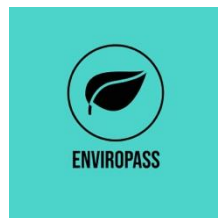

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

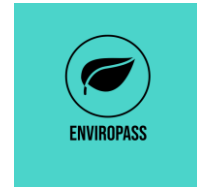
Duckyls Farm Centre, East Grinstead

26th June 2025

Enviropass



Rev A Site plans updated by GML Architects



Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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1.0 Introduction

1. Enviropass has been asked to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for Duckyls Farm Centre, Selsfield Road, East Grinstead, RH19 4QY, Sussex District, Kent
2. This assessment is based on a site inspection and onsite experience undertaken on the 20th June 2025.
3. The aim of this report is to complete a full assessment of the possible landscape and visual effects that might occur from the proposed development. This will be achieved through completing several assessments from the proposed site location. The first main assessment will be for the landscape itself and the second for the visual effects.
4. The site is currently used as a care home for people with learning difficulties and autism to learn valuable skills and 'live their best life', however, it also operates as a functioning farm. There are currently around 8 buildings on site connected by an agricultural path, and the overall site is approximately 90.24 acres, surrounded by woodland.
5. The proposal is to add 2 buildings at the end of the agricultural path including a workshop with a kitchen, social area, storage area, and 2 toilets, and a barn with offices, a welfare room, toilets, and handwashing facilities.
6. The site has been recognised to be an Area of Natural Outstanding Beauty (AONB), the construction of both buildings is going to be relatively disruptive to the land and the surrounding environment.



2.0 LVIA Methodology

1. Desk-Based Research

- The desk-based research used a multitude of relevant sources from the Mid Sussex District Councils District Plan, and The West Hoathly Parish Council's website for historical and cultural facts about the area.

2. Field based research

- The Field Based research took place at the site of the proposed developments, Duckyls Farm Centre, East Grinstead. This included taking photographs of the proposed development sites, the public footpath, and the wider landscape.



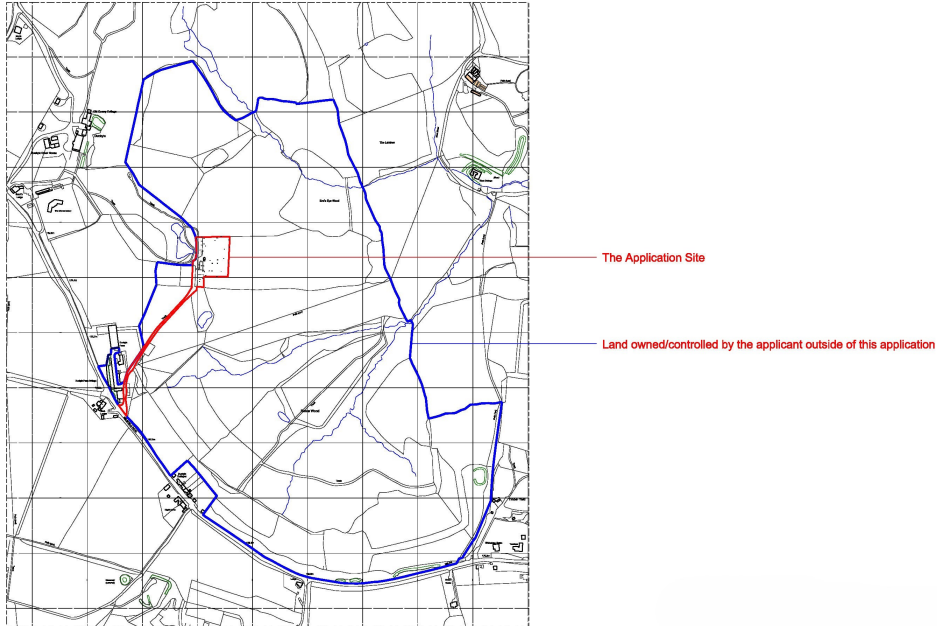
3.0 Description of Site and Location

1. Duckyls Farm Centre is located on Selsfield Road, East Grinstead, West Hoathly, West Sussex, RH19 4QY, Kent.
 - The site currently hosts residential, supported living and day services for adults with learning disabilities.
 - Diagrama have recently been awarded a contract with West Sussex County Council to provide day care services for people within the district who have learning disabilities, physical disabilities, acquired brain injury etc.



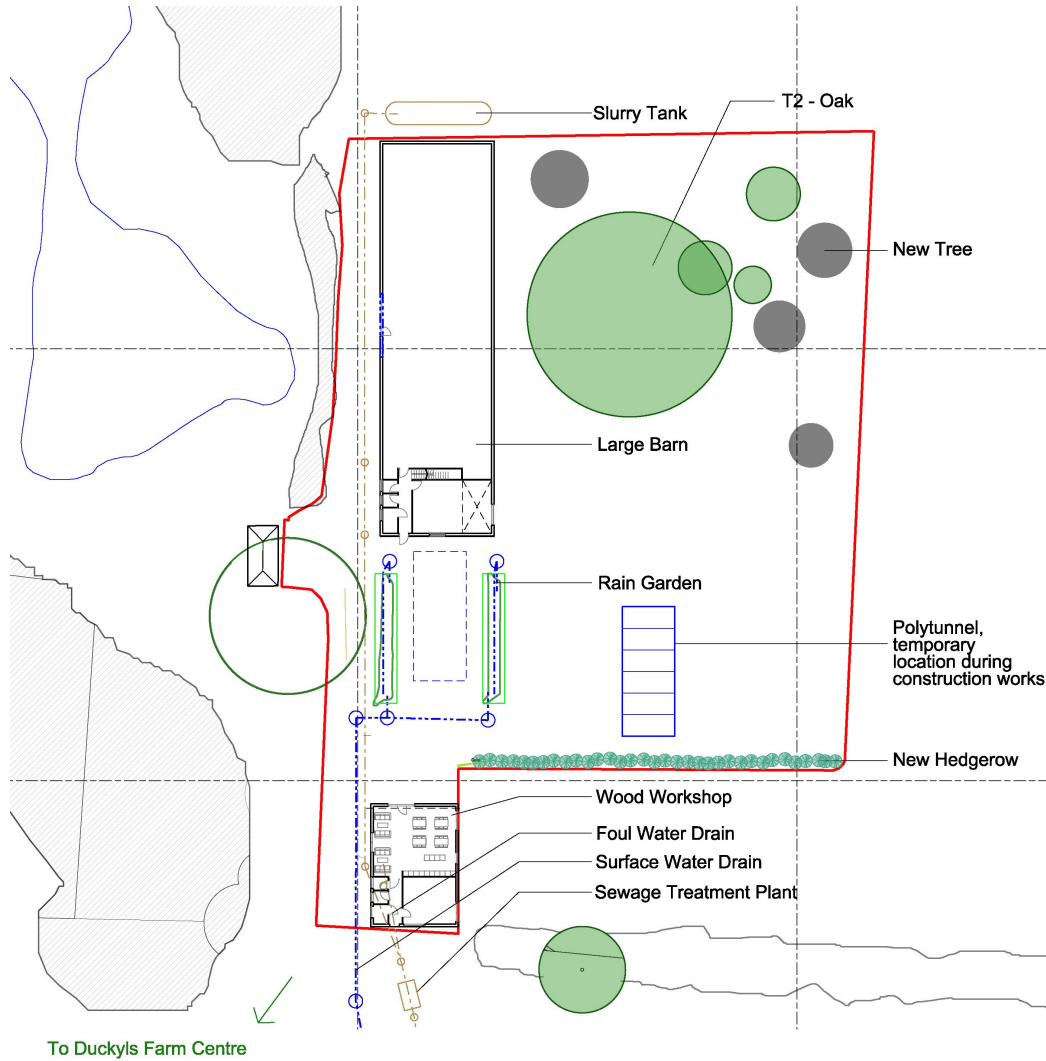
(Appendix 1.0)

2. The proposed development, consisting of a barn and a workshop, are to be placed at the end of the current agricultural track at the North-East end of the property.
3. Map of the proposed site:



(Appendix 3.0)

4. Layout Plan of the Proposed Development:





South of the development site: 10x14 m steel framed metal clad workshop with a kitchen/social area, wood workshop, storage area and 3 toilets, expanding from the shed to the end of the rubble to the right, behind the polytunnel.

