

# **Landscape and Visual impact Assessment.**

**Construction of American Barn, Horse Walker and Outdoor arena, and Indoor Arena, and Associated Works**

**Plummerden House, Park Lane, Lindfield, Sussex, RH16 2QS.**

**On behalf of DS Equine.**

Date: 13/03/2025 | Pegasus Ref: P24-2373

Author: Radek Chanas CMLI

---



## Document Management.

| Version | Date       | Author       | Checked/<br>Approved by: | Reason for<br>revision                                                                              |
|---------|------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| V1      | 11.02.2025 | Radek Chanas | Radek Chanas             | First draft                                                                                         |
| V2      | 13.03.2025 | Radek Chanas | Radek Chanas             | LVIA updated to<br>take into account<br>arboricultural<br>information and<br>heritage<br>assessment |

## Contents.

|                                          |    |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Introduction.....                     | 3  |
| 2. Planning Policy.....                  | 5  |
| 3. The Site and Proposed Scheme .....    | 11 |
| 4. Effects upon Landscape Features.....  | 18 |
| 5. Effects upon Landscape Character..... | 19 |
| 6. Effects upon Visual Amenity.....      | 27 |
| 7. Summary and Conclusions .....         | 36 |

## Appendices contents.

Appendix 1 LVIA Methodology.

Appendix 2 Application drawings – extracts.

## Figures contents.

Figure 1 Site Location and Context Plan.

Figure 2 Plates and Viewpoints Location Plan (Aerial Image).

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group have been commissioned by DS Equine, acting as agent on behalf of the applicant, to prepare this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA') in support of a full planning application for the erection of an American Barn, Horse Walker and Outdoor arena, and Indoor Arena ('the proposed scheme') at Plummerden House, Park Lane, Lindfield, West Sussex, RH16 2QS ('the site') – refer to Figure 1 Site Location and Context Plan. Mid Sussex District Council is the relevant Local Planning Authority ('LPA' / 'the Council').
- 1.2. The purpose of this LVIA is to review and evaluate the baseline condition of the site and its surrounding landscape, analyse the potential landscape character and visual effects, and consider whether any mitigation measures are necessary to avoid, minimise or mitigate any of the identified effects. In doing so, this LVIA also considered whether such measures would be appropriate to the local landscape character.
- 1.3. The site and local landscape fall within the High Weald National Landscape (otherwise known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)).
- 1.4. The site is best described as a small scale, visually self-contained and discreet parcel of land associated with the existing residential property at Plummerden House. There are existing equine outbuildings and outdoor arena. Access to Plummerden House is at the junction of Keysford Lane and Plummerden Lane, which continues south west as Park Lane and leads to Lindfield.

## Consultation

- 1.5. Given the high sense of enclosure across the local landscape, discreet nature of the site, and the general lack of any inter-visibility or views towards the site, no consultation with the LPA has been carried out in relation to this LVIA. The scope of work and viewpoint selection are based on Pegasus' knowledge of the local landscape and experience working on similar developments elsewhere in the country.

## Approach and Methodology

- 1.6. The LVIA assesses the operational stage of the proposed scheme only, as the construction stage would be of short and temporary duration. Any potential effects brought about by the construction stage are likely to be lower or similar to those assessed post construction. The effects are therefore assessed as Year 1 post-completion. The LVIA does not assess the residual effects as no mitigation measures, such as planting, have been deemed to be necessary. The 'Arboricultural Impact Assessment' prepared by Wright Landscape and Arboriculture Ltd (dated 18/01/2025) considers the potential effects upon the tree and hedgerow resource.
- 1.7. The development is a non-EIA development hence this LVIA presents a light touch yet robust analysis of the proposed scheme and identifies the scale of effects rather than their significance.
- 1.8. This LVIA has been undertaken with regards to the best practice guidelines within the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* Edition 3 (hereafter referred to as

GLVIA3). The GLVIA3 states in paragraph 1.17 that when identifying landscape and visual effects there:

***“...is a need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of the likely effects. Judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of investigation that is appropriate and proportional.”***

- 1.9. GLVIA3 also recognises in paragraph 2.23 that:

***“...professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements”***

- 1.10. All effects are taken as adverse unless otherwise stated. This LVIA should be read in conjunction with the application documents submitted as part of the planning application.
- 1.11. The detailed methodology for this LVIA is provided at Appendix 1. The site photography has been carried out with regard to the Technical Guidance Note 06/19 *Visual Representation of Development Proposals*, published by the Landscape Institute on 17 September 2019.
- 1.12. Given the relatively limited complexity of this LVIA, derived through the character of the site and proposed typology, the site photography is embedded in the main body of the report rather than being presented as separate figures.

## Study Area

- 1.13. A preliminary review of the Council's adopted *Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031* and *Policies Maps* has identified the presence of national and local designations and policies which will be considered within this LVIA. The High Weald National Landscape is considered as an individual landscape receptor within this LVIA. The presence of some other designations and assets are noted within the study area. This includes a section of Ancient Woodland immediately to the north of Plummerden House, and which continues as Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland along the western perimeter of the property segregating it from the adjacent Park Lane.
- 1.14. There are four Grade II Listed Buildings at Paxhill, located approximately 170 m southwest of the site, however these are located to the southern edge of the property with intervening trees along the access road and a large allotment style productive garden bound by hedgerows and further small field parcels physically and visually separating them from the site. Lindfield Conservation Area is approximately 1.2 km to the southeast. 'Motte and bailey castle' 240 m east of Dean's Mill' Scheduled Monument is located approximately 700 m to the southwest, beyond Paxhill and Nunnery Wood. Based on the enclosed nature of views from within the site – refer to Section 3 of this report, it is considered that the aforementioned heritage assets are too distant or are screened, to be considered a relevant visual receptor from an LVIA point of view. The Heritage Statement (February 2025), prepared by Palmer Heritage Ltd, in support of this application considers the nearby heritage assets.

## Limitations to the Assessment

- 1.15. The site visit, photography, and assessment were carried out in late November 2024, when deciduous trees were largely devoid of foliage and the level of vegetative screening was relatively low, thus can be considered to illustrate the so-called 'winter views'. The identified viewpoints have been selected in situ, based on the level of inter-visibility across the local area. The potential increased level of screening across the local landscape in 'summer months' is explored in Section 5 of this LVIA.

## 2. Planning Policy

### Mid Sussex Local Development Framework

- 2.1. The main documents which form the adopted Development Framework for Mid Sussex District Council include the *Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031* adopted in March 2018, the *Site Allocations Local Development Document (LDD)* adopted in June 2022 and the *Lindfield & Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan 2014–2031* (2016).

#### Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031 (2018)

- 2.2. The adopted *Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031* provides a strategy for how development within Mid Sussex will evolve for the period up to 2031. The following policies are of relevance to the site or landscape and visual matters with an extract of the adopted Policies Map included at Plate 1.

#### DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

- 2.3. The policy includes:

***“The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:***

- ***it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or***
- ***it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.***

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

***The Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, the West Sussex County Council Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape, the Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study and other available landscape evidence (including that gathered to support Neighbourhood Plans) will be used to assess the impact of development proposals on the quality of rural and landscape character.***

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

***Economically viable mineral reserves within the district will be safeguarded."***

DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

2.4. The policy includes:

***"Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular;***

- ***the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;***
- ***the traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;***
- ***character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and***
- ***the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.***

***Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.***

***Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location or design."***

DP26: Character and Design

2.5. The policy includes:

***"All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:***

- ***is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;***
- ***contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;***
- ***creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;***

- *protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- *protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- *does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);*
- *creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- *incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- *positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- *take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- *optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.*

DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

2.6. The policy includes:

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

*Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.*

*Proposals for new trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of suitable species, usually native, and where required for visual, noise or light screening purposes, trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of a size and species that will achieve this purpose.*

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

- *incorporates existing important trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design of new development and its landscape scheme; and*
- *prevents damage to root systems and takes account of expected future growth; and*

