



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

relating to

**Proposed Residential Development of 35 units on land west of Selsfield Road,
Ardingly, West Sussex**

on behalf of

Antler Homes

April 2026

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Assessment Approach

- 1.5 Current guidance on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Landscape and Visual Appraisal is set out in The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition (GLVIA3). This places an *“emphasis on likely significant effects and stresses the need for an approach that is proportional to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of the likely effects”*. The main issues of landscape and visual relevance are therefore addressed in the following report.
- 1.6 GLVIA3 (Chapter 1, Para 3.3 and Table 3.1) makes a distinction between a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) that is carried out as a part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) where there is a requirement to determine significance of effects in EIA terms, and LVIA that is carried out as part of an appraisal of development proposals (i.e. non-EIA) where the identification of the significance of effects (in terms of the EIA regs) is not required. As the proposal that is the subject of this application is not subject to an EIA, the report has been termed an appraisal. An LVA can be more informal but shares the essence of the approach adopted in EIA.
- 1.7 The preparation of this LVA has involved both desk-based and site work. Site work involved a walkover review of the site and walking the Public Rights of Way and local roads in the area to help determine the landscape character and visual context of the site and surrounding area and inform the design development of the proposal. This also enabled an evaluation to be made of the degree of change that would be expected to arise from the proposed development. The most recent site visit was carried out on 12th April 2026 in fair weather conditions and when vegetation was well foliated and therefore allowing a good degree of screening. Previous site visits were carried out in October 2019, February 2020, March 2021, May 2021 and March 2026. The site and its context has therefore been considered over a relatively long period of time and in various seasonal and weather conditions.

- 1.8 The methodology for the assessment of potential landscape and visual effects in this LVA is based on principles of good practice from GLVIA3 and is set out in full in [Appendix 1](#).
- 1.9 No specific pre-application advice has been sought from MSDC on this LVA as comments were made on the previous LVA for the outline application. In this regard, Place Services provided Specialist Landscape Advice to MSDC, their comments dated 8th June 2022 noting that:

“The application has been supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) undertaken by Huskisson Brown Associates. The LVA has been carried out accordance with the principles set out within the ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’, Third Edition (‘GLVIA3’) (2013) prepared by the Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). It also refers to the LI Technical Guidance Note 06/19 ‘Visual Representation of Development Proposals’ (2019). The assessment includes a desktop study, a review of the landscape and visual baseline, Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, including a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), and an assessment of landscape and visual receptors, that includes value, susceptibility and sensitivity and an assessment of potential direct and indirect effect on landscape and visual environment.”

- 1.10 The following documents and sources are considered primary ones of relevance to the landscape and visual context of the site and its immediately surrounding area:
- National Planning Policy Framework (Revised December 2024) and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance
 - National Design Guide (January 2021)
 - National Character Area Interactive Profile 122 High Weald (2025), Natural England;
 - West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment 2003;
 - Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (November 2005) West Sussex County Council;
 - The West Sussex Landscape, Land Management Guidelines, Sheet HW1, High Weald;
 - The Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (2010);
 - Mid-Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (Adopted March 2018) and supporting evidence base documents;
 - Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex (2018) Mid Sussex District Council;
 - Mid-Sussex Site Allocations DPD (Adopted June 2022) Mid Sussex District Council;
 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029;
 - High Weald National Landscape Advice Note – Legislation and Planning Policy in the High Weald National Landscape (AONB), (Revised January 2025);
 - High Weald National Landscape, Parish Information, Ardingly Landscape Character Maps (August 2018);
 - High Weald Housing Design Guide: Building better, building beautiful in the AONB, (November 2019);
 - High Weald AONB Unit, Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development, (September 2017);
 - High Weald National Landscape Planning Technical Advice Note: Dark Skies in the High

Weald (July 2024)

- High Weald National Landscape Planning Technical Advice Note: Soft Landscaping & Planting Plans in Development Proposals (November 2025)
- Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan 2013 – 2031, and supporting documents;
- Online review of current and historic Ordnance Survey mapping, MAGIC website, Historic England website, Google Earth and Google Maps (with Streetview).
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (October 2014), Christine Tudor, Natural England.
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (GLVIA3) (April 2013), the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
- Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals. (Currently under review) The Landscape Institute. (September 2019).
- TGN 02-21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations. The Landscape Institute (May 2021).
- LITGN-2024-01 Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3). The Landscape Institute (August 2024).
- Documents associated with the approved outline planning application DM/22/1575, including Specialist Landscape Advice from Place Services.

Methodology

- 1.11 The methodology for the assessment of potential landscape and visual effects in this LVA is based on principles of good practice from GLVIA3 and is set out in full in [Appendix 1](#).

Purpose, Scope and Structure of the LVA

- 1.12 The purpose of the LVA is to identify and assess the predicted landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The proposed development is illustrated on the proposed site layout (drawing number AH314 - PL.03 - SITE LAYOUT PLAN - REV.E by Antler Homes), with proposed landscape treatments illustrated on Planting Plans at Appendix 6 and Hard Landscape Plans at Appendix 7.
- 1.13 The LVA draws from the baseline and assessment work carried out for the LVA that accompanied the outline application, to respond to the current baseline situation (including updates to published studies, policies and methodologies) and the updated design proposal submitted for reserved matters approval.
- 1.14 The LVA records and assesses the landscape and visual baseline, including reviewing relevant published character studies and other background documents and identifying the key landscape and visual attributes, character and sensitivities of the Site and its surroundings. It identifies relevant landscape and visual receptors and determines the sensitivity to change of those receptors to the specific development proposed in the accompanying application. It describes and assesses the predicted landscape effects of the proposal and separately describes and assesses the predicted visual effects of the proposal. Where appropriate, landscape and visual mitigation measures are also identified. It provides a summary and reaches overall

conclusions on likely landscape and visual effects.

- 1.15 A number of figures and photographs from representative viewpoints (LI TGN 06/19 Type 1 Visualisations – Annotated Photographs) support the LVA and are referenced throughout the text and appended to the report.
- 1.16 The site lies within the High Weald National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and therefore an assessment is also made of the effects of the proposed development on the special qualities of the National Landscape as a designation. This uses the template provided at Appendix 1 of the High Weald National Landscape Advice Note 'Legislation and Planning Policy in the High Weald National landscape (AONB)'. The assessment identifies how the development proposal could contribute to meeting the objectives of the Management Plan for the High Weald National Landscape.

