



***Land at Turners Hill Road - Turners Hill, West Sussex  
Natural Burial Ground - Viewpoint Assessment  
January 2015***  
*Planning Issue - Rev 02*



## Landscape Character and Visual Appraisal

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### The Brief and Background

- Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Future Planning and Development to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal for the Land at Turners Hill Road, Turners Hill, West Sussex.

- The report, as a Landscape Character and Visual Impact Appraisal, considers the potential constraints and opportunities for the proposed site area in relation to the proposed development in accordance with *The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Edition No. 3)* published by *The Landscape Institute*. The development site location is shown on *Figure No. 01 - Zone of Visual Influence and Viewpoints*.

- A site visit and survey was undertaken on the 5th December 2014, and the public footpaths; highways; and areas of open access land surrounding the proposed site area were walked and surveyed for landscape character; landscape features, components and viewpoints.

- Panorama photographs have been taken and created at each selected viewpoint using a *Canon EOS 450 D Digital SLR Camera* with a 50 mm fixed focal length lens. The camera has a field of view as follows; Horizontal - 40 degrees and Vertical - 27 degrees. The photographs have been taken approximately 1.70 metres from the existing ground level. Single shot photographs have been stitched together to form panoramic photographs and viewpoints. The date, time, weather, lighting conditions and direction of view for each viewpoint has been recorded including the approximate ground level and Ordnance Survey grid coordinates.

- The photographs have been taken and produced in accordance with *The Landscape Institute Guidance Note; 01 / 11 - Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*.

#### The Purpose of the Report

#### Existing Landscape Character and Visual Baseline

- The purpose of the landscape appraisal study has been to determine and assess the potential for development of the proposed site in relation to the landscape character and visual effects within the existing landscape and countryside surrounding the rural edge of the site at Turners Hill Road, Turners Hill, West Sussex. The following report aims to define and illustrate the existing landscape character and environment of the proposed development site, and to identify visual receptors and the zone of visual influence for the development proposals. The existing landscape character and visual baseline identifies and assesses the key landscape characters, landscape components, and viewpoints in relation to the proposed development and the surrounding area.

#### Landscape Character and Visual Effects

The following report appraises and describes the visual effect of the potential development on the landscape character, components and viewpoints of the existing rural landscape and countryside to the edge of Turners Hill, West Sussex; providing an assessment of the sensitivity and magnitude of the anticipated visual and landscape character effects and where necessary presents appropriate landscape and ecological mitigation measures to limit and minimise any potential landscape character and visual effects which would be resultant from any development within the site.

### 2.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The land to the north of Turners Hill Road, Turners Hill has been surveyed within the following appraisal report with regard to the potential provision of the proposed development within the site area. The proposals have been developed following the process of landscape and visual appraisal to specifically to minimise potential effects on the surrounding landscape resource.

The proposals would comprise the phased development of a natural burial site and planting of a native species broadleaved woodland which will extend across the site over time. The LVIA report is based upon the first phase of the proposed development.

Vehicular access would be formed to the site area made from Turners Hill Road, approx. 750m west of the settlement of Turners Hill. The access proposals would necessitate the removal of a section of existing hedgerow that bounds the northern edge of the public highway; a visibility splay would be required to meet highway standards and the existing hedge is proposed to be partially translocated adjacent to the southern site boundary.

The internal site layout would comprise a small single storey building of rural character with car park provision for visitors. The layout has been developed to set back the proposed building from the highway frontage - reducing visual effects consequential to the structure. Pedestrian visitor access would be made through small informal paths through the tree planting area.

The proposed development scheme would incorporate additional tree and native mixed species understorey shrub planting within and around the site frontage following design evaluation in relation to the LVIA appraisal process.

### 3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

#### Planning Policy

A desktop study and review of current relevant planning policy at a local and national level together with relevant statutory and non-statutory landscape and ecological designations has been undertaken and has been summarised below relevant to the development site. The development site is located within the Mid Sussex District and the local development plan is the adopted *Mid Sussex District Local Plan – 2004*.

The Mid Sussex Local Plan was adopted in 2004 and sets out the current planning strategy for the District. In 2007, the Government Office for the South East confirmed that the majority of policies within the Local Plan would be saved indefinitely. The Mid Sussex Local Plan is currently under review and will ultimately be replaced by the Mid Sussex District Plan.

The development proposals have also been considered against the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004) - Policy C1

#### Protection of the Countryside

The Local Plan policy states with regard to the countryside the intention 'to secure its protection' and 'to enhance the countryside... where it does not adversely affect the rural environment'.

*C1 Outside built-up area boundaries, as detailed on the Proposals and Inset Maps, the remainder of the plan area is classified as a Countryside Area of Development Restraint where the countryside will be protected for its own sake. Proposals for development in the countryside particularly that which would extend the built-up area boundaries beyond those shown, will be firmly resisted and restricted to:*

*(a) proposals reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;*

*(b) proposals for new uses in rural buildings of a scale consistent with the building's location;*

*(c) in appropriate cases, proposals for the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;*

*(d) in appropriate cases, proposals for quiet informal recreation and/or tourism related developments;*

*(e) proposals for facilities which are essential to meet the needs of local communities, and which cannot be accommodated satisfactorily within the built-up areas;*

*(f) proposals for which a specific policy reference is made elsewhere in this Plan; and*

*(g) proposals which significantly contribute to a sense of local identity and regional diversity.*





## Landscape Character and Visual Appraisal

### Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004) - Policy C4

#### Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

The Local Plan policy states with regard to Areas with special Qualities (AONBS) that 'Development proposals... will be subject to additional scrutiny to ensure that harm will not be caused to the visual quality and essential characteristics of the AONBs and that opportunities are taken for enhancement' and 'to protect the AONBs from potentially obtrusive development, particularly on exposed sites which are visible from long distances'.