- *where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management; and*
- *has appropriate protection measures throughout the development process; and*
- *takes opportunities to plant new trees, woodland and hedgerows within the new development to enhance on-site green infrastructure and increase resilience to the effects of climate change; and*
- *does not sever ecological corridors created by these assets.*

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

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

*The felling of protected trees will only be permitted if there is no appropriate alternative. Where a protected tree or group of trees is felled, a replacement tree or group of trees, on a minimum of a 1:1 basis and of an appropriate size and type, will normally be required. The replanting should take place as close to the felled tree or trees as possible having regard to the proximity of adjacent properties.*

*Development should be positioned as far as possible from ancient woodland with a minimum buffer of 15 metres maintained between ancient woodland and the development boundary."*

#### DP38: Biodiversity

2.7. The policy includes:

*"Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:*

- *Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and*
- *Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances); and*

- ***Minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience; and***
- ***Promotes the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats in the District; and***
- ***Avoids damage to, protects and enhances the special characteristics of internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation; nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland or to other areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological interest, including wildlife corridors, aged or veteran trees, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, and Nature Improvement Areas.***

***Designated sites will be given protection and appropriate weight according to their importance and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks.***

***Valued soils will be protected and enhanced, including the best and most versatile agricultural land, and development should not contribute to unacceptable levels of soil pollution.***

**Geodiversity will be protected by ensuring development prevents harm to geological conservation interests, and where possible, enhances such interests. Geological conservation interests include Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites."**

#### **Lindfield & Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan 2014–2031 (2016)**

- 2.8. The site is located within the Lindfield Rural Parish, to the central eastern portion of Mid Sussex District. The Parish is located immediately to the north, east and southeast of Lindfield Parish and includes most of the countryside along the eastern edge of Haywards Heath, extending out to the East Sussex County boundary. The document describes Lindfield Rural as ***"... mainly rural in nature, comprising a number of small hamlets... There are large areas of rural countryside between Lindfield and the settlements in the Rural parish, giving them their own sense of identity."***
- 2.9. The explanatory notes for Policy 1: 'A Spatial Plan for the Parishes' states that: ***"The effect of the policy is to confine housing and other development proposals to the established built up area boundaries of Lindfield and Scaynes Hill, unless they are appropriate to a countryside location."*** (para 4.5). The proposed development would be located on land that is currently a private residential property with existing equine facilities.

## **District Plan Review**

- 2.10. The District Council is in the process of reviewing and updating the Mid Sussex District Plan. The new *District Plan 2021 – 2039* was submitted for examination in July 2024, and the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions have been received in August 2024. The emerging plan will replace the current District Plan once adopted. For the purpose of this LVIA these emerging policies have not been reviewed.

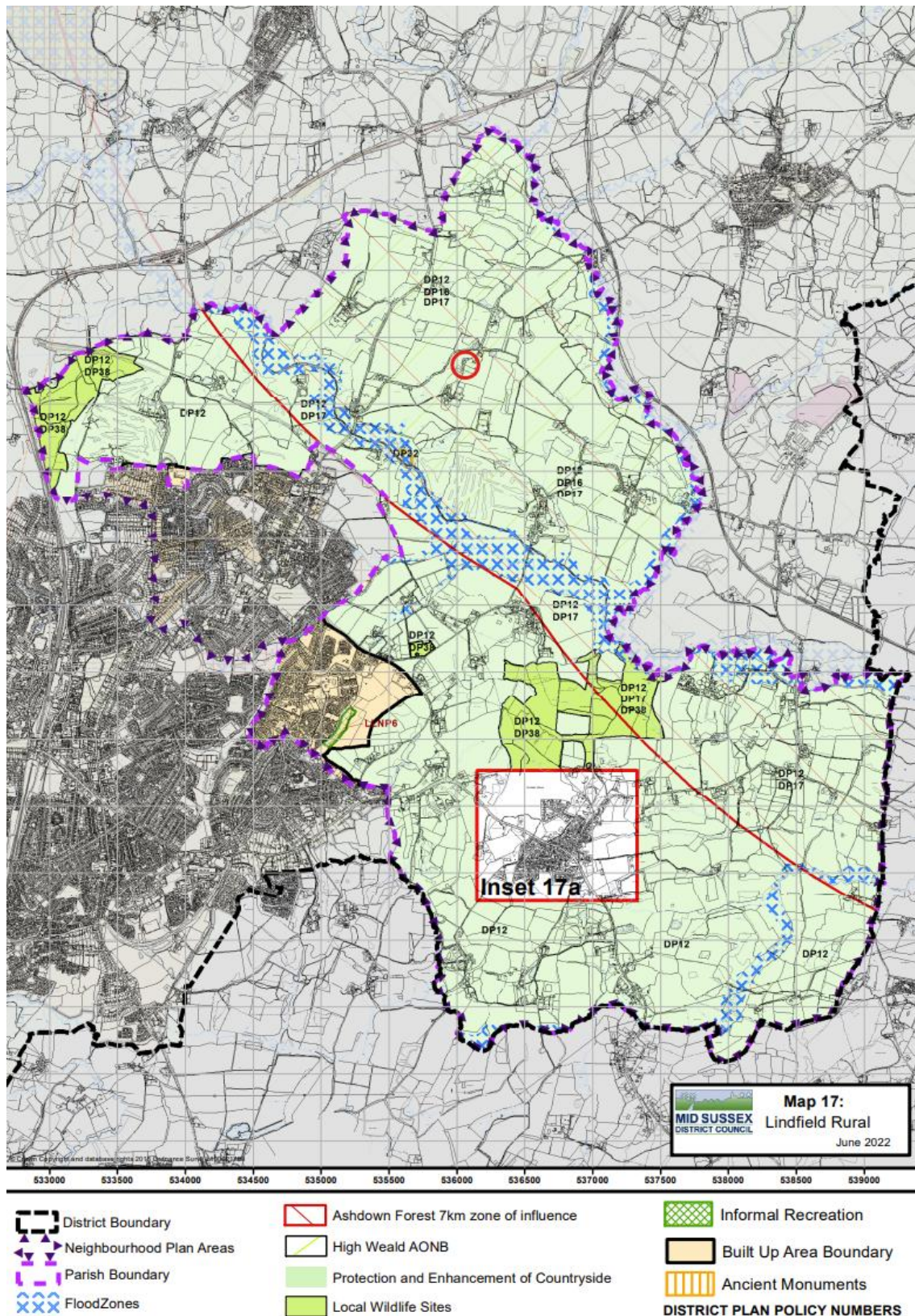


Plate 1: Extract of the Lindfield Rural Policy Map showing the policies within the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031. Red circle marks the approximate location of the site.

### 3. The Site and Proposed Scheme

#### Site Description and Inter-visibility

- 3.1. According to the Council's online mapping the site falls within the High Weald National Landscape and within the open countryside. The protection of the countryside is expressed in the Council's policy DP12 'Protection and Enhancement of Countryside' by and Policy DP16 'High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' quoted in Section 2. The test here is whether the development would conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the District, with specific emphasis on landscape features or components of natural beauty, their setting, land management, character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the National Landscape.
- 3.2. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) prepared by DS Equine discusses the scheme from a planning policy point of view. It is important to recognise, however, that the site is currently used for equine facilities, and this influences its character.
- 3.3. The site is best described as a highly enclosed parcel of land associated with the existing equine facilities at Plummerden House, physically and visually enclosed by woodlands and treed hedgerows. There is a detectable fall across the site, from approximately 82 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at the site's entrance at Plummerden Lane to approximately 75 m AOD in its southern part – where the proposed Indoor Areana and Outdoor Arena would be located. The landform continues to fall south towards neighbouring Paxhill, located at approximately 60 – 70 m AOD, with the River Ouse, approximately 30 m AOD, draining the landscape. Further south west lies the settlement of Lindfield separated by woodlands and tree belts.
- 3.4. The existing vegetation within and around the proposed structures has been identified in the 'Arboricultural Impact Assessment', associated 'Arboricultural Survey Report', 'Tree Survey Plan', and 'Tree Constraints Plan' prepared by Wright Landscape and Arboriculture Ltd – refer to Plate 2.
- 3.5. Vehicular access is off Plummerden Lane / Park Lane, with access to the proposed scheme provided along an internal track servicing the existing equine facilities. Woodland vegetation encloses the track to the west and screens Park Lane. The garden vegetation associated with Plummerden House, which includes well maintain hedges, encloses it to the east.
- 3.6. There are existing equine facilities: stables and tack room, located within the wider landholding, and at this stage these are proposed to be retained. These are not visible from the surrounding landscape.
- 3.7. There is an existing outdoor arena, located in the southern part of the landholding and it is proposed to replace it with a new American Barn with a new Horse Walker located near its north western corner. As mentioned before, the woodland (Court Wood) along Park Lane and vegetation to the south of the site, and indeed at Paxhill, encloses this part of the site.