2 RELEVANT LANDSCAPE POLICY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A summary of planning policy relevant to the landscape and visual context of the site and the proposed development is set out below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Revised December 2024)

- 2.2 The NPPF (revised December 2024) sets out the Government's national planning policy for England. It is a material consideration in determining planning applications (Paragraph 2) and should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes) (Paragraph 3). Its overall aim is to promote sustainable development (Paragraph 7).
- 2.3 Paragraph 8 states: *"the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supporting ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives).*
- *an economic objective: ...*
 - *a social objective: ...*
 - *an environmental objective: to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy".*
- 2.4 Paragraph 135 states: *"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*
- a) Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
 - b) Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
 - c) Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change;*
 - d) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;..."*
- 2.5 Paragraph 187 requires that *"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
 - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
 - c) ..."*
- 2.6 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now named 'National Landscapes') and their setting are considered at NPPF Paragraph 189, which requires that:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

2.7 Planning Practice Guidance supports and informs the NPPF. The guidance relating to Natural Environment explains key issues in implementing policy to protect and enhance the natural environment.

2.8 With regard to development within National Landscapes, the PPG reiterates the NPPF that

“The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that the scale and extent of development in these areas should be limited, in view of the importance of conserving and enhancing their landscapes and scenic beauty. Its policies for protecting these areas may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs for development in full through the plan-making process, and they are unlikely to be suitable areas for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining (non-designated) areas. Effective joint working between planning authorities covering designated and adjoining areas, through the preparation and maintenance of statements of common ground, is particularly important in helping to identify how housing and other needs can best be accommodated. All development in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Beauty will need to be located and designed in a way that reflects their status as landscapes of the highest quality...” (PPG Paragraph: 041 Reference ID: 8-041-20190721).

2.9 The processes and tools for achieving well-designed places through the planning system are set out in PPG to be read alongside the National Design Guide, stating that the National Design Guide “can be used by all those involved in shaping places including in plan-making and decision making” (PPG Paragraph: 001, Reference ID: 26-001-20191001). The National Design Guide sets out ten overarching characteristics of well-designed places and illustrates what good design means in practice.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031

2.10 The Mid Sussex District Plan was adopted as a Development Plan Document in March 2018. Policies of relevance to landscape and visual matters are set out below:

- **Policy DP12 – Protection & Enhancement of Countryside:**

“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.”

- **Policy DP16 – High Weald AONB:**

“Development within the High Weald AONB...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.”

■ **Policy DP26 – Character and Design:**

“To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District’s distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence.. and to protect values characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities.”

■ **Policy DP37 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows**

“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 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.”

and that,

“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.”

2.11 The evidence base for the Local Plan includes the Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007 by Hankinson Duckett Associates) and a more recent Capacity Study (2014 by Land Use Consultants). These were reviewed in the high level appraisal which noted that the site capacity for residential development was identified as ‘medium’ and ‘moderate’ respectively.

2.12 The site is allocated under Policy SA 25 of the Mid Sussex Site Allocations DPD which was adopted in June 2022. Policy SA 25 identifies the site and identifies the site as a housing allocation for 35 dwellings and states that the objective for any development on the site should be:

“To deliver a sympathetic and well integrated extension to the village of Ardingly informed by a landscape led masterplan, which conserves and enhances the landscape character of the High Weald AONB and the setting of nearby heritage assets.”

2.13 Policy SA 25 sets out a number of design principles for the site. Principles of key relevance to landscape and visual matters are identified below:

“Urban Design Principles

- *Locate the development at the eastern end of the open land between the South of England Showground and the Recreation Ground, fronting onto Selsfield Road. The proposed development should include strategic landscaping at its western end.*

- *Respect the distinctive character of the village and the existing settlement pattern.*
- *Orientate development to positively address existing and proposed areas of open space.*
- *Orientate development to have a positive edge to all site boundaries and to the adjacent recreation ground, facilitated by and including the removal of the existing bund providing a focal point for the development where sensitively designed higher density housing could be located; close boarded fencing should be avoided where visible from outside the site.*
- *Provide a permeable layout and enhance the connectivity of the site with Ardingly village and existing PRow.*

AONB

- *Undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements, in order to conserve and enhance the landscape of the High Weald AONB, as set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan.*
- *Retain and substantially enhance existing trees and hedgerows incorporating them into the landscape structure and layout of the development and reinstate the historic field boundary through the centre of the site adjacent to the area of open space to the west, with native species-rich hedgerow and native trees, incorporating the existing mature Oak tree.*
- *Incorporate retained landscape features into a strong new landscape setting, containing the new housing and limiting the impact on the wider landscape.*
- *Protect and enhance the character and amenity of existing PRow which runs along the northern and southern boundaries and provide connections from the new development.*

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- *Undertake an holistic approach to Green Infrastructure and corridors, including retention of existing landscape features and enhancement with new native species-rich hedgerows, native tree planting and wildflower seeding in areas of open space to provide a matrix of habitats with links to the surrounding landscape.*
- *Conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value and ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity overall. Avoid any loss of biodiversity through ecological protection and enhancement, and good design. Where this is not possible, mitigate and as a last resort, compensate for any loss.*
- *Incorporate SuDS within the Green Infrastructure to improve biodiversity and water quality."*

Ardingly Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2013-2031

- 2.14 The Ardingly Parish Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in March 2018. Part of the evidence base for the Ardingly Parish Neighbourhood Plan is the Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment (June 2012) by Hankinson Duckett Associates (HBA Appendix 1). The Landscape Character Assessment is addressed subsequently under 'Landscape Character'.

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029

- 2.15 The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Management Plan 2024-2029 (HWMP) was published by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee in 2024 and forms the policy document for the protected area, ensuring the statutory purposes of the National Landscape are met. The

HWMP sets out the eight core character components of natural beauty to be conserved and enhanced, with long term objectives, ambitions and actions for achieving this. These are described further in the Landscape Character section of this LVA.

2.16 The Statement of Significance for the High Weald National Landscape emphasises that

“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.”

2.17 The following objectives set out within the HWMP are of relevance to the site and its context:

Objective S1: To protect the historic pattern and character of settlements.

- *“To protect the distinctive character and landscape settings of towns, villages, hamlets and farmsteads, remove despoiling influences, and maintain the hinterlands and other relationships (including separation and green infrastructure) between settlements that contribute to local identity.”*

Objective S2: To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure new development reflects the character of the High Weald in its siting, scale, layout and design.

- *“To enhance the beauty and quality of buildings in the High Weald, and ensure new development reflects intrinsic High Weald character and place-making, embedded with a true sense of place, along with re-establishing the use of local materials and rich colour palette as a means of protecting the environment and adding to local distinctiveness.”*

Objective S3: To conserve the distinct built heritage of the High Weald.

