

Planning Inspectorate Ref: 6002030

Mid Sussex District Council Ref: DM/23/2866

Land East of Ansty, Cuckfield Bypass

**Landscape and Visual Proof of Evidence
Volume 4: Rebuttal**

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on behalf of

Fairfax Acquisitions Limited and The Norris Family

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Land East of Ansty, Cuckfield Bypass
Leyton Place Ltd

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 I am Clare Brockhurst, Director of Leyton Place Limited. I am instructed by the appellant in respect of the appeal on Land east of Ansty. I have already provided three volumes of landscape and visual evidence which were submitted to PINS earlier in May 2026:

Volume 1: Landscape and Visual evidence – main text (CD 8.3A)

Volume 2: Landscape and Visual evidence – plans and appendices (CD 8.3B)

Volume 3: Landscape and Visual evidence – summary (CD 8.3C)

1.2 This Rebuttal Proof of Evidence represents Volume 4 of my evidence to the Inquiry. It comprises five sections:

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: Comments on the evidence of Mr J Peacock on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC).

Section 3: Comments on the evidence of Ms L Hooper on behalf of the Rule 6 party.

Section 4: Response to the list of additional sites for testing published 15th May 2026

Section 5: Conclusions

1.3 This volume of my evidence should be read in conjunction with my existing evidence. I will deal with other points of disagreement at the inquiry, as necessary.

1.4 I have not set out in this volume of my evidence to deal with all the areas in the evidence of Mr Peacock and Ms Hooper that I disagree with, and this rebuttal is not intended to be exhaustive.

1.5 The fact that I have limited my rebuttal to dealing with the matters identified (rather than reiterating my evidence already presented) should not be taken to indicate that I do not dispute other elements as I do dispute them.

1.6 Other matters or remaining points of difference will be explored in oral evidence at the Inquiry.

Declaration

1.7 As with volumes 1, 2 and 3, the evidence I have prepared represents my informed professional opinion on the objective and subjective aspects of the development for the Appeal Site and the planning authority's reasons for refusal as far as they relate to the landscape and visual effects of the Appeal proposals. Based on my knowledge, I believe the facts stated in this evidence are true and accurate and I have complied with my professional Code of Conduct.

Section 2: Rebuttal evidence in respect of the case presented by Mr Peacock

- 2.1 My general observation is that much of Mr Peacock's evidence seeks to criticise the LVIA and highlight differences of professional opinion and judgement on the assessment of effects.

Matters between the parties

- 2.2 There is a Landscape Statement of Common Ground (LSoCG, **CD 7.3**) agreed between the parties which sets out the issues on which we do not agree (Section 2). The majority of the issues included in the 'Areas of Disagreement' were provided by Mr Peacock. It is therefore surprising that Mr Peacock does not present evidence on many of the issues he raised, indeed in paragraph 3.1 he makes clear he understands there to be only two matters in dispute. If he were happy to narrow the issues he could have done this before the LSoCG was signed on the 5th May. Specifically I note:

Representative viewpoints

- 2.2.1 Having disputed the viewpoints are not representative of the visual receptors Mr Peacock provides new photography from fewer viewpoints, those presented are similar, albeit slightly different locations, from those included in the LVIA. It appears that the visual receptors are therefore properly represented by the viewpoints shown in the LVIA (**CD 2.17**, Figure 4.14).
- 2.2.2 Mr Peacock appears to reject the internal views (**CD 2.17**, page 26) as they do not represent existing visual receptors, of course these have been included to illustrate the character of the Site, this would have assisted Mr Peacock, who has not walked the totality of the Appeal Site. In time, if allowed many of these locations will be new vantage points for residents and members of the public.

LVIA appropriateness and proportionality

- 2.2.3 In terms of the appropriateness and proportionality of the the LVIA, Mr Peacock could not agree that the LVIA is appropriate and proportionate. In my professional opinion and based on extensive experience through peer reviews of LVIA I am of the view that the LVIA meets these criteria.
- 2.2.4 Mr Peacock has not explained why this is not the case in his opinion. In carrying out his own partial LVIA has relied on a similar study area, duplicated mapping (see below), and failed to demonstrate how his own assessment meets the level of proportionality he indicated was lacking in the work undertaken by Fabrik.
- 2.2.5 This is most surprising given Fabrik worked on the LVIA and masterplan over an extended period of many months, had their work reviewed and critiqued by the Council's landscape advisors (Place Services) provided updates and prepared a final submission LVIA which extends to 150 A3 pages (**CD 2.17**).
- 2.2.6 By contrast Mr Peacock's partial LVIA was prepared between his site visit on the 23rd April 2026 and the date of exchange (12th May 2026), based on accessing publicly accessible

viewpoints only, (Mr Peacock did not ask the appellant for access to the Appeal Site, it would have been granted if requested) without involvement with the design process and masterplanning team and resulted in an LVIA which appears to be limited to the 32 pages in the appendices to his proof.

Degree of harm to the general character of the area

- 2.3 It is not unusual for witnesses for the Council to allege that the LVIA understates some aspects of the assessment process, indicating that their evidence is to be preferred. In respect of Mr Peacock's evidence it is notable that he finds greater adverse effects and fails to acknowledge any beneficial elements of the scheme proposals and place making. There is no reason for refusal pertaining to urban design matters and Green Infrastructure (GI) provision.
- 2.4 Nothing I have read in Mr Peacock's evidence leads me to change my analysis and conclusions in respect of the landscape and visual effects which I have set out in the LVIA.
- 2.5 Overall, as set out in the Committee Report (**CD 3.1** and **3.2**) the officer in undertaking the planning balance and recommending the proposals be approved, assumed significant adverse effects (without reference to any significant beneficial effects). Mr Peacock adds nothing new on this point and his evidence would be unlikely to change how the landscape and visual issues should be approached in the planning balance.

Other Matters

- 2.6 Mr Peacock has not addressed the draft allocation in his evidence; he has not grappled with his clients position on the previously accepted suitability of the Appeal Site to accommodate development on the basis of the limited environmental constraints.
- 2.7 Whilst I accept that Mr Peacock is of the opinion that the LVIA understates effects, I note that he runs an entirely negative case, focussing on the development of the built form and failing to recognise the totality of the contribution of landscape enhancement measures and GI provisions make. This is not in line with Notes and Clarification of Aspects of GLVIA 4(1) and 8(1) (**CD 17.1**). This omission is more problematic in the context of the emphasis placed on GI by the Landscape Institute.