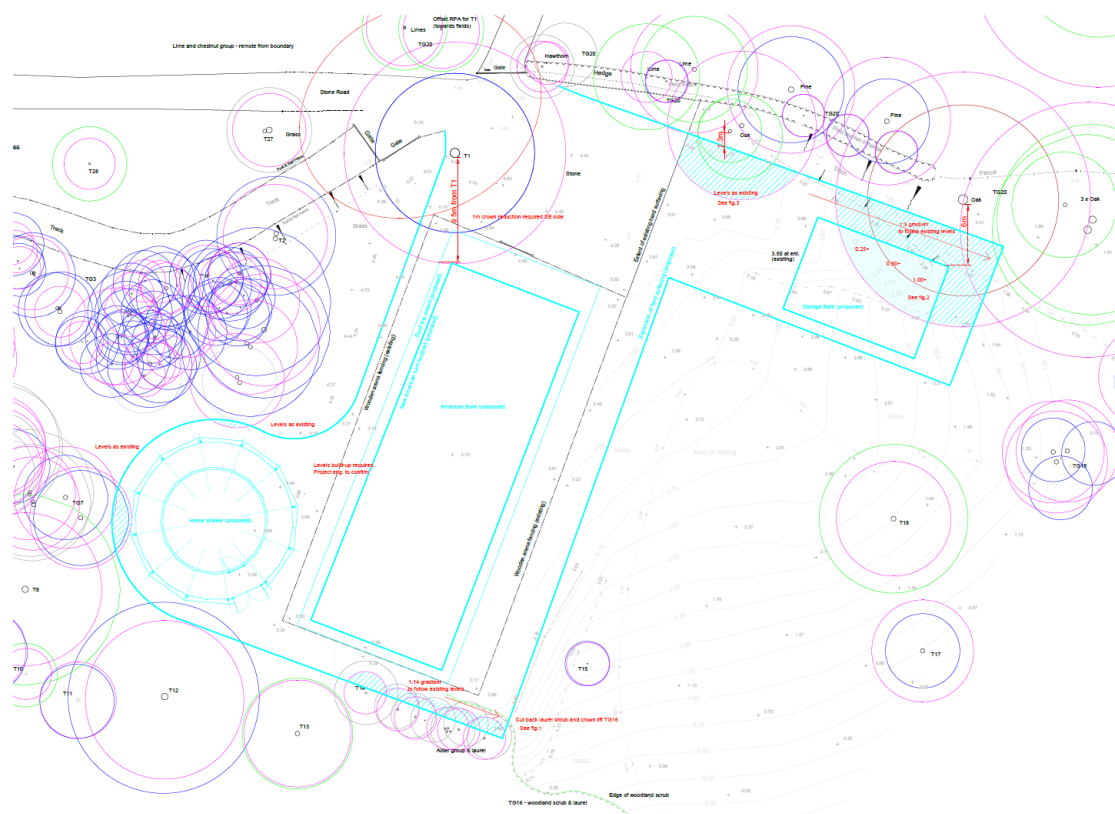


Plate 2: Extract from the Tree Constraints Plan. The American Barn, Horse Walker, and Storage Barn are subject to this LVIA.

- 3.8. A new Indoor Arena is being proposed immediately to the south of it with a new Storage Barn located next to it, to the east – refer to Plate 3. This area is largely laid to grass and benefits from physical and visual enclosure. Aforementioned Court Wood along Park Lane blocks any views out with the internal hedgerow and hedgerow trees terminating views north east, east, and south – refer to Plate 4, Plate 5, Plate 6, and Plate 7. In other words, this area does not exhibit any visual relationship with the surrounding landscape.
- 3.9. Access to the adjacent field located to the east, currently laid to grass and used as paddocks, is gained through a field gate – refer to Plate 8 and Plate 9. A new outdoor arena is being proposed in this area. The curtilage of Plummerden House is visible but the amenity garden and dwelling are largely enclosed – refer to Plate 10.
- 3.10. Views out to the adjacent countryside are restricted and controlled by the boundary hedgerows. It is noted that the eastern perimeter hedgerow is low and gappy in places, but the hedgerow trees provide a considerably amount of screening. The roadside hedgerow along Plummerden Lane and nearby woodlands block views north and north east – refer to Plate 11 and Plate 12. The nearby Quarry Shaw, located one field apart, terminates views further east – refer to Plate 12 and Plate 13.

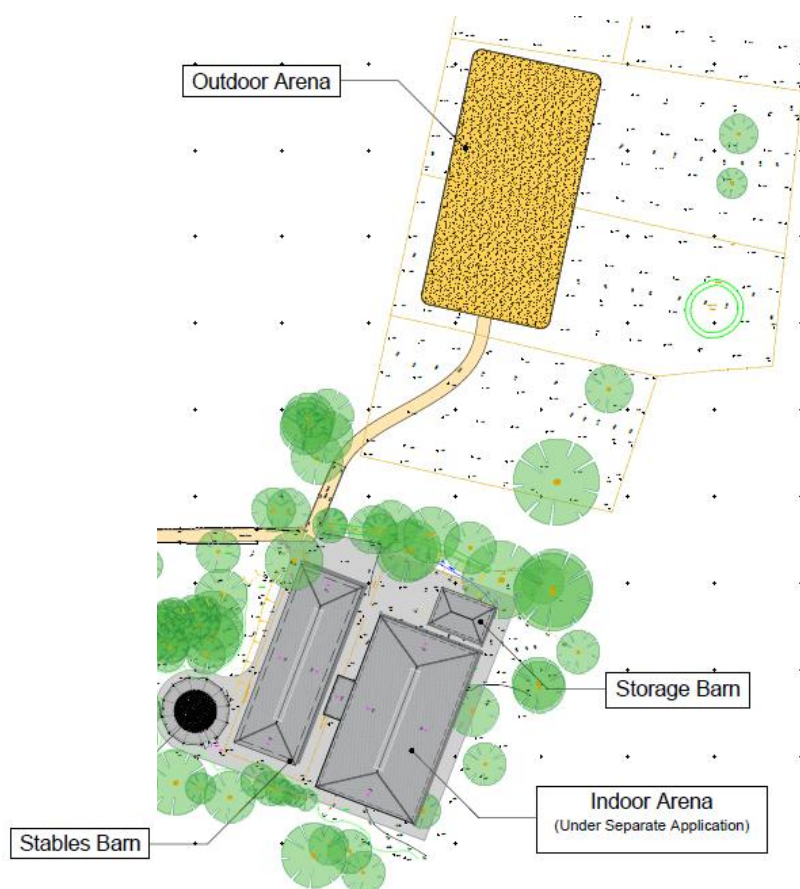


Plate 3: Extract from the proposed masterplan by DS Equine.