C4 Within the Sussex Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as shown on the Proposals Map and its Insets, the aim to conserve and enhance natural beauty is regarded as the overall priority. Proposals for development will be subject to the most rigorous examination and only those which comply with this aim will be permitted.

Development will not be permitted in the Sussex Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, unless:

- (a) it is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture or
- (b) it is essential for local social and / or economic needs; or
- (c) it can be demonstrated that the development would be in the national interest and that no suitable sites are available elsewhere.

In considering development proposals within or immediately adjacent to the AONB, including those regarded as exceptions, particular attention will be paid to the siting, scale, design, external materials and screening of new buildings that are proposed in order to ensure that they enhance, and do not detract from, the visual quality and essential characteristics of the area.

### Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004) - Policy C5

#### Sites and Features important to Nature Conservation

The local plan recognises the importance of the natural resource including; 'unimproved meadows, wildlife corridors and ancient woodland'. Much of the woodland surrounding the development site is designated as ancient woodland.

C5 Proposals for development or changes of use of management within Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves, Ancient Woodlands or to other sites or areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological importance, including wildlife corridors will be subject to rigorous examination, and only permitted where the proposal, by virtue of design and layout, minimises the impact on features of nature conservation importance. Proposals should take advantage of opportunities for habitat creation wherever possible.

### Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004) - Policy C6

#### Areas of Importance for Nature Conservation - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands

The local plan recognises the 'extensive areas of woodland in the District, which together with numerous shaws, copses, tree belts and hedgerows make an important contribution to improving the landscape, to amenity, and to local climatic modification, as well as providing valuable habitats for wild plants and animals'. and that 'The ancient broadleaved woodland of Sussex represents a substantial proportion of this habitat in Britain as a whole and is, therefore, important in the national context'. The local plan goes on to state that 'There are many smaller areas of woodland which provide an attractive setting for the adjoining towns and which have amenity value'.

C6 Development resulting in the loss of woodlands, hedgerows and trees which are important in the landscape, or as natural habitats, or historically, will be resisted.

### National Planning Policy Framework

Section 11 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment - Paragraph 109 states; 'The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity;
- where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and;
- remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.'

Section 11 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment - Paragraph 113 suggests that appropriate and proportionate weight should be given to the ecological value of sites according to their status and ecological potential as follows; 'Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks'.

Section 11 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment - Paragraph 114 continues; 'Local planning authorities should:

- set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.'

Section 11 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment - Paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that 'Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads, and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty'.

### Ancient Woodland

Ancient Woodland is an important natural resource, recognised within the district planning policy document. There is relatively substantial coverage of Ancient Woodland within the surrounding landscape and a block is located directly to the eastern edge of the site location (approximately 250.0m), spreading further north (Butchers Wood). Beyond the site and approximately 180.0m to the north is the woodland block of The Gill. The woodland is recorded within the National Inventory of Woodland and Trees and comprises UK Priority Deciduous Woodland Habitat.

### Public Right of Way Footpaths

Whilst a number of PRoW footpaths and bridleways form a local network of public access, there is only a single dedicated public right of way footpath identified in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development area with publicly accessible viewpoints and vantage across the site area. This PRoW footpath stems from the south western edge of the site adjoining Turners Hill Road following the northern site edge before entering the adjoining woodland block of Butchers Wood. The footpath re-emerges to connect with the western edge of Turners Hill some 700.0m east of the site. The majority of PRoW footpaths and bridleways surrounding the site area traverse the agricultural and wooded landscape connecting villages, hamlets and farmsteads.

## 4.0 - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

### Landscape Character Assessments

The proposed site location is situated within the *Natural England National Character Area (122) The High Weald*. 'A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex' was published in 2005 and forms the basis of the West Sussex Landscape Management Guidelines (West Sussex County Council) which relate to the surrounding rural landscape within the setting of Turners Hill within the High Weald area and has been referred to and summarised below as a background to the assessment.

### Regional Landscape Character; West Sussex Land Management Guidelines

In 2003, West Sussex County Council produced *The West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment* which identified and described the various landscape character areas for the county of West Sussex. The Landscape Assessment divided the County of East Sussex into 42 no. separate Landscape Character Areas and are the basis for the *West Sussex Land Management Guidelines*;

### LCA (HW1) - High Weald

The 'High Weald' Landscape Character Area (HW1) is described as 'The High Weald Forest Ridge within West Sussex. Numerous gill streams have carved out a landscape of twisting ridges and secluded valleys. The ancient, densely wooded landscape of the High Weald is seen to perfection in the area'.

A number of characteristics of the broader landscape character area are relevant to the site location and are summarised below.

#### Characteristics

- Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Plateau, ridges and deep, secluded valleys cut by gill streams.
- 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.
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.





## Landscape Character and Visual Appraisal

- Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead and some expanded and smaller villages.

- Some busy lanes and roads including along the Crawley – East Grinstead corridor.

### LCA (HW1) - High Weald - Landscape Management Guidelines

The Landscape Management Guidelines seek to address key issues associated with the landscape character area, loss of the natural resource and associated bio-diversity and the potential visual effect of new development and new elements within the existing landscape. The landscape action priorities seek to 'Conserve the rich mosaic of woodland and other habitats and the intimate nature of the agricultural landscape, the high level of perceived naturalness of the area including its rural, tranquil qualities, and the unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area'. The guidelines intend to reinforce the existing landscape character and seek to;

- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.

- Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on long and other views and is integrated within the landscape;

- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved woodlands;

- 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 including within the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor.

- 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.

- Seek to protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.

The above Landscape Character Area describes the characteristics and components of the landscape broadly surrounding the proposed development site area. The following section description sets out the characteristics and components more directly associated with the immediate site location. The priorities of the Landscape Management Guidelines are set out further within the *The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2014-2019)*.

### 5.0 LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

#### Topography

The site lies within a landscape of local topographical variance. The localised topography is characterised by intimate valley dip slopes, brows and plateaus. The survey site is contained to the southern boundary by Turners Hill Road which falls gently from the western edge of Turners Hill in the east (+174.00m AOD) to Tulleys Farms (+152.00m AOD) continuing to fall gently west toward the eastern edge of Crawley; The site sits upon and to the northern edge of a plateau ridge at approximately (+164.00m AOD); to the south of the site the plateau extends at a level of and above (c. +170.00m AOD). Beyond the northern site edge the agricultural land falls steadily to a valley base of (+125.00m AOD); evidenced by the waterbody located within Miswell Wood approximately 600.0m north of the site. To the east and the village settlement of Turners Hill the land is demonstrated to replicate the plateau valley topography with the village green sitting at over (+170.00m AOD) falling to (+132.00m AOD) approaching the northern village extent.

#### Vegetation

The survey site is edged with mature treeline and hedgerow vegetation with all but the immediate north western boundary well buffered with continuous cover within the surrounding landscape. Beyond the built settlement of Turners Hill, the largely agricultural land of small to medium scale field parcels is crossed with a network of treelines and hedgerows of mixed evergreen plantation woodland and extensive woodland blocks of native broadleaved species. The network is well established and follows the vast majority of field boundaries forming a connective landscape pattern. Woodland blocks are a feature of the Weald generally and the undulating valley slopes and brows are regularly wooded. Much of the landscape is set against and contained by the wooded heathland habitat. A number of sizeable woodland blocks expand around the survey site as Ancient Woodland. The woodland is recorded in the National Inventory of Woodland and Trees and forms a significant swathe of UK Priority; Deciduous Woodland habitat.

The field boundary network of tree lined hedgerows is replicated to the rural lanes and highways within the surrounding area and many of the PRoW footpaths are edged with or contained within mature woodland vegetation creating a sense of seclusion and enclosure. This imbues some tranquility but reduces appreciation of views to the surrounding landscape.

#### Land north of Turners Hill Road – Development site - Existing Character

The survey site area comprises a single field parcel contained by field boundary hedgerows. The southern boundary runs adjacent to the public highway of Turners Hill Road, a busily trafficked, treelined and hedgerowed highway corridor that links the settlement of Turners Hill to the eastern urban edge of the Crawley built environment. The boundary hedgerow contains a number of intermittent mature hedgerow trees. The western edge of the hedgerow is demarked by a PRoW footpath that follows a partially defunct and sporadic hedgerow to the western and northern field parcel edge. The hedgerow contains a number of mature trees and is dominated by bracken scrub. The eastern field boundary is defined by a treeline feature that extends north to join with the ancient woodland block of Butchers Wood - part of the extensive woodland coverage that contains the landscape setting within which the site is located.

The site itself comprises an area of rough grassland with no internal defining features. The relatively small scale field parcel forms an area of land well enclosed to the south, and east by mature boundary vegetation. The vegetation forms part of a mature woodland landscape component and a defining feature between the fields and the semi-urban edge of the Turners Hill village settlement. The site initially falls gently to the north and east before falling dramatically beyond the field boundaries. The elevated field plateau allows longer distant views across the adjacent open agricultural valley landscape to the north toward the southern woodland edge of Hundred Acres. The view is contained by the woodland blocks north of Tulleys Farm to the west and that of Butchers Wood and Miswell Wood to the east and is terminated by the brow of the valley slopes approaching Hundred Acres.

The site is less well contained to the west and is dominated in part by the adjacent Tulleys Farm and the associated farm activity components (including seasonal tourism), and buildings. The farm is set on land that gently falls northward and westward, and away from the western site boundary.

#### Turners Hill - Residential Settlement

The settlement of Turners Hill lies to the east of the development site; the heart of which is located approximately 800.0m from the site. Turners Hill extends as a linear settlement primarily along a north south axis and is largely contained within the Turners Hill conservation area. The settlement contains established buildings and properties of traditional character particularly along North Street and Lions Lane; however several more modern buildings are interspersed throughout the village settlement. The site is not visible from the conservation area and the village character would remain unaffected by the proposals.

#### Turners Hill Road – Public Highway

The development site is contained to the southern edge by Turners Hill Road that extends from the western edge of Turners Hill toward and past the development site, Tulleys Farm and Worth Abbey toward the eastern urban edge of the Crawley built environment.

The character of the road quickly changes leaving the built environment of Turners Hill village edge to one of a rural highway corridor. The road is edged with treelined hedgerows becoming more heavily wooded moving west. The road is relatively frequent in traffic movement and operates at the single carriageway national speed limit. The southern highway edge is dominated by relatively dense and continuous hedgerow treeline vegetation providing effective containment and enclosure to the southern highway edge.

The northern highway edge is lined with more formally maintained field boundary hedgelines. Approaching the site from the east, the hedgeline to the northern highway edge (and the southern site edge) is characterised by the intermittent spacing of mature Oaks, however moving west and along the southern edge of Tulleys Farm, the hedgeline is devoid of trees until entering Lodge Wood approx. 500.0m west of the site.



