



Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Land South of St.
Stephen's Church,
Hamsland, Horsted



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1. Introduction

- 1.1** This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared by Landscape Collective on behalf of Rydon Homes.
- 1.2** The LVA has been prepared to support a planning application for a residential development and associated infrastructure. The site area within the red line boundary (henceforth referred to as 'the Site') is 1.13 hectares (ha).
- 1.3** The Site is allocated for housing in the Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations Development Plan¹. The site is referenced as SA29 Land south of St. Stephen's Church and is allocated for 30 dwellings.

The Context

- 1.4** The Site is located on existing greenfield pasture on the southern edge of Horsted Keynes village, south of St. Stephen's Church. A field access west of the church provides access to the site from Hamsland. The Site is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Purpose of the LVA

- 1.5** The LVA considers the potential effects of the proposed development on:
- landscape elements and features such as vegetation, topography and water bodies;
 - landscape character; and
 - visual amenity.
- 1.6** The primary objectives of the LVA are as follows:
- To identify, describe and evaluate the current landscape character of the site and its surrounding area.
 - To identify, describe and evaluate any notable individual landscape elements and/or features within the site.

¹ Mid Sussex District Council (July 2020). Site Allocations Development Plan Document. Regulation 19 Submissions Draft.

- To determine the sensitivity of the landscape to the type of development proposed.
- To identify potential visual receptors (i.e. people who would be able to view the proposed development) and to evaluate their sensitivity to the type of changes proposed.
- To identify and describe any effects of the proposed development in so far as they affect the landscape and/or views and to evaluate the magnitude of change owing to those effects.

Key Considerations

2.1 The LVA has been undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute. The visual and character appraisal was undertaken in August 2020 when vegetation was in leaf. Consideration has also been given to the effect on visibility during winter when vegetation is not in leaf.

2. Methodology

2.2 This LVA has been undertaken with regard to the following best practice guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) – Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals – Landscape Institute Technical Design Note TGN 06/19.

2.3 As recommended within the published guidance, landscape (elements and character) and visual effects are assessed separately. A detailed methodology is provided at Appendix 2.

2.4 For the purposes of this assessment, unless otherwise stated, changes to landscape and visual amenity as a result of the proposed development are considered to be permanent and non-reversible.

2.5 The nature of any effect can be adverse i.e. negative, beneficial i.e. positive or neutral i.e. neither wholly adverse nor wholly beneficial. Unless otherwise stated, all effects are considered to be adverse in nature.

2.6 The LVA has been undertaken for the proposal assuming the project is below the threshold for EIA development. The appraisal is therefore scoped accordingly in proportion to likely effects of importance and focusses on the salient issues and considerations, in addition to alignment of the proposals with landscape planning policy objectives.

2.7 The LVA assesses effects on the present day users of heritage assets i.e. as residential receptors or visitors and as landmarks that contribute to landscape character, however the assessment of effect on setting is not undertaken within the scope of this appraisal.

Extent of the Study Area

2.8 The extent of the study area, as shown by Figure 1, has been determined through a combination of desk top study and site survey. Owing to the wooded nature of the study area and existing built development on the north side of the Site, the extent of visibility is localised to within 1 km radius from the Site.

3. Baseline Conditions

Site Description

- 3.1** The Site comprises one field that is generally rectangular in shape with a narrow strip of land that extends to the field access gate on Hamsland, on the west side of St. Stephen's Church. The Site is shown by the aerial plan on Figure 2 and the nature of the Site and its boundaries by the site context photographs, Figures 3 and 4.
- 3.2** The landform of the Site slopes down by approximately 8 metres from the north west to the south-east. The higher point lies at an elevation of approximately 92.23m AOD and the lower point lies at 84.23m AOD. The Site does not contain any ditches or watercourses.
- 3.3** A tree survey undertaken by Broad Oak Tree Consultants² identifies 39 individual trees, varying in age from 25-200 years, with small tree groups and hedges. The vegetation comprises overgrown field boundary hedges to the west and south and domestic garden hedges and tree planting. Three oak trees are identified as 'A' Category, located near the field access to the north-west of the Site and in the overgrown hedge to the south-west and south east.
- 3.4** Some of the hornbeam trees within the overgrown hedge have formed quite sizeable canopies and the interconnected, shared canopies of numerous oak and ash trees are also located in the hedge with an understorey of variable density comprising holly and occasional hornbeam hedging. Tree health across the site varies with many ash trees showing signs commensurate with ash dieback and ash trees on and surrounding the Site have a limited lifespan.
- 3.5** The garden hedges to the north and east boundaries are regularly maintained at different heights. Garden trees include birch and cypress.

Description of the Site Context

² Broad Oak Tree Consultants (March 2020). Report on the Inspection of Trees.

- 3.6** The Site is bounded to the north by gardens of semi-detached and detached properties on Hamsland, in addition to the Catholic Church of St. Stephens. Terraced two storey properties lie on the north side of Hamsland and partially overlook the Site. Properties with large gardens border the Site to the east.
- 3.7** Beyond the site boundary, properties on Hamsland are located to the north-west with gardens backing onto a field west of the Site, designated as Public Open Space. Fields border the Site to the south, south-east and south-west and are either horse paddocks on the fringes of the village or use for grazing livestock.
- 3.8** Horsted Keynes is located on a high point on a sandstone ridge, lying between incised stream valleys. The ridges and valleys form an intricate pattern, where the valleys are narrow and steep sided and the ridges form an array around the valleys. Land descends south and south east of the village towards the Danehill Brook valley, lying approximately 0.7 km from the Site.
- 3.9** The area is densely wooded with frequent blocks of fields are generally small and irregularly shaped.
- 3.10** Public Bridleway 19HK follows Wyatts Lane approximately 0.1 km east of the Site and forms part of the Sussex Border Path long distance route. This route is flanked by tall hedgerow or trees for much of its length. Public Footpath 20HK connects the Sussex border path with Treemans Road, located 0.26 km south of the Site and passes through fields on the north edge of Sandpits Wood.

Designations

- 3.11** The Site and the wider surrounds is located in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The implications of the AONB designation is discussed further in Section 5.0.
- 3.12** The Horsted Keynes Conservation Area is located relatively close to the north-east boundary of the Site, although there is no intervisibility from public areas within the Conservation Area and the Site. Other listed buildings include Wyatts located c.300m south-east and Old Keysford c.0.57 to the south-west although these do not share intervisibility with the Site and are not assessed in further detail in this appraisal.

3.13 Ancient Woodland is frequent within the study area; Sandpits Wood is closest to the Site located c.0.27 km south.

Landscape Character

3.14 A hierarchy of published national/regional, county and district level landscape character assessments provide a foundation for understanding the key characteristics of the host landscape. The national and county level assessments are useful for providing the context of the study area although the district level assessment is of the most relevant scale to the Site and provides the key baseline reference for the landscape character appraisal.

National Landscape Character

3.15 England is divided into 159 National [Landscape] Character Areas (NCAs). The application site is located within NCA 122 High Weald³ (refer to Appendix 2). The following key characteristics are relevant to the Site and the study area:

- A faulted landform of clay, sand and soft sandstones... deeply incised...with numerous gill streams forming the headwaters of a number of major rivers....
- An intimate hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far reaching views giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity....
- Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a system of radiating droveways often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks. Church towers and spires on the ridges are an important local landmark. There is a dense network of small, narrow and winding lanes often enclosed by high hedgerows and steep banks.
- Strong feeling of remoteness due to rural wooded character....
- Extensive broadleaved woodland with a high proportion of ancient woodland...small woods and shaws....
- Rural settlement pattern is a mix of dispersed farmsteads and hamlets

³ Natural England. National Character Area 122 High Weald.

- Small, medium and irregular shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded areas.
- A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and smaller farmsteads with medieval ridgetop villages.

County Landscape Character

3.16 In the West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment⁴, the Site is located within the HW1 Landscape Character Area (see Appendix 6). Key characteristics that are of some relevance to the Site and/or its environs include: -

- Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Plateau, ridges and deep secluded valleys, cut by gill streams.
- Significant wooded cover, a substantial portion of it ancient and a very dense network of shaws, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pattern of small irregular shaped assart fields and some larger fields.
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hill tops and ...and some expanded villages
- Varied traditional rural buildings with diverse materials including timber framing, wealden stone, and varieties of local brick and tile hanging.

District Landscape Character

3.17 In the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment⁵, the Site lies within Landscape Character Area 6. The Key Characteristics listed for this LCA are the same as those identified above for the HW1 West Sussex County landscape character area, but under the paragraphs relating to description and experience and to settlement form

⁴ West Sussex County Council (October 2005). A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape.

⁵ Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County (November 2005). A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex.

and distinctiveness, the following points are noted of relevance to the Horsted Keynes environs :-

- Incised streams define landform, dissecting the landscape deeply, carving it into an interlocking array of twisting ridges and secluded, steep-sided narrow valleys.
- The southern slopes of the Forest Ridge are much longer, stretching over a few miles to the River Ouse.
- Many of the streams contain hammer, ornamental or fishponds, the last notably in the valleys flanking Birchgrove north east of Horsted Keynes.
- A densely wooded landscape clothes this intricate terrain. The woodlands are predominantly deciduous but contain much mixed woodland and coniferous planting (as well as exotic tree species associated with designed landscapes). Many woods are small to medium sized.
- A landscape of small, irregular-shaped fields predominantly used for livestock grazing. These are the characteristic groups of historic assart pastures.
- Settlement in the High Weald is typically dispersed, based on an historic pattern of numerous farmsteads within discrete or enclosed small-scale holdings, often set on high ridges, hilltops and high ground. By the 14th century, nucleated villages had emerged, their dominance as settlements progressively emerging in the modern era. Settlement in the area was therefore unobtrusive and scanty until the 19th Century, when the High Weald became a favourite area for the extension in the Victorian and Edwardian eras of 'London into Sussex', characterised by widespread, often lavish, house development, the hilly woodland settings highly prized developed as a setting for these houses have bequeathed a legacy of exotic trees and shrubs which are today locally dominant in the landscape
- The style of rural historic building in the area is diverse. There are good examples of timber-framed buildings including "Wealden" houses ...The so-called Wealden stone from the Ardingly Sandstone and Cuckfield Stone are members of the Hastings Beds...The stone is very variable in colour depending on its origin, weathering and lichen cover....It tends to be used as ashlar (cut and dressed stone) for more substantial and expensive buildings, rarely used as rough or random stone. Notable concentrations of the use of this stone include at Horsted Keynes... Apart from some timber-framed house more characteristic of

the area is the predominance of locally diverse reddish brick and patterned, hung tiles, and some weather boarding typical.

Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation

3.18 The technique of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is to identify historic landscape types associated with units/areas of land, based upon their historic attributes.

3.19 A radial search area of 500 m distance from the Site with reference to the desk based Sussex HLC mapping, indicates a landscape type of informal fieldscapes, which are of probable medieval origin. The Site has both straight (adjoining more modern settlement) and older, more sinuous field boundaries. To the north the Site is mainly adjoined by areas classified as modern settlement. Immediately to the south of the Site there are some relatively extensive areas of assarts (of medieval date) i.e. small/medium size fields cut out of woodland/cleared for agricultural use, as well as remaining strips/areas of ancient semi natural woodland.

3.20 The informal fieldscapes are a relatively common historic landscape type in the immediate vicinity of Horsted Keynes and is associated with former piecemeal enclosure.

An Assessment of the Existing Landscape Character up to 1km from the Application Site by the Report's Author

3.21 The author's assessment forms a landscape character baseline of the Site and surrounding study area, focussing on areas that share intervisibility with the Site as a further refinement of the published assessments. The following criteria is used:

- Landscape scale.
- Landform and enclosure.
- Landscape pattern and complexity.
- Settlement pattern and human influence.
- Skylines.
- Intervisibility.

Landscape Scale

- 3.22** The landscape scale is generally small to medium with fields of irregular shape and size.

Landform and Enclosure

- 3.23** The Site is located on gentle to moderately sloping land which falls away southwards from the ridgeline/hilltop location of the historic village core. The Site is relatively enclosed, either by existing buildings or vegetation. A glimpsed, distant view is possible between boundary tree lines towards the elevated scarp of the South Downs.

Landscape pattern and complexity

- 3.24** The pattern of the local landscape south of the Site is a relatively complex one comprising small pockets of settlement, historic farmsteads, as well as few larger estate houses, small agricultural fields and woodland.

Settlement pattern and human influence

- 3.25** The village of Horsted Keynes has both a historic linear and a more nucleated pattern associated with later infill and suburban estate expansion as evident on the south side of the village adjoining the Site. The central green of the village associated with historic core is elongated and provides an attractive setting.
- 3.26** The settlement pattern throughout the village is diverse, with suburban forms of development close to the Site along Hamsland, comprising 20th Century development of terraces, semi-detached and detached properties in addition to bungalows, in a fairly dense settlement pattern. Houses become more dispersed in the southern parts of the village, typified by large detached properties in large gardens.
- 3.27** Tranquillity can be described as the relative absence of noise, visual intrusion or activity. The site's tranquillity is influenced by low levels of activity and noise from the adjoining residential properties and road, although a relatively quiet residential road and there no street lighting currently.

Skylines

3.28 Skylines usually contain a mixture of elements and features including built form and vegetation. In the context of the Site, the existing residential development to the west, east and north of the site occupies the skyline and generally the tree belt to the south and west. In areas further away from the village, the skyline is frequently composed of woodland blocks.

Intervisibility

3.29 Intervisibility between the Site and surrounding areas is very limited owing to the built up fringe of the village area north of the Site and the tree belts to the southern boundary. A dense network of hedgerows further limit intervisibility from the east, for example Wyatts Lane is flanked by dense hedgerows and trees. The fields immediately south share some intervisibility with the Site, although the Site is largely screened by the tree belts on the boundary and the Site makes a very limited contribution to the surrounding character.

Baseline Visual Receptors

3.30 A combination of desk study and observation from Site has reduced the study area for the LVA to a 1 km distance from the site boundary. As described above, intervisibility is very limited as a result of local variations in intervening landform and/or the layering effect of woodlands, as well as a dense network of hedgerow trees. Beyond this distance potential small-scale residential development is very unlikely to be discernible.

3.31 The extent of visibility from publicly accessible locations can be described as:

- Potential visibility extends up to 0.2 km westwards across the POS to the rear of properties on Treemans Rd, albeit heavily filtered by trees to the site boundary.
- Southwards, potential intervisibility include the Public Open Space (POS) to the south west, extending to the Public Right of Way (PRoW) 20HK 0.27 km southwards. Sandpits Wood limits visibility further beyond.
- A partial view of the Site from Hamsland near the existing field access and east of St. Stephen's Church.

Residential Properties

- 3.32** A relatively small number of residents located close to the Site on Hamsland and Wyatts Lane are potential visual receptors of the proposed development. Nine properties on the north side of Hamsland have partial views into the site near the existing field access and St. Stephen's Church.
- 3.33** Other residential views and private views are not assessed as part of the LVIA. Private views into the Site are typically from the upper floors of dwellings backing onto the Site along the north and east boundary. Visibility varies owing to vegetation within the curtilages of the residential properties. These residential properties are shown by Figures 3 and 4.
- 3.34** Further afield, the potential for any intervisibility between existing residential properties and the proposed development would be extremely restricted and these would be private views. For example, a few properties back onto the POS west of the Site located on Treemans Road and may have very glimpsed views towards the Site heavily filtered by the tree belt on the site boundary.

Roads and Public Rights of Way

- 3.35** There is limited visibility of the Site from lanes and streets at a close proximity. In general, these would be restricted by the presence of intervening existing built form and/or vegetation in the landscape between the visual receptor (person using the highway) and the location of the proposed development.
- 3.36** It is likely that the only available view would be from Public Footpath 20HK south of the Site and this is represented by Assessment Viewpoint 4.
- 3.37** It is very unlikely that there would be any views from Wyatts Lane/ the bridleway 19HK at the closest proximity as views are restricted by the orientation of the route, dense intervening hedgerows, intervening properties and the layering effect of existing vegetation close to the site. This view is represented by Assessment Viewpoint 3.
- 3.38** Views from Hamsland are limited to a glimpsed view from near the field access gate and Church where partial views of the Site are possible and is represented by Assessment Viewpoint 1.

Selection of Representative Views

3.39 A comprehensive visual assessment has been undertaken of the study area. However, in line with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition), a number of representative viewpoints (four in total) have been selected to form the basis of a detailed visual assessment.

3.40 The selected viewpoints are regarded as being representative of the range of potential views and receptors e.g. users of the public highway or PRow networks, etc. from various distances and directions around the sites. The representative viewpoints are not intended to be exhaustive. A greater number of locations would have demonstrated no visual effect. The locations of the representative viewpoints are shown on Figure 1.

3.41 The following table summarises the overall sensitivity of the representative viewpoints.

Table 3.1 Assessment Viewpoints

Viewpoint				
	Type of Visual receptor	Susceptibility	Value	Overall Sensitivity
Viewpoint 1 – View from Hamsland looking south	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Occupiers of residential properties	(a)Low (b)High	Medium Medium	Low High
Viewpoint 2 – View from public open space west of the Site	Users of the public open space	Medium	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 3 – Glimpsed View from the public	Users of the public bridleway	Medium	High	High

Viewpoint				
	Type of Visual receptor	Susceptibility	Value	Overall Sensitivity
bridleway 19HK/ Wyatts Lane looking north - north east.				
Viewpoint 4 – View from the public footpath 20HK looking north- north east	Users of the public right of way footpath	Medium	High	High

3.42 Viewpoint 1 (Figure 5) is located on the north side of Hamsland opposite the field access gate from the Site. The view is largely dominated by St Stephens Church in the foreground and a mature oak tree next to the field access gate. A small part of the Site is visible beyond the gate with a vegetated backdrop. The wider view is characterised by dense suburban housing development on Hamsland.

3.43 Viewpoint 2 (Figure 6) is taken from the public open space immediately west of the Site, in the context of existing residential development on the edge of the village. It is a close range view of the tree belt on the west boundary of the Site. The Site beyond the tree belt is barely discernible, although may be more visible in winter. The wider view extends across fields to the south towards a wooded horizon where the Downs are glimpsed in the distance.

3.44 Viewpoint 3 (Figure 7) is a glimpsed view from bridleway 19HK from a field access looking north-east. Hedgerows and trees beyond pasture in the foreground limit the view to the middle distance. The Site is not discernible in the view.

3.45 **Viewpoint 4** (Figure 8) is taken from the Public Footpath 20HK at a distance of approximately 0.28km south of the Site and is characterised by the rural edge of the village. The view extends across a horse paddock in the foreground toward a hedgerow to the field boundary, where scattered residential properties on Hamsland are glimpsed between dense trees beyond the field. Scattered properties on Treemans Road are visible to the west.

4. The Proposed Development

Description of the Proposed Development

- 4.1** The development proposals are shown by the site layout in Appendix 4 and plate 4.1 below.



Plate 4.1 Proposed Site Plan

- 4.2** The proposed development comprises 30 dwellings, including a two storey apartment block containing six units in the northern part of the site. The main access road will extend into the Site from Hamsland at the location of the field gate to the north west part of the site following the contours of the Site.
- 4.3** Several minor lanes are accessed of the main road, with two spurs to the south and one to the north-east. Parking courts are located in the north part of the site.
- 4.4** As the Site is gently sloping, the proposed development will require localised cut and fill to create development platforms for the proposed dwellings and access. The principle of the levels strategy is to follow the site topography and the primary

access road is aligned to follow the site contours. The cluster of houses in the southern part of the site will step down in level to follow the landform. The localised cut and fill for development platforms is anticipated to generally be in the range of less than a 0.5m change in level.

- 4.5** Sustainable drainage attenuation will be in the form of an underground crate system. A pumping station will be located to the southern part of the site and will have appropriate screening.

Protecting the Character of the High Weald

- 4.6** The design has evolved with reference to the High Weald Residential Design Guide⁶, the West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment Management Guidelines for HW1 High Weald and Site Allocation Policy SA29 (refer to Chapter 5).
- 4.7** The building layout will create a strong building line to the street as seen in traditional High Weald Villages and parts of Horsted Keynes. Houses and garages are connected to create this strong building line and where possible, allocated car parking on drives is set back into the building line to reduce the visual impact of cars on the street. Plots 16 and 17 form a tight cluster of buildings in around a courtyard.
- 4.8** Whilst sharing a common palette of building materials that are appropriate for the local vernacular, building form and elevations are varied to create an interesting streetscene. The front curtilages of the new dwellings are generally small in scale, where the built form defines the street. Where rear garden boundaries are visible from the public realm, these will be constructed as walls in similar materials as the dwellings to create a coherent and unified streetscene.
- 4.9** The minor lanes will be surfaced in a contrasting material to the main road to reinforce the hierarchy of routes and create an attractive setting that is pedestrian friendly.
- 4.10** The development will remain unlit as surrounding areas, subject to this being acceptable to WSCC.

