWPOINT 20





VIEWPOINT 23



VIEWPOINT 24



VIEWPOINT 25