

Buchan Hill, Pease Pottage

Proposed Residential Development
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

April 2018

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1. Introduction and methodology	1
2. Landscape Policy Context	14
3. Landscape Character Context	25
4. Baseline Landscape Character Assessment	31
5. Baseline Visual Assessment	37
6. Proposed Residential Development: Outline Landscape Scheme	50
7. Landscape Character Impact Assessment	53
8. Visual Impact Assessment	56
9. Conclusions and Recommendations	59

Figure 1: Site location map and aerial view

Figure 2: Viewpoint location plan

Figure 3: Proposed Layout

Figure 4: Illustrative Landscape Masterplan

1. Introduction and methodology

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared with reference to proposed residential development at Buchan Hill, Pease Pottage, West Sussex (see Figure 1).

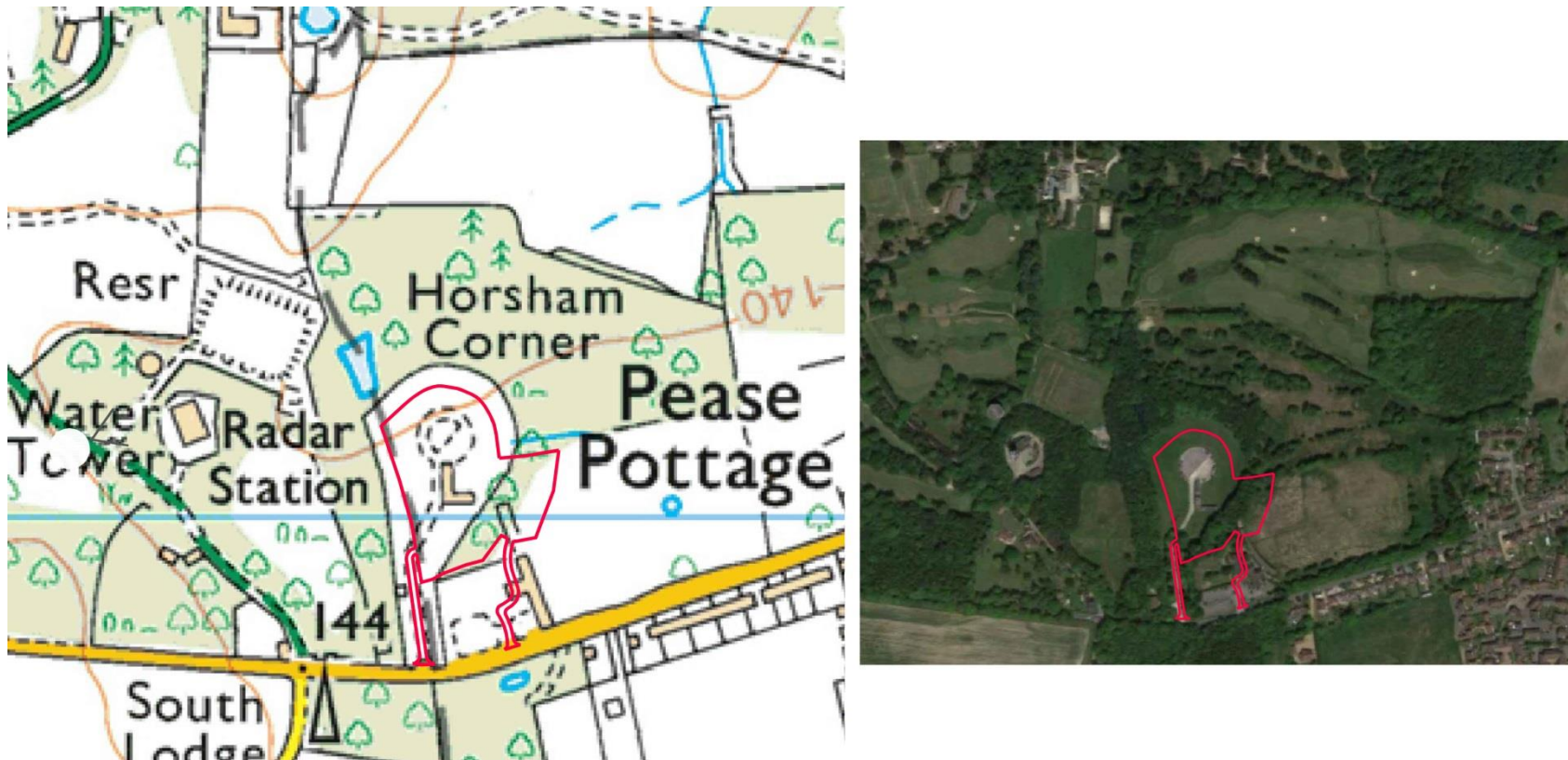


Figure 1: Site location map and aerial view

The site lies at the western edge of the village of Pease Pottage, close to the southern fringe of Crawley.

This LVIA considers the proposals for residential development including associated access, landscape and open space.

The LVIA forms one of a number of surveys and other supporting reports associated with this development, including:

- Buchan Hill, Pease Pottage, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Applied Ecology Ltd., April 2018)

1.1 Assessment Methodology

This LVIA Methodology used is based on revised guidance set out in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' published by the Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Assessment (Third Edition 2013). Additional guidance in relation to the assessment of landscape character is provided in 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (October 2014) and supporting Topic Papers prepared by Natural England together with Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland published by The Countryside Agency (2002).

This Methodology Statement provides an overview of the approach which has been followed in the preparation of the LVIA. For the purpose of this assessment the definition of the distinction between 'impact' and 'effect', is taken from 'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' published by the Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Assessment (2013). This guidance defines 'impact' as *'the action being taken'* and 'effect' as the *'change resulting from that action'*.

Methodology for Determining Baseline Conditions and Sensitive Receptors

The first stage of the assessment involves establishing the landscape and visual baseline of the Site and the surrounding area through desktop studies and field surveys. The desktop study includes the following:

- Identification of landscape and other environmental designations relevant to the Site and surrounding area;
- Collation and review of national, regional and local landscape character assessments and other surveys or assessments relevant to the land such as tree surveys and historic landscape character assessments; and
- Identification of the anticipated Zone of Visual Influence or Zone of Theoretical Visibility associated with the Proposed Development.

This information informs the identification of sensitive landscape and visual receptors, i.e. those landscape elements and features and visual receptors that are likely to be directly or indirectly affected by the Proposed Development on the Site.

The next stage of the baseline assessment is based on field survey and involves the following:

- Evaluation of the condition, quality and value of the existing Site and the principal elements or components of the Site itself and the surrounding area; and
- Visits to all public rights of way and other accessible land, including transport routes within the identified zone of theoretical visibility, in order to confirm the extent of the actual visual envelope and to identify representative viewpoints to be taken forward as part of the assessment.

Fieldwork was completed on 7th March 2018 to provide a baseline assessment of the Site.

The assessment of landscape character involves identifying the key landscape elements or components which define the Site and immediate surrounding area.

These elements or components and the overall Site character are described with reference to:

- Pattern: the relationship between topography, elevation, the degree of visual enclosure and the physical scale of landscape features;
- Tranquillity: remoteness and sense of isolation;
- Cultural and historical associations/features and their settings; and
- Land cover, land use and management.

This stage of the assessment also takes into account the influence of local geology, soils and topography on the character, condition and quality of the landscape. The area of study in relation to landscape character is determined principally by the scale of the landscape typology, element or feature to be assessed. For instance assessment of the Proposed Development in the context of regional or local Landscape Character Assessments considers the Site in the context of the area covered by the assessment. Assessment of individual landscape features or elements such as landscape pattern or tree cover focuses on the significance of the feature or element in the context of the Site itself, and may take into context adjoining areas, where the influence of the feature extends beyond the site boundary.

The assessment and mapping of tranquillity has been the subject of a number of studies, primarily undertaken by the CPRE¹. In surveys CPRE have identified the following positive and negative factors contributing to the perception of tranquillity:

Positive Factors:

- Seeing a natural landscape;
- Hearing birdsong;
- Hearing peace and quiet;
- Seeing natural looking woodland;
- Seeing the stars at night;
- Seeing streams;
- Seeing the sea;
- Hearing natural sounds;
- Hearing wildlife; and
- Hearing running water.

Negative Factors:

- Hearing constant noise from cars, lorries and/or motorbikes;
- Seeing lots of people;
- Seeing urban development;
- Seeing overhead light pollution;
- Hearing lots of people;
- Seeing low flying aircraft;
- Hearing low flying aircraft;
- Seeing power lines;
- Seeing towns and cities and roads.