## Landscape Character and Visual Appraisal

The contained character of the road as a rural highway is broken intermittently to accommodate vehicular access points in the roadside vegetation and woodland allowing occasional oblique passing glimpsed views made to the surrounding rural landscape. Grassed verges adjacent to vehicular access points, edge the highway; the entire southern edge of the Tulleys Farm hedgerow boundary is set back from the roadside with separation provided by a broad grassed verge.

The highway is a single carriageway with no designated pedestrian access provision. The appreciation of the rural highway character is narrowly focused, predominantly made from a vehicular vantage. The surrounding vegetation of treelines and hedgerows set above the highway edge, effectively reduces appreciation of the wider encompassing rural setting.

### *Surrounding Rural Landscape*

The land to the north of the first phase site and containing the area allocated for the third phase development third is of an agricultural character and is a mix of pastoral grassland and arable crop. The land is characterised by the brow and vale topography; the land falls from the northern edge of the site before climbing toward the southern edge of the Hundred Acres woodland block. The land, whilst relatively expansive, is well contained by the enclosing and substantial woodland features and by the treelined hedgerows that divide a number of the fields.

The landscape to the eastern edge of the site comprises a number of relatively small / medium scale arable field parcels well defined and characterised by treelined hedgerowed boundaries. The fields are regular in scale and pattern and edge the western extents of the Turners Hill village settlement. The land falls gently but steadily from Turners Hill Road across the fields to the lower lying woodland of Butchers Wood and Miswell Wood; the source of the River Medway. Isolated glimpsed views are possible through the treelined field boundaries to the St. Leonards Church. Due to the separation given by the woodland blocks and treelined hedgerows the rural character to the western edge of Turners Hill, east of the site, would remain unaffected by the proposals.

Whilst contained by treeline features, the agricultural landscape to the south of the treelined Turners Hill Road boundary is comparatively broad and open and of significantly larger scale in relation to the development site area. The field is partially divided by hedgerow vegetation but is predominantly open beyond the adjacent cricket ground and lies upon the flat plateau ridge above the lower lying surrounding land. The field was planted with a ground crop at the time of survey and whilst broadly open is contained to the field boundaries by mature woodland and tree belt vegetation. The southern treelined edge of the field boundary is bounded by the B2110 Paddockhurst Road which heads south west across the wealden landscape to join with the A23 south of Crawley and the M23 highway corridor.

Tulleys Farm lies to the western edge of the site and covers an expanse of land enclosed by the surrounding contiguous woodland blocks stemming north and south of Turners Hill Road, principally edged by that of The Gill. Tulleys Farm is characterised by the diversification of use to a number of the fields adjacent to the site; the fields abutting the western site edge are cluttered with timber pole structures and whilst edged with woodland vegetation are otherwise devoid of contextual features. A number of shed-building units are scattered to the western edge of the adjacent field. Tulleys Farmhouse itself is separated from the field by a substantial treeline and a dense hedgeline running to the farm access drive.







Photograph A - Site (view southeast)



Photograph B - Site (view east)



Photograph C - Site (view southwest)

## ***Land north of Turners Hill Road – Development site - Existing Character***

The survey site area comprises a single field parcel contained by field boundary hedgerows. The southern boundary runs adjacent to the public highway of Turners Hill Road, a busily trafficked treelined and hedgerowed highway corridor that links the settlement of Turners Hill to the eastern urban edge of the Crawley built environment. The boundary hedgerow contains a number of intermittent mature hedgerow trees. The western edge of the hedgerow is demarked by a PRoW footpath that follows a partially defunct and sporadic hedgerow to the western and northern field parcel edge. The hedgerow contains a number of mature trees and bracken scrub. The eastern field boundary is defined by a treeline feature that extends north to join with the ancient woodland block of Butchers Wood - part of the extensive woodland coverage that contains the intimate but open landscape within which the site is located.

The site itself comprises an area of rough grassland with no internal defining features. The relatively small scale field parcel forms an area of land well enclosed to the south, and east by mature boundary vegetation. The vegetation forms part of a mature wooded landscape component and a defining feature between the fields and the semi-urban edge of the Turners Hill village settlement. The site initially falls gently to the north and east before falling dramatically beyond the field boundaries. The elevated field plateau allows longer distant views across the adjacent open agricultural valley landscape to the north toward the southern woodland edge of Hundred Acres. The view is contained by the woodland blocks north of Tulleys Farm to the west and that of Butchers Wood and Miswell Wood to the east and is terminated by the brow of the valley slopes approaching Hundred Acres.

The site is less well contained to the west and is dominated in part by the adjacent Tulleys Farm and the associated farm activity components (including seasonal tourism), and buildings. The farm is set on land that gently falls northward and westward, and away from the western site boundary.







Photograph D - Tulleys Farm - Adjoining land west of site



Photograph E - Tulleys Farm - Adjoining land north of site



Photograph F - Field Parcels - Adjoining land east of site

## Surrounding Rural Landscape

The agricultural landscape to the south of the treelined Turners Hill Road boundary is broad and open and of significantly larger scale in comparison to the site area. The field is partially divided by hedgerow vegetation but is predominantly open beyond the adjacent cricket pitch. The agricultural field was planted with a ground crop at the time of survey and whilst broadly open is contained to the field boundaries by mature woodland and tree belt vegetation. The southern treelined edge of the field boundary is bounded by the B2110 Paddockhurst Road which heads south west across the wealden landscape to join with the A23 south of Crawley and the M23 highway corridor.

The site is located within the surrounding rural agricultural landscape described in the Landscape Management Guidelines and the land to the east and north are characterised by field parcels of varying scale edged and contained by treelined hedgerows and more extensive woodland blocks.



