

## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT APPRAISAL – SUMMARY STATEMENT NATURAL BURIAL SITE – LAND NORTH OF TURNERS HILL ROAD, WEST SUSSEX

### *Effects upon Local Landscape Character - Turners Hill Road – Summary Statement*

The existing site is edged with a variably intact mixed species hedge containing a small number of mature hedgerow Oaks distributed intermittently to the southern site edge. The boundary hedgeline contains and visually encloses the northern edge of the Turners Hill Road highway that passes the southern edge of the site. The Turners Hill Road highway corridor varies between narrow, hedgerowed and treelined to occasionally broader verged character approaching existing vehicular access points made from the highway.

The proposals would incur the removal of a small section of the hedgerow to accommodate the highway access. The southern boundary hedgerow would require setting back marginally from the northern edge of Turners Hill Road to accommodate the development access visibility splays. The mature trees would be retained and protected within the proposals; the effected roadside hedgerow vegetation set back to accommodate the visibility splays would be limited in extent and located at a point where the existing road and hedge kink southward, currently reducing visibility along the highway corridor adjacent to the PROW footpath as it crosses the highway. The proposals would improve visibility along Turners Hill Road adjacent to the site and benefit users of the highway and also those accessing Public Right of Way footpaths.

The existing landscape character of the Turners Hill Road rural highway is of limited sensitivity. Whilst the southern boundary hedgerow vegetation is considered a feature component of the surrounding landscape character area, it is heavily dominated by and degraded by the presence of the adjacent highway element and the intrusive nature of the relatively frequent and fast moving traffic upon it. The landscape character of the Turners Hill Road highway adjacent to the site is considered to be of **'low'** sensitivity.

The loss of existing hedgerow to form the proposed vehicle access would be limited in extent, appreciable in passing, oblique views, moving along the Turners Hill Road public highway. The existing hedgerow would be trans-located, lifted and replanted, to form the proposed visibility splays and as such, there would be only brief and minimal effects upon the immediate local landscape resource. The existing components of hedgerow and mature hedgerow trees would be retained within the Turners Hill location and the nature of the proposals mean there would be no perceived loss of the existing landscape components associated with the landscape setting to form the visibility splays.

There would be only very limited perceived appreciation of change due to the localised containment, limited duration and scale of the proposed hedge translocation; the magnitude of change is therefore considered to be **'low'**.

The High Weald - Landscape Management Guidelines seek to;

- *Increase tree cover ..., along the approach roads to settlements, and along busy urban routes including within the Crawley - East Grinstead corridor.*
- *Conserve and replant single Oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession;*
- *Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost;*
- *Manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.*

There will be no loss of existing tree cover within the hedgerow feature; additional tree planting is proposed within the landscape and ecology mitigation strategy to the southern site boundary. The setting back of the existing hedgerow and the widening of the verge to the highway edge will allow the seeding of UK habitat for conservation value. The translocation of the hedgeline would be a transient effect and would be ameliorated within a short duration.

The above recommendations of the *High Weald – Landscape Management Guidelines* would be incorporated within the development landscape and ecology visual impact mitigation strategy. Only a very small part of the development would be discernable and there would be little detrimental effect upon the existing landscape character. The proposals would improve the landscape character and ecological habitat in the vicinity of the highway.

The proposals are therefore considered to have an overall **'negligible neutral'** effect upon the local landscape character in the longer term consequential to the development proposals.