¹ 1 www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/item/download/369

Further guidance on the context and assessment of tranquillity is set out in the Landscape Institute Technical Information Note (01/2017) 'Tranquillity – An Overview'.

Accessibility will also influence how the landscape is valued and used by local communities. This stage of the assessment also identifies public rights of way and other areas of accessible land such as Common Land, Parks and Open Spaces and Access Land as well as more functional locations such as transport corridors, places of work and retail centres.

Having drawn together the baseline information from the desktop study and the field survey, this information is used to describe the landscape character and scenic beauty of the Site and the local area. Reference is made to existing baseline assessments and descriptions in defining terms such as 'scenic' or 'natural beauty'.

Sensitive Receptors

This LVIA identifies sensitive landscape and visual receptors, which inform the overall assessment of impacts and effects.

Landscape Receptor Sensitivity

The assessment of landscape sensitivity seeks to establish the degree to which the landscape can accommodate change without affecting the fundamental characteristics which contribute to aspects such as local distinctiveness, sense of place, appearance and landscape quality.

The criteria used in this assessment are closely linked to the attributes and features used to describe landscape character and quality (see Table 1).

Table 1: Landscape Receptor Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	Landscape which would not accommodate change without significant impact on character and scenic beauty. Key considerations: • National Landscape Designation (AONB or National Park) Landscape with many characteristic features or attributes significant at national, regional and local character assessments • Strong cultural and historic associations of national importance • Features and attributes which could not easily be replaced
Medium	Landscape which could accommodate some change without significant impact on character and scenic beauty. Key considerations: • Local Landscape Designation • Landscape with some characteristic features or attributes significant at regional and local character assessments • Strong cultural and historic associations of regional or local importance • Features and attributes which could be replaced within a reasonable timescale
Low	Landscape which could accommodate a high degree of change without significant impact on character and scenic beauty. Key considerations: • No specific Landscape Designation • Landscape with few characteristic features or attributes significant at regional and local character assessments • Limited cultural and historic associations • Features and attributes which could easily be replaced within a reasonable timescale
Very Low/ Neutral	Landscape which is assessed as degraded or derelict. • No specific Landscape Designation • Landscape with no characteristic features or attributes significant at regional and local character assessments • No cultural and historic associations • No features and attributes considered worthy of retention or replacement

The assessment of landscape receptor sensitivity is also informed by published Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs).

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

The baseline assessment has identified a series of representative viewpoints. These are subdivided by distance:

- Near distance 0 to 0.5 kilometre (km) from visual receptor;
- Middle Distance 0.5 to 1 km from visual receptor; and
- Long Distance Greater than 1 km from visual receptor.

Landscape receptor sensitivity also informs the assessment of visual receptor sensitivity. The assessment of visual receptor sensitivity takes account of the landscape receptor sensitivity and also the viewer circumstances. In locations where viewers are likely to be static, such as recognised viewpoints or visitor sites, this will generally be afforded a high sensitivity. Viewpoints located on rights of way, where viewers are likely to be walking, cycling or equestrian users, will generally be assessed as of medium sensitivity. Where viewers are transient and likely to be travelling at higher speeds, such as on road or rail, viewpoints will be assessed as of lower sensitivity. The criteria used in this LVIA to define visual receptor sensitivity are set out in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	Receptor located on a public right of way or other publicly accessible land within a nationally important landscape related asset or designation.
Medium	Receptor located on a public right of way or other publicly accessible land located within a public open space or park or other locally designated landscape, including townscape designations, such as a Conservation Area.
Low	Receptor located within a rural or urban area with no landscape or townscape related designations; or Receptor located on a road or railway where viewer is likely to be transient; or Receptor located in a semi private facility such as a sports club or golf course, with restricted public access
Very Low/ Neutral	Receptor within a degraded or derelict landscape with restricted public access.

Assessment of Magnitude

The first stage of the assessment of magnitude involves a description of the Proposed Development and, where relevant, design and layout options to be considered and assessed. This includes lighting impacts. This may also include proposed landscape infrastructure, which is integral to the development proposals and also measures to protect existing features to be retained.

This LVIA assesses the impacts and effects of the Proposed Development primarily from the perspective of publicly accessible landscape and visual receptors.

Landscape Magnitude

In assessing the magnitude of landscape impacts due regard is given to the scale, nature and duration of the impact. For example, a subtle change in the pattern of the landscape confined to a limited area for only a short period is likely to be considered low in magnitude.

The assessment of the magnitude of the identified landscape change takes into account the following:

- Sensitivity of the landscape receptor (Table 1);
- The age and condition of the feature or component;
- Rarity and ease of replacement; and
- Degree to which the feature contributes to, or is representative of, local landscape character.

These considerations inform the Landscape Impacts Magnitude Evaluation Criteria (Table 3 below).

Table 3: Landscape Impacts Magnitude Evaluation Criteria

Magnitude	Evaluation criteria
High	Proposal results in major changes or alteration to key elements, features or characteristics which define local landscape character and scenic quality and natural beauty
Medium	Proposal results in medium scale changes or partial loss or alteration to key elements, features or characteristics which contribute to local landscape character and scenic quality and natural beauty.
Low	Proposal results in limited changes or partial loss or alteration to elements, features or characteristics which are of limited importance to local landscape character and scenic quality and natural beauty.
Very Low	Proposals are in keeping with local landscape character and would result in negligible or minor changes to elements, features or characteristics which are of limited importance to local landscape character and scenic quality and natural beauty.
Neutral	There is no change to landscape elements, features or characteristics

Visual Magnitude

Having identified all viewpoints the anticipated magnitude of visual impacts associated with the Proposed Development has been assessed from each viewpoint. The criteria used in this assessment are set out in Table 4 using five levels or categories ranging from high, through medium, low, very low to neutral where no change is anticipated. Table 4 does not distinguish between positive (beneficial) and negative (adverse), which will be informed by judgements as to the scale and nature of the change in the view and the integration of the Proposed Development within the view.

Table 4: Visual Impacts Magnitude Evaluation Criteria

Magnitude	Evaluation criteria
High	• The scale of the change in the view is large with respect to the loss or change to features in view. • The nature of the impacts is generally permanent. • The number of affected views or visual receptors is high. • The full extent of the view would be occupied by the Proposed Development. • The introduction of new elements is considered to be in total contrast to the character of the existing landscape.
Medium	• The scale of the change in the view is moderate with respect to the loss or change to features in view. • The nature of the impacts is either permanent or temporary. • A partial extent of the view would be occupied by the Proposed Development. • The introduction of new elements is considered to be/not to be substantially in contrast to the character of the existing landscape. • Affected viewers may be transient, i.e. from footpaths.
Low	• The scale of the change in the view is low with respect to the loss or change to features in view. • The nature of the impacts is either permanent or temporary. • The number of affected views or visual receptors is low. • A small or limited extent of the view would be occupied by the Proposed Development. • The introduction of new elements may not be considered to be unduly in contrast to the existing landscape characteristics. • Affected viewers may be transient, i.e. from a moving vehicle.
Very Low	• The scale of the change in the view is very low with respect to the loss or change to features in view. • The nature of the impacts is either temporary and short term • The number of affected views or visual receptors is very low. • A very small or limited extent of the view would be occupied by the Proposed Development. • The introduction of new elements may not be considered to be unduly in contrast to the existing landscape characteristics. • Affected viewers are transient, i.e. from a moving vehicle.
Neutral	• There is no change to the view.

Effects Significance Criteria

Having assessed the baseline landscape and visual receptor sensitivity (Tables 1 and 2) and magnitude of the anticipated landscape (Table 3) and visual (Table 4) change or impacts, the significance of effect is assessed in accordance with the determinant thresholds set out in Table 5 below. For the purposes of this assessment a 5-point scale ranging from negligible through to major has been adopted in order to assess the significance of landscape and visual effects.