⁶ High Weald AONB (November 2019). The High Weald Residential Design Guide.

Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape and Protecting Amenity

- 4.11** The development area is located within an open field, retaining all tree belts to the site boundaries. Where rear gardens of new dwellings back onto the boundary tree belts, garden boundaries will be offset by three metres to safeguard the retention of this vegetation and facilitate continued effective management of this vegetation belt in the long-term. All trees and hedgerows will be protected in accordance with BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations.
- 4.12** The two storey apartment block is located in the northern part of the site to relate to the settlement edge of the village. Lower density development is located in the southern plots 29 and 30 as a transition to the rural edge of the village.
- 4.13** The boundary tree belts will be supplemented with native tree and shrub species to strengthen the existing vegetation.
- 4.14** Occasional trees of locally appropriate species will be planted within the development where space allows. The verges within the public realm will be seeded with a diverse natural grassland mix to enhance the landscape character.
- 4.15** Building materials for surfacing and boundary treatments will be consistent with the architectural character and will be appropriate for the semi-rural character and local vernacular, avoiding any suburban treatments.

5. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.1 The revised NPPF was published in February 2019. The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10). Specifically, paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For plan-making this means that:

a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;

b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas⁵, unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area⁶; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

5.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF defines the three dimensions to sustainable development. These dimensions are economic, social and environmental. In detail the environmental dimension is explained in the following terms:

"...an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

5.3 Section 12 of the NPPF is entitled 'Achieving well-designed places'. The opening line of paragraph 125 states:

"Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable..."

5.4 Paragraph 127 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

5.5

Section 15 of the NPPF refers to 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment'. Paragraph 170 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”

5.6 Paragraph 171 of the NPPF states:

“Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.”

5.7 The first line of paragraph 172 expands on the requirements of paragraph 171 by saying:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing 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 these issues...”

Local Planning Policy

5.8 Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) adopted the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 in March 2018. Relevant policies to design and landscape issues are outlined below.

Table 5.1 Local Planning Policies

Policy	Scope
<p>DP12 Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside</p>	<p>Strategic Objectives: 3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities; 11) To support and enhance the attractiveness of Mid Sussex as a visitor destination; and 15) To create places that encourage a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle by the provision of first class cultural and sporting facilities, informal leisure space and the opportunity to walk, cycle or ride to common destinations.</p> <p>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, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or • it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan... <p>The Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, the West Sussex County Council Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape, the Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study and other available landscape evidence (including that gathered to support Neighbourhood Plans) will be used to assess the impact of development proposals on the quality of rural and landscape character.</p> <p>Built-up area boundaries are subject to review by Neighbourhood Plans or through a Site Allocations</p>

Policy	Scope
	Development Plan Document, produced by the District Council...
DP16 High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	<p>Strategic Objectives: 3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities; and 11) To support and enhance the attractiveness of Mid Sussex as a visitor destination.</p> <p>Evidence Base: The High Weald AONB Management Plan.</p> <p>Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.</p> <p>Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where</p>

Policy	Scope
	<p>it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location or design.</p>
<p>DP26 Character and Design</p>	<p>Strategic Objectives: 2) 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; 4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; 12) To support sustainable communities which are safe, healthy and inclusive; and 14) To create environments that are accessible to all members of the community.</p> <p>All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace; • contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance; • creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;

Policy	Scope
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area; • protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages; • does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29); • creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible; • incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed; • positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design; • take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element; • optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.
DP37 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows	Strategic Objectives: 3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities; 4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; and 5) To create and maintain easily accessible green infrastructure, green

Policy	Scope
	<p>corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages to act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and leisure and recreational routes.</p> <p>Evidence Base: Green Infrastructure mapping; Mid Sussex Ancient Woodland Survey, Tree and Woodland Management Guidelines, Tree Preservation Order records.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Development that will damage or lead to the 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporates existing important trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design of new development and its landscape scheme; and • prevents damage to root systems and takes account of expected future growth; and

Policy	Scope
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management; and • has appropriate protection measures throughout the development process; and • takes opportunities to plant new trees, woodland and hedgerows within the new development to enhance on-site green infrastructure and increase resilience to the effects of climate change; and • does not sever ecological corridors created by these assets. <p>Proposals for works to trees will be considered taking into account:</p> <p>The felling of protected trees will only be permitted if there is no appropriate alternative. Where a protected tree or group of trees is felled, a replacement tree or group of trees, on a minimum of</p> <p>a 1:1 basis and of an appropriate size and type, will normally be required. The replanting should take place as close to the felled tree or trees as possible having regard to the proximity of adjacent properties.</p> <p>Development should be positioned as far as possible from ancient woodland with a minimum buffer of 15 metres maintained between ancient woodland and the development boundary.</p>

Policy	Scope
DP38 Biodiversity	<p>Strategic Objectives: 3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities; and 5) To create and maintain easily accessible green infrastructure, green corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages to act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and leisure and recreational routes.</p> <p>Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and • Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances); and • Minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience; and • Promotes the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats in the District; and

Policy	Scope
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="603 398 1423 622">Avoids damage to, protects and enhances the special characteristics of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and ... Ancient Woodland or to other areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological interest, including wildlife corridors, aged or veteran trees...

5.9 In addition, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document⁷ includes Site Allocation policy SA29 Land South of St Stephen’s Church, Hamsland, Horsted Keynes (The Site) which is of relevance to this Landscape and Visual Appraisal. The objective of the policy is stated as: “To deliver a high quality, landscape led, sustainable extension to Horsted Keynes, which respects the character of the village and the High Weald AONB, and which is comprehensively integrated with the settlement so residents can access existing facilities.”

5.10 The policy for The Site sets out the following urban design requirements as follows:

- Contribute towards the local character and local needs of Horsted Keynes village and the High Weald AONB by providing a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including a proportion of smaller terraces or flats, ensuring contextual architectural style and detailing in the design of the development.
- Enhance the connectivity of the site with Horsted Keynes village by providing pedestrian and/or cycle links to Hamsland and adjacent networks.
- Orientate development to provide a positive active frontage in relation to the existing settlement, open space and attractive tree belts.
- Concentrate higher density development towards the northern part of the site, reflecting the existing settlement pattern, with a lower density around the edges to create a suitable transition with the countryside.

5.11 The policy sets out the following objectives in terms of the AONB:

⁷ Mid Sussex District Council (July 2020). Site Allocations Development Plan Document. Regulation 19 Submission Draft.

- Ensure that the site layout, capacity and landscape mitigation requirements are informed by the recommendations of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) 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.
- Identify and protect important views into and out of the site with proposals laid out so that views are retained and, where possible enhanced to both improve legibility and the setting of development.
- Retain and enhance important landscape features, mature trees and hedgerows and incorporate these into the landscape structure and Green Infrastructure proposals for the development to limit impacts on the wider countryside. Open space is to be provided as an integral part of this landscape structure and should be prominent and accessible within the scheme.

5.12 In terms of the historic environment, the Policy states:

- Provide appropriate mitigation to protect the rural setting of the Grade II listed Wyatts to the south of the site by enhancing the boundary tree belt at the south western corner, and ensuring that development is not dominant in views from the listed building. The mitigation strategy is to be informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment.
- The site is located near the crest of a sandstone ridge in the High Weald, a favourable location for archaeological sites, requiring Archaeological Assessment and appropriate mitigation arising from the results.

5.13 In terms of biodiversity and green infrastructure, the policy states:

- Undertake a holistic approach to Green Infrastructure provision through biodiversity and landscape enhancements within the site connecting to the surrounding area.
- Conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value and ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity overall. Avoid any loss of biodiversity through ecological protection and enhancement, and good design. Where this is not possible, mitigate and as a last resort, compensate for any loss.
- Incorporate SuDS within the Green Infrastructure to improve biodiversity and water quality.

5.14 In terms of highways and access, the Policy states:

- Access is to be provided from Hamsland. Detailed access arrangements will need to be investigated further.
- Investigate opportunities to set the access away from the trees on the site boundary to protect the existing trees.
- Improve local traffic conditions by setting back the existing on-street parking spaces in Hamsland into the verge opposite the site.
- Provide a sustainable transport strategy to identify sustainable transport infrastructure improvements and how the development will integrate with the existing network, providing safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport through the development and linking with existing networks.

5.15 In relation to flood risk and drainage, the policy states:

- Design Surface Water Drainage to minimise run off, to incorporate SuDS and to ensure that Flood Risk is not increased.
- Provide SuDs in the southern part of the site as an integral part of the Green Infrastructure proposals to improve biodiversity and water quality.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Mid Sussex Design Guide

5.16 The Mid Sussex Design Guide ⁸ was adopted as an SPG in November 2020. This document sets out key considerations for proposed development in the District to ensure proposed development is of high quality, sustainable design, setting out key considerations in relation to site context and landscape character, strategic considerations for green infrastructure and movement corridors, site layouts and residential amenity.

5.17 The High Weald Residential Design Guide⁹ provide specific guidance to set out very clearly how to ensure that new development conserves the strong sense of place that defines the High Weald. The design guide covers the following aspects:

⁸ Mid Sussex District Council (July 2020). Mid Sussex Design Guide. Post Consultation Draft.

⁹ The High Weald AONB. High Weald Residential Design Guide

- DC1 Responding to the Site and Landscape Character
- DG2 Connecting Beyond the Site
- DG3 Layout and Structuring the Site
- DG4 Using Buildings to Define the Street and Spaces
- DG5 The Right Built Form
- DG6 Parking Strategies
- DG7 Building Appearance, Local Details and Sustainable Design
- DG8 Ancillary and Storage
- DG9 Detailing the Street
- DG10 Reinforcing Local Character and Habitats.