4(1)	The role of LVIA in the design process	<p>GLVIA3 (see paragraph 4.7) and IEMA guidance recommend an iterative design and assessment process. Designing appropriate mitigation into a scheme is an important part of the design process and can reduce adverse landscape and visual effects.</p> <p>Descriptions of the design process should be provided in the application documents and may be referred to in the LVIA.</p> <p>The LVIA should set out how the landscape (or townscape or seascape) and visual context of the development has influenced the design of the development and what design changes have been made to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects and provide landscape and visual enhancements.</p> <p>In considering whether design elements constitute enhancement, clear separation must be maintained between project design aims and LVIA. For instance, the provision of a sports pitch may be an enhancement to local recreation facilities, but still have adverse effects on landscape character.</p>
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8(1)	Impartiality	<p>The issue of impartiality is very important in LVIA; LI members also operate under the LI's Code of Practice which requires assessors to exercise impartial and independent professional judgement. Care should be taken that the reporting within an LVIA reflects this duty.</p> <p>See also 1(4) and 2(5) above.</p>
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Photography and visualisations

- 2.8 At paragraph 3.50 Mr Peacock indicates that night-time baseline photography should be presented to understand the potential for impacts on sky glow and glare.
- 2.8.1 At no point during the determination period did the Council, its advisors, or officers request night time photography.
- 2.8.2 It is unfortunate that the first time the Appellant is made aware of this is after the exchange of evidence.
- 2.8.3 Mr Peacock's role is not to request changes to the LVIA but to give evidence. It is too late for the Appellant to resource and prepare these images, particularly now that the daylight hours are longer. This should have been highlighted much earlier.
- 2.8.4 Notwithstanding these points, if Mr Peacock is of the view night time baseline photography is necessary he had the opportunity and ability to provide it as part of his evidence, he has not.
- 2.9 Mr Peacock indicates he is unclear as to the methodology adopted by Fabrik in the preparation of the VVMs.
- 2.9.1 Again, the council did not take issue with the VVMs or ask for any further detail on the methodology. The Council has had these images since November 2023 and the first time there is a request for information comes on the 12th May 2026.
- 2.9.2 At **Appendix RLP1** I append a statement from the VVM specialists appointed by Fabrik and the Appellant.
- 2.9.3 Regarding the VVMs – TGN 06/19 (**CD 17.6**) allows for either panoramic VVMs at A1 page size or single frame VVMs at A3 page size. The criticism appears to assume that all technically robust visual representations must be presented as a single-frame A3 photomontage. That is not what LI TGN 06/19 states. TGN 06/19 provides guidance on good practice presentation of verified visual montages. It does not prohibit the use of panoramic visualisations where these are appropriate to communicate the wider landscape context experienced from a viewpoint. See **CD 17.6** Tables 4 (Type 3 AVRs) and 5 (Type 4 AVRs) of TGN 06/19 (extracted below).

Table 4: Suitable photographic / print formats (Type 3):

Camera / lens	FFS + 50mm lens	Cropped frame + 28 or 35mm lens
Presented Field of View (H x V)	39.6° x 27°	Either 35mm = slightly narrower than FFS+50mm, or crop 28mm image to match FFS+50mm
Sheet size	A3	
Image size (mm)	390 x 260	
Enlargement relative to FFS / 50mm	100%	100 - 120%
Sheet size	Cylindrical Panoramic image @ A1 width	
	90° x 27° (VFoV as appropriate)	
Enlargement relative to FFS / 50mm	96%	
Image size (mm)	820 x 250 minimum (height as appropriate)	

Table 5: Suitable photographic / print formats (Type 4)

Camera / lens	FFS + 50mm lens	
Option	1	2
Captured Field of View (HFOV x VFOV)	39.6° x 27°	
Image scaling (see 3.8)	'Monocular'	'Binocular'
Sheet size	Single image @ A3	
Projection (see App 8)	Planar	
Image size (mm)	390 x 260	
Presented Field of View (H x V)	39.6° x 27°	27° x 18.2°
Enlargement relative to FFS / 50mm	100%	150%
Sheet size	Panoramic image @ A1 width	
Projection (see App 8)	Cylindrical (for baseline and very wide linear infrastructure)	Planar
Presented Field of View (H x V)	90° x 27°	53.5° x 18.2°
Enlargement relative to FFS / 50mm	96%	150%
Image size (mm)	820 x 250 minimum (height as appropriate)	

2.10 It is unclear on what basis Mr Peacock has prepared his Figure 6: Zone of Theoretical Visibility, **CD 9.2**, page A7. He does not indicate the data used for modelling the height parameters etc.

2.10.1 However, in using Google Earth (bare earth mapping) the results are very similar to the ZTV mapping contained in the LVIA (**CD 2.17**, Figure 4.13) and my opinion on this are the same as contained within my Volume 1 Proof of Evidence, **CD 8.3A**, paragraph 1.31 onwards.

2.10.2 Specifically in respect of the Google data, the Viewshed function in Google earth is very primitive and is not able to report exactly what terrain data was used in the analysis – I understand that it is largely based on 50m resolution data, which is not a good basis for an accurate analysis. It can only run an analysis on a single point which does not reflect the layout of the scheme. So in essence, both the scheme and terrain are not accurately representative of reality and even as a bare earth analysis it should not be relied upon.

Section 3: Rebuttal evidence in respect of the case presented by Ms Hooper

- 3.1 I acknowledge that Ms Hooper presents her case on behalf of the Rule 6 party and is not limited by the Council's position on any single issue. In terms of paragraph 187 a) of the NPPF I note that:
- 3.1.1 In the committee report the officer made clear that 187 (b) was the NPPF paragraph in play (Para 12.78).
 - 3.1.2 The Decision Notice is specific as to the policies which are relevant and only cites NPPF 189. There is no allegation that the landscape is a Valued Landscape, the officers had professional advice on landscape matters.
 - 3.1.3 The Council's Statement of Case does not indicate that it will be presented a Valued Landscape case.
 - 3.1.4 The Landscape Statement of Common Ground agreed between the Appellant and Council (**CD 7.3**) confirms that the Appeal Site is not within a para 187 a) valued landscape (Paragraph 1.5).
- 3.2 As with Mr Peacock I note Ms Hooper presents a negative case focussed on harms and does not take an impartial approach to consider the totality of the proposals.

Section 4: Response to published list of additional sites for testing

SSP 7: Post Hearings – Site Selection Review

4.1 I note that this report has been written in the knowledge that the Council would be defending its reasons for refusal at a public inquiry. Mr Brown (Woolf Bond) will address this point.

4.2 However, at paragraph 55, the report notes:

“On balance it is not considered that the benefits of the site comprising the provision of homes, services and facilities, and a longer term contribution to the housing land supply would outweigh the unacceptable harm this scale of development would have on the High Weald National Landscape and the perception of coalescence between Ansty and Cuckfield.”

4.3 Of course the allegation of harm to the HWNL is not the view of the Council's professional officers. This is a matter raised by the members (unevidenced) and on which evidence is presented by the appellant for this inquiry.

4.4 The extent, if any, of harm to the Special Qualities of the NL and perceived coalescence has not been determined.

Appendix 1: District Plan: Site Selection – Housing

4.5 The Appeal Site is identified at ID 736: Broad locations north and east of Ansty.

4.6 In respect of landscape constraints the broad area, including the land within the National Landscape is categorised as 'negative' with a low/medium to medium potential for change in landscape terms. As noted in my Volume 1, the Appeal Site has previously been considered suitable for housing development with no show stoppers in terms of environmental constraints. There is no issue made out in terms of the setting of the National Landscape and possible coalescence.