Table 5: Determinants of Significance of Effect

Landscape Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change / Impact				
	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	Neutral
High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor	Neutral
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Neutral
Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Neutral
Very Low	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Neutral
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

A neutral significance of effect is assessed where there is no change or impact to the Landscape Receptor. The assessment of the significance of effects has due regard to the following:

- Extent and magnitude of the effect;
- Effect duration (whether temporary (short-term) or permanent (medium or long-term));
- Effect nature (whether direct or indirect, reversible or irreversible, beneficial or adverse);
- Whether the effect occurs in isolation, is cumulative or interactive;
- Performance against any relevant environmental quality standards;
- Sensitivity of the receptor; and

- Compatibility with environmental policies

Table 6 provides a definition of the significance of effects:

Table 6: Significance of Effects

Significance of Effect	Definition
Major	Major change to character and/or appearance of affecting landscape resource and/or visual amenity
Moderate	Moderate or partial change to character and/or appearance of affecting landscape resource and/or visual amenity
Minor	Minor change, possibly of short duration or indirect effect, to the landscape resource and/or visual amenity
Negligible	Very low or negligible change, possibly of short duration or indirect effect, to the landscape resource and/or visual amenity
Neutral	No change or effect

The definition of the range and significance of effects for both landscape and visual impact assessments is informed by the sensitivity of the receptor in the context of the criteria above. Impacts and consequent effects can be direct, indirect, cumulative, positive or negative and permanent or temporary. The identification of impacts and consequent effects also clearly distinguishes between those which affect the physical landscape resource (landscape character) and those associated with visual amenity and views across the Site. Impacts and effects are also considered in terms of their duration, i.e. whether they are permanent, and scale.

In order to inform the decision making process, the LVIA reports on those effects that are considered to be significant. The two principal criteria determining significance are the sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor and the magnitude of the change or impact. This assessment therefore combines the sensitivity to change of the various receptors with the assessment of the magnitude of the effect in order to predict the significance of the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development.

Effects can be beneficial (positive) or adverse (negative) as well as neutral, where there is either no effect or where beneficial or adverse impacts balance. For the purpose of this assessment, effects that have been assessed as being either moderate or large

adverse or beneficial or above are considered to be significant. Although minor adverse or beneficial and neutral effects are not considered significant, they remain worthy of consideration throughout the decision making process.

The LVIA is, therefore, set out as follows:

Section 2 describes the landscape policy context for the existing site.

Section 3 provides an overview of the landscape character context, through reference to national and local landscape character assessments.

Section 4 describes the landscape character of the existing site and the surrounding area. This section includes reference to ecology and other relevant surveys and reports.

Section 5 sets out the baseline visual assessment.

Section 6 describes the Outline Landscape Scheme for the proposed residential development.

Section 7 assesses the anticipated impact of the proposals on landscape character.

Section 8 sets out the anticipated visual impact of the proposals.

Section 9 provides the overall conclusions and recommendations of this LVIA.

2. Landscape Policy Context

The majority of the application area (see drawing Buchan Hill, Pease Pottage Proposed Layout, March 2018 069-02-01) falls under the jurisdiction of Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC). However, the administrative boundary between MSDC and Horsham District Council (HDC), to the west, lies across the planning application boundary (see Figure 3). The existing access road is therefore within the HDC administrative area. Relevant landscape policies under both MSDC and HDC planning authorities are included in sections 2.1 and 2.2 below. Relevant national planning policy is included in section 2.1.

The Site lies towards the western end of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which stretches eastwards into Kent and south to the East Sussex coast. All adjoining land to the north (as far as the M23/A264), north east and west, is within the AONB. The AONB includes Horsham Road and land south of the road (including part of the existing built-up area of Pease Pottage). The AONB also includes land east of the Site, including a section of the existing built-up western fringe of Pease Pottage. An area immediately south of the Site, between the Site boundary and Horsham Road, is outside the AONB but within the settlement boundary and is approved for development (ref: APP/D3830/W/16/3158499). The western limit of the settlement boundary adjoins the planning application boundary east of the access road. The relevant policies from the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 are included in section 2.4.

The Site carries no heritage or wildlife designations. Designated features within 1 km of the site include:

- Horsham Corner, bordering the site to the west, north and north west, is designated Ancient and Semi Natural Woodland.
- Finches Shaw, located on the south side of Horsham Road within 100m of the site, is designated Ancient Replanted Woodland
- Cottesmore School main building (Grade II) lies approximately 500m to the north west
- Buchan Hill Ponds SSSI is located approximately 1km to the north west.
- Bowl Barrow on Black Hill Scheduled Monument is located 1km to the west.

The western part of Horsham Corner ASNW (and pond), Cottesmore School, Buchan Hill Ponds and Bowl Barrow are within the administrative area of HDC. The northern part of the ASNW (and pond) and Finches Shaw are within the MSDC administrative area.

2.1 MSDC District Plan 2014-2031

The MSDC District Plan 2014-2031 was adopted on 28th March 2018 and replaces the saved policies of the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004.

Relevant policies include:

DP12: Protection and enhancement of countryside

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.

Evidence Base: A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex, A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape, Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study.

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:

- 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.*

Agricultural land of Grade 3a and above will be protected from non-agricultural development proposals. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, detailed field surveys should be undertaken and proposals should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality.

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.

Built-up area boundaries are subject to review by Neighbourhood Plans or through a Site Allocations Development Plan Document, produced by the District Council.

Economically viable mineral reserves within the district will be safeguarded.

DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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.

Evidence Base: The High Weald AONB Management Plan.

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;

- 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.*

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.

Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where 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.

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 corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages to act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and leisure and recreational routes.

Evidence Base: Green Infrastructure mapping; Mid Sussex Ancient Woodland Survey, Tree and Woodland Management Guidelines, Tree Preservation Order records.

The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected.

Development that will damage or lead to 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.

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.

Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- 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*
- 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.*

Proposals for works to trees will be considered taking into account:

- the condition and health of the trees; and*
- the contribution of the trees to the character and visual amenity of the local area; and*
- the amenity and nature conservation value of the trees; and*
- the extent and impact of the works; and*
- any replanting proposals.*

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 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. 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.

2.2 Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF)

The HDPF was adopted on 27th November 2015. Its purpose is to set out *the planning strategy for the years up to 2031 to deliver the social, economic and environmental needs for the district (outside the South Downs National Park).*

The administrative boundary between MSDC and HDC runs north-south through Horsham Corner ASNW and pond, along the western boundary of the proposed built area of the planning application and along the eastern side of the existing access road and entrance to the Site from Horsham Road. The existing access road is therefore under HDC jurisdiction. The following elements (outside the planning application boundary but within the applicant's ownership, also fall within the HDC administrative area:

- Horsham Corner ASNW (western section) and pond
- Grassland strip west of the access road running the length of the woodland edge (proposals are to maintain this as an ASNW buffer zone)

Other assets located within the HDC administrative area and within 1km of the Site include:

- Cottesmore School main building (Grade II)
- Buchan Hill Ponds SSSI
- Bowl Barrow Scheduled Monument

The area of the planning application within HDC and all of the above designated assets and grassland strip are located within the High Weald AONB.

Relevant policies from the HDPF are discussed below:

Chapter 9 of the HDPF includes policy on Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment. Among the issues highlighted are:

- *The district has a predominantly rural character containing a network of villages and towns, each with their own character. Development proposals will need to consider how this character can be maintained and where possible enhanced.*
- *There is a continued need to protect and enhance nationally and locally designated landscapes, habitats, species and ancient woodland;*
- *In addition to protecting designated sites, other habitats and species should be protected and enhanced to maintain a functional ecological network within and beyond the District's boundaries.;*

Policy 25 addresses the need to protect the district's natural environment and landscape character:

Policy 25

Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development.

The Council will support development proposals which:

- 1. Protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.*
- 2. Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District.*
- 3. Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.*
- 4. Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.*

Policy 26 covers development outside settlement boundaries and consideration of key features within the area, including development pattern, the pattern of landscape elements including woodlands and fields and the landform:

Policy 26

Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection

Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria:

- 1. Support the needs of agriculture or forestry;*
- 2. Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;*
- 3. Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or*
- 4. Enable the sustainable development of rural areas.*

In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including;

- 1. The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change;*
- 2. The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; and*
- 3. The landform of the area.*

Policy 30 sets out policy for the area of the High Weald AONB located within HDC, including conservation and enhancement of landscape features:

Policy 30

Protected Landscapes

- 1. The natural beauty and public enjoyment of the High Weald AONB and the adjoining South Downs National Park will be conserved and enhanced and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities will be promoted. Development proposals will be supported in or close to protected landscapes where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts to the natural beauty and public enjoyment of these landscapes as well as any relevant cross boundary linkages.*
- 2. Proposals should have regard to any management plans for these areas and must demonstrate:*
 - a. How the key landscape features or components of natural beauty will be conserved and enhanced. This includes maintaining local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the protected landscapes, and if necessary providing mitigation or compensation measures.*
 - b. How the public enjoyment of these landscapes will be retained.*

c. How the proposal supports the economy of the protected landscape and will contribute to the social wellbeing of the population who live and work in these areas.