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

5.18 This primary purpose of the designated High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is to conserve and enhance that the natural beauty of the landscape. The High Weald Management Plan 2019-2024 sets out the recognised and special characteristics and qualities of the area that contribute to its natural beauty in a Statement of Significance. This is recorded as comprising five defining character components: -

- **“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, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys.”

as well as: -

- “Land-based economy and related rural life...

and Other qualities and features such as :-

- “historic parks and gardens, orchards, hop gardens, veteran trees etc
- a wide range of locally distinctive historic buildings including oast houses, farm buildings, wealden hall houses and their associated features such as clay-tile catslide roofs
- wonderful views and scenic beauty of the High Weald
- relative tranquillity.
- the area’s ancientness and sense of history
- intrinsically dark landscape,
- opportunity to get close to nature along public rights of way.”

5.19 The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024¹⁰ includes management objectives. These management objectives relate to each component of the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB above, as set out above in the Statement of Significance for the AONB.

5.20 The management objectives are outlined in Appendix 5 in a template form, along with responses, demonstrating how the scheme is consistent with policy objectives.

Response to Local Plan Landscape/ Character and Design Policies

5.21 With reference to NPPF Policy, paragraph 172 which seeks to conserve and enhance the scenic character of the AONB, this is an allocated site and the evidence base for allocation demonstrated that there would not be harmful effects on the AONB character subject to the proposals being consistent with Local Plan policy criteria and relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance.

¹⁰ The High Weald AONB. Management Plan 2019-2024.

5.22 The proposals have been assessed against the relevant High Weald AONB Management Plan Objectives, as outlined in detail in Appendix 5. The proposals are consistent with the objectives of Settlement Objectives S1, S2 and S3; Woodland Objectives W1 and W2 and Field and Heath Objectives F2 and F3, with proposals to enhance outcomes in relation to these objectives. In relation to F1 loss of agricultural productive use for fields, there is no evidence that the field is used productively for grazing currently and it is a relatively small field closely related to the settlement edge. The proposals will inevitably result in land-take of the field with a potential low magnitude of effect on Policy F1, although this would be a neutral effect if the current use is for horse grazing.

5.23 With consideration of the planning policy objectives of DP12 and DP16, this is an allocated site and boundary tree belts are retained and reinforced to ensure views into and out of the AONB will not be adversely affected. The proposals are consistent with policy DP37 and DP38 ensuring the existing tree belts are retained and habitats are not fragmented. In relation to DP26, the design and character of the development will be of high architectural quality, where the layout and settlement pattern will reflect the characteristics of the villages in the High Weald and the architectural details and building materials will be appropriate to the village character. Further discussion in this respect is provided in Chapter 6. The proposed development is considered to be consistent with these planning policy objectives.

6. Assessment of Effects

Effects on Landscape Elements and Features

- 6.1** This section assesses the effect of the proposals on those location elements and features that currently characterise the site as shown by Figure 2 (Appendix 3).
- 6.2** The elements and features that may be classed as key characteristics of the Site are the site's sloping topography, grassland, and the existing hedgerows/scrub and trees to the southern and south-western site boundaries. The elements and features that characterise the site are assessed as being of medium value. The Site is located within the designated landscape of the High Weald AONB and the grassland and boundary tree belts make some contribution to the rural edge of the village, although the contribution the site makes to the surrounding visual character is limited (as noted below).
- 6.3** As stated in paragraph 5.40 of GLVIA3, the susceptibility of the elements and features is their particular ability to be able to accommodate the proposed development without experiencing;

"...undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape policies and strategies."

- 6.4** Reference is made to the criteria in Appendix 1 Detailed Methodology in determining value, susceptibility to change and overall sensitivity.

Topography and Drainage

- 6.5** Changes to the topography of the site during the lifetime of the proposed development are considered to be irreversible.
- 6.6** The susceptibility of the site's topography to the type of development being proposed is assessed as medium, as the Site is sloping and will require some cut and fill to form development platforms for new houses. The overall sensitivity of the site topography is assessed as medium.

- 6.7** Overall, the magnitude of change at Year 1 is assessed as medium. With a low sensitivity and a medium magnitude of change, the effect of the proposed development on the topography of the site is assessed as moderate.
- 6.8** The proposed drainage attenuation will ensure the existing rate of greenfield run-off is retained and will result in a low magnitude of change and a negligible (neutral) effect.

Hedgerows, Trees and Scrub

- 6.9** The existing tree and hedgerow resource is assessed as being overall of medium value, owing to the variable condition of trees, with a medium susceptibility to change and an overall medium sensitivity.
- 6.10** The proposed layout will retain the tree cover within and around the site, with exception of removing one Category U (unsuitable for retention) category tree. The boundary tree belts will be supplemented with native trees and shrubs. Furthermore, occasional tree planting and garden planting within the Site will supplement the vegetation resource further.
- 6.11** The magnitude of change at Year 1 is assessed as being negligible (neutral) and is judged to result in a negligible effect.
- 6.12** With the implementation and establishment of new tree and shrub planting as part of the proposals it is anticipated that at year 10 with development, the effect of the proposed development on the existing tree and hedgerow resource will become increasingly beneficial in nature. By Year 10 the magnitude of change will be low and a minor (beneficial) effect.

Land-use/ Landcover

- 6.13** The existing field is considered to be of medium value and of medium susceptibility, with a medium sensitivity. There is no evidence to suggest the field is currently in use for grazing purposes or is in productive use and is related to the settlement edge. The proposed development will result in partial land-take of grassland and will introduce housing and infrastructure, with a proportion of grassland retained in gardens and in verges to the public realm. The seeding of areas in the public realm has potential to increase biodiversity of these areas.

- 6.14** By Year 1 the change in land-use will be notable and moderate, with some shared characteristics with the immediate adjoining residential land-use on the settlement edge to the north and east boundaries. However, the change in land-use is not considered to be negative, given that it is consistent with the site allocation and the site is closely related to the existing settlement edge. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the field is in productive use for grazing. The proposed development is considered to be an appropriate alternative land-use in this context and the land-use change is not considered to be negative.
- 6.15** The magnitude of change overall is considered to be medium. Combining this with a medium sensitivity this would result in a moderate scale of effect on landcover and a moderate (neutral) effect on land-use.

Summary of Effects of Landscape Elements and Features

- 6.16** In summary, one can draw the following conclusions from the assessment of effects on landscape elements and features:
- The development will result in moderate change to site levels, although the effects will be localised and the development strategy is to step down the site and work with the characteristics of the site's topography. The proposed sustainable drainage strategy will not result in any notable above ground features and existing drainage flow rates and direction will remain similar to the baseline.
 - The existing boundary tree belts will be retained in their entirety and protected through construction. Tree belts will be managed and supplemented with native planting to enhance biodiversity and screening value.
 - Land-use change will be notable but is not an inappropriate alternative in the context of the Site and site allocation. Landcover change will be mitigated with biodiverse grassland mixes and wildlife attracting planting incorporated in the landscape scheme.
 - The physical fabric of the landscape surrounding the application site would remain physically unaffected with the proposals in place.

Effect on Landscape Character of the Site

- 6.17** The construction phase will result in some adverse effects on the visual character and tranquillity of the site, although effects will be limited to a short duration.
- 6.18** By Year 1, the change in land-use will be notable and moderate, with some shared characteristics with surrounding areas i.e. adjacent residential land-use of the settlement edge. The introduction of buildings will partially increase the sense of enclosure within the Site. The essential landscape pattern of boundary tree belts will be retained with the development contained within the extents of the existing field.
- 6.19** The resulting loss of the agricultural land and its replacement with a predominantly residential one would inevitably lead to some adverse effects on landscape character of the Site, although such a change and effect would be experienced with any greenfield development and as noted above, is not an inappropriate alternative land use in this context. The change to site landform will retain the essential aspect of the site that follows the site contours, limiting the effect on site character.
- 6.20** The proposals will reflect the settlement pattern and density that is consistent with the village character, with a varied built form and elevational treatments within a unified palette of materials selected to be appropriate for the local vernacular. The dense layout arrangement of Plots 1-4 and 19-25 is very similar to dwellings in the more traditional parts of the village, such as on Chapel Lane, typified by properties forming a strong building line to the road, with relatively small curtilage to the front. The proposed development will reflect the key characteristics of housing in the High Weald and given the high quality of the design proposal and limited scale of development
- 6.21** Whilst there will be some land-take of grassland resulting from the proposals, effects on the tree and hedgerow resource are none to beneficial once established.
- 6.22** The proposed development will have some low level adverse effect on the tranquillity of the Site associated with additional people and vehicle movements, although the degree of change is limited as adjacent to an existing road and the

development will remain unlit. The improved access will benefit the character of the settlement edge.

- 6.23** The Site is a small pasture field located in the High Weald AONB and is therefore judged to be of high value, although the susceptibility to this type of change is judged to be low. This takes into account that the site is already influenced by the settlement edge on two sides and the site is open and devoid of any mature features, with exception of the boundary tree belts. Overall, the Site is judged to have medium sensitivity to this type of development.
- 6.24** The visual character of the Site is currently influenced by the settlement edge to a great degree and there are no features of value within the open field of the Site and therefore susceptibility to this type of change is judged to be low. Overall sensitivity of the Site to this type of development is judged to be medium.
- 6.25** On balance with the proposed development in place, the magnitude of change on the Site is assessed as medium. With a medium sensitivity and a medium magnitude of change, the proposals will have a moderate effect on the character of the Site at Year 1. This effect is mitigated by the high quality of the design that will reflect characteristics of High Weald villages and creates a distinctive place in a part of the village that currently has a suburban character.
- 6.26** The nature of effects will become increasingly beneficial overtime, as the additional planting to tree belts further matures and vegetation within the development establishes.

Effect on the Character of the Wider Landscape

- 6.27** At the local character level, the key characteristics of the landscape within the area surrounding the Site would experience little change i.e. the boundary tree belts would become increasingly dense and any intervisibility of built form within the Site and surrounding areas will be very infrequent. Where built development is visible through the tree belt it would be glimpsed and viewed in the context of the existing settlement edge. Therefore, the overriding characteristics of the surrounding landscape will remain.
- 6.28** The proposals will result in some change to the visual character to the small parts of the rural edge that is visible from Hamsland, with a small scale increase in

building mass in the backdrop to St. Stephen's Church. The wooded horizon south of the Site will remain as the backdrop to the development.