4.7 From a review of the Examination Update, this situation is unchanged, unsurprisingly given the lack of any physical change to the landscape since 2022 when the broad area was previously reviewed, and considered positively as a draft allocation. Change to the landscape and a mitigable issue with the ancient woodland are the only environmental constraints ascribed to the Appeal Site.

4.8 To assist in understanding the degree to which this level of change is determinative, or not, of the acceptability of development I have extracted the landscape analysis for the 'long list' sites (sourced from paragraph 1.47 of MS-TP4: Housing Post Hearings Update (CD 5.40)) and the additional sites proposed in the HWNL, within **Table RLP 1**. I follow this with my commentary and observations.

Table RLP1: Landscape Constraints for the 'long list' yield over 200 dwellings and sites in the HWNL

Site	Landscape Category	Yield	LPA Commentary text (CD 5.42)
Appeal Site – for comparison	Negative	1,450	Low/medium to medium potential for change in landscape terms
Land to the West of Burgess Hill and North of Hurstpierpoint	Negative	1,350	Low to low/medium potential for change in landscape terms.
Land at Crabbet Park*	Negative	1,950	Southern part of site lies within the High Weald AONB and is of substantial landscape sensitivity and moderate landscape value. Low to low/medium potential for change in landscape terms. Development of this scale would have a significant and detrimental effect on the character of the landscape.
Land to the South of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common	Negative	2,000	Low to low/medium potential for change in landscape terms.
Land at Coombe Farm, Sayers Common	Negative	210	Low to low/medium potential for change in landscape terms.
Land at LVS Hassocks, Sayers Common	Negative	210	Development is likely to have an adverse effect on most of the character area and while smaller development may be possible in a very few locations within the character area, it will not be suitable for strategic scale development.
Burgess Hill Station	Very Positive	375	Within urban area. High potential for change in landscape terms.
Land to west of Turners Hill Road, Crawley Down and Hurst Farm, Turners Hill Road, Crawley Down	Neutral ¹	430	The site is of a significant scale and although relatively well screened in places by established woodland its undeveloped rural character is considered to make an important contribution to the wider rural setting of Crawley Down, from which it derives significant character. As a large strategic extension, this site would need further assessment to consider its landscape impact. The final design would likely need to incorporate woodland buffers and consideration of the boundaries of the site and the

¹ Given the commentary provided it is unclear how the category of constraint is properly described as 'neutral.'

Site	Landscape Category	Yield	LPA Commentary text (CD 5.42)
			extent to which they are, or can be made, defensible. It is noted that the promoter has commissioned their own landscape evidence and prepared a masterplan for the site though it is not considered that in isolation this demonstrates mitigation of loss of rural character to the west of Crawley Down. Whilst the perimeter screening will help limit views in from the wider landscape, the scale of the site will necessarily require enhancement of the connections to Crawley Down creating a more permeable and open western boundary to the settlement where the current built area interfaces with the site. Therefore, whilst the site's impact on the wider landscape further to the west could have potential to be mitigated through the retention and enhancement of perimeter screening, the site's contribution to the rural setting of Crawley Down will likely be eroded through the perceptual and actual urbanisation of what is currently a rural landscape, regardless of the notion that there are currently limited sightlines between the west of the town and the site itself.
Additional Sites (SSP7: Post Hearing Site Selection, CD 5.44, para 26) proposed for allocation in the National Landscape (1,192 new dwellings in total)			
Land at Brambletye School, Lewes Road	Negative	25	Moderate impact on the AONB.
Area south of Redbridge Lane at junction with London Road, Balcombe	Negative	20	Moderate impact on the AONB.
Land south of Oldlands Avenue (Vintens Nursery), Balcombe	Very Negative	40	Likely major development in the AONB with no identified exceptional circumstances. Moderate impact on AONB due to significant scale of development, loss of semi-intact medieval field system, impact on public enjoyment of Public Rights of Way (PROW) and potential impact on woodland including Ancient Woodland. High site sloping down to the south. One pond marked to the east of the footpath. If accessed from Oldlands Avenue could be integrated with the village. However, site is of a significant scale for the existing size of village. The footpath running through the site is a historic PROW. Woodland to the east of the PROW with some linear strips of Ancient Woodland connecting with Upper Stumble Wood to the east of the site which is Ancient Woodland. Western field is identified as part of a medieval field system, albeit probably affected

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Site	Landscape Category	Yield	LPA Commentary text (CD 5.42)
			by the route of the railway line. Likely to be views of the site from the PROW and a loss of enjoyment of a countryside outlook from the PROW. Priority habitat (deciduous woodland) is present on part of the site. Impact on this habitat needs to be considered as the NPPF requires the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitat. To achieve this aim, appropriate mitigation measures may need to be specified.
Land at Brook House Farm, Turners Hill Road, East Grinstead	Very Negative	45	High impact on the AONB.
Land east of West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead	Negative	20	Moderate impact on the AONB.
Land west of Truggers	Very Negative	105	High impact on AONB due to scale of development, loss of medieval field systems and potential impact on Ancient Woodland. Gently sloping from east down to the west. Small pond at south end of central field. Site wraps around development along Horsham Road which comprises linear development to west and an estate development (Truggers) to the east. The A23 forms the eastern boundary which separates this part of Handcross from the main village. Significant scale of development for size of existing village. Horsham Road is a historic routeway and there is a historic routeway to the west of the site (Truckers Hatch), but this does not appear to be a Public Rights of Way. Hoadlands Wood on the north boundary of the whole site is Ancient Woodland. The eastern two fields are part of a medieval field system. The western field is post-medieval, probably enclosed from heathland in the nineteenth century. Limited views from Horsham Road through Truckers Hatch entrance and semi-public views from the Royal Oak Public House. Natural England consider this allocation to be major development within the AONB
Land north of the Former Golf House, Horsham Road, Pease Pottage	Negative	41	Moderate impact on AONB due to potential impact on Ancient Woodland. Impact may be low for apartments on site of existing buildings. Pond within Ancient Woodland to the north of the site and a drain to the east of the site. On western edge of the main village of Pease Pottage, currently occupied by an office and car parking. Offices

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Site	Landscape Category	Yield	LPA Commentary text (CD 5.42)
			within the Golf House immediately to the east with modern in depth development beyond. Horsham Road is a historic routeway. Ancient Woodland surrounds the site on three sides and may reduce capacity due to need to retain 15m buffers. Twentieth century clearance of woodland. Site not visible from public vantage points.
Land at Pease Field	Negative	196	Moderate impact on the AONB.
Land to the West of Woodhurst Farm, Old Brighton Road South*	Very Negative	700	High impact on the AONB/ Likely major development in the AONB with no identified exceptional circumstance.