3. In the case of major development proposals in or adjoining protected areas, applicants will also be required to demonstrate why the proposal is in the public interest and what alternatives to the scheme have been considered.

Policy 31 sets out policy on Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity. Within the supporting text, woodland is identified as a key habitat:

The nature of the habitats and species found across the District is very varied, but key characteristics include the network of woodland habitats, which is particularly dense in the north of the district. Much of this woodland has been present since at least 1600. Designated as ancient woodland, these areas are of particular importance to wildlife and are irreplaceable. As identified by the Local Economic Partnership, woodland has the potential to play a key economic role in the district in the future, providing a low carbon fuel source together with biodiversity benefits.

Policy 31

Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

1. Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss, and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained.

2. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and /or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks.

3. Where felling of protected trees is necessary, replacement planting with a suitable species will be required.

4. a) Particular consideration will be given to the hierarchy of sites and habitats in the district as follows:

i. Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

ii. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs)

iii. Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and any areas of Ancient woodland, local geodiversity or other irreplaceable habitats not already identified in i & ii above.

b) Where development is anticipated to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on sites or features for biodiversity, development will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that:

i. The reason for the development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and,

ii. That appropriate mitigation and compensation measures are provided.

5. Any development with the potential to impact Arun Valley SPA or the Mens SAC will be subject to a HRA to determine the need for an Appropriate Assessment. In addition, development will be required to be in accordance with the necessary mitigation measures for development set out in the HRA of this plan.

Policy 34 is relevant for reference to the setting of heritage assets. The appropriate extract is included below:

Policy 34

Cultural and Heritage Assets

The Council recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and as such the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets. Applications for such development will be required to:

1. Make reference to the significance of the asset, including drawing from research and documentation such as the West Sussex Historic

Environment Record;

2. Reflect the current best practice guidance produced by English Heritage and Conservation Area Character Statements;

[..]

7. Retain and improves the setting of heritage assets, including views, public rights of way, trees and landscape features, including historic public realm features; [..]

2.4 High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 created the AONB (and National Park) designation. The primary purpose of AONB designation is defined as *to conserve and enhance natural beauty*.

The High Weald Management Plan 2014-2019 *sets out local authority policy for the AONB and will be used to assess how public bodies, statutory undertakers and holders of public office fulfil their duty to have regard for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the High Weald.* MSDC is one of fifteen local authorities covering the AONB which have adopted the Management Plan and *has regard to it when considering the suitability of proposals for development in the High Weald AONB.*

The Management Plan defines the key characteristics of the High Weald in terms of:

- **Geology, landform, water systems and climate:** deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone [..].
- **Settlement:** dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and hamlets, and late medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.
- **Routeways:** ancient routeways (now roads, tracks and paths) in the form of ridge-top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways. These routeways are often narrow, deeply sunken, and edged with trees, hedges, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks.
- **Woodland:** the great extent of ancient woods, gills, and shaws [..]
- **Field and heath:** small, irregularly shaped and productive fields often bounded by (and forming a mosaic with) hedgerows and small woodlands, and typically used for livestock grazing [..]

The Management Plan summarises issues and defines objectives under each of these key characteristics. Those relevant to the Site include:

Settlement:

S2 Objective: To protect the historic pattern of settlement.

Rationale: To protect the distinctive character of towns, villages, hamlets and farmsteads and to maintain the hinterlands and other relationships (including separation) between such settlements that contribute to local identity.

Woodland:

W1 Objective: *To maintain existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland.*

Rationale: *To maintain irreplaceable habitats for biodiversity, to maintain a key component of the cultural landscape, and to maintain contribution to carbon storage.*

Field and heath:

FH2 Objective: *To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands.*

Rationale: *To maintain fields and field boundaries that form a part of the habitat mosaic of the High Weald; and to maintain this key component of what is a rare UK survival of an essentially medieval landscape.*

3. Landscape Character Context

National Character Area (NCA) profiles prepared by Natural England define *areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries* and include a *description of natural and cultural features*. The 159 National Character Areas thus provide a source of environmental information of major landscape areas. The proposed development Site is in National Character Area NCA 122 High Weald, which stretches eastwards to the Sussex coast and incorporates the High Weald AONB. The key characteristics of this NCA are included in section 3.1.

County and local landscape character is discussed in sections 3.2 - 3.4 and is informed by the Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (West Sussex County Council 2005), the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment prepared in 2005 and the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment prepared in 2003 (HDLCA).

3.1 National Character Area 122: High Weald

The Site lies at the westernmost tip of this character area, south of Crawley. Key characteristics of this NCA include:

- *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.*
- *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.*

3.2 Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (West Sussex County Council 2005)

Although now some years old, the Strategy (SWSL) (and Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex) remain the primary sources for an overview of county and local landscape character. The SWSL offers a broad vision for the county as a whole, strategy objectives and guidelines for key landscape elements. It is discussed here briefly. However, local landscape character assessment offers a greater level of detail (see section 3.3).

The SWSL was prepared in 2005 with an overall purpose *to protect and enhance the landscape of West Sussex as an asset for future generations*. It includes a vision for the landscape of West Sussex and for each of the five National Character Areas which include parts of the county. The vision defined for the area defined as High Weald, in which the Site is located, is:

The characteristic mixture of highly distinctive and extensive woodlands, many of them ancient, including shaws and steep valley woodlands in the deep ghylls, is managed as a woodland resource and as wildlife habitats, with new plantings linking up once-isolated woodland features.

Distinctive characteristics such as sandstone outcrops, the pattern of small, irregular fields bounded by shaws, historic routeways and rural lanes, old iron working sites and hammer ponds, are protected and conserved.

The characteristic pattern of small fields is well-managed and is being maintained.

New development of high quality fits with the characteristic settlement pattern of scattered villages, hamlets and dispersed farmsteads.

The local distinctiveness of villages and their settings is evident, with a return to the greater availability and use of traditional local materials.

The Strategy includes a series of objectives and landscape guidelines for key elements, including woodland. Among the guidelines for conserving and enhancing existing woodlands are:

- *conserve and enhance woodlands as a major contribution to protecting the unique landscape character of West Sussex as well as for their environmental, wildlife, historic, economic, and cultural importance.[..]*
- *promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of ancient woodlands,.[..]*
- *where appropriate, restore heathland as part of the fabric of woodland areas.*

3.3 A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex (November 2005)

This LCA was prepared *to help protect and enhance the distinctive character of the District and to manage change* and offers a greater level of detail than the SWSL.

The MSDC LCA identifies a number of distinct landscape character areas. The proposed Site is located within Landscape Character Area 8 Worth Forest. Summary and key characteristics are described as:

Heavily-afforested, dissected plateau landscape enclosing a post-medieval rural landscape cut from the forest. Includes the western end of the High Weald Forest Ridge. Adjoins Crawley and the M23 Motorway.

- *Densely wooded, confined, dissected plateau landscape with extensive coniferous and mixed afforestation.*
- *The Worth forests mark the plateau-like western end of the High Weald Forest Ridge, drained by the Rivers Mole and Ouse.*
- *Long views over the Low Weald to the downs but fewer long views north.*

- *Large, regularly-enclosed and some smaller, irregular, assart fields within a woodland setting comprising an arable and pastoral landscape enclosed by shaws, hedgerows and fencing.*
- *Despite the closeness of Crawley to the north, a secluded, tranquil nature exists in many parts of the forests.*
- *Clearance and re-planting of large tracts of ancient woodland.*
- *Heathland remnants and significant areas of rich woodland biodiversity.*
- *Spares network of ridge-top roads and lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.*
- *Sparse, dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads.*
- *Bounded to the west and north by the M23 Motorway and to the south east by the B2110.*
- *The London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area via the Balcombe Tunnel.*
- *Sizeable hammerponds, lakes and ponds.*
- *Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.*
- *Exotic treescapes in places including rhododendron hedgerows*

This character area is described as having a two-sided character: it can be experienced as different and special, a seemingly impenetrable forest tucked behind the Forest Ridge of the High Weald, tranquil, secluded, scenic and rather wild in places. Yet it is surrounded and crossed by the trappings of 19th and 20th Century development. It lies cheek by jowl with Crawley and the M23 Motorway, is crossed by the London to Brighton Railway Line and pylon lines and contains large blocks of regular coniferous plantations divided by forest rides. It suffers from traffic and aircraft noise. The forest therefore has a two-sided character despite its persistence as one of the most densely wooded areas in the western Weald.