- 6.29** The landscape value of the wider landscape is high owing to the AONB designation. The susceptibility to change is medium (owing to some influence of built development of the rural edge of the village) and sensitivity is high overall. The magnitude of change on the wider landscape is negligible and the scale of effect no greater than minor. Effects are likely to be negligible during periods when vegetation is in full leaf. Owing to the limited extent of intervisibility with the Site, effects on the wider landscape character will be limited to within 0.27 km of the Site, in areas west and south of the Site due to the layering effect of intervening vegetation and the screening effect of intermittent buildings.

Visual Effects

- 6.30** A detailed visual assessment has been undertaken from the representative viewpoints to determine how the proposed development might influence views towards the Site. The assessment was undertaken as part of the site survey, with the photographic assessment recording the nature of the view and the existing visibility of the application site.
- 6.31** The detailed assessment of the effects of the proposed development on representative various viewpoints is based upon the viewpoints in Appendix 3 (Figures 5-8).
- 6.32** The following table summarise the assessment of visual effects on the representative viewpoints and the viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 1 (Appendix 3). The nature of effect and scale of effect is described in further detail below.

Table 6.1 – Summary of Detailed Visual Assessment

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Scale of Visual Effect			
		Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
Viewpoint 1 – View from Hamsland looking south	Low (users of public highway) High (residential receptors)		Minor	Moderate	
Viewpoint 2 – View from POS west of the Site	Medium (users of POS)	Negligible (Summer)	Minor		
Viewpoint 3 – Glimpsed view from public bridleway 19HK/ Wyatts Lane looking north - north east.	High (users of Public Bridleway)	Negligible (Summer)	Minor		
Viewpoint 4 – View from the public footpath 20HK looking north- north east	High (Users of Public Rights of Way)	Negligible (Summer)	Minor		

Detailed Visual Assessment

Viewpoint 1 – View from Hamsland Looking South

Predicted view at Year 1 and Magnitude of Change

6.33 At Year 1, visual receptors will gain partial views of the development, comprising the new access from Hamsland, the gable end of Plot 1, possible glimpses of Plots 2-4 beyond and Plot 25 in the middle distance. The garden boundary vegetation to no. 45 Hamsland and alignment of Plots 5-7 and apartments 8-13 should limit the extent that development is viewed on the east side of the church from Hamsland. The proposals are viewed in the context of a densely built-up residential street in the foreground, part screened by the existing church. The residential receptors are directly opposite the proposed entrance to the development. Views of the houses will be partially visible, as set back behind the church in the foreground and new buildings will not be prominent in the view. Road users would experience transient oblique views of the proposals for a short duration. The overall magnitude of change is low.

Scale of Visual Effect

6.34 Residential receptors on the north side of Hamsland have a high sensitivity to change. With a high sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, the scale of effect of the proposed development at Year 1 would be moderate.

6.35 Road users have a low sensitivity. With a low sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, the visual effect on road users on Hamsland will be minor.

Viewpoint 2 – View from POS west of the Site

Predicted view at Year 1 and Magnitude of Change

6.36 With the proposed development in place, it is anticipated that there would be little perceptible visibility of the proposed development, owing to the high tree belt, although views may be less filtered by vegetation during the winter.

Scale of Visual Effect

6.37 With a medium sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, the scale of effect of the proposed development at Year 1 would be minor, when vegetation is not in leaf. During other periods of the year the effect is likely to decrease to negligible. The establishment of newly planted vegetation to the tree belt will result in further beneficial effects on this view.

Viewpoint 3 – Glimpsed view from public bridleway 19HK looking north -north east.

Predicted view at Year 1 and Magnitude of Change

6.38 With the proposed development in place, it is anticipated that there would be little perceptible visibility of the proposed development, resulting in a negligible magnitude of change on pedestrians. People on horseback may gain unobstructed views over the hedgerows across the intervening fields, although views are likely to be screened or heavily filtered by the tree belt to the southern boundary of the Site. Any views would be glimpsed and experienced for a short duration owing to the alignment of the footpath. The magnitude of change is negligible.

Scale of Visual Effect

6.39 With a high sensitivity and a negligible magnitude of change, the scale of effect of the proposed development at Year 1 would be minor, as a worst case scenario although likely to be negligible when vegetation is in full leaf. The establishment of newly planted vegetation to the tree belt will increase the effectiveness of screening and will result in further beneficial effects on this view.

Viewpoint 4 – View from the public footpath 20HK looking north- north east.

Predicted view at Year 1 and Magnitude of Change

7.1 With the proposed development in place, it is anticipated that the tree belt to the site boundary will heavily filter views of the development. Very small parts of the built development may be glimpsed in the distance, particularly during periods when vegetation is not in leaf, although would be viewed against the residential area at Hamsland, reducing effects. The magnitude of change will be negligible.

Scale of Visual Effect

6.40 With a high sensitivity and a negligible magnitude of change, the scale of effect of the proposed development at Year 1 would be minor, when vegetation is not in leaf. At other times of year, the effect is likely to be reduced and is anticipated to be negligible. The establishment of newly planted vegetation to the tree belt will increase the effectiveness of screening and will result in further beneficial effects on this view.

Summary

6.41 **Table 6.1** indicates that for all of the representative viewpoints with exception of residential receptors at Viewpoint 1, the scale of visual effect would be within the

range minor effect to negligible. A small number of residential receptors on Hamsland are predicted to experience a moderate change in view owing to their proximity to the north boundary of the site, although new buildings will not be prominent and will be partly mitigated by the landscape proposals within the site softening views and the architectural quality of the development.

6.42 Elsewhere the tree belts to the western and southern site boundaries will limit the extent that built development will be discernible from surrounding areas. The change in views are predicted to be of no greater than minor and the effects are likely to be seasonal. Additional planting will augment this tree belt increasing its screening value and it will continue to be managed as part of the public realm to ensure its effectiveness remains in the future.

7. Summary and Conclusions

- 7.2** A landscape and visual appraisal has been undertaken by Landscape Collective on behalf of Rydon Homes, for a proposed residential development at Hamsland, Horsted Keynes. The proposal is for 30 dwellings with infrastructure and landscaping and is consistent with the draft Site Allocation Policy SA29 in the Mid Sussex District Council Development Plan. The Site is located on the southern edge of the village and is accessed via an existing field access adjacent St. Stephen's Church.
- 7.3** The proposed site plan and design has evolved in response to the draft Site Allocation Policy SA29 and with reference to the supplementary planning guidance to ensure the proposal reflect the special characteristics of development within the High Weald.
- 7.4** The site survey was undertaken when vegetation was in full leaf, however the appraisal considered the seasonal effects of vegetation in the appraisal of landscape and visual effects.
- 7.5** The Site is a small pasture field located in the High Weald AONB and is therefore judged to be of high value, although the susceptibility to this type of change is judged to be low. This takes into account that the site is already influenced by the settlement edge on two sides and the site is open and devoid of any mature features, with exception of the boundary tree belts.
- 7.6** The Site is visually contained by tall tree belts from the wider countryside to the south and south-west. Existing residential properties and St. Stephen's Church on the northern boundary limit intervisibility of the Site with the village, with exception of glimpsed views near the proposed access and church. Therefore, only a small number of publicly accessible viewpoints were identified, four in total.
- 7.7** The appraisal finds no important levels of effect on existing landscape elements or features. The proposals will result in a moderate effect on landcover resulting in the partial land-take of grassland and a moderate, yet neutral effect on land-use. Whilst the proposals will result in a moderate effect of the site's topography, the proposals are designed to relate to existing landform characteristics, minimising the

level change in any one area and retaining the essential character of the Site. The management of the boundary tree belts will remain in the public realm and additional tree and native shrub planting will enhance the vegetation resource once established, further supplementing the ecological and screening value of this tree belt. Whilst the change to the site character will be moderate, the effect on the landscape character beyond the Site will be minor to negligible, owing to the visual containment of the Site. The effects on the site character will be mitigated by the high quality of the design that will closely reflect the characteristics of vernacular villages in the High Weald, with reference to supplementary planning guidance.

7.8 The visual assessment found no important levels of effect on the representative viewpoints, with all effects being judged as minor to negligible except for a small number of residential receptors on Hamsland at Viewpoint 1 who are predicted to experience a moderate scale of change to views. These views will be mitigated by the high quality of the design and no new buildings will be prominent in these views.

7.9 The appraisal finds the proposed development to be consistent with planning policy objectives, with a potential minor adverse to neutral effect on AONB Objective F1 Fieldscapes. In relation to the field being taken out of agricultural production, there is no evidence the field is currently used for grazing and it is strongly associated with the settlement edge rather than rural land-uses.

7.10 In conclusion overall, the proposed development is acceptable in terms of effect on the visual amenity and views experienced by users of the local landscape and the wider landscape beyond the site boundary and the development will benefit the character of the settlement edge.

Appendix 1

Detailed Methodology



Detailed Methodology

Claire Browne
CMLI

On behalf of Rydon Homes
August 2020



Project Ref: 601B

Detailed methodology

Introduction

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been undertaken with reference to best practice, as outlined in the following published guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) - Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013)
- GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals – Landscape Institute Technical Design Note TGN 06/19
- Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland - (2002) Countryside Agency / Scottish Natural Heritage

The proposed scheme was assessed for the purposes of the landscape and visual analysis.

The study area for the LVA was taken to be a 3km radius from the site. However, the main focus of the assessment was taken as a radius of 1km from the site as it is considered that beyond this distance, even with good visibility, the proposed development would not be perceptible in the composite landscape.

The effects on settings of heritage assets or ecological/environmental assets are not considered within this LVA.

Nature of Effects

The nature of any effect will be adverse i.e. negative, beneficial i.e. positive or neutral i.e. neither completely adverse or beneficial. Unless expressly noted, effects are deemed to be adverse in nature.

Landscape Elements and Character Assessment Methodology

A baseline landscape assessment was carried out to determine the current elements and character of the landscape within and surrounding the site. This involved an initial desktop study of but not necessarily limited to:

- Ordnance survey maps at 1:50,000, 1:25,000 scales.
- Aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area.
- Datasets for rural designations from the MAGIC website (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside).
- Relevant planning policy.
- National and local scale landscape character assessments.

Visual Assessment Methodology

The assessment of visual effects was undertaken on the basis of viewpoint analysis as recommended in best practice guidelines. The viewpoints which are in different directions from the site and are at varying distances and locations were selected to represent a range of views and visual receptor types.

The viewpoints are representational and not exhaustive. They are taken from publicly accessible land and not from any third party, private, land.