*Projects of relevance to paragraph 4.12 below

- 4.9 Projects which will directly impact on the HWNL, bring forward very negative effects on the protected landscape or that will adversely affect the landscape character are considered by the Council, in this latest study, to be suitable to accommodate housing development to address the housing needs of the district. Even where such development is acknowledged to give rise to high levels of landscape impact.
- 4.10 Notably, the Council's strategy will result in the direct and irreversible loss of 72.33ha of the High Weald National Landscape (179 acres). This figure does not represent the extent to which effects on the special qualities, such as dark skies, tranquility and scenic beauty will be eroded beyond the limits of each site.
- 4.11 As can be seen through the Council's latest position on draft allocations; sites within the National Landscape are being positively considered for allocation, despite acknowledging very negative outcomes for a landscape which is at the highest end of the spectrum of value, status and protection and in a landscape where great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes (NPPF, para 189). Furthermore, LURA requires authorities to seek to further the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes, the Council's statement does not explain how they consider this strategy will further the statutory purpose of the National Landscape.
- 4.12 The HWNL Unit (and its predecessor the AONB Unit) has registered its objections to the Reg 19 allocation of Crabbet Park in the setting of the National Landscape (**CD 17.24**) and the planning submission in respect of Woodhurst Farm (**CD 17.21**, **CD 17.22** and **CD 17.23**).
- 4.13 At this stage I have not seen any response from the HWNL Unit in respect of the latest position on proposed level of new housing proposed to be in the designated landscape. A landscape wherein the top issue of concern is the increased pressure for new housing. I am cognisant of the contents of the HWNL Management Plan (**CD 17.12**, page 19) which, even before the Council published its additional sites for testing, recorded:

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*The scale of housebuilding in the High Weald AONB is **currently** at an unprecedented level; the High Weald is experiencing the highest level of housing growth of any AONB in England. Pressure from ever increasing numbers of new developments is eroding the historic settlement pattern of the High Weald and the rural landscape with its intrinsic sense of naturalness. Meeting the climate, biodiversity and inequality challenges of the next 20 years will require transformational change in the way that development is planned for and delivered in the High Weald AONB. Being nationally designated for their outstanding natural beauty, AONB landscapes should be exemplars of sustainable planning and design. (My emphasis **emboldened**).*

4.14 The ambitions for 2029 include (CD 17.12, page 27):

*New housing development **will be small-scale** and in keeping with the character of the area. Its location and design will be based on meeting local needs (including affordability and housing mix) through high quality and landscape-led place-making and design principles that reflect intrinsic High Weald character, embedded with a true sense of place, without stifling innovation and creativity in the use of local materials and net zero technologies. (My emphasis **emboldened**).*

4.15 The Management Plan seeks to (CD 17.12, page 47):

Ensure that planning decisions (site allocations and development management decisions) consider the impact of development on the intrinsic rural character of the landscape and seek to avoid intrusive development.

4.16 It is notable that MSDC's analysis (replicated in **Table RLP1**) is proposing development which is anticipated to have very negative impacts on the landscape. This is contrary to the ambitions of the HWNL Management Plan.

4.17 At page 69 of the Management Plan there are a number of material considerations relating to new development in the the NL. I provide my observations on these in **Table RLP2** in light of the Council's emerging strategy to accommodate new housing:

Table RLP2: Consideration of HWNL material considerations

Management Plan considerations	My Observations
The scale and extent of development in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) should be limited.	I accept that some proposed sites are 'limited' in terms of the quantum of housing provided. However, it is notable that the total number of new dwellings is in excess of 1,100 new homes. Some of the sites are considered to be major development.
The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not automatically apply within the High Weald AONB (where the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance	For each of the sites thee is currently insufficient information which will enable a decision maker to be certain that the harms would be

Management Plan considerations	My Observations
provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, OR where any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the Framework taken as a whole).	significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the benefits.
There is a presumption that planning permission should be refused for major development in AONBs other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.	<p>In the case of the Land to the West of Woodhurst Farm, Old Brighton Road South, the Council's analysis accepts that this would be major development, with high impacts on the NL and for which there are no exceptional circumstances. This indicates that any planning permission should be refused.</p> <p>The same applies to Land south of Oldlands Avenue (Vintens Nursery), Balcombe, major development, with very negative change to the landscape with no identified exceptional circumstances.</p>
Policies for protecting AONBs may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs for housing and other development in full (where the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type, or distribution of development in the plan area).	This is a matter on which I have no professional opinion.
AONBs are unlikely to be suitable areas for accommodating unmet needs arising from adjoining, non-designated, areas.	The Appellant is of the opinion (supported by the the analysis of the Council's planning officer (CD 3.2)) that the Appeal Site represents a suitable area for housing to meet the local housing needs in an adjoining and non-designated landscape with benefits which significantly and demonstrably outweigh any harms.

- 4.18 Given the Council's stance taken to accommodating major development within the National Landscape there appears to be an inconsistency with the Council's position at this inquiry, where it objects to development within the setting of the NL, despite repeated rejection of this proposition by the planning officer.
- 4.19 Critically, not only is there an inconsistency of approach wherein sites are to be taken forward knowing there will be very negative landscape consequences, whilst sites with lesser harm are rejected; there is a clear inconsistency with the Council's previously stated aims and objectives for the National Landscape (CD 5.18, pages 34 and 35):

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Strategic Objectives Met	3 - To protect valued landscapes
	11 - Support Mid Sussex as a Visitor Destination
District Plan Policies	DPC4: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

How?

A key principle for the District Plan Strategy and Strategic Objective of the Plan is the protection of designated landscapes and in Mid Sussex District this is the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. (Approximately 11% of Mid Sussex District is within the South Downs National Park, however, the District Plan does not include this area as the South Downs National Park Authority is the local planning authority for this area). Protection of designated landscapes is important for the landscape itself and to support nature recovery and resilience to the effects of climate change. It also has benefits by being an attractive destination for visitors.

As such, this District Plan places great importance on protecting the High Weald AONB such as through Policy DPC4. This approach is also in line with national policy which makes clear that the scale and extent of development in protected landscapes should be limited (NPPF, September 2023: paragraph 176). This does not preclude growth at settlements within the AONB – the Site Allocations DPD, Neighbourhood Plans and this District Plan include allocations within the AONB to meet local needs. However, these are smaller in scale and only where any impacts on the AONB have been minimised. In assessing potential housing sites and identifying proposed site allocations, protection of the High Weald AONB was central to the site selection process.

- 4.20 The likely effects on the landscape associated with the Appeal Site, in the Council's judgement, does not reach the threshold of 'Very Negative' landscape consequences. Further, the potential development, in the view of the Council, has low to medium/medium potential for change. This level of anticipated change for the Appeal Site is notably less than sites currently supported by the Council.
- 4.21 There appears to be an inconsistency with the Council maintaining an objection to the appeal proposals, on the basis of unacceptable effects on the setting of the National Landscape; whilst adopting a strategy which will inevitably result in direct harm, of a greater magnitude within the NL (than even Mr Peacock assesses) in respect of this appeal scheme.