Strategic gaps between settlements are highlighted: The County Council, Mid Sussex District Council and Crawley Borough Council have long recognised pressures for development on the open land between Crawley and Pease Pottage and have designated this land as a strategic gap.

Among key issues identified is:

Continuing pressures for urban development on the northern fringes of the area and an attendant increase in the pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise.

The LCA notes under landscape and visual sensitivities that:

- *woodland and forest cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.*
- *sparse settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.*

The Area's management objective is defined as:

Conserve and enhance the secluded, tranquil nature of the forest and the agricultural landscape, and the unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout the area.

Land Management Guidelines include a range of recommendations associated with forestry management for nature conservation, woodland regeneration, conservation of hedgerows, maintenance of the historic pattern and fabric of the agricultural landscape, woodland biodiversity, management of lakes and ponds, and the character of rural roads.

3.4 Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (HDLCA) (Chris Blandford Associates, 2003)

This LCA identified 16 landscape character types and 32 separate landscape character areas across the district. The Site is character type L - Forest Ridges and Ghylls, described as follows:

*Relatively high flat topped ridges and steep ghylls
Heavily forested with extensive coniferous plantations and mixed woodland
Small areas of farmland with regular field pattern
Roads following ridges
Confined views*

Landscape Character Area is L1 St Leonard's Forest, which covers an area stretching from Horsham to the eastern district boundary. This is described as:

A very densely wooded area, with a landform of flat top ridges and steep sided ghylls [..]. The combination of forest cover and ghylls creates a strongly enclosed landscape with confined views. However, a medium scale field pattern of regular arable fields divides the woodlands. Much suburban modern development has spread along the ridgetop roads. However, as sense of isolation and remoteness prevails in much of the area.

Historic features include Medieval hunting forest, hammer ponds and mills, and 18th and 19th century large fields cut out of woodland. Biodiversity elements include small areas of heathland, beech, oak and hornbeam woodland. Among key issues are:

Overall sensitivity to change is assessed as high. Planning and management guidelines are defined as:

- *Conserve the traditional dispersed settlement pattern. Any further infill and extension of ribbon development along roads, or building of new large dwellings on existing plots, would further erode this pattern and therefore damage character*
- *Screen visually intrusive urban fringe development along ridgetop roads with selective tree planting*
- *Conserve the strongly wooded character of the area*
- *Conserve and manage ancient semi-natural woodland and pollarded trees*
- *Take opportunities to restore heathland*

[..]

4. Baseline Landscape Character Assessment

4.1 Site Description.

The Site lies immediately to the west of the main settlement of Pease Pottage, north of Horsham Road. The Site is largely flat and consists of areas of open grassland with ornamental shrubs, areas of hardstanding used for access and car parking, an electricity substation and an existing building, largely of a single storey, currently in commercial use. A circular area of hardstanding, laid to concrete and tarmac, mirrors the Site of the radar station approximately 250m to the west and may once have been in similar use. The existing concrete access road, which leads north off Horsham Road through a metal fence and gates, is lined with an avenue of semi-mature trees.

Grassland west of the access road (and around the perimeter of the application boundary) forms a buffer between the Site and an area of Ancient and Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) known as Horsham Corner. A security fence forms a boundary at the woodland edge. There are gates within the security fencing, but these are not located on public rights of way.

The Site includes an area proposed for a second access road off Horsham Road, a few metres east of the existing access. This crosses an area of land already approved for development ((ref: APP/D3830/W/16/3158499).



Illustrative view north from entrance along access road. The conifers to the right of the image screen the substation. The security fence and Horsham Corner ASNW are visible to the left.



Illustrative view south along access road towards the Site entrance. The substation is visible to the left of the image.



Illustrative view looking north towards existing building and areas of ornamental shrubs set in open grassland



Illustrative view east across the access road. Recent residential development off Horsham Road is visible.



Illustrative view south across central area of hardstanding, in use as a car park. The existing building is visible to the right of the image. New development is visible to the east of the Site.



Illustrative view in the north of the Site towards Horsham Corner ASNW and the security fence.

4.2 Rights of Way and Access

Vehicular and pedestrian access is via an access road off Horsham Road. There are no public rights of way within the Site. A chain link security fence follows the woodland boundary to the north and west of the existing site. There are gates within this boundary fence, but these are normally kept locked.

4.3 Ecology

A Preliminary Ecology Appraisal conducted in April 2018² noted the area of ancient woodland along the western and northern margins of the study area. Grassland is described as *large areas of regularly mown and short sward amenity grassland characterised by a limited mix of species characteristic of poorly-drained and slightly acidic ground conditions. [...] A narrow strip of previously disturbed semi-improved neutral grassland and small patch of semi-improved acid grassland with bracken was located along the eastern Site boundary.*

² Buchan Hill, Pease Pottage, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Applied Ecology Ltd., April 2018)

Overall, the Site is concluded to be *of limited value to protected animals, with areas of intact mature broadleaved woodland (outside of the development Site area) likely to constitute the habitat of highest relative value in these terms.*

Trees on the site include semi-mature broadleaved specimens lining the existing access road and clumps of tall conifers around the electricity substation.

4.4 Neighbouring Features

Topography of surrounding land is largely flat or gently undulating.

South: the Site is bordered to the south (east of the existing access road) by a building formerly in use as a care home and a car parking area laid to tarmac. This area is the subject of a separate, approved planning application (see Figure 3) for residential development. The existing access road joins Horsham Road, from which it is separated by a security fence and gates. To the south of Horsham Road is an area of Ancient Replanted Woodland known as Finches Shaw, which contains a small pond. A building in use by the Meteorological Office lies just outside the fence to the west of the entrance.

West: to the west is a belt of ASNW known as Horsham Corner. Beyond this is a further area of open grassland and woodland. Within this woodland area is a NATS air traffic control radar tower and station and a Southern Water site with a concrete water tower and underground reservoir.

North: the ASNW continues around the northern and north eastern periphery of the Site, where it broadens into a more extensive area of woodland containing a pond. Beyond the woodland to the north is a golf course, a cluster of commercial buildings and, to the north west, the grounds of Cottesmore School.

East: To the east of the Site is an area of recently completed residential development off Horsham Road.



Illustrative view of new development off Horsham Road, east of the Site



Illustrative view looking west from the central area of the Site. The radar tower can be seen to the rear of the woodland belt.

4.5 Overview Landscape Character and Significance

The Site lies within the High Weald AONB which confers the highest level of protection, but carries no wildlife or heritage designations. It lies outside the settlement boundary of Pease Pottage, but contains existing development comprising a 20th century building in commercial use and an electricity substation, fenced off from public access. The remainder of the Site comprises a mix of mown grassland with occasional trees and clumps of ornamental shrubs, a group of tall conifers around the substation, the access road and associate trees, and central car parking area laid to concrete/ tarmac.

The Site offers few of the characteristics of this National Character Area. Its topography and situation within extensive areas of woodland do partially reflect the sense of an *intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape* and *remoteness due to very rural, wooded character*. However, its proximity to Horsham Road, existing commercial use and the visibility of recent development to the east all reduce the sense of remoteness. Its wider surroundings are to some degree consistent with key characteristics. The adjacent and wider neighbouring woodland to the north and west are typical of the *great extent of interconnected ancient woods, steep-sided gill*

woodlands, wooded heaths and shaws and extensive broadleaved woodland cover with a very high proportion of ancient woodland. The adjacent section of Horsham Road, although bordered by woodland, does not suggest *narrow and winding lanes, often sunken and enclosed by high hedgerows or woodland strips* and, as a main route to and from Pease Pottage, has the character of an urban traffic corridor rather than a rural lane. The character of recently developed land to the east contrasts with the heavily wooded areas to the north and west. The extension of residential development westwards along Horsham Road within a recently extended settlement boundary has created a now continuous ribbon of built form on the northern side of Horsham Road which corresponds with existing development on the south side and increases the urban influence on the Site.

At a local level, most of the Site forms part of the Worth Forest Landscape Character Area and has some characteristic topographical and landscape features, notably its woodland setting. It forms a part of the *densely wooded, confined, dissected plateau landscape*. The local LCA suggests that this is an area where, *despite the closeness of Crawley to the north, a secluded, tranquil nature exists in many parts of the forests*. Although largely enclosed to the north and west by woodland, the proximity of Horsham Road and recent residential development, and the present usage of the Site are such that it cannot be describe as tranquil. To some degree it is typical of the *two-sided character [of this LCA] despite its persistence as one of the most densely wooded areas in the western Weald* - largely enclosed by woodland, hidden from outward view and offering few long views outward, but close to modern development and infrastructure.