- *“To protect and preserve the character and setting of heritage assets (designated and non-designated); historic traditional buildings and built features distinct to the High Weald area, including the historic public realm (e.g., traditional signs, railings, milestones and paving treatments).”*

Objective R2 – To protect and enhance the ecological function of routeways.

- *“To protect, and improve the condition of, the complex mix of small-scale habitats along routeways, including verges, for wildlife and nature recovery, and maintain routeway boundaries as part of a highly interconnected habitat mosaic.”*

Objective W2 – To maintain and restore the existing extent and pattern of woodland cover and particularly ancient woodland.

- *“To increase the viability of the woodland habitat for wildlife, by identifying and extending the area of appropriately managed woodland (including restoring plantations on ancient woodland) to link and enhance isolated habitats and species populations, providing greater connectivity between woodlands and other important wildlife areas, and helping to facilitate species’ response to climate change.”*

Objective DS1 – To preserve the dark skies of the High Weald AONB by minimising light pollution, obtrusive external lighting and internal light spill from domestic, commercial and public premises in both existing and new developments in the High Weald, and from highways lighting.

- “To protect and maintain the existing dark skies within the High Weald for the benefit of all, including future generations, for our health, wellbeing and enjoyment, to increase our understanding and sense of place in the universe; and for the benefit of wildlife and to reduce energy consumption.”

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.

- “To prevent the loss of contained green space, glimpsed and long views, and tree-canopied skylines, especially regarding developments that fringe existing settlements in the High Weald, which would impinge on people’s perception of greenness and rurality.”

- 2.18 An appraisal of the site (and any potential development on it), in relation to the environmental objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan is provided at **HBA Appendix 3**.

3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3.1 Landscape Character is defined in GLVIA3 as:

“A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse”.

3.2 The general hierarchy of the published landscape character studies relevant to the Site and its surroundings are set out below.

National Landscape Character

3.3 Natural England has divided the country into 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment. The site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 122 High Weald. Some of the key characteristics of NCA 122 that are relevant to the overall character of the landscape surrounding the site are:

- *“A faulted landform of clays, sand and soft sandstones with outcrops of fissured sandrock and ridges running east-west, deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams...”*
- *Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a dense system of radiating droveways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wild-flower-rich verges and boundary banks.*
- *An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far-reaching views, giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.*
- *Extensive broadleaved woodland cover with a very high proportion of ancient woodland with high forest, small woods and shaws, plus steep valleys with gill woodland.*
- *Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin and managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing.*
- *An essentially medieval landscape reflected in the patterns of settlement, fields and woodland.”*

County Landscape Character

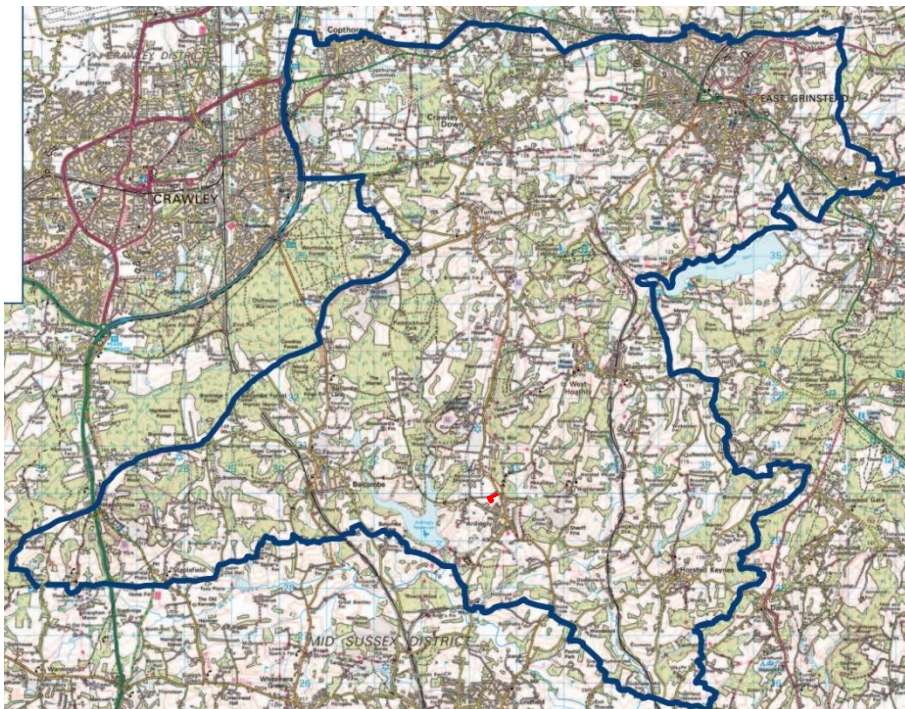
3.4 At a county level, the Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme has carried out a series of character studies of the County, which are published in several separate but linked documents that are read in conjunction with each other and include:

- A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (WSCC October 2005)
- The Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (Chris Blandford Associates for WSCC, 2003) with supporting Land Management Guidelines.
- Local Distinctiveness Study of West Sussex (WSCC, Ongoing)

3.5 A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape sets out the vision for the landscape of the County and defines strategies *“to protect and enhance the landscape of West Sussex as an asset for future generations”* (Para 1.5). It considers the landscape in relation to the five national landscape character types found in the County and draws directly from earlier landscape

character studies carried out in West Sussex.

- 3.6 The Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex identifies and maps 42 unique landscape character areas within West Sussex and provides Land Management Guidelines for each character area. The site and the village of Ardingly within character area HW1 High Weald.



HBA Figure 3 - Area HW1 from the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (with site highlighted in red)

- 3.7 Key characteristics of HW1 High Weald include:

- *“Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);*
- *Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees;*
- *Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland;*
- *Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead and some expanded and smaller villages”*

- 3.8 Landscape and visual sensitivities are noted as including:

- *“Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.”*

- 3.9 Land Management Guidelines include:

- *“Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on long and other views and is integrated within the landscape, paying particular attention to the siting of communications masts.*
- *Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, along the approach to roads to settlements and along busy urban*

routes....

- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness."

High Weald AONB Management Plan

- 3.10 The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Management Plan 2024-2029 (HWMP) provides a Statement of Significance and identifies the eight core character components of natural beauty for which the landscape is designated. The Statement of Significance describes that:

The High Weald is one of the best-preserved medieval landscapes in north-west Europe...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...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..."