Photograph G - Field Parcels - Land south of Turners Hill Road







Photograph H - Turners Hill Road - Public Highway (view east)



Photograph I - Turners Hill Road - Public Highway (view west)



Photograph J - Turners Hill Conservation Area (Lion Lane)

### ***Turners Hill Road – Public Highway***

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The character of the road quickly changes from the suburban residential edge to one of a rural highway corridor, edged with treelined hedgerows becoming more heavily wooded moving west. The road is relatively frequent in traffic movement and the road operates at the single carriageway national speed limit.

The character of the road as a rural highway is well contained with intermittent breaks to accommodate vehicular access points in the roadside vegetation and woodland allowing occasional and more prolonged views made across the rural wealden landscape. While the highway is a single carriageway and has no allowance for designated pedestrian usage, wide verges adjacent to vehicular access points, edge the highway intermittently

### ***Turners Hill - Residential Settlement***

The settlement of Turners Hill lies to the east of the development site; the heart of which is located approximately 800.0m from the site. Turners Hill extends as a linear settlement primarily along a north south axis and is largely contained within the Turners Hill conservation area. The settlement contains established buildings and properties of traditional character particularly along North Street and Lions Lane; however several more modern buildings are interspersed throughout the village settlement. The site is not visible from the conservation area and the village character would remain unaffected by the proposals.







Photograph K - Ancient Woodland (Butchers Wood)



Photograph L - Treelined Hedgerow Field Boundaries



Photograph M - Woodland Blocks upon undulating topography (The Gill)

### Vegetation

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The field boundary network of tree lined hedgerows is replicated to the rural lanes and highways within the surrounding area and many of the PRoW footpaths are edged with or contained within mature woodland vegetation creating a sense of seclusion and enclosure. This imbues some tranquility but reduces appreciation of views to the surrounding landscape.

### Topography

The site lies within a landscape of local topographical variance. The localised topography is characterised by intimate valley dip slopes, brows and plateaus. The survey site is contained to the southern boundary by Turners Hill Road which falls gently from the western edge of Turners Hill in the east (+174.00m AOD) to Tulleys Farms (+152.00m AOD) continuing to fall gently west toward the eastern edge of Crawley; The site sits upon and to the northern edge of a plateau ridge at approximately (+164.00m AOD); to the south of the site the plateau extends at a level of and above (c. +170.00m AOD). Beyond the northern site edge the agricultural land falls steadily to a valley base of (+125.00m AOD); evidenced by the waterbody located within Miswell Wood approximately 600.0m north of the site. To the east and the village settlement of Turners Hill the land is demonstrated to replicate the plateau valley topography with the village green sitting at over (+170.00m AOD) falling to (+132.00m AOD) approaching the northern village extent.





## Landscape Character and Visual Appraisal

### 6.0 - LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT APPRAISAL

#### *Landscape Character Setting of the High Weald AONB (LCA - HW1)*

The development proposals would have a limited but generally positive effect upon the wider landscape setting of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and specifically the Landscape Character Area of the 'High Weald' (HW1). The extent of effects would be limited primarily due to the containment of existing extensive woodland coverage and intervening treebelts, treelined hedgerow vegetation; the surrounding village and farmstead settlements; and the site itself being largely contained and enclosed within the surrounding wooded landscape and enclosed by field boundary hedge and tree lines.

The access and single storey building development proposals would have only a '**negligible neutral**' effect upon the wider setting due to the scale of the proposals and effective retention of existing features. Whilst there would be some removal of a small section of the southern boundary hedgerow to form the development site access, the hedgerow feature would be lifted and replanted, predominantly retaining the outward character of the rural frontage

The key features would not be significantly affected by the proposals; the proposals are considered to have only a very '**minor**' effect upon the sensitivity of the existing landscape character area. The magnitude of change is judged to be '**negligible**' due to the limited extent of the proposals within the broader Landscape Character Area of the 'High Weald' (HW1). The landscape and ecology mitigation strategy would seek to bolster the valued components of the site frontage and reinforce the broader character of the 'High Weald' (HW1).

The natural burial ground woodland planting proposals would reinforce the existing 'High Weald' landscape character, in accordance with the *High Weald - Landscape Management Guidelines*. The woodland planting proposals would specifically increase;

- 'long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved woodlands',

- '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 including within the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor'.

The proposed woodland planting would take place incrementally over time. The initial tree planting stock would be relatively young and the development of the woodland would take place over a period of years. The woodland planting proposals are therefore considered to accord with the *High Weald - Landscape Management Guidelines*, to sensitively provide restoration of valued landscape features, integrating well with the existing landscape character and more substantially bringing long-term structural enhancement of the local and wider landscape appropriate to the existing landscape scale and pattern.

The long term effects of the woodland planting proposals are considered to provide '**moderate beneficial**' connectivity within and improvement of the existing 'High Weald' (HW1) landscape character area.

#### *Effects upon Local Landscape Character - Existing Site*

The existing site comprises a small field of rough grassland edged with a variably intact mixed species hedge containing a small number of hedgerow Oaks distributed intermittently within, edging the southern site boundary. The field parcel is more open to the northern and western boundaries allowing appreciation of the surrounding setting to be made from the PROW footpath that passes to the western and northern site boundary. The eastern boundary is edged and enclosed by substantial woodland vegetation and field boundary treelines.

The field is associated with the valued rural character of the High Weald but the character is predominantly defined by the surrounding landscape components of ancient woodland set upon the locally undulating topography. The relatively frequent and fast moving traffic upon the Turners Hill Road highway, and the operational activity of the Gatwick Airport terminal audibly disrupts the tranquillity of the setting. The clutter and paraphernalia associated with the Tulleys Farm diversification immediately adjacent to the western boundary visually detracts from the immediate landscape character of the site.