- 3.11. Views south east include the woodlands around nearby Skein Winders House but the property itself is not visible apart from a single rooftop – refer to Plate 13. Further to the south east lies Little Plummerden (residential property) and the Lindfield Golf Course, but intervening woodlands screen them in this view. It is noted that Public Footpath 44LR connects the Lindfield Golf Course with Plummerden Lane and leads past Little Plummerden and then along the eastern edge of Quarry Shaw. Given the proximity views from this PRoW are explored in this LVIA. The valley landscape is enclosed by distant undulating and wooded landscape. The site visit has not revealed any properties or publicly accessible locations that would offer reciprocal views towards the site.
- 3.12. In summary, views from the edge of the landholding extend across the adjacent field but terminate on the immediate landscape features.
- 3.13. The dwelling at Paxhill is not visible, being screened by its garden vegetation which includes perimeter hedge around its productive garden and mature trees – refer to Plate 14. The 'Heritage Statement' states at paragraph 5.12: ***"In general, it is considered that the proposals will cause no harm to the listed buildings of Paxhill Park or the coach house, as a result of changes to their setting. The site is not considered to be part of the setting of the gazebo or wall and gate piers..."***
- 3.14. The landscape further south is intermittently visible, seen amongst the intervening tree canopies in the middle ground, and being largely cloaked in woodland, or screened by the vegetation at Paxhill, woodlands along Park Lane: Court Wood, and those in the valley

landscape of the River Ouse including Nunnery Wood. The settlement of Lindfield is not visible from within the site with the exception of some rooftops.

- 3.15. In addition to the aforementioned Public Footpath 44LR at Quarry Shaw, public access can be gained along Public Footpath 32LR, which lies approximately 410 m south of the site and leads past Skein Winders House and south of Paxhill, connecting Little Plummerden with Park Lane to the west.
- 3.16. According to the 'Arboricultural Impact Assessment' none of the existing tree vegetation would have to be removed to accommodate the proposed scheme – refer to its paragraph 14.1: ***"No trees need to be removed to facilitate development."***
- 3.17. Topographically, the site forms part of the wider undulating landscape with folds in the landscape cloaked in woodlands – refer to **Figure 1** Site Location and Context Plan. The site and indeed the entire landholding is surrounded by a strong landscape framework of woodlands, hedgerows and belts of trees / blocks of woodland that characterise the surrounding undulating landscape. This considerably restricts views from within the site into the wider landscape and limits opportunities for reciprocal views, as described in the preceding paragraphs.
- 3.18. Apart from the above described locations and PRoWs, the site visit has not revealed any features or publicly accessible locations that would be relevant to this assessment.



*Plate 4: Site of new Indoor Arena – views terminate on Court Wood. Park Lane and landscape further west is screened.*



*Plate 5: Site of new Indoor Arena – looking north east across the existing outdoor arena (site of the proposed American Barn). Plummerden House is screened.*



*Plate 6: Site of new Indoor Arena – looking east towards the boundary hedgerow. Proposed Outdoor Arena would be located behind the vegetation.*



*Plate 7: Site of new Indoor Arena – looking south towards the boundary vegetation. Neighbouring property Paxhill is screened.*



*Plate 8 Looking west through a field gate towards the existing outdoor area.*



*Plate 9: New Outdoor Arena to be located to the left of the track – looking west towards the vegetated internal boundary, which would screen the new Indoor Arena.*



*Plate 10: Near the site of the new Outdoor Arena – looking towards the curtilage of Plummerden House.*



*Plate 11: Near the site of the new Outdoor Arena – looking north towards the vegetation along Plummerden Lane (Lane is screened).*



*Plate 12: Near the site of the new Outdoor Arena – looking north east towards the vegetation along Plummerden Lane (Lane is screened). Quarry Shaw woodland encloses the immediate area.*



*Plate 13: Near the site of the new Outdoor Arena – looking south east towards Quarry Shaw woodland. Rooftop of Skein Winders House is identifiable on the lower ground.*



*Plate 14: Looking south west, across the site of the new Outdoor Arena, towards Paxhill (dwelling is screened). Two conical evergreen trees mark the site's southern edge. Built form in Lindfield is visible in the distance.*



*Plate 15: Eastern edge of the landholding – looking south east towards Quarry Shaw woodland and Public Footpath 44LR.*

## Site Analysis

- 3.19. Based on the on-site analysis and above description it is evident that the proposed scheme has been sensitively located within the wider landholding, utilising the land that is already partly developed and characterised by a strong sense of enclosure and association with the existing equine facilities at Plummerden House.
- 3.20. Given the strong sense of enclosure within the site and indeed the immediate area, and the characteristic of the proposed Outdoor Arena there are no specific visual receptors or in the local area that would be of concern.

## The Proposed Scheme

- 3.21. The proposed scheme comprises an Indoor Arena and a new American Barn located to the south of the existing outdoor arena. In addition, the scheme includes an Outdoor Arena located in a field adjacent to the east. The proposed scheme would have the following parameters:
- The proposed Indoor Arena would be approx. 41 m x 23 m footprint, with a small scale 'viewing room' adjacent to it (9 m x 4.5 m footprint).
  - The proposed Indoor Arena would be approx. 4.8 m to the eaves and approx. 7.2 m to the ridge.
  - The proposed Storage Barn would be a small-scale building, with an approx. footprint of 96 sq metres, with a maximum ridge height of approx. 5.5 m.
  - The proposed Indoor Arena would be approx. 43 m x 33 m footprint.
  - The proposed American Barn would be approx. 3.7 m to the eaves and approx. 6 m to the ridge.
  - The proposed Outdoor Arena will be 60 m x 30 m footprint and would include a low hedge to demarcate its edge but would not include any fencing.
- 3.22. From an LVIA point of view, the location of the above listed elements is considered to be a sensitive response given the site is located within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 3.23. With regards to the materiality, the 'Design and Access Statement' states: ***"The proposed Indoor Arena will be of a steel frame structure with open elevations with a post and rail timber fence around the perimeter under a Anthracite coloured steel profile roof. On the north side there will be an enclosed viewing area for the trainer to sit and instruct from. The proposed Storage barn will be constructed of a galvanised steel frame construction with larch external cladding under a Anthracite coloured steel profile roof."***
- 3.24. The proposed materials and colours are considered appropriate given the proposed typology, context, and local landscape.
- 3.25. As part of the proposed scheme, the applicant is committed to maintaining and enhancing the existing vegetation in order to improve its condition and increase the level of screening.

This LVIA identifies a number of such measures, and any subsequent detailed planting plan would be prepared with reference to the Council's guidance on three and hedgerow species.

## 4. Effects upon Landscape Features

- 4.1. This section of the LVIA analyses the effect of the proposed scheme on those landscape elements that help characterise the site and provide the structural integrity of its environment. Physical effects are restricted to the area within the site.
- 4.2. As illustrated on the proposed masterplan and other application drawings – see Appendix 2 to this LVIA, the proposed Outdoor Arena and American Barn would be located within an area currently characterised by grassland and a BMX outdoor track.
- 4.3. With regards the ground levels, a degree of fill would be required to create a suitable building platform. The extent of the ground works, however, would be limited as far as practical and would not affect the underlying sloping topography of the wider landholding. Whilst direct effects would be unavoidable, within the footprint of the Outdoor Area and immediately around it, the overall topography would prevail.
- 4.4. It is accepted that a small area of the existing grassland margin, surrounding the car parking, would have to be removed to accommodate the proposed American Barn and storage barn. This would represent a minute proportion of the grassland within the wider landholding.
- 4.5. With regards the Outdoor Arena, the existing grassed paddocks would be replaced by sand surface thus in quantitative terms there would be direct adverse change.
- 4.6. As indicated in the 'Arboricultural Impact Assessment' the proposed scheme would not require any tree removal with only limited tree works required.
- 4.7. The above, however, has to be considered in the context of the wider landholding in order to provide a balanced view. Given the extent of the landholding, the degree of change upon the grassland associated with the site is considered to be negligible. The grassland within the site is expected to be semi-improved thus is considered to be of low value and susceptibility, and of low sensitivity, being a resource that can be easily and quickly replaced and replicated. On that basis, the scale of effects is considered to be negligible within the site itself.
- 4.8. Similarly, the underlying gently sloping topography of the landholding would not change with the proposed scheme in place. Its value is considered to be medium, on the basis that it forms part of the wider landform. Its susceptibility is taken as low given the gentle gradient and lack of any pronounced change in ground levels in this part of the site. Whilst some localised ground works would, be required, the overall degree of change would amount to negligible, with effects also negligible.
- 4.9. There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) and no water features within the site, thus those landscape features would not be affected by the proposed scheme.