- This building will greatly aid the day-center as the residents have stated that their favorite activity is woodworking. However, the center's current woodwork shop is in a tent, which is impractical in harsh weather conditions.



North side Development: 13x45 m barn to house animals and offices/welfare room with toilets and handwashing facilities to be used by current residents and people using the facilities.

- This barn also provides a large, accessible area for residents and guests, with a washroom, and area for the animals, which on observing the property included goats and alpacas, with paddocks south-west and south of the development up the track towards the main property.



Picture 1: Goat paddock, south-west of the proposed developments at the top of the path from the main property.

Picture 2: Alpaca paddock, west of the developments on the left side of the path from the main property.

Existing prominent Landscape Features:



- There are currently 8 buildings on the site, including a farmhouse, barns, and a polytunnel ranging across the property. The site is also in the countryside, which has been recognised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which area designated areas where protection is afforded to protect and manage the areas for visitors and local residents (Appendix 3.0).
- There is a public footpath that crosses the site, running along a section of the access track from Selsfield Road and then diverting north eastwards towards Gravetye Manor.
- Photos from the public footpath towards the site indicate that the proposed structures would be obstructed by trees along the edge of the fields to the north-east and the copse to the site of the proposed structures which will allow extra privacy from the public footpath.
- If there is a desire for extra protection from the footpath, we would recommend that native trees and hedging are placed along the north-eastern boundary behind the proposed sites.



Pictures of the public footpath (left), and the view of the site from the public footpath (right).

5. Conditions of the site boundary

- The eastern boundary behind the development path is formed by mature, mixed native trees such as ash and oak which screens both developments from the public footpath on the right side of the property (see above). This site is surrounded by a copse of similar mixed native trees as part of the extended woodland into the countryside.
- The site is mainly flat grassland, with an agricultural path leading down from the main property.



- Picture of the north-eastern end of the site

- The western edge of the site also has a boundary of mixed native trees and grassland gently sloping down to the agricultural path, sectioned off by a fence, this is also where the alpaca paddock is located



Picture of the western border

- The north-eastern end of the property, extending past the polytunnel is an extension of the agricultural path into another field, which is bordered by a fence and hedging.



Picture of the northern end of the property

- The property is just off a main A road named Selsfield Road, however, the proposed developments are at the far northern end of the property, connected to

the main property by an agricultural path. This negates any safety issues, as there will be no risk of any guest or residents walking onto the main road and possibly getting hurt.



- View of the path from the property to the proposed development site



4.0 Characteristics of Existing Landscape

1. The visual sensitivity of the area of landscape where the development is proposed relates to the general existing nature of the site. This may highlight the openness of the site, and the quantity of visual receptors present within the environment and the probability of how this may change during and after the development has been built.
2. Topography of site (Appendix 4.0):
 - The field from the eastern side of the property has a gentle incline up to proposed buildings.

Ducklys Farm Centre, East Grinstead Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment





5.0 Baseline Study

1. Initial desk-based study:

- An initial desk study was prepared and carried out gathering relevant information to assist in evaluating the landscape when on site.
- From this study we gathered all the relevant maps, images, and information about and surrounding the site to understand the land before travelling to the site and carry out the assessment. This list includes:
 - The information about the proposed sites.
 - The public footpath.
 - Information about the land being an ANOB.
 - The layout of the land for the proposed developments.
 - The developments proximity to other properties and listed buildings or historical sites.

2. Field survey:

- A field survey was undertaken at the proposed development site to understand the immediate setting of the landscape, scoping out the visuals of the area.
- During the site visit, we carried out a photographic survey of the area capturing the entire boundary and photographing key points from around the site.
- A visual assessment was conducted from walking around the proposed development site, determining and identifying the main factors that were at play and how it would impact the area and wider landscape in the short and long term.

3. Landscape:



- The existing condition of the site is slightly undulated ground.
 - It has been recognised by planning that the land where the proposed developments will be constructed is an AONB, this can be found under DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: 'To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities' (*planning permission should be refused for major developments in these areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest*) (Appendix 5.0)
 - As Duckyls Farm Centre houses vulnerable people and allows them to learn key skills in the natural countryside, it can be said with certainty that the proposed developments are in the public interest.
4. Visuals of the landscape (With photos)
- The existing view of the site is basic with no main obstacles in its place, and it is currently unpopulated with no dwellings or other structures as the end of the property backs onto countryside.

Picture 1: landscape from the east



Picture 2: landscape from the track on the east



Picture 3: landscape of the north-east on the footpath



5. Visual context of the development:

- This consists of information from the extent of the visual envelope and how the relationship of the site has to the wider landscape will help to determine its context within the area. From viewing the site at different points around the wider landscape will assist with clarifying the current visual context of the site currently and how this will adapt if the development goes ahead.



Picture 1: visual of slope from the east side up to the site.

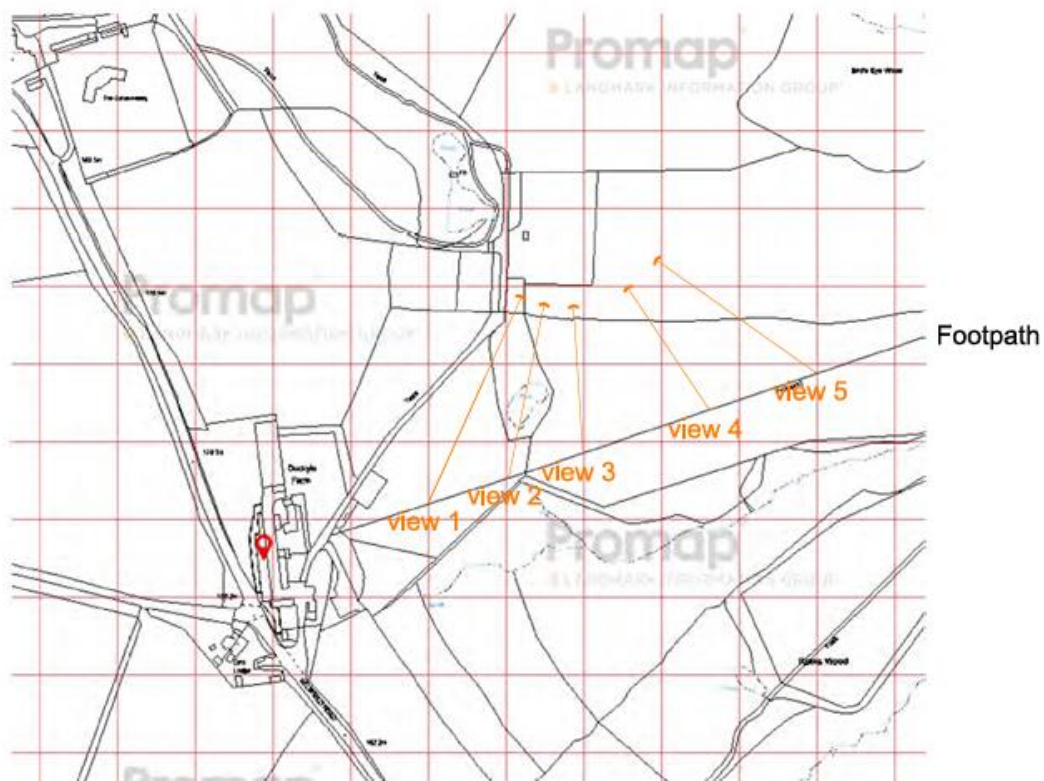
Picture 2: visual slope up to the property from the west.