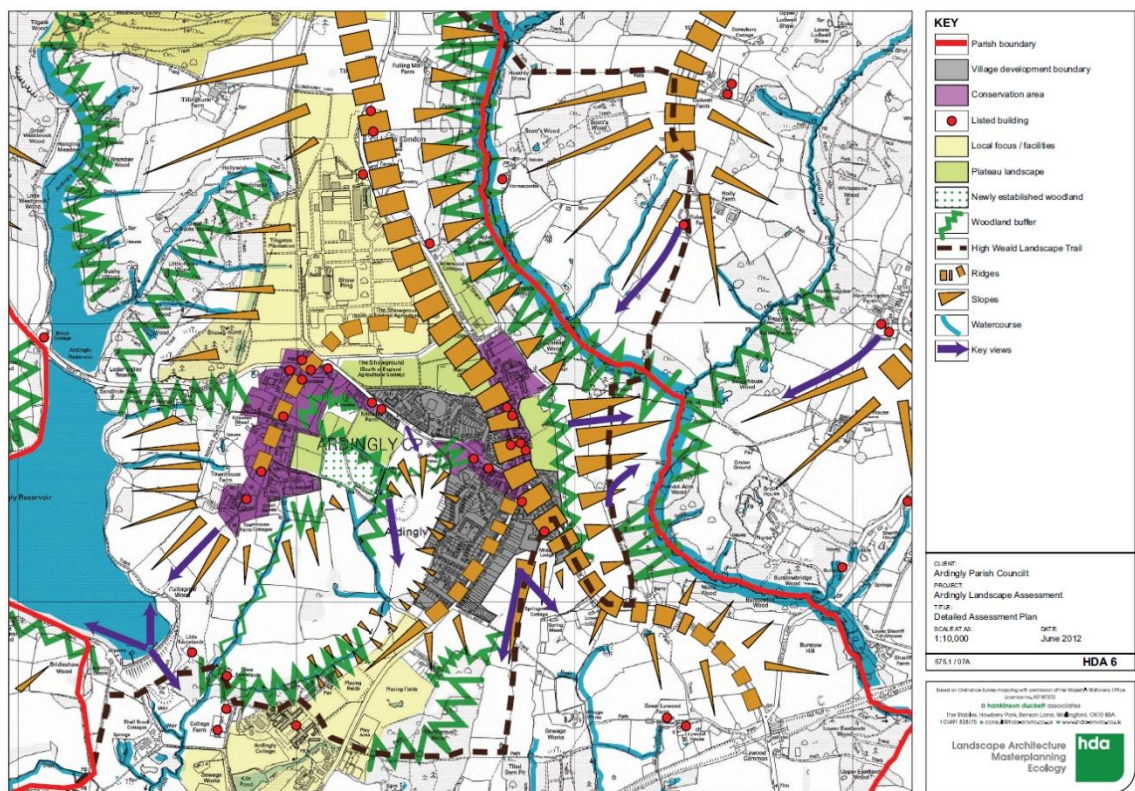
- 3.11 The eight core components of natural beauty are:

- 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."
- Fieldscapes 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.”

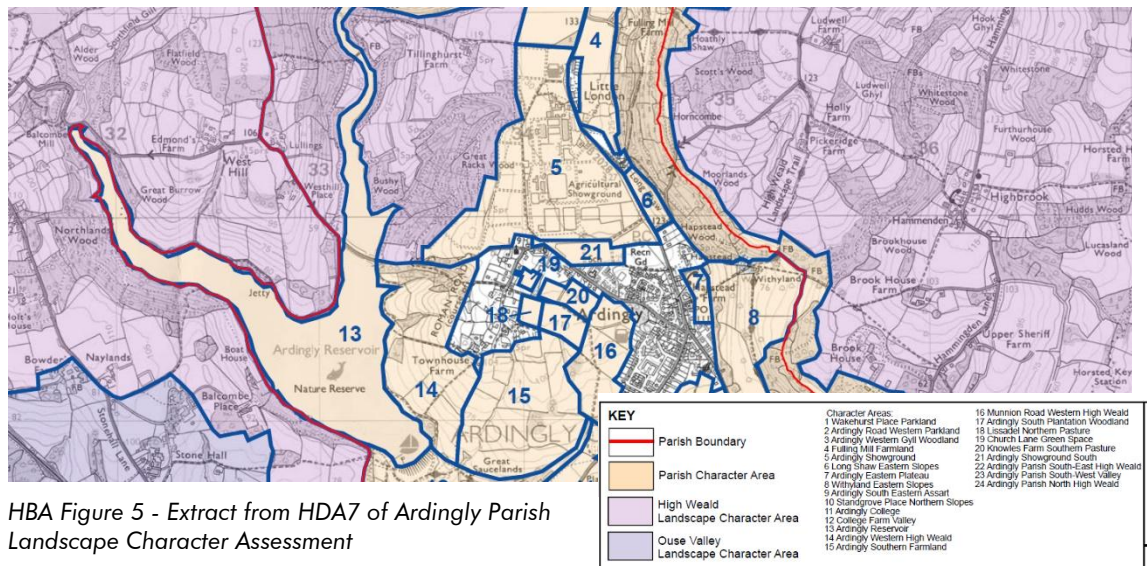
District Landscape Character

- 3.12 At a district scale, ‘A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex 2005’ locates the proposed site in Landscape Character Area 6 ‘High Weald’. Relevant key characteristics, key issues for change and management objectives directly reflect those identified in the West Sussex study.
- 3.13 The Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment (July 2012 by Hankinson Duckett) provides a parish wide landscape study. It was carried out to inform and support the Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan and provides an assessment of the landscape character of the parish and its sensitivity and capacity to accommodate change and future development. Relevant extracts are provided in Appendix HBA2.
- 3.14 A “Detailed Assessment Plan” is included of the whole parish, identifying key landscape and visual characteristics and constraints. This in particular highlights the overall well-wooded nature of the parish and encircling landform. It illustrates how the whole of the site lies on a ‘plateau’ and is distinct from the village and showground.



HBA Figure 4 - Detailed Assessment Plan from the Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment

- 3.15 The majority of the site forms its own parish character area, parish LCA 21 ‘Ardingly Showground South’, whilst the eastern part of the site is considered to have the same character as the adjoining showground and therefore lies in parish LCA 5 ‘Ardingly Showground’.



HBA Figure 5 - Extract from HDA7 of Ardingly Parish Landscape Character Assessment

3.16 The Ardingly Character Assessment includes the following 'Landscape analysis' of Area 21:

- "Located to the north of Ardingly and south of the main Ardingly Showground character area. Bordered by Street Lane to the west and the High Street to the east
- Situated on a plateau at 115-125m AOD. Gently sloping to the south.
- Flat organised landscape with linear pattern of tracks and paths. Used for recreation and overflow car parking for the South of England Agricultural Show.
- Formal linear tree planting along routeways and strong hedgerow boundaries along the roadside boundaries to east and west.
- Closely mown grass.
- Public footpaths are located to the north and south with informal paths running through it.
- Formal and open landscape influenced by Ardingly village and its use. The character is pleasant but is not representative of the wider AONB or High Weald.
- Visual links and urban influence from Ardingly village to the south - forms part of the village edge. Views from the conservation area to the south-west are blocked by vegetation."