Appendix 2: Site Selection

- 4.22 There appears to be a disconnect between the conclusions in Appendix 2 and the preliminary consideration in Appendix 1, noting of course that this analysis post-dated the Council's refusal of the appeal scheme as recorded in the text.
- 4.23 Noting that the Council has considered the Appeal Site in greater detail because of the application it records:

However, given the scale of the proposed development and its proximity to Ansty and Cuckfield, it will result in the visual coalescence of these settlements. The introduction of built form of this scale would render Ansty readily visible in views from Cuckfield, where it

is currently not readily visible. This will remove the perception of separation, impact the identity of the villages, and create visual coalescence.

The northern boundary of this site is in close proximity to the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) where development of the site would need to be carefully considered. The proposed development would result in a significant and discernible extension of built development into the surrounding countryside, creating a large new urbanisation adjacent to and abutting the HWNL, and would introduce an abrupt change of landscape character in close proximity to the HWNL, and a loss of natural landscape contiguous with the HWNL. Further, it would adversely impact on perceptual qualities of the HWNL of tranquillity and rurality, due to the level of noise, activity and lighting that would inevitably be associated with a development of such large scale, in such close proximity to the HWNL.

- 4.24 The text regarding the issue of coalescence is directly extracted from the committee report (**CD 3.1**, para 2.22), this is a matter on which I present evidence and suggest the allegation (which rises only to the extent of 'perceived' coalescence on the Council's case) is not substantiated by proper consideration of the issues.
- 4.25 In respect of the HWNL, this again is a quote from the committee report (**CD 3.1**, paragraph 12.98) but this is not the council detailed consideration but the objection from the HWNL Unit (who do not appear at this inquiry to substantiate its case). The Council's Officer did consider all the evidence and objections on this matter and concluded that (**CD 3.1**, paragraph 12.105):

*Overall, a development of the size proposed will result in some harm to the adjacent protected landscape and as such there would be a conflict with policy DP16 of MSDP. However, steps have been taken to the minimise the impact on the setting of the AONB, and there is scope for this to be further reduced at the detailed application stage. In the circumstances, **your Planning officer considers there is no conflict with para 189 of the NPPF.** (My emphasis **emboldened**).*

- 4.26 Further scrutiny of this matter was provided in the Update Sheet (**CD 3.2**) wherein the officer reiterated that the effects on the setting of the HWNL would not provide a strong reason for refusal.
- 4.27 The about turn by the Council in terms of its previous support for allocating the Appeal Site and now finding it unsupportable, is surprising and not evidentially substantiated by its own analysis of the issues, prior to the decision of the committee.
- 4.28 As set out in my proof (Volume 1, **CD 8.3A**) it is important to understand the landscape context, with a primary mitigation measure being directing change to landscapes at the lower end of the spectrum of value and quality. In light of the Council's latest analysis **Table RLP3** illustrates this spectrum in the context of Mid Sussex and how the Appeal Site avoids the most impactful locations (from a landscape perspective). With the inevitable change for all greenfield locations (**CD 8.3A**, paragraph 6.4), a reading of the effects set out in the LVIA should be cognisant of how these effect are contextualised.

Table RLP3: Spectrum of landscapes proposed for development (by reference to site listed in Table RLP1)

Landscape Category	Level of Impact	Sites	ID Reference (shaded in NL)
Very Negative	High Impact	Land at Brook House Farm, Turners Hill Road, East Grinstead	1024
		Land west of Truggers	181
		Land to the west of Woodhurst Farm, Old Brighton Road South	603
	Moderate Impact	Land south of Oldlands Avenue, Balcombe	165
	Low Impact	None subject of my analysis	
Negative	High Impact	None subject of my analysis	
	Moderate	Land at Brambletye School, Lewes Road	1175
		Area south of Redbridge Lane at junction with London Road, Balcombe	28
		Land east of West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead	1181
		Land north of the Former Golf House, Horsham Road, Pease Pottage	818
		Land at Pease Field	1188
		APPEAL SITE	736
	Low to Low/moderate	Land at Crabbet Park	18
		Land to the South of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common	799
		Land at Coombe Farm, Sayers Common	601
		Land at LVS Hassocks, Sayers Common	1003
Land to the West of Burgess Hill and North of Hurstpierpoint		740	
Low Impact	None subject of my analysis		
Neutral	Not assigned	Land to west of Turners Hill Road, Crawley Down and Hurst Farm, Turners Hill Road, Crawley Down	688
Very Positive	High Impact	Burgess Hill Station	1123

Section 5: Conclusions

- 5.1 Despite the criticisms levelled at the Fabrik LVIA by Mr Peacock and Ms Hooper, it is agreed in the LSoCG (**CD 7.3**, paragraph 1.3) that the LVIA follows the guidance published by the LI and IEMA and there are no methodological differences between the Appellant and the Council.
- 5.2 The Inspector has before her sufficient information from the main parties to be able to consider the landscape and visual effects when determining the appeal.

Appendix RLP1: VVM Methodology



**Proposed development:
Ansty**

**Verifiable photomontage images,
methodology and supporting evidence**

May 2026

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2.1 Photography and filming

2.2 Survey

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4.0 Supporting evidence

1.0 Overview

This document has been prepared by Munrostudios Ltd to explain the methodology used for producing verifiable photomontage images for the proposed development Land at Ansty, Haywards Heath. The visual assessment of the proposed development reflects current best practice in relation to the verification of images (a process which is constantly being refined and improved with advances in technology and industry experience).

The verified visual montages of the proposed development reflects the proposed development which enables its effect on the skyline, important settings and sensitive locations to be objectively evaluated with regard to relevant planning policy criteria. During this document, you will be guided through a step-by-step description of how Munrostudios produced an accurate representation of the proposed development in pictorial form to explain the process used including statements from the survey team and photographer.

The methods described in this document are based on current best practice and follow recommendations from the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (17 September 2019) on Visual representation of development proposals; on Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment. As part of the process Munrostudios produced an audit trail showing key stages of production that can be checked. i.e. verified by a third party. This document also sets out additional information in relation to the methodology that has been used to select the viewpoints, photography, computer modelling and the checks that have been carried out to ensure the accuracy of the wire-frame and block model photomontage views of the proposed development

The entities responsible for the preparation of the views that are set out in the following pages comprise:

Photography & Production and checking of verifiable images

The Garden Suite
Malthouse Court,
Malthouse Lane,
Hambledon,
Surrey. GU8 4HJ
01428 481471

Survey of existing views and camera locations

Cadmap Ltd, Office 9, Dalton House, 6
0 Windsor Avenue,
London, United Kingdom,
SW19 2RR
01483 429385

Verification of design and appearance

fabrik
Lenten House,
16 Lenten Street,
Alton,
Hampshire
GU34 1HG

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Photography

The photographer employed on this project was briefed by MunroCGI to work to a methodology which conforms to the principles recommended in the third edition of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) this was published jointly by the LI and IEMA and came into force on 17 April 2013.