### Summary

4.10. In summary, the proposed scheme would bring about the following effects:

- No effects upon the tree and hedgerow / hedge resource within or off site.
- Negligible effects upon the landform of the wider landholding.
- Negligible effects upon the grassland with the wider landholding.
- No effects upon PROWs as none are present within the site.
- No effects upon water features as none are present within the site.

## 5. Effects upon Landscape Character

### Baseline Landscape Character

5.1. The character of the landscape within the study area has been analysed and described on various levels:

- National level assessment provided by Natural England.
- County level in the 'Landscape character assessment of West Sussex' (2003) and 'The Ouse Valley Landscape Management Guidelines' for West Sussex
- District level in the 'Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex' (November 2005)

#### Natural England

5.2. According to Natural England, the site and study area fall within the National Character Area (NCA) 122 'High Weald'. This national level assessment, however, is considered too coarse and geographically extensive to provide detailed information that would be relevant to the site and proposed scheme. For this reason, the description of the national level NCA 122 has been reviewed to inform this LVIA, but the NCA has not been assessed as a specific landscape receptor.

#### 'Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex' (November 2005)

5.3. The '*Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex*' (2005)<sup>1</sup> was produced by Mid Sussex Council to help protect and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the district and to manage change, with support from West Sussex County Council. It draws upon the '*Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex*' (2003), identifying the same Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), outlining the same Key Characteristics and the same Land Management Guidelines for the LCA. This report focusses on Mid Sussex and is more recent, thus is considered more relevant to this LVIA.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/background-studies/>

- 5.4. According to the *Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex* (2005), the site and surrounding area fall within the Landscape Character Area (LCA) 9 'Ouse Valley'.<sup>2</sup> This LCA covers the majority of the study area, and the geographical extent is illustrated on Plate 10.

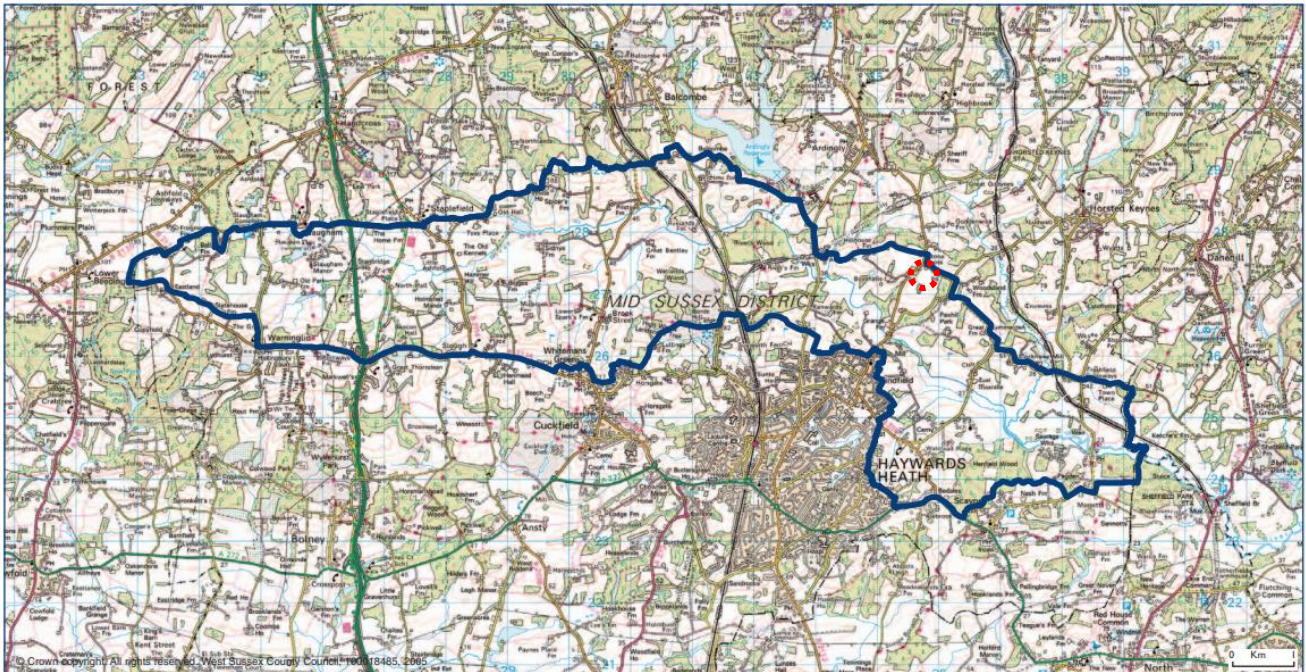


Plate 10 LCA associated with the site and local landscape – extract from 'The West Sussex Landscape Land management Guidelines'. Approximate location of the site is marked in red.

- 5.5. The LCA 9 'Ouse Valley' is described as:

***"Strongly linear valley adjoining Haywards Heath, its boundaries defined clearly by a marked break of slope. In the west, the river is a small, tree-lined stream amidst parallel streams and ridges, the valley broader to the east, the river meandering through water meadows. The signature of the valley is the high, long brick-built Ouse Valley (Balcombe) Viaduct on the London to Brighton Railway Line."***

- 5.6. The assessment identifies a number of key characteristics for the LCA 'Ouse Valley' which are quoted below:

- ***"Shallow but well-defined attractive rural valley landscape of intimacy and unusual complexity with a single, unifying character based on strongly-defined valley edges."***
- ***Parts of the valley are perceived as secluded and locally tranquil.***
- ***A markedly convex v-shaped valley form developed along a heavily faulted rock sequence giving rise to a series of confined parallel tree-lined streams and ridges within and below the valley edges to the west.***

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/1768/lca-part-three-landscape-character-areas-ouse-valley.pdf>

- *Eastern part of the valley contains a broader, meandering river with water meadows along the as yet narrow but gradually widening, flat valley floor.*
- *Relatively few panoramic or long views across or down the valley.*
- *Woodland cover less extensive than that of the High Weald fringes, despite an impression in places of a strong woodland presence strengthened by shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.*
- *Pattern of mixed arable and pastoral medium to large-sized fields is in places uncharacteristic of the High Weald.*
- *Numerous crossing and flanking roads and lanes including the A23 Trunk Road, many of which are busy.*
- *London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the valley, spectacularly so at the Ouse Valley (Balcombe) Viaduct, and the valley includes a small stretch of the Bluebell Steam Railway Line.*
- *Pockets of rich biodiversity including ancient woodlands.*
- *No settlements in the valley other than dispersed farmsteads although the townships of Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Cuckfield lie on the valley edges.*
- *Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timberframing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.*
- *Old mills, weirs and bridges.*
- *Extensive designed landscape at Borde Hill."*

5.7. The published 'Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex' (2005) identifies that the host LCA 9 is under pressure from "**Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks**".

5.8. The 'Land Management Guidelines' outlined within the assessment include:

**"Conserve the rural quality of the valley including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the mosaic of woodland and other habitats, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement farmstead pattern.**

- **Conserve and enhance the undeveloped character, drainage pattern and pastoral qualities of the valley.**
- **Protect existing views from ridge tops and avoid skyline development, paying particular attention to the siting of**
- **telecommunications masts.**
- **Conserve and enhance the presence of the river and its wildlife by streamside planting and creation of new wetland areas.**

- *Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.*
- *Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved woodlands and appropriate management of existing woodlands.*
- *Promote the creation of arable field margins including alongside the sides of streams.*
- *Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, including along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes.*
- *Conserve and plant parkland trees and tree groups and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession.*
- *Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.*
- *Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.*
- *Conserve species-rich meadows and road verges.*
- *Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.*
- *Reduce the visual impact of golf courses, and stabling and grazing for horses.*
- *Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.*

#### **Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007)**

5.9. The 'Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study' (2007) identifies Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) to understand localised variation in character. There are two LCTs covering the site, including the western parcel being located within L8 'Coniferous Woodland', and the eastern parcel being located within L1A 'Weald enclosed, large-scale arable'. There is no description for the coniferous woodland, but the eastern parcel under L1A is described as:

- *"Intensive arable farmland*
- *Fields, often large, across relatively flat or gently undulating landform*
- *Well developed structure of hedges, shaws, copses and woodland which break up views across it and give a sense of large-scale enclosure."*

5.10. The document also identifies the site as being within the wider LCA 39 'Packhill Weald', within zone 4, described as:

- *“Mixture of relatively large fields including pasture, semi-open arable, recreation and parkland of varying period and boundary loss.*
- *Sits on ridge outcrop which slopes down to river valleys on three sides.*
- *Boundary vegetation and woodland limit views, however distant views of High Weald to the north are possible from higher central parts of the CA.”*

5.11. This published assessment, however, was prepared in the context of potential residential developments rather than equine facilities, therefore is of limited use, and is not considered further in this LVIA.