Picture 3: visual slope up from the north-east of the path.

6. Visual receptors:

- These are people or groups of people who are likely to see the site during and after the development build. This could be passing by on a walk, or living next to the site. This must be determined from assessing the magnitude of the effect and how it will affect the development and the wider visual receptors.
- From conducting the visit on-site, the visual receptors of the proposed site development have been recognised as:
 - The public footpath.

7. Map of public footpaths:



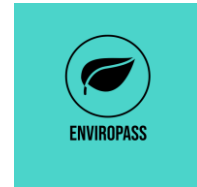
(Appendix 5.0)



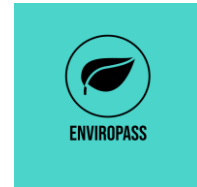
6.0 Relevant Policy and Landscape Requirements

Planning policy documents, legislations and guidelines all assist in providing the framework for the protection and conservation of an area. All of these are taken into consideration when assessing the proposed site area to determine the significance of the changes that have been proposed.

- The planning policy that will be used is the Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP), which is the main planning document used by the Council when considering planning applications. It includes the strategy, proposed level of development and a number of planning policies which will be used to assess the area (Appendix 6.0). The policies relevant to the development at Duckyls Farm Centre include:
 - DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the countryside (*The rural economy will be supported by other policies within this Plan that permit small-scale development and changes of use that will further economic activities that are compatible with the District's rural character*) (Appendix 6.0).
 - DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: 'To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities' (*planning permission should be refused for major developments in these areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest*) (Appendix 6.0).
 - DP17: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (*recreational disturbance to protected breeding birds from an increase in visitors to Ashdown Forest and atmospheric pollution affecting the heathland habitat from increased traffic and associated nitrogen deposition*) (Appendix 6.0).
 - DP21: Transport (*The District Plan aims to create sustainable communities and this includes a sustainable local transport network and ease of access to local services and facilities*) (Appendix 6.0).



- DP25: Community Facilities and Local Services (*To ensure that development is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure in the right place at the right time that supports development and sustainable communities - Education Facilities and Community Centres are included in the councils criteria*) (Appendix 6.0).
- DP26: Character and Design (*requires high quality in design with new development that contributes positively to the private and public realm (including streets and open spaces), protects valued townscapes, and creates accessible environments*) (Appendix 6.0).
- DP28: Accessibility (*To support sustainable communities which are safe, healthy and inclusive*) (Appendix 6.0).
- DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution (*New development in the District needs to be managed so that the local economy can prosper within clear guidelines and businesses can operate efficiently alongside homes without adversely affecting the environment. Soil quality must be protected in accordance with Policy DP38*) (Appendix 6.0).
- DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows (*The District Council will make Tree Preservation Orders or attach planning conditions, in line with national guidance, to protect specific trees, a group of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity or where they are threatened by development. The amenity value of trees will take into account visibility and characteristics relating to the individual, collective and wider impact*) (Appendix 6.0).
- DP38: Biodiversity (*The District Plan recognises the importance of the protection and conservation of areas of importance for nature conservation and the valuable contribution made by these sites and features in conserving biodiversity and geodiversity of our natural heritage, together with opportunities for education and employment*) **Local ecological evidence should include protected and notable species as well as considering the potential effects of the development on the habitats and species on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 section 41 list** (Appendix 6.0).



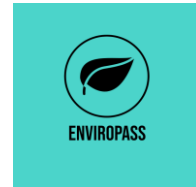
- DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction (*To promote development that makes the best use of resources and increases the sustainability of communities within Mid Sussex, and its ability to adapt to climate change*)(Appendix 6.0).

1. Key characteristics of the area:

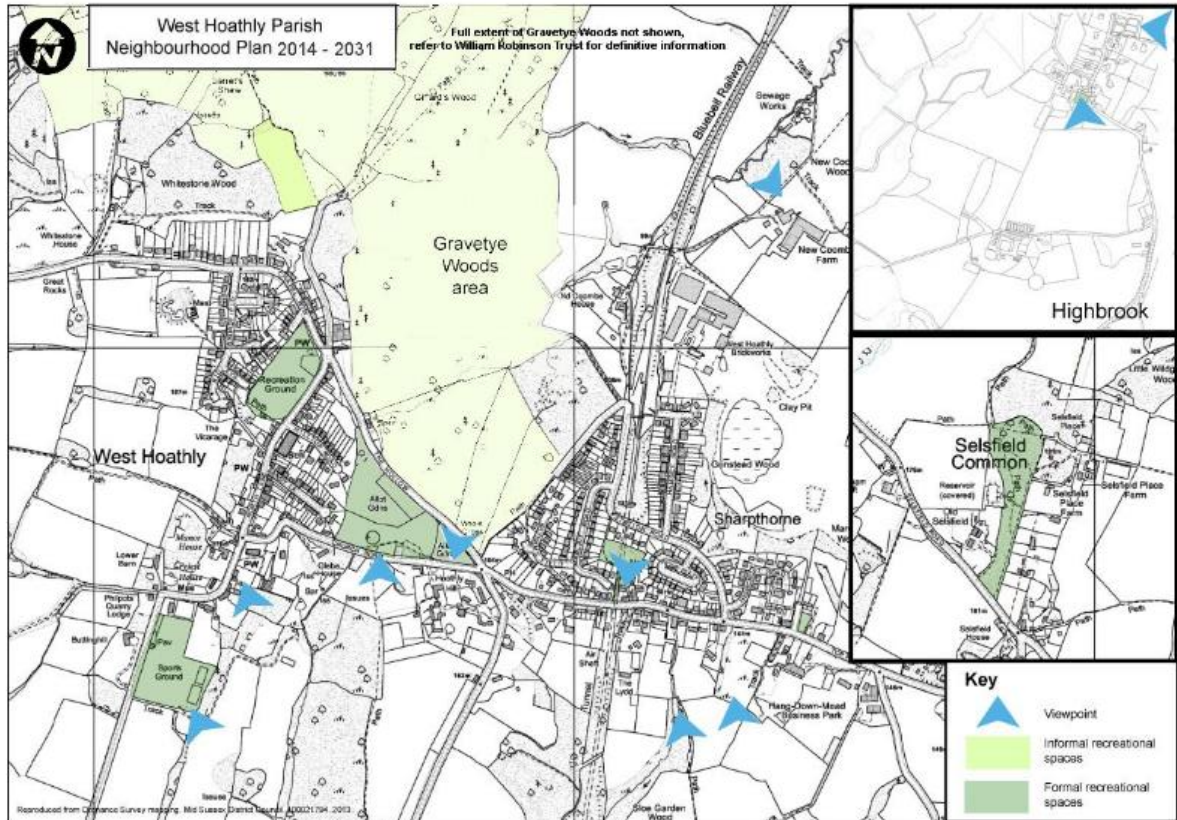
- Duckyls Farm Centre is located near the village and Civil Parish of West Hoathly in the Mid Sussex District of West Sussex.
- The village has a deep-rooted history dating back to the 11th Century, with many Medieval farms and buildings. Including Kingscote railway station, and The Priest House, a 14th Century Wealden Hall house of 'high antiquarian interest.' Located in the middle of the village, the house is now a museum containing items relating to local and domestic history. This is opposite St Margret's Church, a Grade I listed building, constructed in the 11th Century, and expanded in the 15th Century, making it West Hoathly's oldest and most culturally rich building.
- Gravetye Manor, built in 1958 for a local ironmaster, is another example of West Hoathly's cultural heritage. Northern Sussex was an important ironworking area for several centuries. The manor was overtaken by smugglers, until its abandonment and refurbishment in 1884 by William Robinson. It is now a 4-star hotel and restaurant.
- Furthermore, the village also contains Chiddingly Manor, a Gothic-style house from 1866. Next door is Chiddingly Farm, an open hall house from the 15th Century, and Selsfield House from the Georgian era.
- Other notable areas include the Village Pub is the Cat Inn, an early 16th Century timber-framed building with authentic pillars visible inside.
- Near Sharpthorne lies West Hoathly Pit, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, a working clay pit of geological interest.