3.17 In considering the characteristics that fall in line with the AONB and Regional assessment, the parish study considers that Area 21 is

- "Out of character with High Weald landscape
- Part of Ardingly Showground, which is named as a visitor attraction in the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment for the 'High Weald' character areas.
- Village edge landscape"

3.18 The landscape analysis for Area 5 'Ardingly Showground' describes a landscape:

- "Situated on a plateau at 125m AOD Gently sloping to the south.
- Flat organised landscape with linear pattern of roads, tracks and paths used for the South of England Agricultural Show
- Linear tree planting along routeways

- *Closely mown grass*
- *Public footpaths run through it*
- *Some large low level buildings and car parking*
- *Areas of showground are fenced*
- *Recreation ground and school playing field to the south share characteristics"*

3.19 In terms of characteristics that fall in line with AONB/regional assessment, the parish assessment considers that Area 5 is a *"locally distinctive / important development / facility"*.

HBA comment on published landscape character assessments / studies

- 3.20 The above published characterisation studies are considered to be a good overall summary of the wider landscape character of the site's surrounding area.
- 3.21 At a parish scale, as noted above, whilst the eastern side of the site falls in the same parish Character Area as the wider showground landscape (Area5), it lies on the edge of the plateau and shares the same characteristics as the reminder of the site in the adjoining Area 21. Whilst the eastern part of the site (and the rest of Area 21) provide overflow parking for the showground, this part of the site lacks the permanent built form of organised roads and low level buildings and enclosure by fencing that are characteristic of the main showground in Area 5, nor does it have any substantial intervisibility with the wider Area 21.
- 3.22 An evaluation of the relevant characteristics of the site within its immediate context are described in more detail in Section 4 of the LVA below, based upon our field assessments and desktop review.

4 LOCATION AND BASELINE CONTEXT

Site Location and Description

- 4.1 The site covers an area of approximately 2.3 hectares of greenfield land to the south of the South of England Event Centre and showground, lying to the west of the B2028 Selsfield Road in the village of Ardingly, West Sussex.
- 4.2 The site is irregularly 'L' in shape, essentially spanning the eastern and part of the central part of a single "field" which extends from Selsfield Road in the east to Street Lane in the west and wraps around the northern and western side of the village recreation ground. The site provides overflow parking for the showground and is separated from the South of England Event Centre and showground by a surfaced track (forming public footpath 43AR/7AR) which follows the northern site boundary and provides gated access from the B2028 to other overflow parking areas to the north-west.
- 4.3 The site is partly subdivided by an east / west track which splits the southern portion of the eastern part from the north, this coinciding with a soil mound.
- 4.4 The site is well used for informal recreation.
- 4.5 The site and surrounding area, including the village of Ardingly, lie within the High Weald National Landscape.

Boundaries

- 4.6 The northern site boundary adjoins the access track (also a public footpath) which runs around the perimeter of the South of England Event Centre and showground. The track provides access to overflow parking and is gated at the Selsfield Road/B2028 entrance. The boundary is marked by a row of semi-mature ornamental trees of variable quality which line the track and a new post and rail fence. The perimeter of the main showground site and a caravan and camper van storage area near Selsfield Road, opposite the site, is marked by a 2m high wire mesh fence following the north side of the access track.
- 4.7 The southern site boundary is marked by a gappy hedgerow located on the northern side of public footpath 9AR, linking between Selsfield Road/ B2028 in the east and Street Lane in the west. The footpath separates the site from housing on Holmans and Gowers Close and a children's play area. On the eastern side of the southern boundary, the site boundary follows the tree and hedge line around the southern perimeter of the recreation ground / Ardingly Cricket Club.
- 4.8 To the east, the site boundary is marked by a hedgerow at the back of the wide grassed and tree lined verge to the B2028. The verge slopes such that the hedgerow and site are located at a slightly higher level than the pavement and carriageway to the road.
- 4.9 On the western side of the site, the boundary is undefined on the ground, running across the "field" but approximating to the line of a car park trackway.

Land cover and land use

- 4.10 The land is used for overflow parking but otherwise has an informal recreational use.

- 4.11 The site abuts a recreation ground and Ardingly Village Play Area in the south-east, with residential development and St Peter's CE Primary School lying to the south and south west of the site respectively. To the east, residential properties address the site on the eastern side of Selsfield Road.
- 4.12 To the north northwest, the landscape of the South of England Event Centre and showground dominates this part of the landscape and has an almost military appearance with numerous low buildings and fenced compartments of little visual appeal, with woodland and agricultural land beyond this. To the north the caravan and camper van storage area near Selsfield Road, opposite the site, is locally prominent and rather unattractive.

Landform and levels

- 4.13 The site lies at the southern edge of a plateau at around 120m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) with an overall slight fall to the southwest. The land rises gently beyond the site to the north, to the plateau crest across the South of England Event Centre and showground at around 127m AOD. Beyond the site to the south, the land falls more steeply across the Ardingly Village Play Area and housing on Gower Close which is located at a lower level to the site.
- 4.14 The site is raised up from Selsfield Road (B2028) in the east by about 1.2m but overall the B2028 is an ancient ridgetop road which runs through the village.
- 4.15 There is a sparsely vegetated bund of unknown composition in the eastern half of the site, broadly following the southern site boundary where it wraps around the recreation ground.
- 4.16 In the wider setting, the landform is undulating and typical of the High Weald, rising to local high points of 133m AOD on the B2028 approximately 1km north of the site and 153m AOD on Hook Lane approximately 1.5km to the north-east and falling to a series of wooded ghylls.