### Landscape Sensitivity

5.12. The site and the study area fall wholly within the High Weald National Landscape; thus the landscape is taken to be of high value on the basis of its statutory national designation and recognition of its natural beauty. The susceptibility of this landscape and the host LCA HW ‘Ouse Valley’ to the proposed scheme is taken as low given its small scale and typology. Overall, the sensitivity of the local landscape to the proposed scheme is medium.

### Assessment of Landscape Character Effects

- 5.13. The magnitude of change upon the landscape can only be established by analysing various factors that collectively define and characterise the local area. These would include such factors as landform, land cover, land use, scale, pattern, sense of enclosure / openness, field pattern, quality, and condition but also perceptual qualities of the landscape and movement. These factors broadly align with the description of the LCA included in the Council’s Assessment.
- 5.14. Effects on landscape character will arise either through the introduction of new elements during the construction and operational stage, that alter the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements in a particular type of landscape, or through visibility of the proposed built form, which may alter the way in which the pattern of elements is perceived.
- 5.15. The published *Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex*’ (2005) identifies that the character of Mid Sussex could be under pressure from equine facilities: ***“Potential effects of horse riding and associated facilities on landscape character including over-grazed paddocks, the introduction of post-and-rail fencing and horse jumps, and decline in the management of hedgerows”.***
- 5.16. At the outset it is important to acknowledge that equine land use is already established on site, with the existing facilities extending across much of the landholding and with paddocks present in the eastern area. Therefore, in landscape character terms the proposed scheme would echo the character of the site and would not alter the already established baseline.
- 5.17. Most importantly, the proposed Outdoor Arena and American Barn utilise land that is characterised by a strong sense of visual enclosure. Views north, east, south, and west terminate on the boundary vegetation: Court Wood to the west and the existing hedgerows and trees within the landholding. This vegetation is of considerable height and this part of the site is best described as a discreet parcel of land, which does not exhibit any visual or functional relationship with the surrounding countryside. Despite the landform sloping to

the south, the neighbouring Paxhill is screened and none of the nearby properties, or indeed those in the wider countryside, are visible from this part of the site.

- 5.18. With regards the proposed Outdoor Arena, currently this area is characterised by open grassland subdivided into smaller paddocks with field boundary hedgerows providing a degree of visual enclosure. The proposed scheme would replace the existing grassed paddocks with sand surface. There would be no need for any elements of built form or fencing here, apart from a low height perimeter hedge which would demarcate the edge of the surface.
- 5.19. Therefore, the proposed scheme would not exacerbate, or indeed cause, and change to the perception of the surrounding open countryside as identified in 'The Ouse Valley Landscape Management Guidelines for West Sussex': ***"Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks"***
- 5.20. The proposed scheme respects the existing field boundary hedgerows and trees and is compatible with the current land use and landscape pattern. It would not affect any views across the surrounding countryside due to the highly enclosed character of the site and the characteristics of the proposed Outdoor Arena.
- 5.21. Furthermore, the scheme has been purposely located away from the boundary vegetation in order to avoid any undue effects upon them and to conserve this characteristic of the local landscape.
- 5.22. As part of the proposed scheme, the existing hedgerow located to the east and south of the proposed Outdoor Arena would be reinforced, and gapped up where necessary, with native hedgerow species to improve its condition. Additional hedgerow trees would be introduced to strengthen the canopy cover and echo the well treed character of the nearby field boundaries. This would result in a heightened sense of visual and physical enclosure which is characteristic of the local area.
- 5.23. With regard to the sense of openness / enclosure and inter-visibility with the wider landscape, as stated previously, the site forms a discreet parcel of land with its perimeter vegetation and indeed vegetation within the wider landholding and around it, restricting views in and out – refer to Section 6 for details.
- 5.24. Most importantly, by locating the proposed built form in this particular part of the landholding, the appreciation and perception of the rural, settled, and peaceful landscape would be preserved with views of the proposed Outdoor Arena and American Barn not available from publicly accessible locations. Their scale and height would be modest, given the typology, and comparable to other agricultural buildings found in the open countryside. Furthermore, the height of the proposed buildings would be lower than the height of the nearby mature tree vegetation thus not attracting attention or breaking the skyline.
- 5.25. The proposed scheme would not compete visually with or screen any features or local landmarks that characterise the local area. The scheme, due to the lack of views of the proposed built form, would also retain the relative level of tranquillity with movement and activities echoing the existing activities within the site and wider landholding where equine activities already take place.

- 5.26. Overall, the proposed scheme is considered to respond positively to the advice given in the Advice Note 'Legislation and Planning Policy in the High Weald AONB' published in 2021 by the High Weald National Landscape Unit, and more specifically its following Objectives: Objective FH2 'To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands' and Objective OQ4 'To protect and promote the perceptual qualities that people value'. It is important to acknowledge that the remaining Objectives, identified in the Advice Note do not apply to the proposed scheme.
- 5.27. Whilst a separate colour study has not been carried out, the proposed scheme has been informed by the 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'.<sup>3</sup> The proposed Indoor Arena would be of a steel frame structure with open elevations and with a post and rail timber fence around the perimeter under an Anthracite coloured steel profile roof. Similarly, the American Barn would include an Anthracite coloured steel profile roof with larch timber external cladding. It is considered that Anthracite, being recessive, would blend well with the surrounding vegetation regardless of the seasonal changes. The timber cladding would, with time, develop a grey / silver patina, and this is considered to be a sensitive response.
- 5.28. With regard to the High Weald National Landscape, 'The High Weald National Landscape AONB Management Plan' 2024–2029 provides the following Statement of Significance:

***"The High Weald is one of the best-preserved medieval landscapes in north-west Europe. Despite its large size (1,461 sq.km) and proximity to London, its landscape has remained relatively unchanged since the 14th century, surviving major historical events and accommodating significant social and technological changes.***

***The natural beauty of the High Weald AONB is derived from the essentially rural and small-scale landscape character, rich in wildlife and cultural features. It has been created by historic and locally distinctive agricultural and forestry practices, with the story of its past visible throughout. The extensive survival of woodland and traditional mixed farming supports an exceptionally well-connected green and blue infrastructure, with a high proportion of natural surfaces. Food production and semi-natural habitat are interwoven in a structurally diverse, permeable and complex mosaic supporting a rich diversity of wildlife. A dense network of historic routeways and public rights of way provides access for people to get close to nature and experience its natural beauty. The pattern and landscape setting of dispersed historic settlements enriches its natural beauty, with small, irregular fields and pasture, hedgerows and ancient woodlands interspersed with the rich clay-tiled roofscapes of historic buildings. Greenness, a sense of tranquillity and dark skies contribute to the perceptual and scenic qualities people enjoy.***

***The Plan articulates natural beauty through eight core character components which are rooted in the historic characterisation of the High Weald landscape as a whole, and represent the cultural imprint of generations on the natural inheritance of the area. These components encompass finer-grained key characteristics which include habitats, features of interest and cultural associations, and all combine to create a distinct and recognisable landscape whose natural beauty exceeds the sum of its parts.***

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://highweald.org/document-library/legislation-and-planning/high-weald-aonb-colour-study/?layout=default>