The methodology ensures that the appropriate combination of lens types are chosen to reflect as closely as possible to what can be seen by the human eye and take into account key visual receptors within each view. A consistent approach is taken for comparative purposes throughout the project. The following statement has been supplied by the photographer:

The following methodology applies to the production of photographic images originated during April 2026, which form the pictorial basis for visual impact assessments and photomontages for 3 views. Location points for Land at Ansty, Haywards Heath by Sean Rushton from fabrik.

Equipment used

Camera – 36x24mm / 42mp sensor.
 Shift Lenses – 17mm, 24mm , 52mm and 80mm
 Panoramic mount - custom engineered to rotate the camera in a flat plane within 0.015 degrees to the horizon

Image capture procedure

The camera is mounted on a tripod 1.6m above the ground and high quality architectural photographic practice is used to capture the view in two-point perspective. For panoramic images the camera is placed on a rotating mount and a sequence of images sharing the same point of perspective and orientation with respect to the horizon are captured using a fixed 35mm lens. Images are captured in RAW format and a photograph is taken of the camera in it's location. Reasonable effort is made to capture images in the best weather and at the best times of day with regards to the angle of the sun however if deadlines are tight then clear visibility will be regarded as acceptable unless otherwise instructed.

Image Processing

The RAW image is processed into a tiff image which is remapped to remove all lens distortion to ensure a perfect fit with the 3d data. Where panoramic images are required the individual frames are stitched together in specialist software to create a seamless image to the specified FOV in an equirectangular projection. The image is then placed into a larger background and positioned so that the calculated position of the image's optical axis is aligned with the center of the background to compensate for any lens shift.

OUTPUT PACKAGE

A high resolution layered tiff file
 Information describing the physical parameters of the camera and Camera coordinate height above survey nail, Lens focal length, Sensor size
 Time and date of photograph
 A photographic record of the camera in it's positions also given.

A 40deg FOV image printed on A3 and held at a comfortable arm's length will replicate in terms of scale that of the viewer if they are standing at the camera position. This would seem to be an ideal way to represent all visualisations but unfortunately it is a very narrow 'window' on the world and in order to show important context it is often desirable to use a wider FOV. This then requires the print to be held closer if it's the same A3 size which can prove difficult to view effectively or printed bigger than A3 which can prove difficult to handle in the field. If it's printed at the same size and viewed at the same size it will make objects in the scene appear smaller than they are in real life which could be regarded as misleading. Additionally at very wide FOV's objects at the edge of the frame look larger than those at the center due to the effects of perspectival distortion when projecting a 3d world on a 2d plane. In order to overcome this phenomenon wide views can be captured using a panoramic technique which maintains a constant linear scale across the image so that the relative scale of massing's can be judged across a large FOV. It does however require specialist viewing techniques such as curving the print on a constant radius equal to the viewing distance. In all instances changing a lens to gain a wider FOV or using panoramic capture does not alter the relationship in size or position between objects in the scene and thus cropping a portion out of a larger image is exactly the same as capturing that image with a lens with a narrower FOV. Only a change in camera position will change perspective and thus the relationship between objects in the view.

2.2 Survey

All of the baseline photographs have been taken by a professional architectural photographer. Each viewpoint location is then surveyed and identified by Ordnance Survey co-ordinates. The heights and distances of significant points within each view that are easily distinguishable have also been recorded as Ordnance Survey grid and level datum and their accuracy has been checked relative to the fixed camera position. The number of survey points that have been identified in each view range from 10 to 20 separate points dependent upon the particular view. These survey points provide an effective check for ensuring that the three dimensional model and existing views are accurately merged together. The following statement has been supplied by the surveyor:

Survey brief: We were commissioned to survey and record co-ordinates (Eastings, Northings and Height) of known points of detail located around the study site known as Land at Ansty, Haywards Heath. The points of detail were to be identified on a total of 3 base photographs provided by Munrostudios.

Date of survey: 29th April 2026

Camera Point Positioning



Network RTK solutions were established using a Leica GPS + GLONASS SmartRover receiver. The equipment was set-up directly over the camera position (survey nail) and multiple observations were recorded. A second (reference) point was taken approximately 100m away from the camera position using the same method.

Data Capture

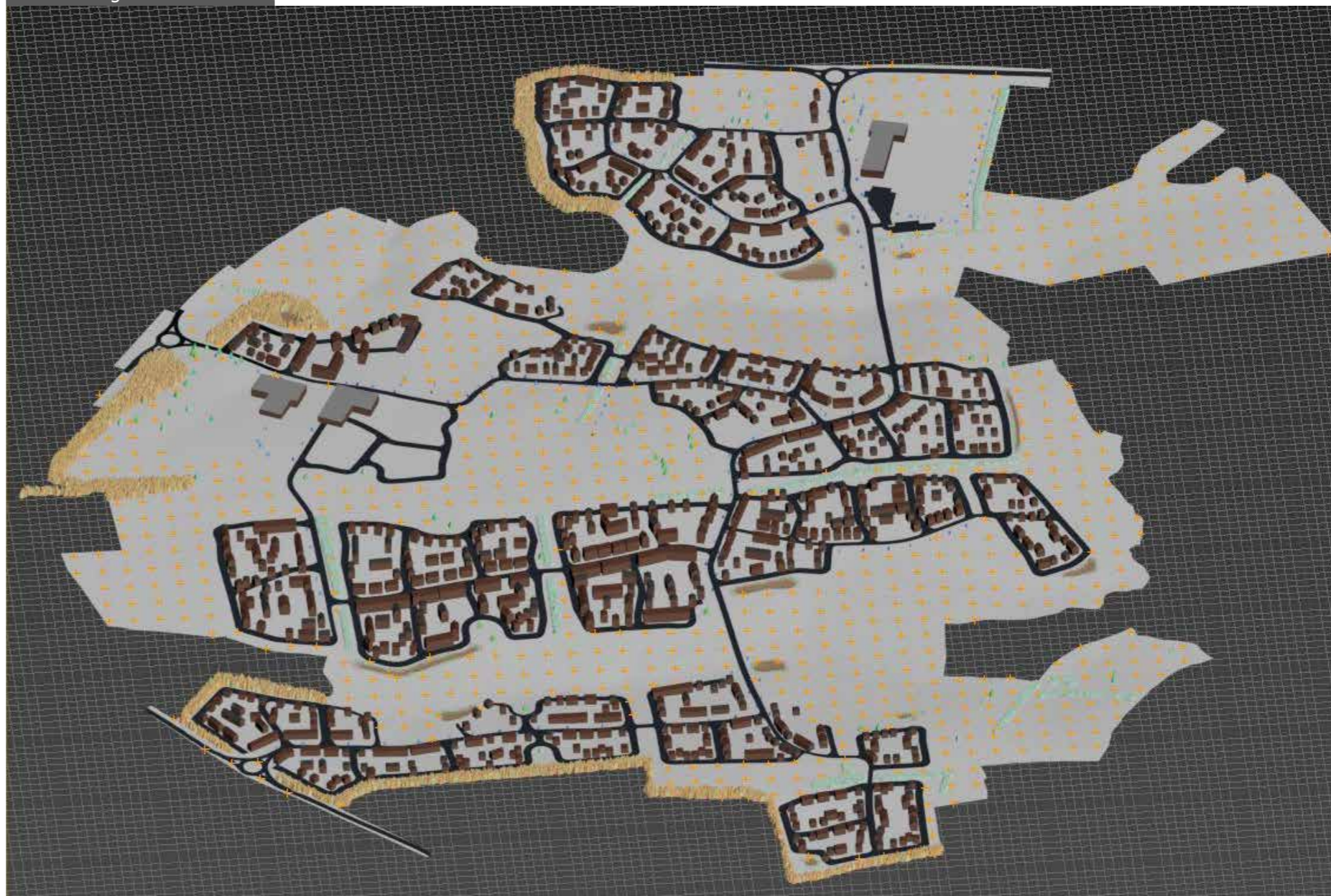
Traditional survey techniques were then employed to record the points of detail within each view. A Leica TCRA TS15 Total Station with long range reflector- less distance measurement capabilities was set-up directly over the camera point and orientated to Ordnance Survey National Grid using the two sets of co-ordinates determined by the SmartRover receiver.