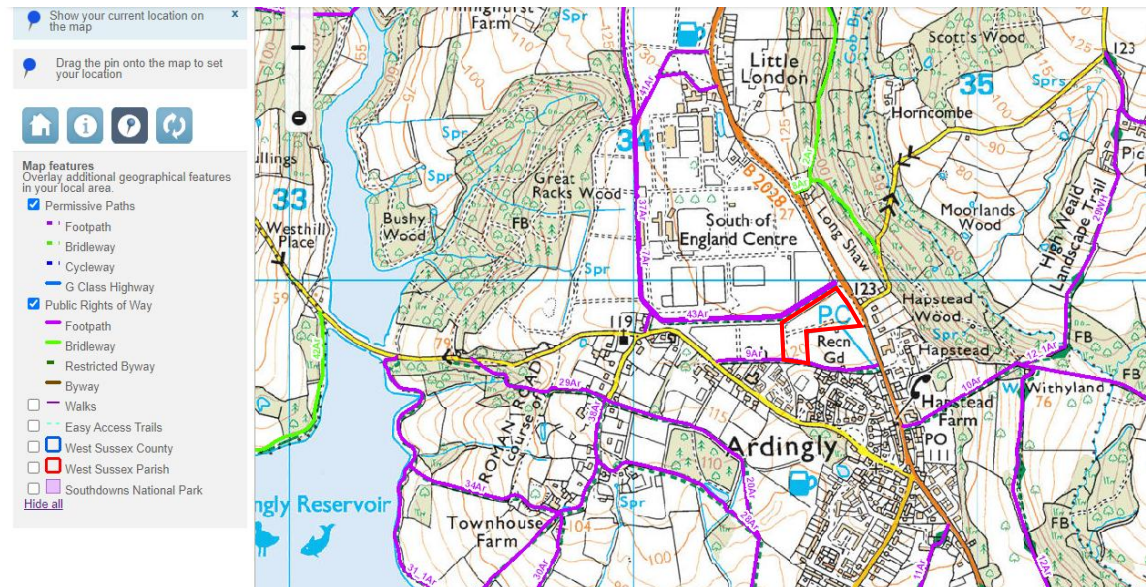
Vegetation of landscape and visual significance

- 4.17 Significant vegetation on the site itself includes the formal, predominantly ornamental trees, lining the northern boundary and access track and hedgerow boundaries to the east and parts of the southern boundary and the historic hedgerow and tree belt which separates the site from the recreation ground /cricket ground. Some of the ornamental trees are of species not typically associated with the Wealden landscape such as Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*).
- 4.18 Offsite, the tree lined verge (predominantly Horse Chestnut) to Selsfield Road creates a strong identity and a leafy approach to Ardingly. A row of poplars at the western end of the southern boundary to the showground are also a prominent landscape feature. Beyond the western site boundary, tree groups planted in the adjoining triangular field soften this edge of the village.
- 4.19 In the wider landscape, fields and roads are generally lined by hedgerows and the landscape is well wooded. Great Racks Wood extends along a valley on the western side of the showground and Hapstead Wood provides a wooded valley to the east of Selsfield Road, both these areas of woodland providing a degree of containment to the site.

Public Rights of Way, Open Access land and public open space

- 4.20 The closest Public Rights of Way to the site are footpaths 7AR/43AR and 9AR which lie offsite but adjacent to the northern and southern site boundaries respectively.

- 4.21 To the north, footpath 7AR (also recorded on the West Sussex Rights of Way Definitive Map as 43AR) follows the surfaced access track from the B2028 and follows the perimeter fence of the showground, heading north around the showground site to re-join the B2028 near 'Little London'.
- 4.22 To the south, footpath 9AR follows a narrow pathway between the wire fence and hedge to the southern site boundary and the boundary hedges and fences to St Peters Primary School grounds and residential properties along the northern side of Street Lane and Holmans which back onto the footpath. At the eastern side, footpath 9AR continues along the southern edge of the adjacent recreation ground and its car park.



HBA Figure 6 – Extract of WSCC Online Rights of Way Map (not definitive)

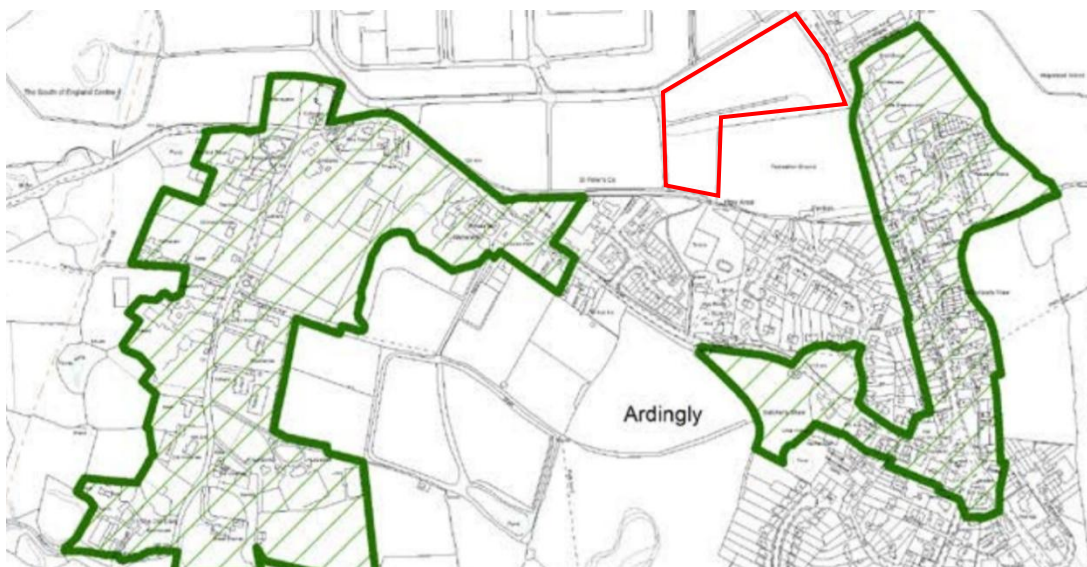
- 4.23 Approximately 250m south and south-west of the site, public footpath 20AR joins the end of Church Lane and follows a garden boundary and small scale fields to the south of, and running parallel to but at a lower level than, Street Lane. Intervening fields, vegetation and properties on The Street and Church Lane separate the site from the footpath.
- 4.24 The informal trackways across the site are currently used for informal recreation, with use of the perimeter pathways signposted as being permitted by permission of the land owner (ie. no formal / legal access). They are very well used by local residents for dog walking.
- 4.25 There is no open access land in the vicinity of the site.
- 4.26 Ardingly recreation ground lies to the south of the site and includes formal sports pitches and play areas as well as pavilion.

Landscape Designations

- 4.27 The Site lies within the High Weald National Landscape, a statutory designation of national importance which recognises that the landscape of the area is generally of the highest quality. The primary purpose of the National Landscape designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.

Historic Landscape and Cultural Heritage

- 4.28 Refer to separate Heritage Statement by Savills.
- 4.29 The Ardingly Conservation Area covers what originally were two separate settlements that have now merged to form the village. The western section of the Conservation Area includes St Peter's Church and extends to within about 100m of the south western corner of the site. The eastern section of the Conservation Area covers the main centre of the village and extends north along Selsfield Road to include the verge to the recreation ground, to the south-east of the site and extending as far as Cob Lane in the north.