- Hoathly is the Anglo-Saxon word meaning a heath covered clearing, a natural area dominated by highland vegetation. This sums up the village's countryside's history, as the Parish lays on the edge of the Ashdown Forest; ancient forest, an ANOB, and a recognised Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Area of Protection (SPA) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Ashdown Forest provides expansive views across the heavily wooded hills of the Weald, to the chalk escarpments of the North and South Downs on the horizon.
(Appendix 6.0)



2. Map of the local landscape character area (Appendix 6.0):



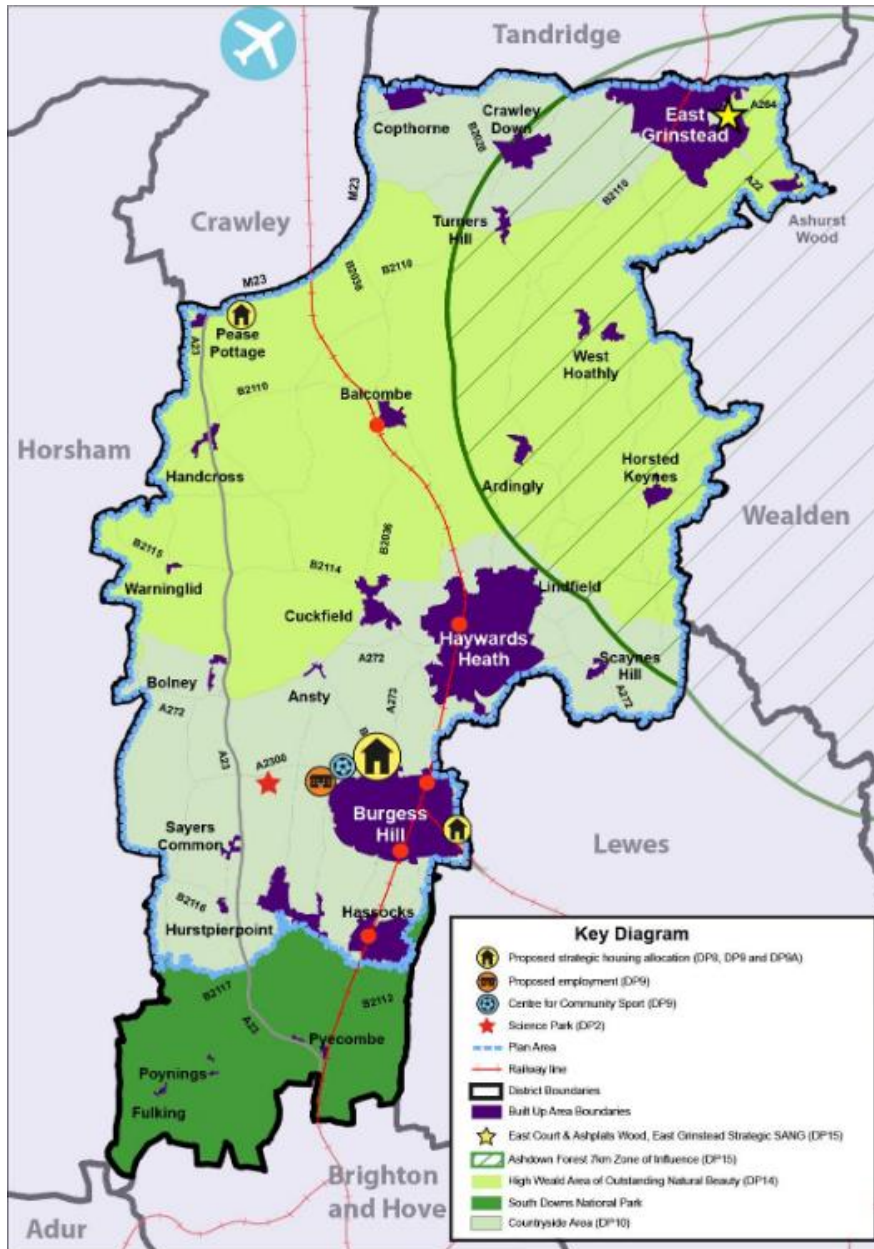
3. Core Strategy Submission (Appendix 6.0):

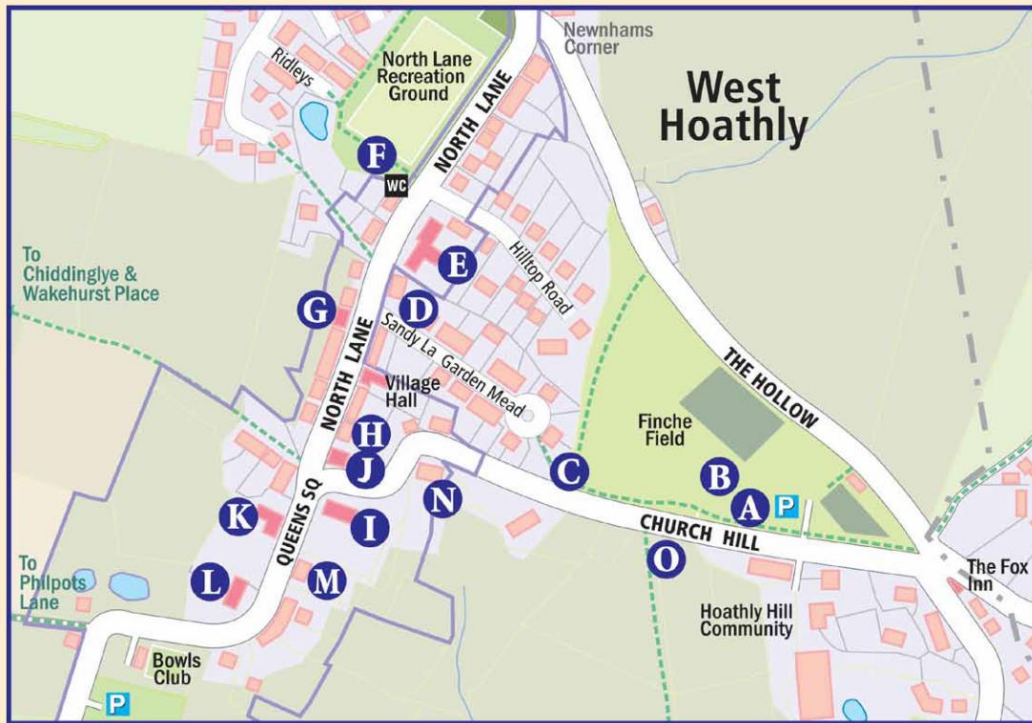
- The MSDP, covering 2014-2031, outlines the overall strategy for development in the district in chapter 3, focusing on housing, economic growth, and sustainable communities. The plan aims to address key issues such as housing shortages, affordability, and commuting patterns by providing more homes and jobs. The plan also supports the regeneration of town centers and encourages local businesses and services.