*Each core component of natural beauty is of equal and stand-alone importance in its own right, (i.e., they cannot be ranked) and any policy or action may be considered harmful to the AONB if it results in the loss of, or material harm to, any of these components of character. All of the AONB is important; any areas perceived as 'degraded' should be seen as opportunities for enhancement of natural beauty contributing positively to the purpose of designation and objectives of the Management Plan."*

5.29. The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024–2029 also identifies a list of **"...Core Character Components of the High Weald's natural beauty..."**, which are:

- ***"Natural systems (geology, soils, water and climate) – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with highly variable, relatively undisturbed soils and numerous headwaters (gill streams) functioning under an oceanic climate.***
- ***Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads, hamlets and late-medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.***
- ***Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).***
- ***Woodland – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.***
- ***Fieldsapes and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bound by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths and inned river valleys (reclaimed marshland).***
- ***Dark night skies – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.***
- ***Aesthetic and perceptual qualities – arising from the interaction of people with the landscape, including the notion of a quintessential English pastoral landscape, intimacy of scale, a sense of history and timelessness; rurality and tranquillity; glimpsed long views; freedom to explore and make connections with the natural world, and a rich legacy of features and ideas left by writers, poets and gardeners inspired by the landscape.***
- ***Land-based economy and rural living – with roots extending deep into history, and which has visibly and culturally shaped the landscape."***

5.30. The proposed equine scheme is not in conflict with these features.

5.31. With regards the 'Settlements' the Management Plan notes: ***"A limited palette of local materials intrinsically linked to geology and landscape character, reinforcing local distinctiveness: clay as tiles and brick, timber as weatherboard and framing, and some localised instances of stone."*** As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the intention is to use timber cladding and dark grey / Anthracite colours steel and roofing material.

- 5.32. The proposed scheme would respond well to the objectives of the Management Plan and would not have any discernible effect on the High Weald National Landscape, particularly its 'Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities' component and Objective PQ2: 'To protect the unspoilt rural landscape with its intrinsic sense of naturalness, valued views, and the extent of green space which foster experiences of rurality and tranquillity'.
- 5.33. Based on the assessment outlined in the preceding paragraphs the proposed scheme would bring about a negligible magnitude of change being of very small scale, sensitively located, does not materially affect its openness, and is wholly in keeping with the character of the local landscape.

## 6. Effects upon Visual Amenity

- 6.1. The effects on visual amenity consider the changes in views arising from the proposed scheme in relation to visual receptors including residential properties, highways, PRoW, and recreational areas, and the effect on representative viewpoints or specific locations within the study area. Visual amenity is defined in GLVIA3 as:

***"...the overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area."***

- 6.2. The assessment was carried out in late November 2024 as part of on-site survey. Site photographs were taken to record the character and nature of views, and the existing visibility of the site. Where relevant the seasonal changes to the vegetative cover have been considered as part of the visual assessment.
- 6.3. The construction stage would be of relatively short duration and although relevant any potential visual effects would be similar or lower to those identified during the long term operational phase of the proposed scheme. Therefore, this assessment focuses on the operational stage of the proposed scheme.

### Sensitivity of Receptors

- 6.4. With regards to the sensitivity of visual receptors this is established by cross referencing the value of views gained and their inherent susceptibility to change brought about by the proposed scheme. In terms of value, it is taken as high to reflect the presence of the High Weald National Landscape.
- 6.5. In terms of their susceptibility, this will vary with users of PRoWs and those exercising their right to access considered to be of high susceptibility. This is on the basis that the surrounding landscape forms a strong component of their visual amenity. The same approach is taken for residential receptors. Overall, the sensitivity of PRoW users and residential receptors is assessed as high.
- 6.6. In comparison, road receptors driving along B class and local minor unclassified roads travel across different parts of the local landscapes and are influenced by a variety of views, building typology, and elements of infrastructure. On that basis their susceptibility is taken as low. Due to the high value of views within the National Landscape their sensitivity is assessed as medium.

## Visual Receptors and Viewpoints

- 6.7. A site visit was conducted in late November 2024 with a number of visual receptors / public vantage points identified and visited, in order to obtain views towards the site. Given the gently undulating topography of the local landscape, coupled with blocks of woodland and tree belts, the actual visual envelope of the proposed scheme would be extremely highly localised.
- 6.8. Views from within the site terminate largely on the immediate vegetation: Court Wood to the west, Quarry Shaw woodland to the east, and tree and hedgerow vegetation associated with the site and wider landholding. More specifically, views from around the proposed Indoor Arena and American Barn are enclosed and there is evident lack of any inter-visibility with the receptors that might be present in the surrounding landscape. With regards the proposed Outdoor Arena, views from the edge of the host field looking south east travel towards Public Footpath 44LR but the nearby property Skein Winders House is barely perceptible, and none of the properties further to the east, south east or indeed south are visible. The curtilage of Paxill is enclosed by hedgerow / tree vegetation and the closest part appears to be of utilitarian character and does not include any amenity areas.
- 6.9. In other word, views from within the site are largely internal and where they do exist, they are medium range, and highly localised with the only identified and relevant visual receptors being Public Footpath 44LR.
- 6.10. For completeness, however, and to provide evidence to the Council on the inconsequential visual effects of the proposed scheme, a number of locations have been visited and these views are illustrated by Viewpoints x – x. The viewpoints have been selected to aid the discussion on the potential effects upon the nearby visual receptors.

## Lindfield Golf Course – Public Footpath 44LR – Plummerden Lane

- 6.11. The Lindfield Golf Course is a self contained area of amenity grounds and views from around the Club House and car park terminate on the surrounding tree and hedgerow vegetation. The receptors would not gain any views of the site or the proposed scheme – refer to Plate 16 **Viewpoint 1**.
- 6.12. As one travels north west along Public Footpath 44LR and leaves the Golf Course, views towards the site continue to be screened by the rising landform and Skein Winders woodland. Little Plummerden sits on the upper slopes and is visible from this section of the PRoW – Plate 17 **Viewpoint 2**.



*Plate 16: View from Public Footpath 44LR within the Lindfield Golf Course. Little Plummerden is visible in the background.*



*Plate 17: View from Public Footpath 44LR, northern edge of the Lindfield Golf Course. Little Plummerden is visible on the upper slope.*

- 6.13. Views from Public Footpath 44LR continue to be strongly enclosed until one reaches the northern edge of Skein Winders. Skein Winders House is visible to the west and some of the vegetation within nearby Paxhill is also identifiable – Plate 18. At this point the Footpath joins a track leading west, past Skein Winders House and Paxhill, and which coincides with Public Footpath 32LR. Public Footpath 44LR, however, diverts north towards Plummerden Lane. Initially views towards Plumeerden House / the site are relatively open and gained along c. 130 m long section of the PRoW – Plate 19 and Plate 20 **Viewpoint 3**. The conifer trees that mark the south eastern corner of the site help identify the direction of view. The conservatory at Plummerden House is partially visible through the boundary vegetation. The field boundary hedgerow and trees screen the site land of the proposed Outdoor Arena, which would be located some 450 m away at its closest point. The Indoor Arena and American Barn would be located c. 600 m away and screened by the intervening landform and vegetation. In other words, the proposed built form would not have any effects upon the visual amenity of the PRoW users at this location. Any activities within the proposed Outdoor Arena, if visible at all, would be inconsequential.
- 6.14. Shortly after, views towards the site become increasingly screened by Quarry Shaw woodland with the PRoW skirting its eastern edge – the site is not visible.



*Plate 18: View from Public Footpath 44LR, northern edge of Skein Winders woodland, looking west towards Skein Winders House.*



*Plate 19: View from Public Footpath 44LR, northern edge of Skein Winders woodland, looking north west towards the site. Quarry Shaw woodland encloses the view to the right.*



*Plate 20: Zommed in view for Plate 19. Conifer trees mark the south eastern corner of the site. Plummerden House partially visible through the boundary vegetation.*



*Plate 21: Public Footpath 44LR skirts the eastern edge of Quarry Shaw woodland.*

## Plummerden Lane

- 6.15. With regards the views from Plummerden Lane, the roadside hedgerow screens the property and indeed the site – Plate 22 **Viewpoint 4**. As one approached the junction with Keysford Lane, a gap in the hedgerow line allows for glimpsed and fleeting views into the adjacent field but the site of the proposed Outdoor Arena continues to be screened – Plate 23 **Viewpoint 5**.