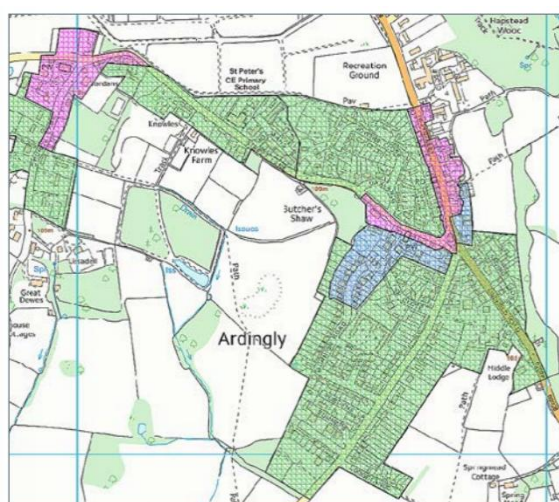
HBA Figure 7 - Conservation Area boundary (green outline and hatch)

- 4.30 'Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex' (2018, Mid Sussex District Council) describes the particular features that contribute to the character of the Conservation Area, including:
- *"the spacious secluded gardens which include an abundance of mature trees and hedgerows in Church Lane;*
 - *the Listed Buildings in the western section;*
 - *the views across the countryside;*
 - *the significant presence of individual trees and tree groups in Street Lane, Butchers Shaw and Oaklands Green...."*
- 4.31 There are numerous listed buildings within the village and Conservation Area, several in proximity to the site.



HBA Figure 8 - Listed buildings in proximity to the site (Extract from Magic.gov.uk)

- 4.32 Ardingly Church of England Primary School is a Grade II listed building which lies on the opposite side of Street Lane at the north-western corner of the field in which the site lies. Knowles Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building located on the southern side of Street Lane approximately 310m west of the site. The Grade II listed Knowle Cottages are situated to the south-east of the farmhouse. St Peter's Church is Grade I listed and lies approximately 450m west of the site. Church Cottages are Grade II listed and lie between the church and the site; approximately 400m from the western site boundary. Jordans and Jordans Cottage (both Grade II listed) also lie at the junction of Church Lane and Street Lane.
- 4.33 There are no Registered Historic Parks and Gardens in close proximity to the site.
- 4.34 The recreation ground which is encompassed by the site is long established being shown on the earliest Ordnance Survey maps so the northern and western boundaries should be regarded as historic hedgerows.
- 4.35 The history of the formation of the settlement of Ardingly is briefly summarised and illustrated in the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide (page 7) extracted below for ease of reference.



ARDINGLY

A village in West Sussex with two distinct centres: the older Saxon settlement in the west around the church and the later mediaeval trading settlement around the intersection of two routeways in the east.

In common with other 'dual' centre settlements within the High Weald, the continued separation between these two settlements is an intrinsic part of its character and is crucial to being able to 'read' its historic settlement pattern, and how the settlement relates to its immediate landscape context.

Key

- Epoch 1 (1863-1894)
- Epoch 3 (1909-1912)
- OS (modern)

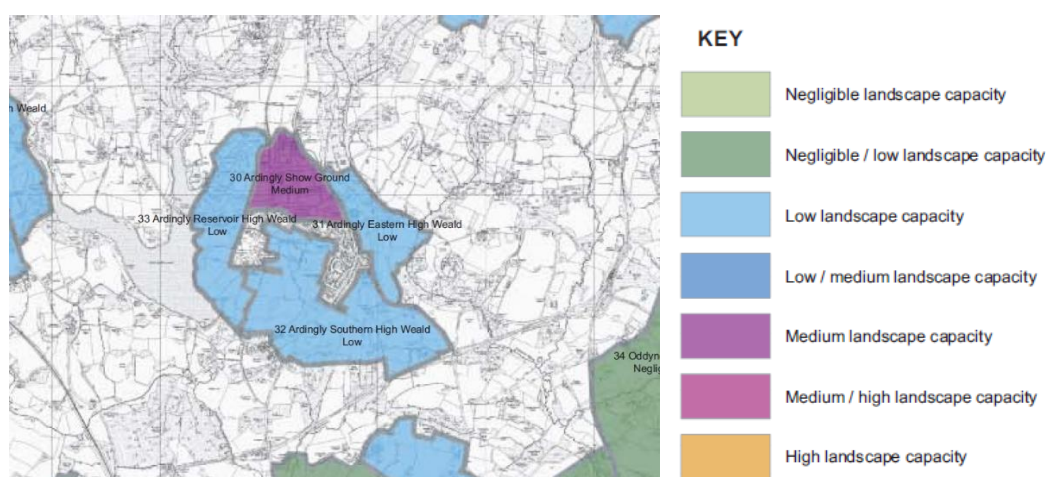
HBA Figure 9 – Built form characteristics of Ardingly settlement (Extract from High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide)

Nature Conservation and Biodiversity

- 4.36 There are no recorded Sites of Special Scientific Interest or other biodiversity interest on or immediately surrounding the site.
- 4.37 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was reported by Greenlink Ecology Ltd (May 2022) in connection with the outline application. aLyne Ecology has subsequently undertaken updated baseline assessments and surveys in March 2026 and prepared an updated BNG assessment now submitted with the reserved matters application.

Landscape Capacity

- 4.38 The Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007 by Hankinson Duckett Associates) was undertaken to identify the capacity of the district landscape to accommodate future development in relation to development zones that were being considered at the time. The site lies within 'Zone 30 Ardingly Showground', which also covers a wider tranche of land spanning the north of Ardingly village and extending north across the showground. The 2007 Landscape Capacity Study assessed this wider area of Zone 30 as having 'Medium' landscape capacity.



HBA Figure 10 - Extract from Figure HDA 13 of the Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study

- 4.39 The Mid Sussex Study considers landscape capacity on the basis of combining assessment rankings of landscape value and landscape sensitivity for each site. Site 30 was considered to have overall 'Moderate' landscape value.