The viewpoints were used as the basis for determining the effects of visual receptors within the entire study area. The viewpoints were photographed at 1.6 metres above ground level.

Sensitivity of Landscape Elements and Features

The sensitivity attributed to a landscape element or feature is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a particular landscape element feature and the susceptibility of the landscape element/feature to changes that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 88-90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

Table 1: Value of Landscape Elements and Features

<p>Low</p>	<p>Ones that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have no or little rarity and/or, • make no and/or make only a limited contribution to the character and local visual and amenity value and/or • are of such poor condition that the element/feature has lost its ability to contribute effectively to the character of the landscape
<p>Medium</p>	<p>Ones that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are notable in the landscape, with some visual and/or amenity interest but that do not make a particularly strong or important contribution to the character of the landscape and/or, • ones that are an intrinsic element of landscape but in poor condition
<p>High</p>	<p>Ones that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make an important contribution to the character of the landscape and/or, • have particular historical or cultural reference and/or, • are distinctive or rare and typically of good condition

Table 2: Sensitivity of Landscape Elements and Features

	VALUE			
SUSCEPTIBILITY		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low

Magnitude of Change on Landscape Elements and Features

Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of direct physical impacts on individual existing landscape elements and features as follows:

Table 3: Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape elements and features

Negligible	No loss or very minor alteration to part of an existing landscape element and/or feature
Low	Minor loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape element and or feature
Medium	Some loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape element and/or feature
High	Total or major loss of an existing landscape element and/or feature

Sensitivity of Landscape Character

Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a landscape and the susceptibility of the landscape to changes that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 88-90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

Table 4: Value of Landscape Character

Low	An area that is in a recognisably poor condition and/or with a weak strength of character that typically has a clear indication of being damaged and/or contains a high number of detractors, and/or is of limited visual cohesion
Medium	An area is recognisable as being in reasonable condition and/or with a strength of character including some individual elements or features of local rarity or value but likely to exhibit some damage or deterioration/ contains some detractors but may have some visual cohesion
High	Areas with international or national landscape designations, i.e. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or occasionally landscapes non-designated landscape in particularly good condition and/or strong strength of character or of particular local value

Table 5: Sensitivity of Landscape Character

	VALUE			
		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
SUSCEPTIBILITY	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low

Magnitude of Change on Landscape Character

Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude change on landscape character as follows:

Table 6: Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape character

Negligible	No notable introduction of new elements into the landscape or change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
Low	Introduction of minor new elements into the landscape or some minor change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
Medium	Introduction of some notable elements into the landscape or some notable change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape

High	Introduction of major elements into the landscape or some major change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
------	---

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a view and the susceptibility of the receptor to changes in that view that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 113-114 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

GLVIA3 says a judgement should be made as to the value of a particular view being experienced. In making a professional judgement as to the value attached to a view, the following criteria have helped guide the process. Not all the criteria have to apply to a particular view and the criteria are not in a hierarchy.

Table 7: Criteria for judging levels of visual value

Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views from within or towards undesignated landscapes and/or features of either importance to the site only or of no importance • View has little aesthetic merit e.g. has numerous visual detractors, is badly degraded etc. • View makes a limited contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape • Views with no known social, cultural or historic associations • Views from locations that are not necessarily destination points or that are infrequently visited
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Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views from within or towards undesignated landscapes and/or features of local importance • View with some limited aesthetic appeal • View makes a reasonable contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape • Views with some known local social, cultural or historic associations • Views from locations that are locally popular destination points or that are frequently visited by locals but not necessarily by visitors from further afield
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views from within or towards designated landscapes and/or features of importance at district level and above • View with great aesthetic appeal • View makes an important contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape • Views with some known national or international social, cultural or historic associations especially to art and literature • Views from locations that are popular regional, national or international destination points or that are frequently visited by large numbers of visitors from further afield.

Table 8: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

	VALUE			
		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
SUSCEPTIBILITY	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low

Magnitude of Change on Visual Amenity

Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude change on landscape character as follows:

Table 9: Criteria for magnitude of change for visual receptors

Negligible	No notable change in the view
Low	Some change in the view that is not prominent / few visual receptors affected
Medium	Some change in the view that is clearly visible and forms an important but not defining element in the view
High	Major change in the view that has a defining influence on the overall view / many visual receptors affected

Scale of Effects

The scale of the landscape and visual effects is determined by cross referencing the sensitivity of the landscape feature, landscape character or view with the magnitude of change. The scale of effects is described as major, moderate, minor or negligible.

Table 10: Scale of effect thresholds for landscape character, landscape elements/features and visual receptors

		Magnitude of Change			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Sensitivity	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible

Appendix 2

National Character Area

122: High Weald

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Introduction

As part of Natural England's responsibilities as set out in the Natural Environment White Paper¹, Biodiversity 2020² and the European Landscape Convention³, we are revising profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.

NCA profiles are guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change.

Each profile includes a description of the natural and cultural features that shape our landscapes, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics and ecosystem services. Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) are suggested, which draw on this integrated information. The SEOs offer guidance on the critical issues, which could help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.

NCA profiles are working documents which draw on current evidence and knowledge. We will aim to refresh and update them periodically as new information becomes available to us.

We would like to hear how useful the NCA profiles are to you. You can contact the NCA team by emailing ncaprofiles@naturalengland.org.uk

National Character Areas map



¹ The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature, Defra (2011); URL: www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf

² Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services, Defra (2011); URL: www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf

³ European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe (2000); URL: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>

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Summary

The High Weald National Character Area (NCA) encompasses the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald. It is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 78 per cent of the NCA. The High Weald consists of a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. Wild flower meadows are now rare but prominent medieval patterns of small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape.

Some 26 per cent of the NCA is covered by woodland, comprising wooded shaws, pits and gills, farm woods and larger woods; of this 26 per cent, 17 per cent is ancient semi-natural woodland and 5 per cent is ancient replanted woodland. The majority of the woodland cover is ancient, managed in the past as coppice with standards surrounded with native woodland flora such as bluebells and wood anemones in the Spring. Evidence of the area's industrial past is prominent, from the large iron-master houses to iron industry charcoal hearths, pits and hammer ponds found throughout the ancient woodlands.

The small scale and historical patterning of the landscape, interwoven woodland, wetland and open habitats, with many hedgerows and historic routeways supporting semi-natural vegetation, provide a flourishing, accessible landscape for wildlife. Exposed sandstone outcrops along the wooded gills provide nationally rare habitat and support an array of ferns, bryophytes and lichens. The Weald meets the sea at Hastings Cliffs which are a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and an area of undeveloped coastline consisting of actively

eroding soft cliffs of sands and clays. A small section (35 ha) of the Pevensey Levels Ramsar site also falls within the NCA. The numerous gill streams of the High Weald give rise to the headwaters and upper reaches of rivers which were previously important trade routes for timber, iron and wool out to the coastal ports around Walland Marsh.

Today the High Weald, and particularly Ashdown Forest, is internationally known as the home of the character Winnie-the-Pooh. Ashdown Forest is both a Special Protection Area (SPA) due to its populations of Dartford warbler and nightjar and an SAC as it is one of the largest single continuous blocks of lowland heath in England. The forest also inspired William Robinson who pioneered the English natural garden movement and writers such as Rudyard Kipling. The NCA is also home to 56 historic parks and gardens covering 4,599 ha. The High Weald provides an example of one of the best preserved medieval landscapes in north-west Europe and



Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce.

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has a strong sense of history. This is enhanced by many features such as Battle Abbey, numerous churches and chapels and an abundance of locally distinctive traditional buildings. The eroding sea cliffs at Hastings provide one of the finest exposures of Lower Cretaceous, Wealden sediments in Britain, containing a range of internationally important fossil plant material and non-marine animal fossils.

The High Weald provides many services to communities living within the area's towns and villages and adjacent urban populations through the supply of drinking water, flood mitigation and carbon storage and a range of open-air recreational activities based around its distinctive character, from walking its ancient routeways to off-road cycling in Bedgebury Forest, water sports at Bewl Water and soft rock climbing at Harrison's Rocks. Future challenges include continuing high demands for housing in south-east England, and rural areas in particular, resulting in strong pressure for development within the NCA, and pressure to bring forward land for housing in and around larger villages, threatening the dispersed settlement character of the landscape and the sustainable development of smaller settlements.



Ashdown Forest consists of open rolling heathland and birch woodland on the sandstone ridge of the High Weald. The forest forms the literary landscape of the children's classic, 'Winnie the Pooh'.

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Statements of Environmental Opportunity

SEO 1: Maintain and enhance the existing woodland and pasture components of the landscape, including the historic field pattern bounded by shaws, hedgerows and farm woods, to improve ecological function at a landscape scale for the benefit of biodiversity, soils and water, sense of place and climate regulation, safeguard ancient woodlands and encourage sustainably produced timber to support local markets and contribute to biomass production.

SEO 2: Maintain and restore the natural function of river catchments at a landscape scale, promoting benefits for water quality and water flow within all Wealden rivers, streams and flood plains by encouraging sustainable land management and best agricultural practices to maintain good soil quality, reduce soil erosion, increase biodiversity and enhance sense of place. Maintain and enhance the geodiversity and especially the exposed sandrock.

SEO 3: Maintain and enhance the distinctive dispersed settlement pattern, parkland and historic pattern and features of the routeways of the High Weald, encouraging the use of locally characteristic materials and Wealden practices to ensure that any development recognises and retains the distinctiveness, biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage assets present, reaffirm sense of place and enhance the ecological function of routeways to improve the connectivity of habitats and provide wildlife corridors.

SEO 4: Manage and enhance recreational opportunities, public understanding and enjoyment integrated with the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, a productive landscape and tranquillity, in accordance with the purpose of the High Weald AONB designation.



Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin.

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Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

The High and Low Weald National Character Areas (NCAs) together form an area known from Saxon times as the Weald whose landscape is the product of transhumance (the seasonal movement of people and animals between the settlements on the borders of the Weald and its interior) and a traditional system of integrated farming and forestry. Early in its history the Weald was linked economically and socially with its more habitable fringes where farming was easier. A dense network of droveways connects the Downs and the Weald, a visible legacy of the seasonal movement of people and animals into the woodland to take advantage of acorns and mast (fruit of forest trees). Today these routes can still be travelled as roads and public rights of way. The wooded nature of these linear routes together with the wooded gills provides a high degree of interconnectivity to ancient woodland habitats across the High and Low Weald.