The proposals would include the erection of a small single storey building and carpark. The southern boundary hedgerow would require setting back marginally from the northern edge of Turners Hill Road to accommodate the development access. The hedgerow would be translocated as existing and as such, there would be only brief and minimal effects on the immediate local landscape resource. Other valued defining features would be retained and enhanced within the proposals. The effects upon the sensitivity of the local landscape character is assessed to be '**low**' due to the nature of the proposals and retention of existing features.

The woodland planting proposals would be made incrementally and over a period of time reducing the magnitude of immediate effects. In the longer term the existing landscape character of the site would ultimately change from that of small scale field of rough grassland to one of a woodland / meadow character; the magnitude of change would be '**medium**'.

The proposals would form a visible and recognisable element in the landscape. Whilst there would be a change in setting, the landscape character would remain rural and would be more specifically connected with that of the surrounding landscape of Ancient Woodland, treelined hedgerows and treebelts. The woodland planting proposals are therefore considered to accord with the *High Weald - Landscape Management Guidelines*, providing 'long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved woodlands' appropriate to the existing landscape scale and pattern; there would be a '**slight beneficial**' effect upon the local landscape character consequential to the proposals.

#### *Effects upon Local Landscape Character - Turners Hill Road*

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 southern 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 southern boundary hedgerow would require setting back marginally from the northern edge of Turners Hill Road to accommodate the development access. The hedgerow would be translocated as existing and as such, there would be only brief and minimal effects on the immediate local landscape resource.

The mature trees would be retained and protected within the proposals; the effected roadside hedgerow vegetation whilst marginally set back to accommodate the vehicular site access would be limited in extent and would be located at a point where the existing road and hedge kink southward 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 using the 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 landscape 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 development site is considered to be of '**low**' sensitivity.

The proposals would incur the removal of a small section of the hedgerow to accommodate the highway access. The hedgerow would otherwise be translocated as existing within the proposals; the magnitude of change is 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 to 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 provenance wildflower grassland, strengthening the local biodiversity and ecology habitat for conservation value. The translocation of the hedgeline would be a transient effect and would be ameliorated within a short duration.

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.





## Landscape Character and Visual Appraisal

### **Turners Hill - Residential Settlement**

The settlement of Turners Hill lies to the east of the development site; the heart of which is located approximately 800.0m from the site and contained within the Turners Hill conservation area. The site is not visible from the conservation area and the village character would remain unaffected by the proposals.

### **Surrounding Rural Landscape**

The land to the north of the first phase site and containing the area allocated for the third phase development third is of an agricultural character and is a mix of pastoral grassland and arable crop. The land is characterised by the brow and vale topography; the land falls from the northern edge of the site before climbing toward the southern edge of the Hundred Acres woodland block. The land, whilst relatively expansive, is well contained by the enclosing and substantial woodland features and by the treelined hedgerows that divide a number of the fields.

Due to the intervening vegetation in combination with the topographic nature and distance from the southern site boundary, the access proposals and reception building would not have significant influence over the surrounding landscape to the north of the site and the character would remain unaffected by the proposals to the southern site boundary. The woodland planting proposals would restore and enhance the local landscape character of ancient woodland surrounding the site. The proposals would have a positive effect upon the land north of the site boundaries.

The landscape to the eastern edge of the site comprises a number of relatively small / medium scale arable field parcels well defined and characterised by treelined hedgerowed boundaries. The land falls gently but steadily from Turners Hill Road across the fields to the lower lying woodland of Butchers Wood and Miswell Wood.

Due to the separation given by the woodland blocks and treelined hedgerows, and the falling topography to the east of the site, the rural character to the western edge of Turners Hill would remain unaffected by the proposals.

The agricultural landscape to the south of the treelined Turners Hill Road boundary is comparatively broad and open and of significantly larger scale in relation to the development site area. The field is contained to the field boundaries by mature woodland and tree belt vegetation.

The presence of intervening mature vegetation to the Turners Hill Road public highway would be bolstered by the planting proposals; the proposals would have only a negligible and localised effect. There would be an imperceptible change to the local landscape character to the land south of Turners Hill Road.

Tulleys Farm lies to the western edge of the site and covers an expanse of land enclosed by the surrounding contiguous woodland blocks stemming north and south of Turners Hill Road, principally edged by that of The Gill. The fields of Tulleys Farm abutting the western site edge are cluttered with timber pole structures and whilst edged with woodland vegetation are otherwise devoid of contextual features. A number of shed-building units are scattered to the western edge of the adjacent field.

The lack of intervening landscape component features to the western site boundary allows the visually disruptive degradation of the local landscape character inherent to Tulleys Farm to prevail to the immediate boundary with the site. The site proposals would incorporate the repopulating of a native broadleaved woodland character to the site edge along the route of the PROW to the western boundary. The proposals would have marked beneficial effect upon the local landscape character to the western boundary and would provide greater contextual influence and containment to the land of Tulleys Farm west of the site.

### **Zone of Visual Influence**

The Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) for the development proposals is well contained and is set predominantly within land localised to the surrounding site boundaries. There are limited public right of way footpaths in close proximity to the existing survey site area, and the proposed site location is not prominent within views from outlying public rights of way.