## Park Lane

- 6.16. As part of the LVIA site work Park Lane has been walked in both direction between the junction with Keysford Lane / site entrance and its junction with the B2028 / near the entrance to Paxhill and nearby Public Footpath 32LR. The road is characterised by a strong sense of enclosure with the change in ground levels and Court Wood ensuring that the receptors would not gain any views of the proposed scheme – Plate 24 **Viewpoint 6**. In short, views from Park Lane are screened and the proposed scheme would not have any effects upon the associated visual receptors.



*Plate 22: Views from Plummerden Lane looking west.*



*Plate 23: Views through a field gate along Plummerden Lane.*



*Plate 24: View from the northern section of Park Lane, looking south.*

## Public Footpath 32LR

- 6.17. As stated in the previous paragraphs, Public Footpath 32LR runs south of Skein Winders House and Paxhill, linking with the B2028 further west, and is the closest PRoW in the southern part of the study area. The route has been walked in both directions, to establish the degree of inter-visibility and potential for visual effects. The site survey, however, has not identified any clear lines of sight between the receptor and the site. The following paragraphs describe the character and nature of views gained from this PRoW.
  
- 6.18. The eastern section of the route, that closer to Public Footpath 44LR, runs along the northern edge of Skein Winders woodland with a line of trees and rudimental vegetation enclosing its northern side – Plate 25. Furthermore, views towards the site are interrupted by the extensive curtilage of Skein Winders House. The conifer trees, located to the east of the proposed Outdoor Arena are identifiable, similar to the views from the nearby Public Footpath 44LR, but quickly disappear after c. 80 m – refer to Plate 26 **Viewpoint 7**.
  
- 6.19. Past Skein Winders House, the PRoW follows the gently sloping landform and its central and western sections dip towards the River Ouse corridor, descending from approx. 60 m AOD at Skein Winders House to 48 m south of Paxhill, and then to 32 m AOD at the point where it joins the B2028. Looking north, views are foreshortened by the rising landform with the intervening field boundary hedgerow adding to the visual segregation – Plate 27 **Viewpoint 8**. Further along the route Paxhill terminates views looking north with Court Wood screening views from the western section of the PRoW. In short, the proposed scheme would not be visible from Public Footpath 44LR.



*Plate 25: Public Footpath 32LR, looking east. The eastern section is enclosed by trees.*



*Plate 26: Views from Public Footpath 32LR, looking north east. Conifer trees, east of the proposed Outdoor Arena, are visible in the background.*



*Plate 27: View for the central section of Public Footpath 32LR. Curtilage of Paxhill is visible to the left.*

## 7. Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1. This LVIA has been prepared by Pegasus Group to provide landscape planning services in support of a full planning application for the 'Erection of an Indoor Arena, an American Barn, and an Outdoor Arena' at Plummerden House, Park Lane, Lindfield, West Sussex, RH16 2QS.
- 7.2. This LVIA has been undertaken with regards to the best practice guidelines within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Edition 3 (2013) and the associated 'Statements of clarification'.

### **The Site – overall character and visual context**

- 7.3. The site and local landscape fall within the statutory designated High Weald National Landscape. The closest visual receptors are the road users associated with Plummerden Lane and Park Lane, and Public Rights of Way: Public Footpath 44LR and Public Footpath 32LR.
- 7.4. The LVIA has identified that the site of the proposed Indoor Arena and American Barn, is a small scale and well enclosed parcel of land, of lower visual and landscape character sensitivity, when judged in the context of the wider landholding and indeed the surrounding High Weald National Landscape. Court Wood and trees within the site enclose it physically and visually. The presence of the proposed scheme is justifiable, in landscape character and visual terms, due to the physical and functional relationship with the existing equine facilities at Plummerden House.

- 7.5. The site of the proposed Outdoor Arena falls within the existing paddocks located in the south eastern part of the wider landholding. This area also benefits from being enclosed by hedgerows and mature trees, and Quarry Shaw woodland segregates it from the wider eastern study area. Views out to the surrounding open countryside are very limited and, broadly speaking, include the adjacent pastoral field which also forms part of the landholding, enclosed by aforementioned Quarry Shaw woodland.

## Effects on Landscape Elements

- 7.6. The proposed scheme has been judged not to cause any direct adverse effects upon any of the identified structural vegetation within or around the site. In other words, none of the tree and hedge vegetation would have to be removed to accommodate the proposed scheme.
- 7.7. The proposed scheme has been assessed as not causing any evident change to the topography or land cover of the wider landholding. Whilst a localised levelling and fill would be required to construct the Indoor Arena, this would not require major earthworks and the overall topographical profile of the wider area would prevail, and the effects have been assessed as negligible.
- 7.8. The proposed scheme would not affect any Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) or no water features as none are located within the site.

## Effects on Landscape Character and the High Weald National Landscape

- 7.9. The site and the surrounding area have been identified as falling within the Landscape Character Area 9 'Ouse Valley' of the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex' (2005). The published assessment has identified that the character of Mid Sussex could be under pressure from equine facilities: ***"Potential effects of horse riding and associated facilities on landscape character including over-grazed paddocks, the introduction of post-and-rail fencing and horse jumps, and decline in the management of hedgerows"***. Furthermore, 'The Ouse Valley Landscape Management Guidelines for West Sussex' has identified as follows: ***"Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks"***
- 7.10. The site has been analysed in terms of its character and inter-visibility with the surrounding landscape, and the assessment has concluded that the site of the proposed Indoor Arena and American Barn is best described as a discreet parcel of land not exhibiting any visual or functional relationship with the wider landscape. It benefits from a strong sense of enclosure, internally and locally, with blocks of woodland and tree belts compartmentalising the local area and limiting inter-visibility. This is evident around the site, particularly as one travels along Plummerden Lane and Park Lane, or indeed as experienced from the nearby PRoWs: Public Footpath 44LR and Public Footpath 32LR.
- 7.11. In summary, the proposed scheme has been assessed as being compatible with the existing landscape character due to its equine typology and small scale. It is located within and functionally associated with the existing equine facilities at Plummerden House.
- 7.12. In character terms, the proposed scheme has been judged to bring about negligible effects at most.

## Effects on Visual Amenity

- 7.13. The site visit and on-site assessment were carried out in late November 2024 and site photographs taken to record the character and nature of views, and the existing visibility of the site.
- 7.14. Given the undulating topography of the local landscape, coupled with blocks of woodland and tree belts, it has been determined that the actual visual envelope of the proposed scheme would be highly localised. Views from within the site have been identified to largely terminate on the immediate vegetation within the landholding, including Court Wood, and Quarry Shaw woodland enclosing it to the east.
- 7.15. In summary, the LVIA has concluded that views from within the site are largely short to medium range, and highly localised with the only identified relevant visual receptors, from where the proposed scheme might be visible, being Public Footpath 44LR.
- 7.16. The assessment, however, has concluded that views from this particular PRoW are restricted and terminate on the boundary vegetation that encloses the site. The proposed Outdoor Arena and American Barn would not be visible, and the Outdoor Arena would be also screened.
- 7.17. In addition, to inform the decision makers of the inconsequential effects of the proposed scheme, views from Plummerden Lane and Park Lane, and Public Footpath 32LR to the south of the site have also been investigated. The assessment has concluded that the proposed scheme would not affect the views gained from these linear receptors due to the lack of inter-visibility.

## Conclusion

- 7.18. The proposed scheme utilises the least visually sensitive part of the wider landholding, protecting the visual amenity of the neighbouring residential receptors, and retaining the perception of the rural landscape. Its introduction would not have any unacceptable effects on the character or perception of openness associated with the local landscape. The introduction of the proposed scheme would not change or redefine views gained by any of the visual receptors associated with this area to any degree. In landscape character terms, its introduction would be inconsequential – negligible.