4. Local development framework (Appendix 6.0):



- The MSDP aims to shape the future of Mid Sussex up to 2031 by providing a framework for new development, employment growth, infrastructure, and measures to ensure the protection of the countryside. The District Plan is also to be used as a guide for other planning documents.
- The MSDP uses both the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in planning decisions. The HEDNA report (published in 2022) determines the objectively assessed housing need for Mid Sussex. It draws on evidence from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and The Economic Growth Assessment. The HEDNA update also includes sensitivity testing and adjustments to the starting point of Objectively Assessed Need, in line with planning practice guidance. The SHLAA identifies and assesses potential housing sites within the district. It aids the council in understanding the land available for development and supports the selection of sites for allocation.
- There is also use of Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which assesses the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of the plans policies. The SA helps ensure that the plan is sustainable and considers the long-term effects of the development.
- The Mid Sussex District Local Development plan includes a detailed map of all proposed developments, including; designated housing sites, a sports centre, science park, proposed employment areas, a railway line, and district boundaries (Appendix 6.0).





- A: Finche Field
- B: Coronation Clump
- C: Steps to Church Hill
- D: Garden Mead and Sandy Lane
- E: North Lane
- F: The Lavatory
- G: Smith's Butcher Shop
- H: Fountain Cottage
- I: St Margaret's Church
- J: The Cat Inn
- K: The Manor House
- L: The Priest House
- M: Upper Pendent
- N: Church Hill to Finche Field
- O: New Stile

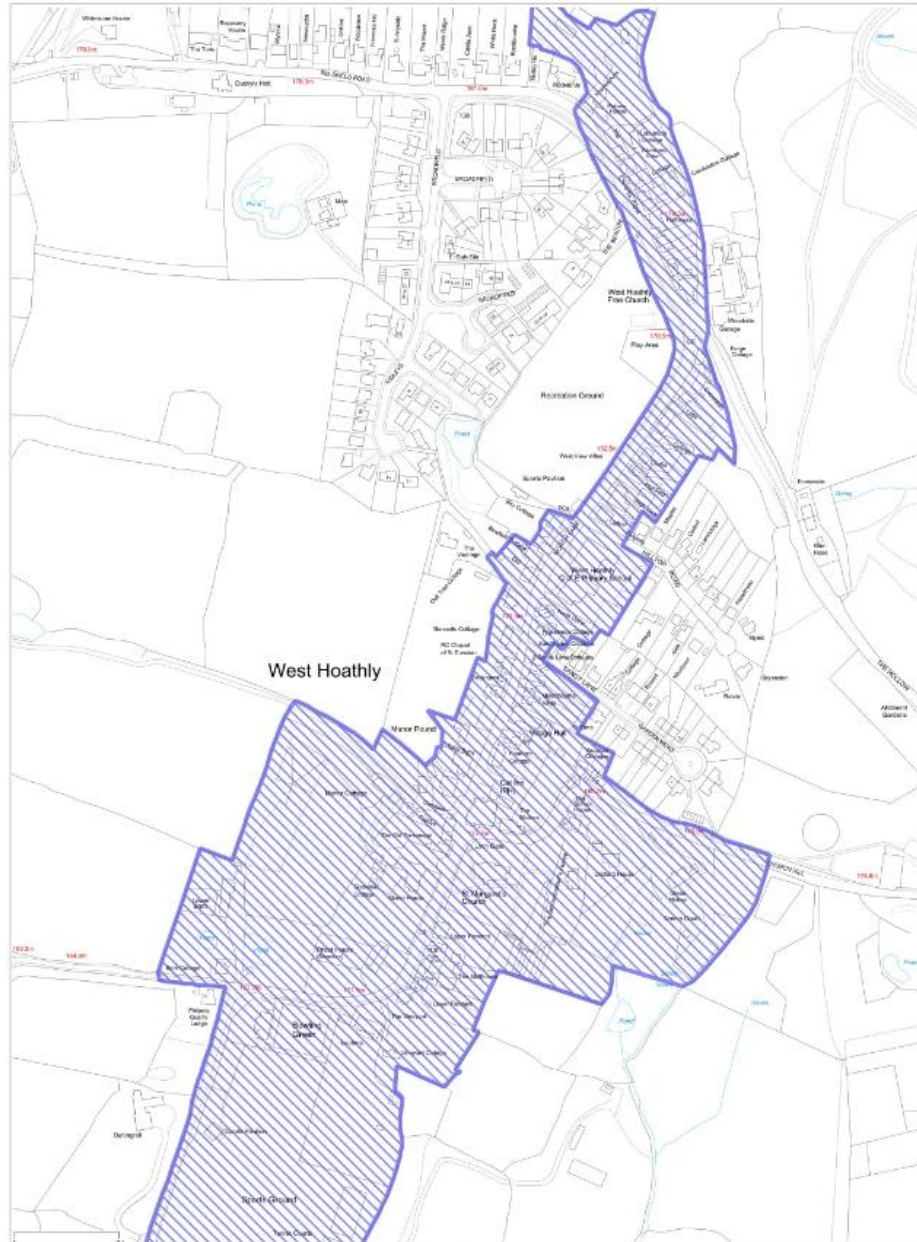
6. Conservation areas:



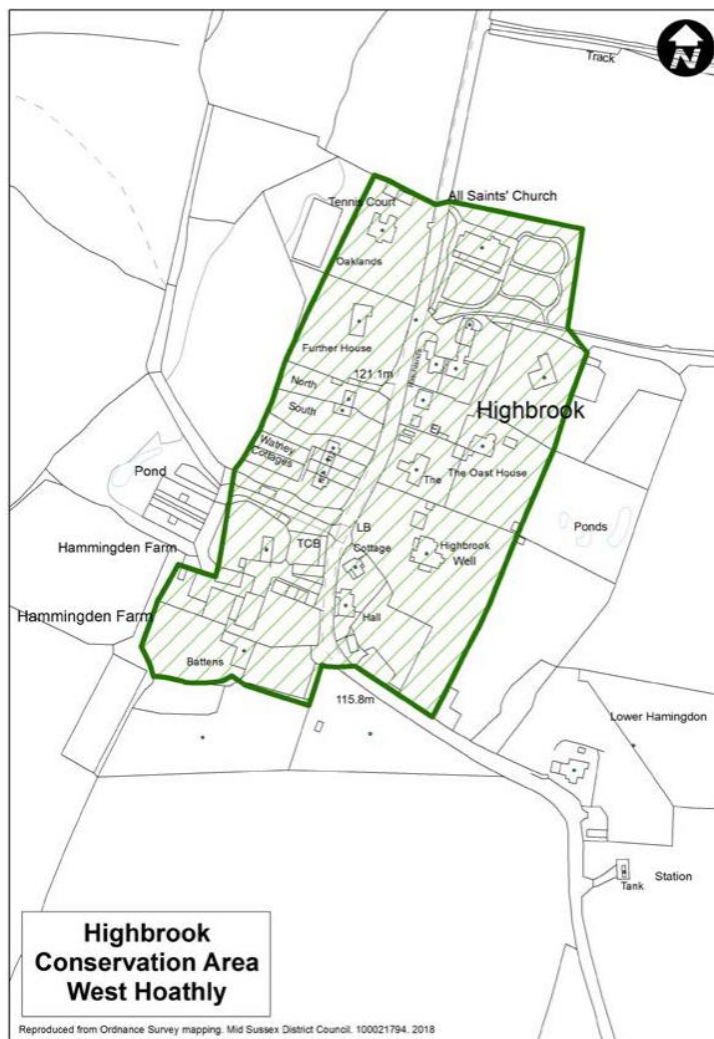
- West Hoathly Conservation Area: The southern part of West Hoathly was designated a Conservation Area in December 1972. This includes the area commonly known as Queen's Square based on St Margaret's Church, a Grade I Listed Building believed to have Norman origins, around which the village initially grew. Many of the Listed Buildings in the village date from the 14th to 16th centuries although West Hoathly is reputed to date from the 11th century. The Conservation Area includes such buildings as the Priest House dating from 1450 and the Cat Inn (Appendix 6.0).
- Map of Environmental constraints in the Mid Sussex District Plan (Appendix 6.0):
 - This map shows the boundary of Ashdown Forest, and protected areas that constrain planning permissions highlighted in the plan. If planning is requested in one of the special areas for conservation highlighted on the map, it will be assessed under DP's: 12, 16, and 17 of the MSDP (see above or Appendix 6.1.2)



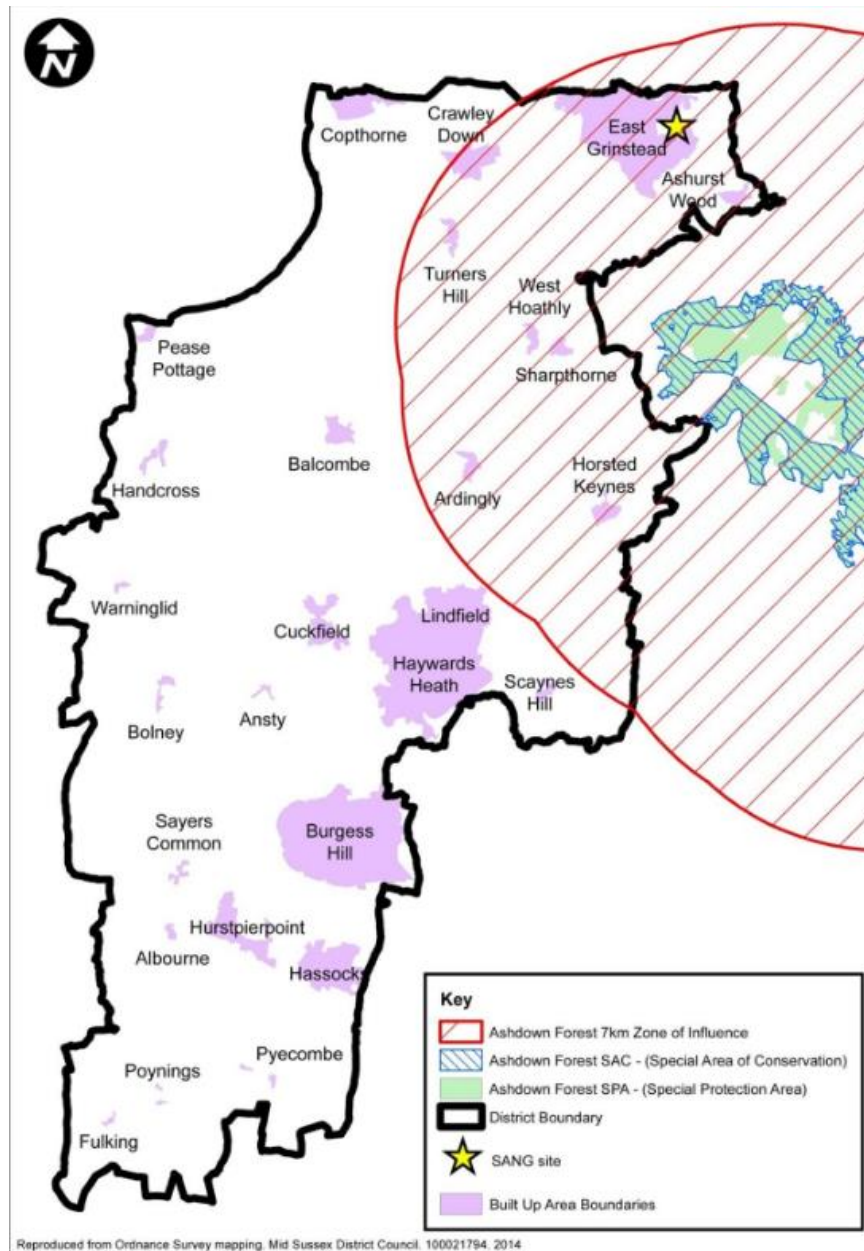
- Map of West Hoathly Conservation Area (Appendix 6.0):



- Highbrook Conservation Areas: Highbrook was designated a Conservation Area in 1990. At the northern end of Highbrook lies All Saints Church, built in 1884 in the Gothic revival style. There are a number of other listed buildings in the settlement including Battens, which is believed to date back to the late 13th or early 14th centuries (Appendix 6.0).
- Map of Highbrook Conservation Area (Appendix 6.0):



Map of Ashdown Forest (Appendix 6.0):





Duckyls Farm Centre does fall within a conservation area (Ashdown Forest). However, assessed with the MSDP, it has shown to benefit the local community by offering services to vulnerable adults. Furthermore, upon assessment of the area, it can be determined that the developments will not significantly impact the ecological integrity of the area, as they cannot be distinctly viewed from the public footpath, and neither of the proposed developments are excessive. We suggest that native hedging and trees are planted around the eastern border to give extra privacy from the public footpath and contribute back to the biodiversity in that area.

7. Historic Parks and gardens:

- The site does not have, nor encroaches on any historical parks or gardens.

8. Trees Preservation Orders:

- The site has no known TPO's on or adjacent to the proposed development site.

9. Public Rights of Way:

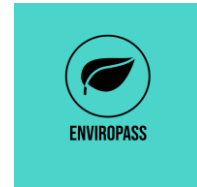
- There is a public right of way that goes east through the property. This path is maintained by the staff at Duckyls Farm Centre yearly, and can be accessed through the property's entrance. The proposed site for both developments cannot be seen from the public footpath:

Picture 1: public footpath on the east side of the site



Picture 2: view of the development site from the northern side of the public footpath





7.0 Visual Assessment

1. The extent of the visual changes will be considered depending on what scale they will be seen as affecting the townscape view.

For this purpose, the scale will be categorised from high to low. Low being that the proposed development is visible but has no effect upon its quality or character within the landscape.

2. To identify what the visual impacts of the site may be there are a variety of factors considered including but not limited to:

- People living nearby
- People travelling through the area
- Existing land neighbours that look onto the site

3. The visual impacts of the site will create short term and long-term changes to the area starting from when the construction phase of the project begins.