The survey site is largely contained by the mature woodland areas surrounding the land north of Turners Hill Road. The site enclosure is defined by the treelined and hedgerow boundaries to the south and east. To the north east the woodland block of Butchers Wood contains views with the open agricultural land lying between Butchers Wood and The Gill being enclosed by the extensive woodland block of Hundred Acres. Views made from the west are interrupted by intervening vegetation, buildings and site paraphernalia of Tulleys Farm. The localised topography whilst predominantly level across the immediate survey site area, rises and falls with gentle regular ridge and hollow undulation beyond the site, reducing views across the outlying agricultural landscape north of Turners Hill Road. The field boundary hedgerows and treelined edge to the Turners Hill Road public highway diffuse and reduce views made from the farmland and PROWs south of the site and highway corridor.

Following initial desk top study, the surrounding landscape of the Land at Turners Hill Road has been appraised for views made toward the survey site area and for the potential of visual effects arising from the development proposals. The appraisal allows the identification of viewpoint sensitivity in relation to the proposed site development and informs the development of a landscape mitigation strategy.

The Zone of Visual Influence would be contained by the existing landscape components, the extent of which is defined below.

### **Development Proposals - Zone of Visual Influence**

The development proposals for the natural burial site upon the land north of Turners Hill Road, to the west of Turners Hill are two-fold and would comprise the phased planting of native woodland which would extend incrementally across the site over time. The initial phase of planting would be undertaken within the first year and would extend over the western area of the field parcel to the north of Turners Hill Road. The proposals would include a visitor reception building and car park to the southern site boundary.

The proposals would incorporate a single storey reception building, set back from the roadside frontage. The building would be located to the northern edge of a small car park area. The car park would be accessed from Turners Hill Road to the southern site boundary and would require the forming of visibility splays to meet highway standards. The proposals would seek to lift and relocate the existing hedgeline; the translocation would effectively set back the existing hedgeline from the highway edge to form the visibility splays.

The visual effects consequential to the above development, describing the zone of visual influence, are outlined below.

The southern site boundary is edged with intermittent mature boundary trees and hedgerow vegetation filtering and diffusing views made toward the site. Potential receptors are limited to the southern aspect of the site and would be made predominantly by the vehicular users of Turners Hill Road. Views would be made obliquely on approach and in passing and would likely be made at speed reducing the appreciation of the site.

The treelined hedgerow to the southern edge of the road further limits and prevents views made from PROWs further south. Whilst seasonal views may be more revealing, the ZVI is considered well contained to the southern site edge.

Immediately to the eastern edge of the proposed site boundary is the farm dwellings and outbuildings of Tulleys Farm. The land edging the site is in private ownership and there is no public access made upon it. Tulleys Farm encourages tourism as a working farm, holding seasonal events through the year. Visitors would be aware of the site area which is less well contained to the western boundary but the internal farm components visually filter and interrupt open views to the site which is elevated above the farm. The ZVI is contained by the farm buildings and intervening vegetation west of the site.

To the north longer ranging views to the site area are not perceptible. The extensive dense woodland block vegetation of mixed species broadleaved trees and developed understorey considerably reduce views made toward the survey site area. There are few PROWs crossing the land to the north and are overwhelmingly contained by woodland with views further limited by the localised slope and brow topography of the intimate wealden landscape. The ZVI is contained to the immediate slopes north of the site area south of Hundred Acres wood.

The landscape to the north, west and north east falls steadily from the site plateau. To the east of the site the land falls dramatically immediately upon entering the woodland block of Butchers Wood. Views are extensively diminished by the dense woodland block vegetation but are effectively blocked by the topographic brow immediately east of the site. Views to the site from within and beyond the woodland block are not achievable. The Zone of Visual Influence is judged to be well contained by the existing topography and woodland vegetation to the eastern site edge.

The survey site is located to the west of the residential village settlement of Turners Hill which has developed in a linear pattern following a north south axis. The eastern site boundary is edged with substantial treelined hedgerow and woodland block vegetation. Residential properties to the west of the village settlement are not considered to attain vantage of the survey site. The built form of the settlement area prevents publicly accessible views from within the village.

The primary school and church located to the south western edge of the settlement area, aid the containment of views made westward toward the site from further east. Whilst separated by agricultural land, users / visitors of the school and church are not considered to receive views of the site due to intervening vegetation and the slight undulation of the intervening landscape.





## Landscape Character and Visual Appraisal

### Visual Impact Assessment Summary

Views made to the proposed development site area are extremely limited within the surrounding landscape and especially so from areas of public access and public rights of way, bridleways and footpaths. Whilst the land is relatively level to the site location and elevated views can be made from the site to the surrounding landscape to the north, the range of visibility is heavily reduced by the extensive landscape components of woodland vegetation, treelines and hedgerowed field boundaries and localised topography. The site is very well contained by existing landscape components and features to the site boundaries such that publicly accessible views are extremely limited and the compact Zone of Visual Influence is reflected by this. With the development of a landscape and visual mitigation strategy, proposals for the proposed development within the site would be judged to have beneficial effects upon visual quality of the local landscape resource of the High Weald AONB or from public access made within it.

The proposals would include the formation of a new carpark access to the proposed site. Whilst the internal site is unlikely to be visible from the highway location, the hedgerow would be set back to accommodate the access visibility splays. The existing hedgerow would be transplanted and there would be a physical and visual widening of the highway and highway verge. The mitigation proposals would strengthen the local rural character in the longer term with the planting of native species trees and shrubs and the augmentation of the existing hedgerow. The planting proposals would follow the guidelines of the West Sussex Landscape Management Guidelines.