2.3 3D model

In addition to initially modelling the maximum parameters for the VVMs submitted with the application, the model opposite (based on the illustrative masterplan) was generated to enable modelling of the additional VVMs. The generation of the three-dimensional computer models of the proposed development which is superimposed upon the existing views is based upon information supplied by the architect. If CAD is supplied, the two dimensional drawings of the proposed development are supplied by the architect and initially imported into 3D Studio Max. A 1:1 scale model of the proposed development is created. A crosscheck of heights and widths is then carried out between the three dimensional model and the two dimensional CAD drawings of the scheme whether the model has been created in house or been supplied by the client to be used. The 3D model is then approved by the architects.

3D Modeling



2.4 Camera matching and rendering

The particular method that has been used to verify the photomontage views of the proposed development is set out below. The verification process confirms the accuracy of the three dimensional model in relation to each existing views. The details of the Ordnance Survey co-ordinates for each viewpoint, and the angle of each view has also been checked as part of the verification process.

The next step in the process involves accurately positioning the three-dimensional model of the proposed development within each existing view. This is achieved through a process of matching the surveyed points in the digitised image with those recorded by the survey team on the existing photographs. The central horizon line in each of the existing views is then calculated and imported into 3D Studio Max as a backdrop to the 3D model. The survey points as well as the specifications of the lens type relating to each existing view is also entered into 3D Studio Max.

The survey points of the camera position and those relating to specified objects within each particular baseline image are then highlighted on the digitised image. A further check of the accuracy of the survey points in each digitised existing view is carried out by overlaying the central horizon line of each existing view with the digitised survey points prepared in 3D Studio Max. This additional check ensures that the survey points match precisely. This exercise requires meticulous attention to detail. Once the process of camera matching is complete, the three-dimensional model of the proposed development is accurately positioned within each of the existing views. This is achieved by rendering the camera matched three dimensional model of the proposed development within 3D Studio Max to the same size as the digitised existing view.