This includes more people being onsite during the build and more traffic coming into the area which could include workers and different organisations involved with the proposed development.

4. Table of findings for Visual Effects:

Receptor Sensitivity	Description
High	N/A
Medium	Private dwelling at the top of the agricultural path, separate to the center.
Low	The public footpath from the east. The wider landscape (AONB) Limited views from Selsfield Road, due to the location of the developments being away from the road.

5. Findings from the visual assessment:



- The site for the proposed developments does not play a significant role in the character of the area. The property has the main farmhouse at the top of the hill, the south, leading down to the proposed site, with a private dwelling on the left of the agricultural path, whose visuals will not be significantly impacted by the construction of the new developments, as the property east facing.
- Neither the public footpath nor the wider landscape (being an AONB) will not affect or be affected by the visuals of the new developments due to the eastern border which is screened by a copse of mature trees. If there are any issues with privacy, more native trees or hedging can be planted to give extra coverage, allowing the border to merge with the wider landscape.



8.0 Landscape Assessment

1. Assessment of the landscape will determine if the proposed development creates significant changes to the landscape and surrounding area in the visual envelope or not.

For this purpose, the scale will be categorised from high to low. Low being that the proposed development is visible but has no effect upon its quality or character within the landscape.

2. Table of findings for Landscape Assessment

Landscape Assessment	Typical Indicators
High	N/A
Medium	N/A
Low	The developments will not have a significant effect on the value of the landscape, as the area is not identified as a valued part of the landscape within the wider area. The area is also currently just grassland, with a shed, polytunnel and a few raised beds. There may be a need for extra trees and hedges to help strengthen the copse and provide extra privacy from the eastern footpath.



9.0 Direct Impacts

1. Direct impacts on the site would occur during construction preparation of the development as well as the long-term effects of the development.

First instance impacts would be from the groundworks of the area involving diggers and other construction vehicles on site to carry out the movement of soil from around the area. This would be necessary to create suitable ground condition but with avoiding excessive soil erosion in the process will be important.

The main direct impact on the site would be the nature and wildlife found there. This includes but is not limited to animals and insects that have habitats on the site and use the area for foraging and protection from predators.



2. Indirect Impacts

- The amount of traffic on the roads would increase in the long term due to the development of both the workshop and the barn. We know from GML Architects report that the centre aims to increase the number of day-centre guests. This will require a shuttle bus to run to-and-from the development site once constructed, which means that a new path will need to be constructed from the top of the property to make it more accessible. This will create a disturbance for the private dwelling.

During the short term of the construction phase of the development there would be a lot more traffic visiting the site during the working hours of the week. This would consist of construction workers vehicles travelling to and from the site and construction vehicles entering and leaving the site when required.

There will be an increase of noise and pollution from the development during construction phase in the short term because of the nature of the work. The noise however will only be increased during working hours of the week when large vehicles are in use or noisy machinery is being operated.

The development will result in long term changes in animal migration routes. This could be enhanced by a development of a landscape plan creating new migration routes.



10.0 Development Proposal and Sustainability

This includes sustainable proposals to sustain the ecological integrity of the area for the residents and the people who access the site during the day.

1. Landscape Principles:

- Retention and strengthening of existing planting of banks along all development boundaries.
- New native hedges added to the open boundaries on the East side of the site, including native trees.
- Use of quality stocks for above.
- During work minimise any possible disturbance to the neighbouring biodiversity.
- General amenity landscaping with development areas including some flowering and native trees to integrate movement of birds and other wildlife.

If the site has well balanced and inclusive landscape areas in place. With good application of the above principals this should enhance and provide a good living and working environment. By maintaining the current naturalistic feel of the site and improving the current biodiversity from following the principals will ensure an enhancement of people's lives living in the area.

2. Changes and Effects on the landscape after the development is completed

- As there are going to be two new builds on the site, the visuals of the area are going to be impacted from the south and west views, which are both part of the property, hence it will be insignificant.
- The buildings may be slightly visible from the public footpath at first. However, the proposed planting of mature native trees and hedging on the east boundary will mean that, over time, the buildings will not be visible from the footpath and will merge into the wider landscape.
- The new plantings will also enhance and encourage biodiversity in the area.



11.0 Mitigation

There will need to be mitigation put into place for the impacts of the development. The use of designated areas around the site will be beneficial to animals and other wildlife that is found on the site. The main mitigation proposals are as follows:

1. Preventing the Loss of Habitats

Further planting of trees and shrubs around the site is advised to help habitats in the area.

The planting will have many benefits towards the site including:

- Habitats and food sources for birds and other animals
- Creating corridors for wildlife within the area
- Reducing excess surface water

2. Loss of Grassland

The loss of grassland to a new development can have several landscapes, environmental, and visual impacts:

Landscape and Ecological Impacts

- Biodiversity Loss – Grasslands support a wide range of plant and animal species, including pollinators (bees, butterflies), small mammals, and birds. Their removal can disrupt local ecosystems.
- Habitat Fragmentation – Breaking up grassland areas can isolate wildlife populations, making it harder for species to move and thrive.
- Loss of Carbon Sequestration – Grasslands store carbon in their soils, so their removal can contribute to increased carbon emissions.
- Soil Degradation – Development can lead to soil compaction, erosion, and reduced fertility, impacting adjacent green spaces and agricultural land.

Hydrological and Environmental Impacts



- Increased Flood Risk – Grasslands naturally absorb rainwater, reducing runoff. Replacing them with hard surfaces (roads, buildings) can lead to more surface water flooding.
- Water Quality Decline – Loss of natural vegetation can increase pollution runoff into nearby watercourses.
- Microclimate Changes – Replacing greenery with concrete can create heat islands, making local temperatures rise.

Visual and Landscape Character Impacts

- Loss of Openness – Grasslands often contribute to a sense of open space, particularly in rural or suburban landscapes. Development can lead to a more enclosed or urban feel.
- Changes in Landscape Character – The introduction of buildings, roads, and infrastructure can alter the natural character of the area, reducing its scenic value.
- Reduced Recreational Access – Grasslands are often used for walking, picnicking, or informal play. Development may reduce these opportunities unless green space is retained or integrated.

Mitigation Strategies

- Retaining green corridors or buffer zones.
- Enhancing biodiversity through green roofs, wildflower planting, or wetland areas.
- Implementing sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage runoff.
- Designing developments to blend with the surrounding landscape.



12.0 Proposed Landscape and Environmental Enhancement

On top of the mitigation proposals for the site, the benefits of environmental enhancement together will improve the site for the local and wider landscape.

1. Planting for Bees and Biodiversity

Along with increasing the planting onsite to improve the boundary with native hedging plants and trees, the additional planting for bees around the area would be beneficial. The presence of bees has been declining in recent years but with planting designated to them that have high levels of pollen can help to improve the numbers of them found in the wider areas.

The general increasing of soft landscaping around the site would be beneficial for biodiversity. It will create more food sources and foraging for wildlife throughout the year.

Soft landscaping also makes an area a more appealing environment to live in for the residents and people using the public right of way footpath when they travel through the site.

2. Hedgehog Highways

Creating a safe passage for hedgehogs across the property

This requires a section in the fence lines of the gardens in the properties being proposed to have small openings of around 13cm, no smaller. This allows rooms for hedgehogs to travel freely through built up areas without coming to harm. The use of the hedgehog holes in fences would benefit them in this area and have a positive effect on the decline of hedgehogs (and avoiding using wire fencing as hedgehogs may get stuck, meaning that they are at high risk to suffocation or exposure to predators)

3. Bird Boxes



The potential presence of nesting birds on the site means that the development might reduce the areas they have to nest in and forage.