From vantage points in the surrounding North and South Downs NCAs sweeping views extend across the densely wooded countryside of the Weald, an area of heavy soils and the natural habitat of the oak. Views from vantage points within the High Weald extend along the low-lying clay vale of the Low Weald NCA which largely wraps around the northern, western and southern edges of the High Weald NCA in a rough horseshoe shape. To the south-west pocket of the NCA, there are views towards the low-lying wetlands of the Pevensey Levels, and to the south-east corner there are long ranging views across the flat topography of the Romney Marshes NCA.



Rock climbing at Harrison's Rocks is managed carefully to protect the friable sandstone rocks from erosion.

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The sandrock geology of the High Weald, notably on the ridge top settlements, is shared with only the northern part of the Isle of Wight NCA and parts of Boulonnais and Pays de Bray in France. It comprises fissured sandrock and ridges running east–west, deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams which give rise to the headwaters and upper reaches of rivers, with those to the east of the area also providing historical trade routes for timber, iron and wool out to the coastal ports on Romney Marsh.

In the High Weald, where the rivers Rother, Brede and Tillingham originate, the impermeable clay and silt layers of the Hastings Beds give rise to rapid run-off and quickly responding watercourses following heavy rainfall. Maintaining flows in the Rother catchment is important due to the dependency of the Walland Marsh on water transferred into the Royal Military Canal from the Rother, and hence the High Weald and Romney Marsh are inextricably linked in terms of water resources.

The catchments of the rivers Cuckmere, Ouse, Adur and Arun drain south through deep valleys in the eastern chalk ridge from the High Weald via the Low Weald NCA, and the later via the Wealden Greensand NCA, into the sea along the south coast, passing through major coastal settlements.

The High Weald provides many services to adjacent populations, not only through the supply of drinking water, flood mitigation and carbon storage but also through extensive opportunities for a range of open-air recreational activities based around its distinctive character. Activities including walking the ancient routeways, off-road cycling in Bedgebury Forest and soft rock climbing at Harrison's Rocks provide benefits to the various towns that straddle the border between the High and Low Wealds, namely Crawley, East Grinstead, Horsham, Haywards Heath and Uckfield.



The High Weald has a wealth of ancient woodland.

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Key characteristics

- 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 forming the headwaters of a number of the major rivers – the Rother, Brede, Ouse and Medway – which flow in broad valleys.
- High density of extraction pits, quarries and ponds, in part a consequence of diverse geology and highly variable soils over short distances.
- A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads and medieval ridgetop villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries, with a dominance of timber-framed buildings with steep roofs often hipped or half-hipped, and an extremely high survival rate of farm buildings dating from the 17th century or earlier.
- 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. Church towers and spires on the ridges are an important local landmark. There is a dense network of small, narrow and winding lanes, often sunken and enclosed by high hedgerows or woodland strips. The area includes several large towns such as Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough, Battle and Heathfield and is closely bordered by others such as Crawley, East Grinstead, Hastings and Horsham.
- An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far-reaching views, giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity yet concealing the highest density of timber-framed buildings anywhere in Europe amidst lanes and paths.
- Strong feeling of remoteness due to very rural, wooded character. A great extent of interconnected ancient woods, steep-sided gill woodlands, wooded heaths and shaws in generally small holdings with extensive archaeology and evidence of long-term management.
- 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.
- A predominantly grassland agricultural landscape grazed mainly with sheep and some cattle.
- There is a strong influence of the Wealden iron industry which started in Roman times, until coke fuel replaced wood and charcoal. There are features such as a notably high number of small hammer ponds surviving today.
- Ashdown Forest, in contrast to the more intimate green woods and pastures elsewhere, is a high, rolling and open heathland lying on the sandstone ridges to the west of the area.
- An essentially medieval landscape reflected in the patterns of settlement, fields and woodland.
- High-quality vernacular architecture with distinct local variation using local materials. Horsham Slate is used on mainly timber structures and timber-framed barns are a particularly notable Wealden characteristic feature of the High Weald.

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The High Weald today

The High Weald is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers 78 per cent of the NCA, reflecting the outstanding natural and scenic beauty of the landscape.

From a distance the appearance of the High Weald is one of a densely wooded landscape, although closer inspection reveals a patchwork of irregularly shaped fields and woods forming both open and enclosed landscapes along rolling ridges and within valleys. Along the ridgetop roads briefly glimpsed extensive views open up, stretching away over rolling ridges, punctuated by church spires far into the horizon, providing a contrast to the intimacy of the lush green valleys. Everything in the High Weald landscape is of human scale and its rich detail is best explored on foot, cycle or horseback along the myriad interconnecting paths and tracks.

Along the English Channel coast the High Weald gives way to eroded sandstone and clay sea cliffs around Fairlight and disappears under the urban areas of Bexhill and Hastings to the south-east. The eastern end of the High Weald is characterised by a series of broad, often flat-bottomed river valleys opening out towards the coastal levels of Romney Marsh between Tenterden and Fairlight.

Sandstone exposed as outcrops or along the wooded gills provides a nationally rare habitat and supports a rich community of ferns, bryophytes and lichens. The moist microclimate in these sites is vulnerable to climate change. Potential physical damage comes from the popularity of rock climbing although this is mitigated by guidance and support from the climbing community.



Traditional farmsteads are often glimpsed through a densely-wooded landscape.

The drained landscape of the eastern High Weald river valleys is the result of a thousand years of modifications and exhibits few of the features associated with healthy natural river valleys. It is grazed by high numbers of sheep. Upriver the gill streams and upper reaches function better but remain vulnerable to pollution from agriculture and domestic waste treatment.

The ancient routeway network in the High Weald is substantially intact but the archaeology associated with it, such as multiple ditches and banks, is vulnerable to physical damage and the ancient, laid coppice stools edging many sunken routeways present a challenge for highway maintenance.

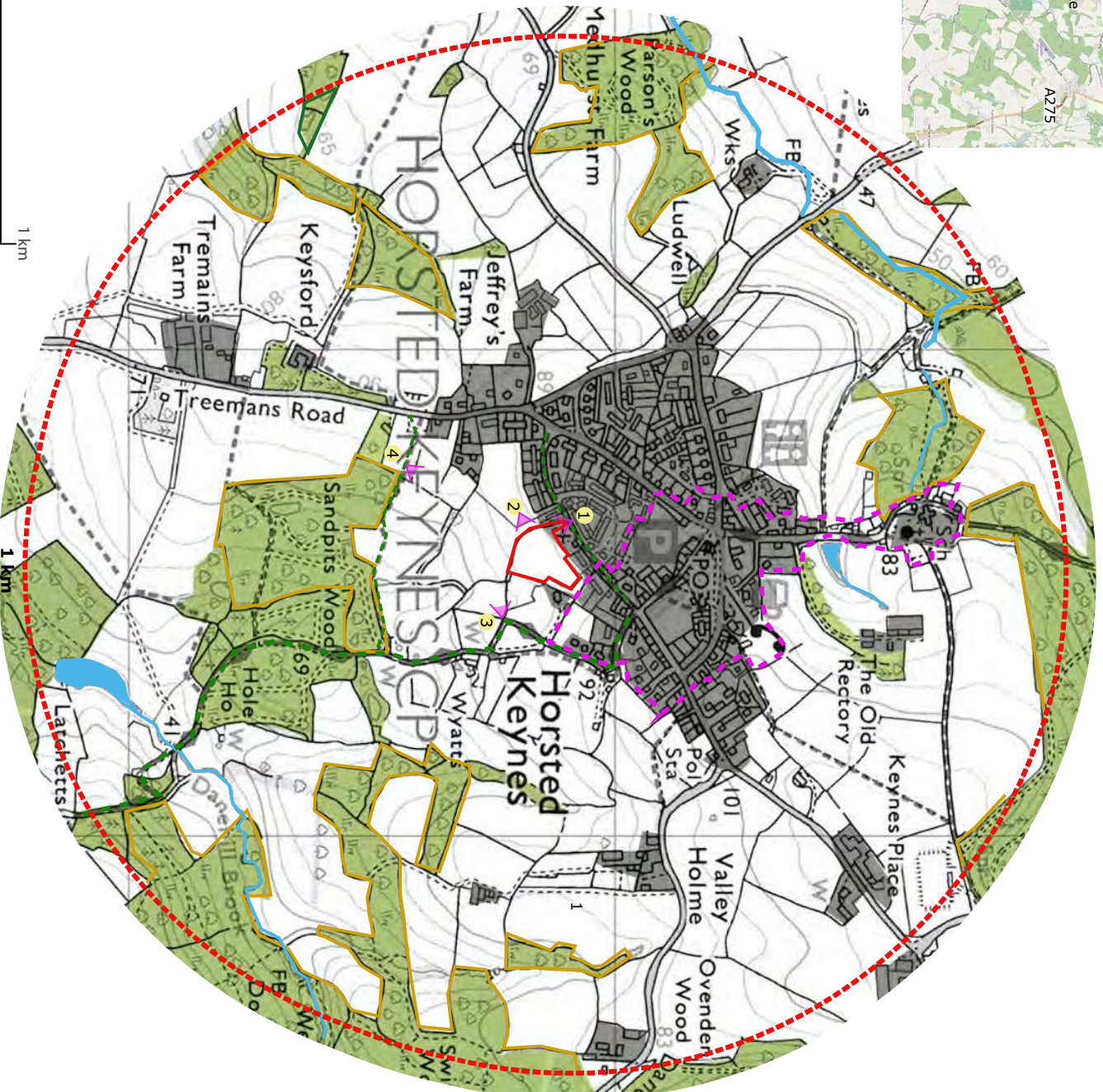
Appendix 3

Figures













Site Location (Not to Scale)

Map data © Open Aerial Map (Open Licence)



Key

-  Site Boundary
-  Distance from Site Boundary
-  Public Right of Way
-  Bridleway or Byway
-  Public footpath
-  Woodland
-  Watercourse
-  Conservation Area
-  Ancient Woodland
-  5 LVA Assessment Viewpoint



Client:
Rydon Homes

Project:
Land at Hamstead

Drawing Title: Figure 1
1km Study Area

Status:	Scale:	Scale bar	Job No:	Dwn / CB	CHK / SH	Date:
			6018	Dwg No: 01		28/08/20
						Revision:

W: www.hckgroup.co.uk



Key

— Site Boundary

▲ Context Viewpoint



Client:
Rydon Homes

Project:
Land at Hamsland

Drawing Title: **Figure 2**
Site Features and Context Views

Status:	Dwn /	CHK	Date:
Scale:	CB	SH	28/08/20
Scale Bar			
Job No:	02		Revision:
6018			

Revision:	Description:	Date:
	First Issue	2020.07.23





Top: Context View A - Northern Boundary
 Grid reference: 538425, 127877
 Elevation: 10m AOD

Bottom: Context View B - Eastern Boundary
 Grid reference: 538425, 127877
 Elevation: 10m AOD

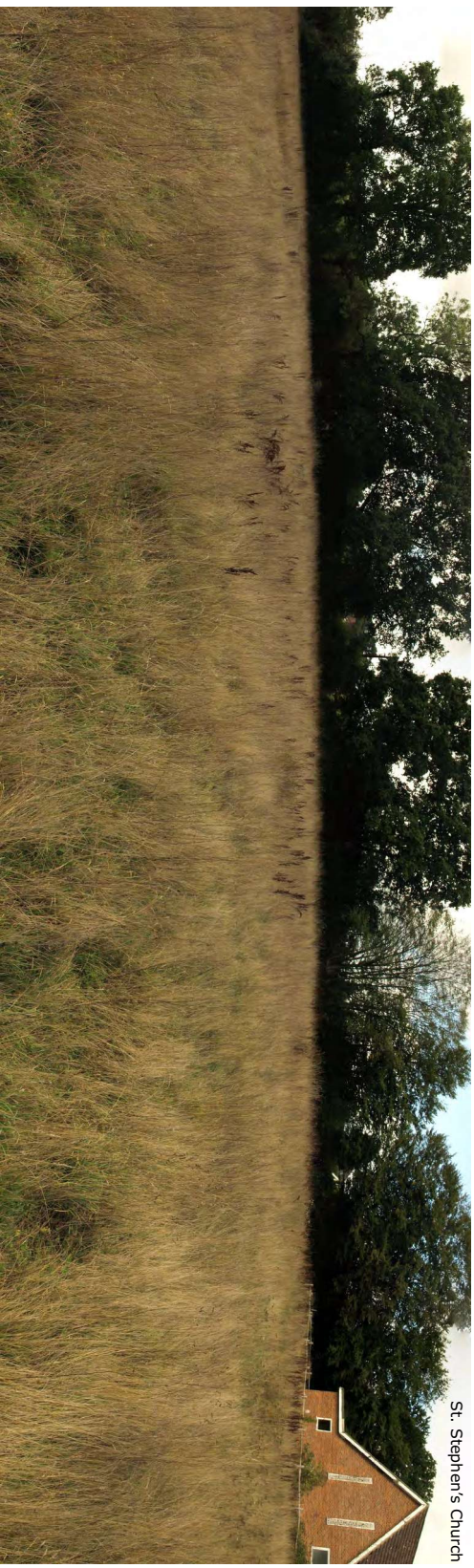
Viewpoint Information:
 Paper size: 594 x 297
 Camera: Olympus E510
 Lens: 25mm (50mm equivalent FFS)

Client:
 Rydon Homes Ltd
 Project: Hamsland, Horsted Keynes
 Land Use: Residential
 Figure 3 - Context Views 1

Job Number: 6018
 Drawn/Checked: CB SH
 Date: 28.08.20
 Revision: 3



St. Stephen's Church



Top: Context View C- Southern Boundary
 Grid reference: 538425, 127877
 Elevation: 10m AOD

Bottom: Context View B- Western Boundary
 Grid reference: 538425, 127877
 Elevation: 10m AOD

Viewpoint Information:
 Paper size: 594 x 297
 Camera: Olympus E510
 Lens: 25mm (50mm equivalent FFS)

Client: Rydon Homes Ltd
 Project: Hamsland, Horsted Keynes
 Land Use: Residential
 Figure 4 - Context Views 2

Job Number: 6018
 Drawn/Checked: CB
 SH
 Date: 28.08.20

Revision: 4



Extent of the Site (extends behind church)

Type: 1 Visualisation
Location: Hamstead, view south
Grid reference: 538347, 127914
Date: 28.08.20 **Time:** 11.03

Viewpoint Information:
Paper size: 841 x 297
Image Size: 820 x 250
Field of View: 75°
Lens: 25mm (35mm equivalent FFS)

Client:
 Riddon Homes
 Land at Hamstead, Harrod Keynes
Drawing Title:
 Figure 5 - Viewpoint 1

Job Number: 6018
Drawn/Author: 5
Checked: CB
Date: 28.08.20
SH



Extent of the Site (behind trees/hedgerow)

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Type: 1 Visualisation
Location: Public open space, view east
Grid reference: 593644, 127811
Drawing No: 601B
Date: 28.08.20 Time: 11.09

Viewpoint Information:
Paper size: 841 x 297
Image Size: 630 x 250
Drawing Scale: 1:250
Lens: 25mm (50mm equivalent FFS)

Client:
Rydon Homes
Land at Hamstead, Harrod Keynes
Drawing Title:
Figure 6 - Viewpoint 2

Job Number: 601B
Drawing Number: 6
Design Checked: CB
SH
Date: 28.08.20
Revision:



Direction of the Site

Type 1 Visualisation

Location: Public Bridleway 19HK, Wyatt's Lane
Grid reference: 538556, 127768
Elevation: 83m AOD
Date: 28.08.20 Time: 11:30

Viewpoint Information:

Paper size: 420 x 297
Image Size: 390 x 260
Camera: Olympus E510
Lens: 25mm (50mm)

Client:

Rydon Homes
Project: Land at Hamsland, Horsted Keynes
Drawing Title: Figure 7 - Viewpoint 3

Job Number: 601B **DrawingNumber:** 7 **Revision:**

Drawn/Checked: CB SH **Date:** 28.08.20



Extent of the Site

Trace to the west boundary of the Site

Type 1 Visualisation
 Location: Public Footpath view north
 Grid reference: 539260, 127588
 Date: 28.08.20 Time: 11.48

Viewpoint Information:
 Paper size: 841 X 297
 Image Size: 820 X 250
 Lens: 25mm (50mm equivalent FFS)

Credit:
 Ryan Horne
 Land at Hamshill, Hasted Keynes
 Planning Team, Viewpoint 4
 Figure 8 - Viewpoint 4

Job Number: 6018
 Drawing Number: CB SH
 Date: 28.08.20
 Revision: 8

Appendix 4

Proposed Site Plan



Pudon Homes Ltd
 Pudon Homes
 Station Road
 Forest Row
 East Sussex
 RH18 5DW
 T 01323 823151
 Email: sales@pudon.co.uk

Rev. Description
 Date By

Land South of St. Stephens Church
 Hansland
 Horsted Keynes
 Site Layout
 Drawing No: 1044-FA-02
 Date: November 2020
 Drawn By: MHH
 Scale: 1:500 @ A1
 Rev:

Appendix 5

Assessment Against AONB Management Plan Objectives

The following appraisal in Table A5.1 outlines an appraisal of the proposed development against relevant Management Plan Objectives in relation to landscape and settlement character.

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives (as related to the identified components of natural beauty)	Response
Settlement	
S1 – To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside	A minor lane is provided through the site connecting Hamsland to the field to the south, with future link to Wyatts Lane/ the bridleway 19HK and rural landscape beyond.
S2 – To protect the historic pattern of development	<p>The layout and density of the proposals would respond to the existing historic settlement/townscape pattern of Horsted Keynes and the reduction in density towards the southern site boundary will allow retention and reinforcement of existing boundary trees and hedgerows, as appropriate to a new countryside edge. The proposals will be contained by existing development, roads and housing and as such the physical pattern of development outside the site will be unchanged with the proposals in place.</p> <p>It should be noted that the relatively small scale of development envisaged would be appropriate and that it would lie adjacent to existing C20th century housing on the</p>

	northern, eastern and western boundaries, associated with previous village expansion.
S3 – To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald	The site layout, form and massing reflects characteristics of villages in the High Weald, with reference to the High Weald Residential Design Guide SPG. The building line will define the entrance and primary street, with lower density to the rural edge to the south. Cars are set back within the building line to limit negative impact on the street scene. The architectural quality of the proposals would be sufficiently high to ensure that the proposed development will have its own sense of place. Reference will be made in the detailing of the proposed buildings to those associated with the village/local vernacular, as well as in the use of materials, while remaining contemporary and avoiding pastiche and using appropriate colour.
Woodland	
W1 – To maintain existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland	The retention of the existing boundary trees and shrub, together with new tree planting, as part of the proposals, will both maintain and enhance the perception of a wooded appearance to the Site as perceived from the wider landscape to the south of the Site. There is no Ancient Woodland on Site.
W2 – To enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale	Given the existing southern and western boundary tree/ shrub belt will be retained, connectivity will be maintained with the dense network of hedgerows and woodlands in the wider landscape.
Field and Heath	
FH1 – To secure agricultural productive use for fields of the High Weald especially for	The proposed development will inevitably result in the loss of a pasture field, as might

<p>local markets, as part of sustainable land management</p>	<p>be the case for any small- scale development on similar agricultural land elsewhere in the AONB. Given it partly adjoins an existing settlement edge and there is no evidence to suggest it is currently in use for grazing purposes, its loss is considered to be a low magnitude of change in the context of the wider AONB and not considered to be an important scale of effect on the AONB overall. This matter is expanded upon within the main text of the LVA.</p>
<p>FH2 – To maintain the pattern of small irregular shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodland.</p>	<p>The existing field boundaries to the site would be unaltered with garden fences offset a minimum of 3 metres from the edge of the tree belt. This existing tree and native shrub resource would be reinforced and enhanced as part of the proposed development. The irregular field boundary on the west/ south-west will remain unaltered.</p>
<p>FH3 – To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats</p>	<p>The site currently appears to be improved/semi improved pasture. The proposal will include wildlife conservation focused management through management and planting of boundary tree belts and diverse natural grassland mixes sown along the verges in the public realm.</p>

Standard Sources

<http://magic.defra.gov.uk>

National Planning Policy Framework, 2019

National Planning Practice Guidance, 2019

Natural England (January 2014). National Character Profile 84 Mid Norfolk.

Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).
Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition).

The Landscape Institute (2019). Visual Representation of Development Proposals – Landscape
Institute Technical Design Note TGN 06/19.