The existing access road is within Horsham district and is part of a separate landscape character area identified as St Leonard's Forest. Occupying a very small part of this character area, the road cannot be said to reflect typical characteristics. However, the adjacent areas of ASNW are an illustration of this *densely wooded area and strongly enclosed landscape with confined views*. Again, the visible presence of recent development diminishes the *sense of isolation and remoteness [of] the area*.

The AONB Management Plan seeks to *protect the distinctive character of towns, villages hamlets and farmsteads* and emphasises the need to *maintain existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland*. The Site does reflect identified landscape and visual sensitivities: *woodland and forest cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity*, but there are *continuing pressures for urban development on the northern fringes of the area and an attendant increase in the pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise*.

In conclusion, the Site reflects few characteristics of the High Weald NCA and local landscape character. A nationally significant AONB landscape designation would suggest high landscape sensitivity. However, the Site's sensitivity is also influenced by existing development on Site, visible neighbouring recent development and the proximity of Horsham Road. Overall sensitivity is therefore concluded to be medium.

5. Baseline Visual Assessment

This baseline visual assessment describes the visual amenity and appearance of the existing Site by reference to a series of representative viewpoints.

The anticipated visual envelope is defined by the following features:

- The landform within the Site is largely flat;
- Surrounding land to the north, west and south, largely wooded, is flat or gently undulating;
- Horsham Road passes to the south of the Site;
- The topography of the Site and its surrounds are such that intervisibility is generally low and confined to near views within the immediate surrounding area. There are no distant views of the Site. The desktop review identified the following potential views towards the Site:
 - from Horsham Road when travelling to and from Pease Pottage
 - from bridleway 1546 which runs north from Horsham Road along the driveway to Cottesmore School, approximately 1500m from the Site at its nearest point.

Following the desk top analysis a site visit was undertaken in order to identify the actual visual envelope as defined by relief, landscape feature and also built development.

9 viewpoints from publicly accessible locations were identified. Viewpoints are described in Table 7 and viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 2. Photographs taken from each of the representative viewpoint locations are included below. Photographs were taken on 26th February and 11th March 2018. These images were taken with a 50mm SLR equivalent digital lens (33.2mm).

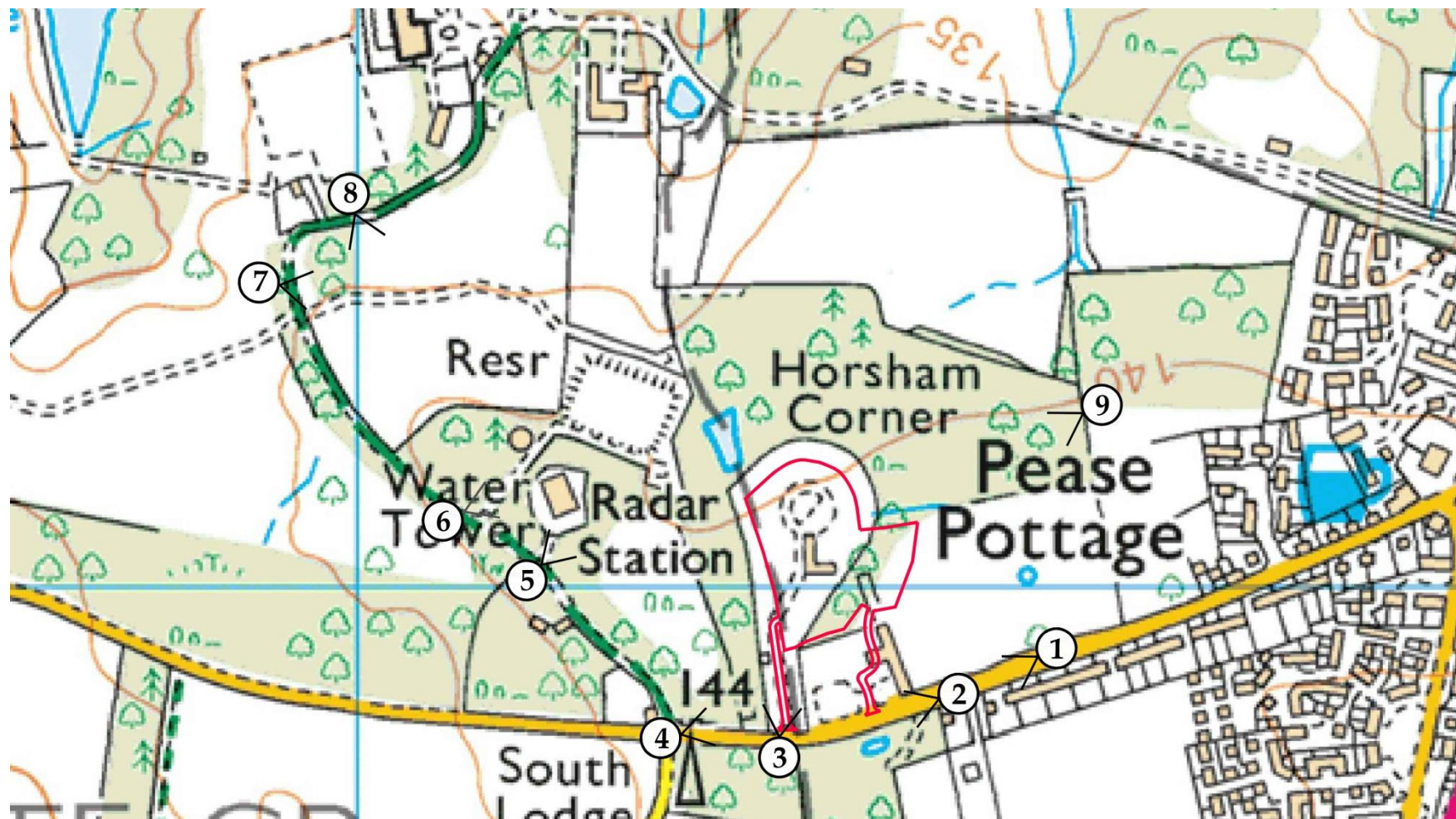


Figure 2: Viewpoint Location Plan

Table 5: Baseline Visual Assessment

Viewpoint	Location	Sensitivity	Baseline Assessment: Description
1	Near view west from Horsham Road at a distance of approximately 250m from the Site entrance.	Low. Viewpoint located on a public right of way.	A typical semi-urban road flanked on either side by development of mixed age and style (including new development to the right of the image), bordered by hedging, fencing and trees. The woodland lining the road ahead suggests the approach to a settlement edge. The Site entrance is just visible to the rear of a telegraph pole but the main area of the Site is screened by trees and built form.
2	Near view west from Horsham Road towards existing Site entrance.	Low. Viewpoint located on a public highway.	The AONB boundary follows the southern edge of this section of Horsham Road. An unremarkable view dominated by a tarmac road and associated signage and infrastructure. A tarmac surfaced car park is visible to the north of the road, partially screened by evergreen shrubs. Deciduous woodland lines the southern side of Horsham Road. The existing Site entrance is located just beyond the far telegraph pole. The ASNW belt to the west of the Site is visible to the upper right of the image.
3	Near view north from Horsham Road towards Site entrance.	Low. Viewpoint located on a public highway.	A semi urban view including a typical tarmac road, telegraph poles, lighting columns, signage, modern fencing and gates. An existing building and recent development at the western fringe of Pease Pottage are partially visible north of the road. The main area of the Site beyond the access road is largely screened by tall conifers. The belt of ASNW woodland west of the Site is visible at the left of the image.
4	Near view east on the western approach to the Site along Horsham Road.	High. Viewpoint located on a public right of way within the High Weald AONB.	The road is the dominant feature in this view, lined to the north and south by deciduous woodland. No built development is visible, but signage and infrastructure suggest the approach to a settlement. The entrance to the Site is just visible, but views into the main part of the Site are screened.
5	Near view east from public bridleway 1546	High. Viewpoint located on a public right of way within the High Weald AONB.	The view is dominated by the base of the NATS radar tower and associated building, signage, gates, fencing and tarmac access. Views to the rear are largely screened by trees. There are no views of the Site.
6	Near view east from public bridleway 1546.	High. Viewpoint located on a public right of way within the High Weald AONB.	The view is dominated by the access road into the Southern Water site and gates. The water tower is partially visible left of centre. Views east towards the Site are entirely screened by vegetation.