The Turners Hill Road is a narrow highway corridor. Traffic passes along the road at the national speed limit (60mph). There are existing vehicular access points in the immediate vicinity of the proposed site; the nearby cricket field, the secondary access to Tulleys Farm and joint access with the site located at the PRoW as it crosses the highway lie within 370.0m of the viewpoint location. The main access to Tulleys Farm is located within 500.0m of the viewpoint location.

The presence of widened roadside verges with hedgerows is evident along the Tulleys Farm roadside southern boundary. Visibility past the site is relatively poor due to the kink in the hedgerow as it follows the curvature of the highway passing the site. The creation of visibility splays would improve the visibility of the highway route approaching the cricket field and PRoW access.

The mitigation planting would be a beneficial element reinforcing and improving the rural setting of the Turners Hill Road highway corridor.

- The Zone of Visual Influence for the development proposals is illustrated within;

*LLD787 Figure No.01 Zone of Visual Influence and Viewpoints.*

- Additional Viewpoints for the Turners Hill Road development access proposals is illustrated within;

*LLD787 Figure No.02 Turners Hill Road; Viewpoints.*

### 7.0 - LANDSCAPE MITIGATION PROPOSALS AND DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

The proposals should seek to maintain the landscape baseline surrounding the development with minimal impact upon existing landscape components such as significant trees or hedgerows. The development proposals would be contained within the wider landscape by the existing landscape features of mature trees, boundary treelines and woodland blocks enclosing the site location; by the localised topography to the northern edge of the site and by the existing buildings of Tulleys Farm and the residential edge further east of the site location.

The landscape impacts and visual effects upon which the surrounding landscape is subjected are identified and summarised within the previous sections. Following the appraisal of the site proposals within the surrounding landscape environment, the containment of the site and nature of the development proposals indicate that mitigation measures should be implemented to nullify effects made on views from Public Rights of Way - Footpaths and Bridleways and publicly accessible areas.

*- Any proposed access should incur minimal impact upon the southern hedgerow. The hedgerow boundary should be replanted as existing within the proposals to retain the visual quality of the existing landscape character. The hedgerow boundary vegetation should be reinforced within the proposals with an additional native tree and understorey shrub planting buffer to the northern edge, augmenting the rural highway character.*

*- The proposed single storey building should be of a traditional rural vernacular utilising materials of local contextual design. The building should be set back from the highway boundary to reduce visual effects made from Turners Hill Road and should be sufficiently separated from the adjacent PROW footpath to ameliorate the built form in proximity to the public footpath.*

*- The proposed car park should incorporate planting bays within the layout to further soften and diffuse views to the proposed building from the south.*

*- The western site boundary is relatively undefined by existing mature vegetation. The proposals should seek to implement a body of native tree planting to the western boundary to reduce and contain visual effects and distinguish the site from the adjacent site of Tulleys Farm in the longer term, extending and visually connecting with the existing western boundary vegetation and reinforcing the surrounding landscape character.*

- The mitigation strategy proposals are illustrated within;

*LLD787 Figure no.03 Ecological and Landscape Mitigation Strategy.*

The landscape proposals seek to enhance the existing Wealden landscape character whilst softening and filtering glimpsed views from the Turners Hill Road public highway to the southern edge of the site and views made from the adjacent public right of way footpath to the western site edge. The proposals should seek to establish greater ecological connectivity and diversity of the existing habitat mosaic, encouraging the profusion of invertebrates and insects and providing opportunities for foraging, nesting and hibernation for protected species such as Birds, Bats, Reptiles, Amphibians and Mammals. The planting proposals should include species of locally prominent origin, suited to the local soil type found to the western edge of Turners Hill, West Sussex.

The proposals would include the planting of native species tree group trees and intermittent scattered trees to the southern and western boundaries. Native species tree planting should be implemented to the car park planting bays further diffusing and containing views made toward the proposed development.

The proposals would establish a dense mixed native species hedgerow to the edge of the proposed parking area, maintaining the rural landscape character within the proposed development and enhancing the habitat corridors within the site area.

The proposals would include the planting of native mixed species understorey shrub planting to the southern and western site boundaries. The native shrub planting would reinforce the variably intact existing hedgerow vegetation against the Turners Hill Road highway corridor, whilst establishing a significant swathe of newly created diverse wildlife habitat.

The local soil type is recorded as 'Slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage'. The landscape proposals would seek to establish open areas of UK provenance wildflower grassland. The proposed wildflower grassland seed mix is composed of species that are adapted to growing on soils with a high clay content.

The existing hedgerow is to be trans-located within the proposals. The hedgerow and boundary native buffer shrub planting should be sown with a wildflower grassland seed mix suited to woodland floor / hedgerows. The proposed wildflower grassland seed mix contains wild flowers and grasses that are tolerant of semi-shade suitable for sowing beneath newly planted or established hedges and on woodland edges, rides and glades. The native wildflower would be encouraged to self seed to the proposed natural woodland areas.

The phasing and successional native species tree planting of the natural woodland provide the opportunity to restore the wooded Wealden landscape character, ultimately forming a connective body of woodland habitat to the northern edge of Turners Hill Road; in accordance with the aims of the Landscape Management Guidelines. The proposed woodland and species rich meadows would increase the site potential for local wildlife and protected species providing substantial gain in site diversity, strengthening the existing habitat mosaic and extending the ecological resource.

The landscape and ecology proposals are further described within the following drawings and documents;

- *LLD787 / 01 - Location Plan - Development Phasing;*

- *LLD787/ 03 Ecological and Landscape Masterplan*

- *LLD787 / 02 - Illustrative Landscape Proposals - Phase 01;*

- *LLD787 / 04 - Landscape Planting Matrix*

- *LLD787 Ecological and Landscape Design Strategy and Outline Planting Specification.*