It would be advisable to place additional bird boxes around the site to make up for disturbance the development may cause.

4. Bat Boxes

The open site is considered to provide suitable commuting and foraging for bats primarily near the hedging and trees. This relates back to section

Planting for Bees and Biodiversity of planting further soft landscaping around the site.

The recommendation of placing a selection of bat boxes up around the area will provide additional safe habitats for bats if they are appearing in the area. On average it takes bats around two years to find and occupy a bat box and some may take up to five years.

The bat boxes could be placed on trees around the boundary of the site or on the side of a selected number of houses. The boxes cannot be situated too close to the ground and must be out of direct light from the dwellings.

That leads onto the suggestion of bat friendly external lighting across the development during the construction phase and after for the long term of the site. The colour temperature should be a warm light ideally 2700k. The use of sensors and timers on the lights will have a positive impact on bats in the area too from reducing the time that lights need to be on.

5. Sustainable Drainage System



A sustainable drainage system would need to be put into place to help with the water movement on site. A suggestion of this would be to propose permeable paving through the area. This could be for access roads, parking spaces and pavements to help with the drainage on site.

6. Informative Signage on Site

During the construction phase the signage should display how the construction phase is being considerate to the local area and wildlife around. From the use of low lighting in the evening and suitable working hours to reduce the amount of noise in the area whilst the build is going on.

6. Surface Water Plan

Developers are encouraged to produce a surface water plan before construction starts on site. This will reduce the amount of unnecessary water on site and reduce the risk of soil erosion. From having a surface water plan there is a reduction of the amount of silt and sediment reaching the local water table. This will of course benefit the area and the wider landscape if this impact can be lowered.



13.0 Summary and Conclusion

1. Summary of the site

- The development site is currently a patch of grassland with a wooden shed and a polytunnel at the north end of Duckyls Farm Centre, a charity owned property that provides residential and day-care services to people with autism and learning disabilities, allowing them to live their best lives alongside nature in a stunning area of countryside in East Grinstead.

2. Summary of the suggested plan for the development

- The proposed developments include; a steel framed metal clad workshop with a kitchen and social area, wood workshop, storage area and 3 toilets, and a barn to house animals with an office, a welfare room, 3 toilets, and handwashing facilities.
- The cladding is in colours selected from High Weald AONB guidance on the selection of colours in the development.
- PV panels to be included into the roof system to sustainably convert sunlight into electricity.

3. Summary of the suggested biodiversity action plan

- As the area is part of an AONB suggested scheme for this site includes planting a mix of native trees and hedging to encourage biodiversity in the area, and to ensure that the developments are integrated into the site and the local environment.

4. Summary of the visual assessment

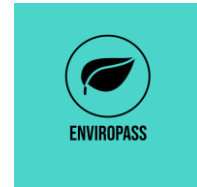
- The assessment of the landscape has an overall low sensitivity to the area due to the copse of trees on the eastern border merging in with the wider landscape, and the developments being at the northern end of the property, which does not significantly impact the views from the main property.

5. Summary of the landscape assessment

- The site has established areas of natural screening through a copse of mixed, native trees, and vegetation that enclose the proposed development reducing any adverse visual effects and can easily accommodate the current proposal.



6. The proposed development has taken local, council, social and economic considerations into account in providing a valuable service to the local community. Upon our investigation on the sensitivity of the site and local surroundings, we conclude that the proposed developments will not give rise to any significant adverse landscape or visual effects. Therefore, we found no reason why the site should not be released for the educational and agricultural buildings development proposed.



14.0 Appendix

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Photo taken from GML Architects Ltd Pre-Application for Duckyls Farm Centre, page 3 (p5).

2.0 LVIA Methodology

3.0 Description of site and location

3.3 Photos taken from GML Architects Ltd Pre-Application for Duckyls Farm Centre, page 13 (p5).

3.5 Natural England, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England) <
<https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-england/explore>> (p7).

4.0 Characteristics of Existing Landscape:

4.2 Topographical from GML Architects Ltd Pre-Application for Duckyls Farm Centre, Page 24 (p14).

5.0 Baseline Study

5.3 Mid Sussex District Plan: the main planning document used by the Council when considering planning applications <
<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3406/mid-sussex-district-plan.pdf>> Policy DP16, Page 71 (p10).

5.7 Photos taken from GML Architects Ltd Pre-Application for Duckyls Farm Centre, page 20 (p11).

6.0 Relevant Policy and Landscape Requirements

6.1 Mid Sussex District Plan <<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/mid-sussex-district-plan/>> (p12).

6.1.2 Policies DP12 (Page 56), DP16 (Page 62), DP17 (Page 63), DP21 (Page 68), DP25 (Page 74), DP26 (75), DP28 (Page 76), DP29 (Page 77), DP37 (Page 90), DP38 (Page 92) and DP39 (Page 94) of the Mid Sussex District Plan <<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3406/mid-sussex-district-plan.pdf>> (p12-14).



6.1.3 Wikipidea, West Hoathly <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Hoathly> (p15).

6.2 West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031 page 19 <<https://www.westhoathly.gov.uk/uploads/west-hoathly-neighbourhood-plan-2015.pdf?v=1594042225>> (p15).

6.3 Mid Sussex District Council, Mid Sussex District Plan <<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/mid-sussex-district-plan/>> Chapter 3, Page 24 (p16)

6.4 Mid Sussex District Council, Mid Sussex District Plan <<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/mid-sussex-district-plan/>> (p16).

6.4.1 Mid Sussex District Council, Map of the Mid Sussex District Development Plan's proposed developments <<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/2989/bp1-submission-district-plan-august-2016.pdf>> Page 14 (p17).

6.5 Map of the listed buildings and Landmarks in West Hoathly, there is more information provided on the Council's website: West Hoathly Heritage Trail <<https://www.westhoathly.gov.uk/uploads/west-hoathly-a3.pdf>> Page 1-2 (p16).

6.6 West Hoathly Parish Council: Conservation Areas <<https://www.westhoathly.gov.uk/conservation-areas>> (p19).

6.6.1 Mid Sussex District Council: Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, Map of Environmental Constraints <<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3406/mid-sussex-district-plan.pdf>> Page 21 (p20).

6.6.2 West Hoathly Parish Council, Map identifying the West Hoathly Conservation Area <<https://www.westhoathly.gov.uk/uploads/conservation-area-west-hoathly.pdf?v=1597056854>> (p20).

6.6.3 Mid Sussex District Council, Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex, Map of Highbrook Conservation Area <<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3710/conservation-areas-in-mid-sussex.pdf>> page 36 (p21).



6.6.4 Mid Sussex District Council, Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex <
<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3710/conservation-areas-in-mid-sussex.pdf>> page 36 (p19).

6.6.5 Mid Sussex District Council: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and
Special Area of Conservation <
https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3070/tp2_ashdownforesttopicpaper.pdf>
Page 18 (p20).

- 7.0 Visual Assessment
- 8.0 Landscape Assessment
- 9.0 Direct Impacts
- 10.0 Development Proposals and Sustainability
- 11.0 Mitigation
- 12.0 Proposed Landscape and Environmental Enhancement
- 13.0 Summary and Conclusion
- 14.0 Appendix