Viewpoint	Location	Sensitivity	Baseline Assessment: Description
7	Near view south east from public bridleway 1546 on the approach to Cottesmore School grounds.	High. Viewpoint located on a public right of way within the High Weald AONB.	An undulating landform and rural view with no visible development. The view consists of parkland, woodland and scattered mixed trees. Trees in the far distance screen all views of land to the rear.
8	Near view south east from public bridleway 1546 on the approach to Cottesmore School grounds.	High. Viewpoint located on a public right of way within the High Weald AONB.	Open parkland with scattered mature trees allows extensive views of trees and woodland in the far distance. The radar tower and water tower are clearly visible in the middle distance. The distant tree belt screens all views of land to the south and east.
9	Near view west from the northern fringe of the settlement of Pease Pottage.	Medium. Viewpoint located at the AONB boundary (but not on a PRow)	Although not on a PRow, this viewpoint is included as there is informal public access around the edge of the existing residential area, which comprises recent development north of Horsham Road and is visible to the left of the image. The viewpoint is located approximately at the AONB boundary. The AONB designation covers most of the land within this viewpoint but excludes visible recent development. The Site is located to the rear of a tree belt in the middle distance and there are glimpses of existing development in this winter view. The radar tower west of the Site is just visible above the tree line in the right hand part of the image. The foreground comprises mainly open grassland.



Viewpoint 1: Near view west from Horsham Road at a distance of approximately 250m from the Site entrance. A typical semi-urban road flanked on either side by development of mixed age and style (including new development to the right of the image), bordered by hedging, fencing and trees. The woodland lining the road ahead suggests the approach to a settlement edge. The Site entrance is just visible to the rear of a telegraph pole but the main area of the Site is screened by trees and built form.



Viewpoint 2: Near view west from Horsham Road towards Site entrance. The AONB boundary follows the southern edge of this section of Horsham Road. An unremarkable view dominated by a tarmac road and associated signage and infrastructure. A tarmac surfaced car park is visible to the north of the road, partially screened by evergreen shrubs. Deciduous woodland lines the southern side of Horsham Road. The existing Site entrance is located just beyond the far telegraph pole. The ASNW belt to the west of the Site is visible to the upper right of the image.



Viewpoint (panorama) 3: Near view north from Horsham Road towards Site entrance. A semi urban view including a typical tarmac road, telegraph poles, lighting columns, signage, modern fencing and gates. An existing building and recent development at the western fringe of Pease Pottage are partially visible north of the road. The main area of the Site beyond the access road is largely screened by tall conifers. The belt of ancient and semi natural woodland west of the Site is visible at the left of the image.



Viewpoint 4: Near view east on the western approach to the Site along Horsham Road. Viewpoint located within the High Weald AONB. The road is the dominant feature in this view, lined to the north and south by deciduous woodland. No built development is visible, but signage and infrastructure suggest the approach to a settlement. The entrance to the Site is just visible, but views into the main part of the Site are screened.



Viewpoint (panorama) 5: Near view east from public bridleway 1546 which follows the route of the access road north from Horsham Road to Cottessmore School. The view is dominated by the base of the NATS radar tower and associated building, signage, gates, fencing and tarmac access. Views to the rear are largely screened by trees. There are no views of the Site.



Viewpoint (panorama) 6: Near view east from public bridleway 1546 which follows the route of the access road north from Horsham Road to Cottesmore School. The view is dominated by the access road into the Southern Water site and gates. The water tower is partially visible left of centre. Views east towards the Site are entirely screened by vegetation.



Viewpoint (panorama) 7: Near view south east from public bridleway 1546 on the approach to Cottesmore School grounds. An undulating landform and rural view with no visible development. The view consists of parkland, woodland and scattered mixed trees. Trees in the far distance screen all views of land to the rear.



Viewpoint (panorama) 8: Near view south east from public bridleway 1546 on the approach to Cottesmore School grounds. Open parkland with scattered mature trees allows extensive views of trees and woodland in the far distance. The radar tower and water tower are clearly visible in the middle distance. The distant tree belt screens all views of land to the south and east.



Viewpoint (panorama) 9: Near view west from the northern fringe of the settlement of Pease Pottage. Although not on a PRow, this viewpoint is included as there is informal public access around the edge of the existing residential area, which comprises recent development north of Horsham Road and is visible to the left of the image. The viewpoint is located approximately at the AONB boundary. The AONB designation covers most of the land within this viewpoint but excludes visible recent development. The Site is located to the rear of a tree belt in the middle distance and there are glimpses of existing development in this winter view. The radar tower west of the Site is just visible above the tree line in the right hand part of the image. The foreground comprises mainly open grassland.

6.0 Proposed Residential Development: Outline Landscape Scheme

The proposed residential site layout and outline landscape proposals are shown on Figures 3 and 4. The proposals are for the demolition of the existing office building and areas of hardstanding (with the exception of the existing access road), construction of 43 residential units comprising a mix of 37 2-, 3- or 4-bedroom houses, a 6-unit apartment block and a business unit, with associated streetscape, car parking and private gardens. The existing avenue of trees lining the access road will be retained. Private rear gardens will be planted with suitable tree species to enhance the overall tree cover on the Site. Front gardens would feature native tree and shrub planting, including species such as lavender, spindle, honeysuckle, blackthorn and dog rose. Two of the existing conifers around the substation would be removed. There is potential for the creation of community open space east of the new access road which might include features such as a community orchard or play area.

Vehicular access will be via the existing access road and a second, new access to be created approximately 100m further east along Horsham Road within the area already approved for new residential development (see Figure 3).

A large part of the surrounding belt of ASNW of Horsham Corner, as well as the Site itself, is within the ownership boundary of the applicant. The planning application boundary allows for a 15m buffer formed of existing grassland to be retained between the proposed residential development and the surrounding belt of ASNW in accordance with guidance published by Natural England. The buffer zone will be managed and maintained in accordance with good ecological practice to provide appropriate protection for the ASNW and encourage the regeneration of a heathland landscape type. This might include scarification and overseeding with an acid grassland/heathland seed mix and planting with blocks of native heathland scrub such as birch, goat willow, gorse, hawthorn and hazel, and groups of birch and oak.

It may be advisable to include a naturalistic-style, visually permeable barrier between the proposed new perimeter road and the grassland buffer to prevent unauthorised vehicle access and parking. This could take the form of a low native hedge to maintain visual links between the Site and surrounding woodland, or alternatively a post and rail timber fence.



Figure 3: Proposed layout



7.0 Landscape Character Impact Assessment

The Site is located within the High Weald AONB. However, it reflects few characteristics which define national and local landscape character for this area and is influenced by existing development on Site and to the east. Landscape sensitivity is therefore concluded to be medium.

The anticipated impacts of proposed development on the key criteria which have been used to describe landscape character are assessed below:

7.1 Landscape Pattern

The overall relief and topography of the Site would be likely to remain unchanged. The proposed built form would sit within the existing physical boundary formed by the ASNW to the north and west. The proposed layout introduces an additional boundary around the area designated for development in order to retain a 15m grassland buffer between the development and the ASNW. A new access road would be created from Horsham Road through an area approved for development south of the Site. The existing grassland and hardstanding, and existing building, would be replaced by new residential development across all of the planning application area. The boundary formed by the edge of the ASNW would remain unchanged. Existing trees within the planning application boundary would be retained, with the exception of two conifers close to the electricity substation. The woodland buffer area of grassland would be enhanced with additional planting and overseeding to encourage development of a heathland-type landscape.

The proposals would therefore introduce change to the existing landscape pattern and reduce the largely open character of the Site by introducing built form and associated streetscape and infrastructure, creation of a new boundary within the existing Site and the creation of a new access off Horsham Road. The relationship between the Site and historic field pattern is unclear. However, the existing area of grassland is likely to have been created by clearance of former woodland, possibly to make way for a radar facility (similar to the neighbouring NATS site). Magnitude of impact on landscape pattern is therefore concluded to be low. The proposals would however, result in the loss of a largely open area of grassland and the extension of built form further west along Horsham Road and north into an open area.

The overall impact on landscape pattern is therefore concluded as minor adverse.

7.2 Tranquillity: remoteness and sense of isolation

Existing development on site, currently in commercial use, and associated traffic, already influence the overall tranquillity of the Site. The radar tower to the west is visible from within the Site, and recent woodland clearance and neighbouring residential development to the east also compromise levels of tranquillity and remoteness. The introduction of residential development across the majority of the Site, traffic movements, noise and lighting associated with normal residential occupation, would be likely to reduce existing levels of tranquillity, but the magnitude of change should be assessed within the context of the present Site usage. The sense of isolation from surrounding areas provided by the dense woodland would remain to some degree, but again, this should be considered against the introduction of residential development to the east, which already compromises any sense of remoteness or visual screening from surrounding areas.