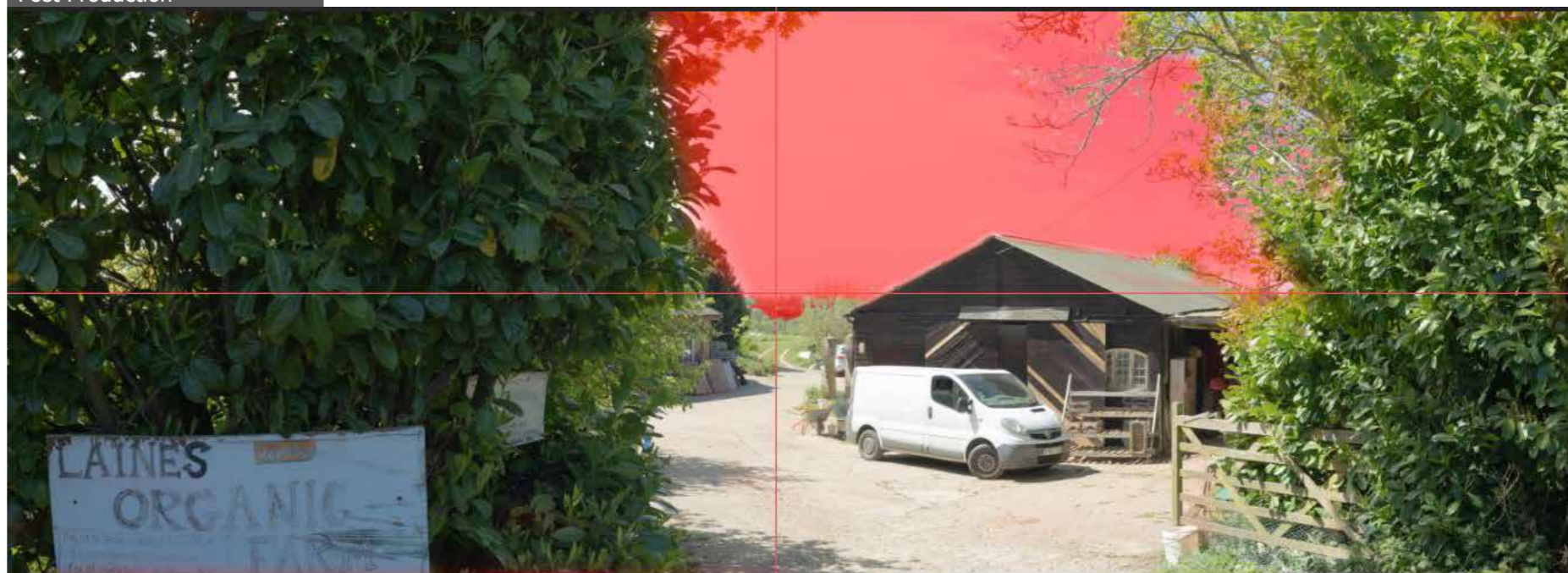
Camera Matching



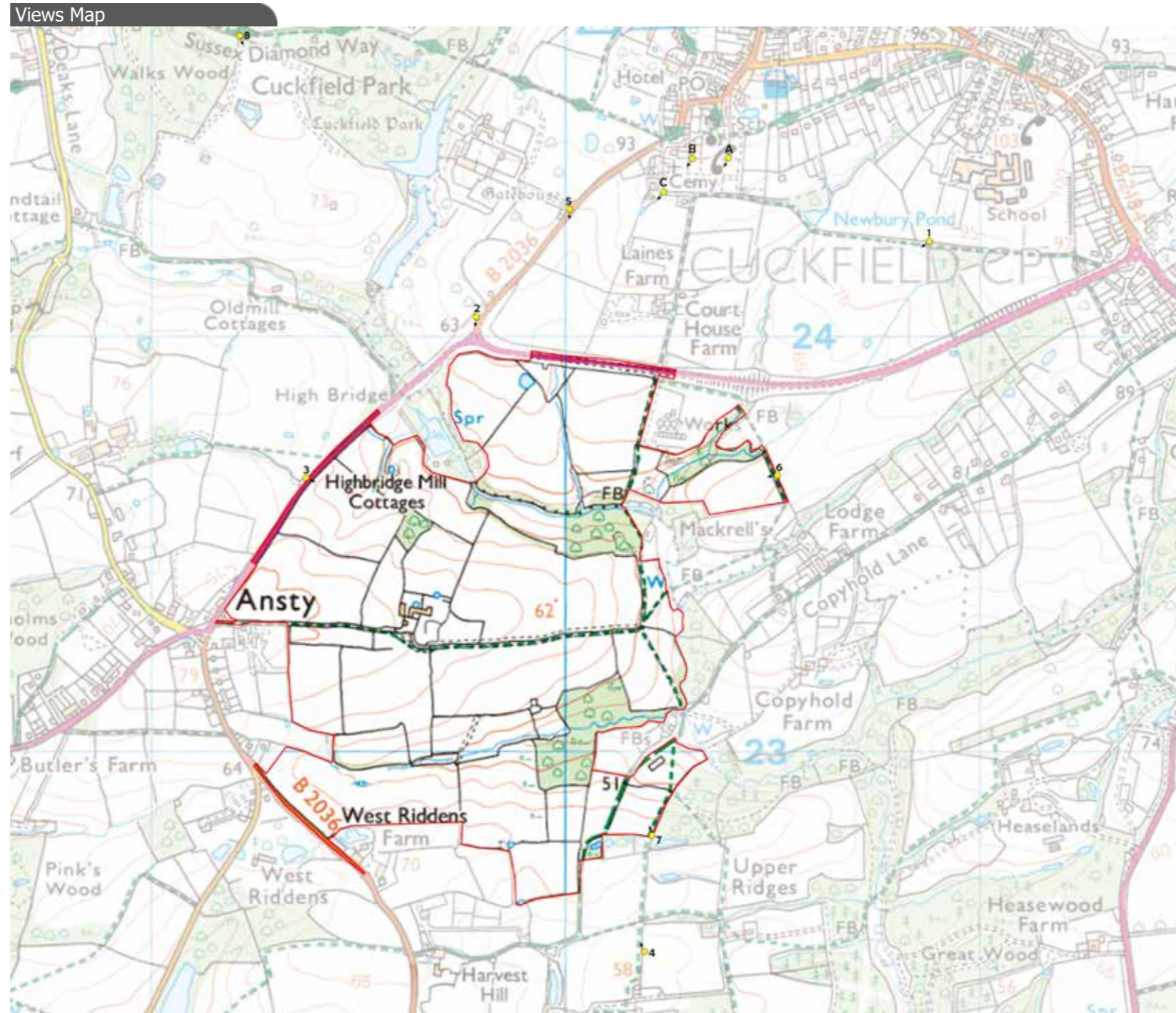
2.5 Post production

The render of the three-dimensional model is then superimposed on the existing still views in Adobe Photoshop. The foreground of the existing views such as trees, lampposts, cars, buildings etc, are then copied and placed over the rendered model in order to ensure that the depth is accurate within the photomontage view between the foreground, background and the rendered model. At this stage, the textured model is further adjusted to match the colouring and saturation of the photograph taken to create an accurate impression of what the textures of the building would look like. This is a qualitative exercise and requires interpretation by the designer on how the building will look, and guidance from the architect. A final qualitative check of all of the photomontage images is carried out to ensure that they provide objectively accurate views of the proposed development.

Post Production



3.0 Camera Locations



View Positions

View	View Location	Page	Style	Easting	Northing	Height (AOD)	Lens	FOV	Time	Date
1	View A Cuckfield Cemetery		AVR2	530356.470	124432.730	92.254	24.26	NA	10:51 BST	29/04/2026
2	View B Cuckfield Cemetery		AVR2	530296.870	124430.904	92.897	24.26	NA	11:26 BST	29/04/2026
3	View C Newbury Lane, Cuckfield		AVR2	530230.619	124353.879	88.937	24.26	NA	11:58 BST	29/04/2026
4	View 1		AVR2	530877.669	124224.627	90.216	35	NA	15:19 BST	18/05/2023
5	View 2		AVR2	529798.510	124061.518	67.286	35	NA	14:44 BST	18/05/2023
6	View 3		AVR2	529368.761	123652.118	64.606	35	NA	14:21 BST	18/05/2023
7	View 4		AVR2	530181.000	122537.501	58.629	35	NA	13:53 BST	18/05/2023
8	View 5		AVR2	530020.719	124318.856	78.734	35	NA	09:35 BST	09/04/2024
9	View 6		AVR2	530522.935	123648.791	61.957	35	NA	10:29 BST	09/04/2024
11	View 7		AVR2	530197.102	122811.695	62.962	35	NA	11:52 BST	09/04/2024
12	View 8		AVR2	529214.289	124720.714	86.905	35	NA	13:13 BST	09/04/2024

4.0 Supporting Evidence

View B: Cuckfield Cemetery

Photography Details:
29/04/2026 11:26 BST

Camera Position:
OS Ref:530296.870, 124430.904

Height AOD: 92.897

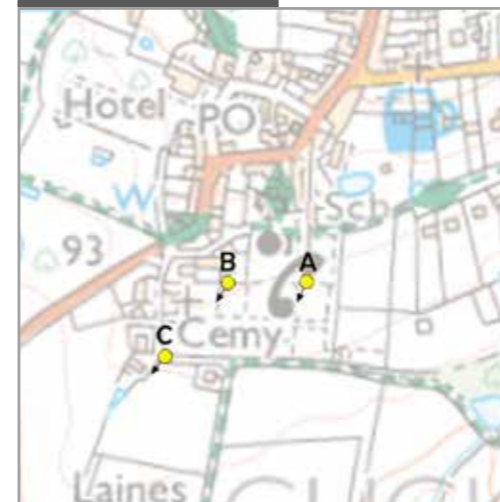
OS survey points marked



OS survey points

101	530284.530	124335.697	93.128
102	530284.925	124338.132	90.578
103	530283.010	124329.290	89.684
104	530279.864	124330.039	90.086
105	530291.990	124392.085	90.201
106	530297.702	124422.381	91.728
107	530295.394	124401.568	91.161
108	530304.643	124407.678	90.293
109	530310.406	124362.541	90.822
110	530292.456	124413.295	91.227
111	530293.884	124429.186	92.288
112	530254.101	124411.044	97.168
113	530257.699	124418.306	92.774
114	530257.045	124414.640	92.323
115	530209.258	124370.987	94.364
116	530211.059	124373.880	91.301
117	530223.778	124393.448	97.382
118	530293.469	124423.195	91.097
119	530272.185	124395.023	90.107
120	530253.012	124363.431	88.764
121	530215.993	124338.995	88.646
122	530202.600	124407.967	92.819

View Location



Camera Location