The magnitude of impact on tranquillity is concluded to be low. The overall impact on tranquillity is therefore concluded as minor adverse.

7.3 Cultural and historical associations/features and their settings

The site has no heritage designations. Grade II Cottessmore School is located approximately 500m to the north west. Bowl Barrow on Black Hill Scheduled Monument is located 1km to the west. These are physically and visually removed from the Site by intervening vegetation and it is not anticipated that the proposals would impact on these assets or their setting.

The magnitude of impacts on cultural and historical associations is concluded to be neutral. The overall impact on cultural and historical associations is therefore concluded to be neutral.

7.4 Land cover, land use, ecology and management

The proposals represent a complete change of land use from business use to residential occupation across a large part of the existing area of grassland. A proportion of the existing grassland would be permanently lost. This, together with the existing building and central area of hard standing would be replaced with residential housing and apartment blocks with associated infrastructure and car parking. The scale of the proposals is not, however, out of character with recent development nearby. The planning application boundary allows for a 15m grassland buffer to be retained between the development and the ASNW. The grassland is likely to benefit from enhanced management to improve species diversity and encourage the development of a heathland landscape type, which would in turn create an

enhanced woodland edge buffer to the ASNW at Horsham Corner. Landscape treatments include additional native tree and shrub planting. Existing trees (with the exception of two conifers) associated with the access road and adjacent grassland strips would be retained.

The Preliminary Ecology Appraisal recommends appropriate protection of the ASNW and creation and enhancement of the woodland buffer, in line with proposals as shown in the illustrative landscape masterplan. The amenity grassland is concluded to be of low ecological value. Proposed additional planting and enhancements within the grassland buffer would encourage greater species diversity and enhance nature conservation potential. The proposals would remove the existing building, but this is considered to have low bat roosting potential. Other recommendations include incorporation of wildlife-friendly planting into proposed landscaping and installation of artificial habitats such as bird and bat boxes.

All trees lining the existing access road are to be retained. Removal of trees is confined to a selected number of conifers in the area of the electricity substation.

The magnitude of impact on land cover, land use, ecology and management is concluded to be medium. While the proposals will result in a loss of openness and the introduction of a more extensive area of built form, the Site already includes existing development, which is unremarkable in nature and has few characteristics which contribute to landscape character. There are opportunities to enhance the landscape and woodland buffer through appropriate planting and management. The overall impact on land cover, land use, ecology and management is therefore concluded to be minor beneficial.

8.0 Visual Impact Assessment

Table 6 below provides an assessment of the visual impact of the proposed development from the representative viewpoints described in the baseline visual assessment in Section 6.

Viewpoint	Location	Sensitivity	Significance of effects
1	Near view west from Horsham Road at a distance of approximately 250m from the Site entrance.	Low. Viewpoint located on a public right of way.	The proposed new access point may just be visible in this viewpoint. However, the existing trees and built form north of Horsham Road screen all views of the Site. Overall effect: Negligible
2	Near view west from Horsham Road towards existing Site entrance.	Low. Viewpoint located on a public highway.	It is anticipated that the proposed new access would be visible from this viewpoint. However, the view already contains an existing access into the car park. It is possible that any works to the existing Site access may also be visible. No built form associated with the proposals would be visible. Overall effect: Negligible
3	Near view north from Horsham Road towards Site entrance.	Low. Viewpoint located on a public highway.	Two of the conifers associated with the electricity substation would be removed. However, the remaining specimens and other trees lining the access road would be likely to screen all views of the built form in summer, although glimpses may remain in winter. Built form is already visible in this view to the right of the image. It is anticipated that approximately 50% of this image (right hand section), which includes an area approved for development, will change to include new housing. It is anticipated that proposals could include changes to the existing access, for example surface treatments and signage, and there is scope for enhancements to planting. The existing access road and grassland to the west would remain in situ. Overall effect: Negligible/minor beneficial
4	Near view east on the western approach to the Site along Horsham Road.	High. Viewpoint located on a public right of way within the High Weald AONB.	Alterations to the existing access point may be visible from this viewpoint. However, the Site is entirely screened by trees in winter as well as in summer. Overall effect: Negligible

Viewpoint	Location	Sensitivity	Significance of effects
5	Near view east from public bridleway 1546	High. Viewpoint located on a public right of way within the High Weald AONB.	Access to the NATS radar tower offers views eastwards towards the Site. However, vegetation and built form screen all views of the Site itself. Overall effect: Neutral
6	Near view east from public bridleway 1546.	High. Viewpoint located on a public right of way within the High Weald AONB.	The proposals would be entirely screened by vegetation. Overall effect: Neutral
7	Near view south east from public bridleway 1546 on the approach to Cottesmore School grounds.	High. Viewpoint located on a public right of way within the High Weald AONB.	Trees in the middle and far distance screen all views of the Site. Overall effect: Neutral
8	Near view south east from public bridleway 1546 on the approach to Cottesmore School grounds.	High. Viewpoint located on a public right of way within the High Weald AONB.	A mature tree belt in the centre of the view screens all views towards the Site and the proposals would not be visible. Overall effect: Neutral
9	Near view west from the northern fringe of the settlement of Pease Pottage.	Medium. Viewpoint located at the AONB boundary (but not on a PRoW)	There may be glimpses of proposed development, especially in winter. However, recent development is already a feature within the view, suggesting nearby settlement, and existing development on Site, and the radar tower to the west, are partially visible. The tree belt in front of the Site is likely to screen almost all views in summer. Overall effect: Negligible

Following the Site visit, the visual envelope (publicly accessible viewpoints) is confirmed as follows:

- Intervisibility between the Site and surrounding areas is generally low and confined to near views within the immediate surrounding area. There are no distant views of the Site.
- From the west and north, views into the Site are entirely screened by the extensive land cover of woodland and trees. Views from public bridleway 1546 are screened entirely by an evergreen hedge along the eastern side of the bridleway route (the access road to Cottesmore School), or by intervening vegetation and landform between the bridleway and the proposed Site.
- From the south (Horsham Road) there are limited and transient views of the existing and proposed Site access roads. There may be glimpses of proposed development on the Site.

- From the east (Horsham Road) there are limited views of the existing and proposed access roads. Existing built form and trees screen all views of the proposed development Site. Glimpses may be possible from publicly accessible land at the northern edge of recent development north of Horsham Road.

The overall effect of the proposed development on identified viewpoints may be summarised as follows:

- 4 viewpoints (nos. 5-8, all west of the Site) are concluded to be neutral;
- 4 viewpoints (nos. 1, 2, 9) are concluded to be negligible;
- 1 viewpoint (3) is concluded to be negligible/minor beneficial

9.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

At a national and local Landscape Character level this LVIA concludes that the existing site does not contribute to the natural character and scenic beauty of the High Weald NCA, as described in the published Landscape Character Assessments and the High Weald AONB, as described in the AONB Management Plan. The existing ASNW at Horsham Corner is, however, an important element of landscape character and provides effective enclosure and visual screening from land to the west and north.

The proposed development area thus benefits from a high degree of visual enclosure, but has a more open eastern boundary with views across the existing recent development, although views inward (e.g. viewpoint 9) are filtered by tree belts.

The development proposals would retain almost all existing trees on the Site and include enhancement of the surrounding grassland to incorporate additional planting, enhance ecological value and create an effective 15m woodland buffer zone to protect the ASNW.

This assessment concludes that the effects of the proposals on landscape character will be either minor adverse (landscape pattern, tranquillity), neutral (cultural and historical associations) or minor beneficial (land cover, ecology and management). Adverse effects are concluded as such in view of the high landscape sensitivity accorded to the Site's location within the AONB. However, this should be considered within the context of the Site itself, which contributes little to landscape character as defined in the High Weald AONB Management Plan or national and local landscape character assessments.

Existing development is functional in design and hardstanding associated with the car park does not contribute to landscape character or visual amenity. Re-development will enable the creation of an enhanced landscape infrastructure across the residential area and enhanced protection of the neighbouring ASNW.

This LVIA therefore concludes that re-development of the site as proposed would enable the removal of the existing functional development which does not contribute to the character and scenic beauty of the AONB and would enable development incorporating landscape and amenity benefits which would contribute to the character and scenic beauty of the AONB and the conservation and management of the ASNW.