No	Landscape Character Area	Landscape Designation ²⁵ low high	Other Designation (nature conservation, heritage, amenity, including flood zone)	Contribution to setting of 'outstanding assets'	Special cultural/historic associations	Perceptual aspects (eg. scenic beauty, tranquillity, wildness)	Landscape Value 1-5 Negligible 6-10 Slight 11-15 Moderate 16-20 Substantial 21-25 Major 5 10 15 20 25	Final Assessment Landscape Value
30	Ardingly Show Ground	AONB.	Setting to LBS, setting to Conservation Area.		AONB.			MODERATE

HBA Figure 11 - Extract from Table 2 Landscape Value (Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study)

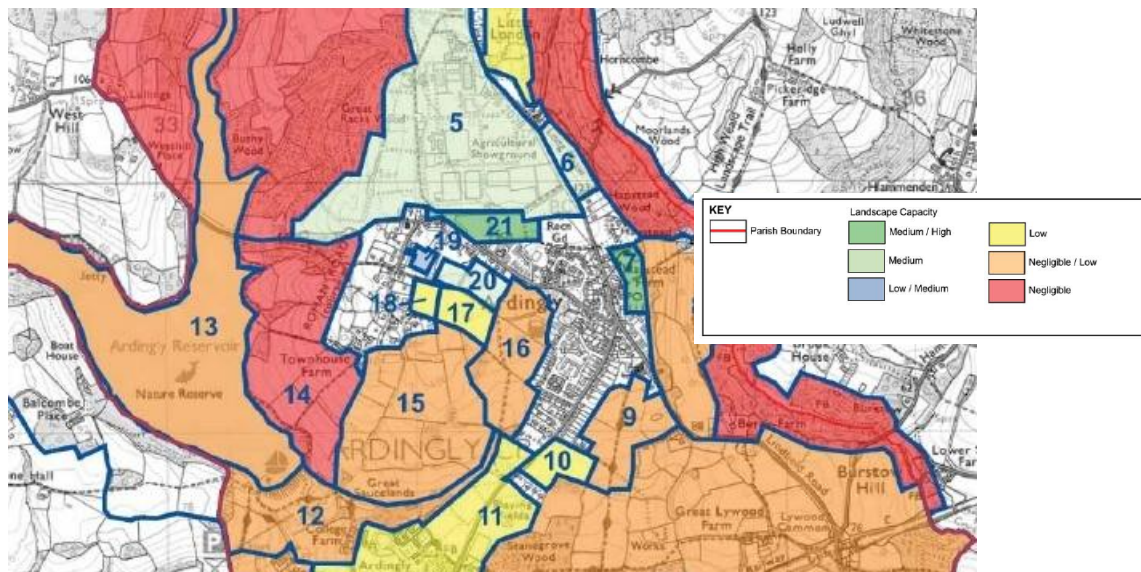
- 4.40 Site 30 was assessed of having 'Moderate' Sensitivity to development, based upon a standard assumption in the Study that:
- buildings would be 2 or 3 storeys in height with occasional landmark buildings of 4-5

- storeys;
- there would be open space provision and a strong landscape framework with tree planting of appropriate scale, area and design to ensure that the development achieves a good fit in the landscape.

No	Landscape Character Area	Inherent Landscape Qualities (intactness ¹⁴ and condition) low high	Contribution to distinctive settlement setting	Inconsistency with existing settlement form / pattern	Contribution to rurality of surrounding landscape	Contribution to separation between settlements	Sensitivity 1-5 Negligible 6-10 Slight 11-15 Moderate 16-20 Substantial 21-25 Major	Final Assessment Landscape Sensitivity
30	Ardingly Show Ground	Low intactness	Northern high ground setting to Ardingly, not overly distinct in this context.	On top of ridge, mostly above settlement.	Pleasant but artificial.			MODERATE

HBA Figure 12 - Extract from Table 1 Landscape Sensitivity (Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study)

- 4.41 Land Use Consultants subsequently prepared a Capacity Study in 2014 which includes an assessment of areas that were not included in the 2007 study and reviewed the previously assessed areas against a revised scale for landscape capacity. The 2014 Study confirmed the wider area of Zone 30 as having 'Moderate' landscape sensitivity, 'Moderate' landscape value and 'Medium' landscape capacity (for housing). By comparison, the majority of the surroundings of Ardingly village are considered to have 'Low /Medium' capacity (for housing).
- 4.42 At a parish level, the Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment also considers landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity albeit at a finer grain than the district-wide studies.
- 4.43 Area 21 comprises the majority of the site and is assessed as having 'Medium – High' landscape capacity to accommodate residential development. The remainder of the site lies in Area 5, assessed as having 'Medium' landscape capacity to accommodate residential development. At this finer level of detail, the majority of the rest of the surroundings to Ardingly village are considered to have low, negligible/low or negligible capacity to accommodate development.



HBA Figure 13 - Extract from Figure HDA 5 in the Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment

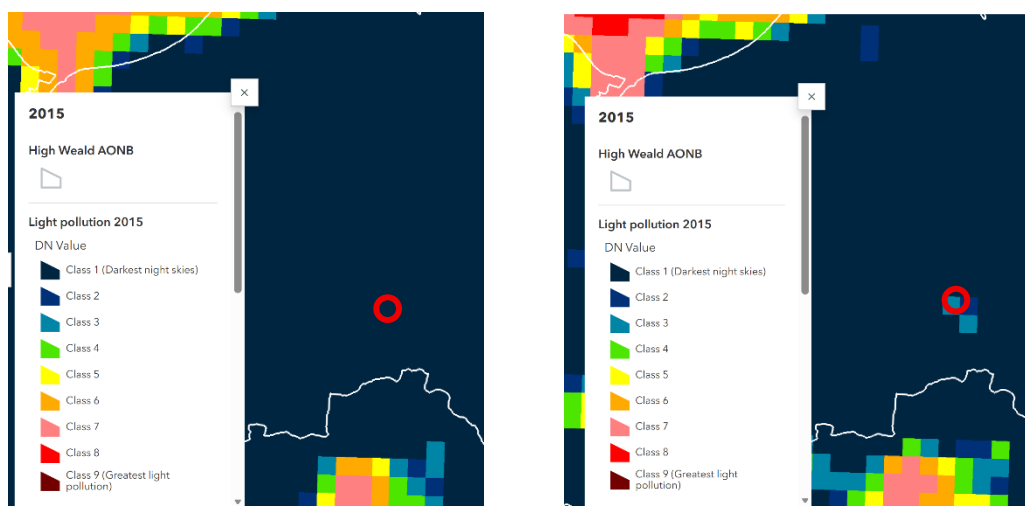
- 4.44 The Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment describes that "The high level of tree cover is an important factor within Ardingly Parish. Much of the existing settlement is screened from view

from the wider landscape, by woodland (plan HDA 6). Any future development would need the appropriate level of screening in order to fit in with existing settlement patterns and minimize the impacts on the surrounding AONB landscape”.

- 4.45 At paragraph 4.3.9, the parish assessment notes that the plateau landscapes (such as the site) mark areas where *“new development may fit with the existing settlement pattern”* and development on those sites *“would have substantially less impact on the surrounding areas of AONB”*.
- 4.46 With regard to the landscape of Area 21 it summarises that *“New development would have little influence on the character of AONB”*.
- 4.47 Area 5 is summarised as an *“urban influenced landscape on ridge top- although settlement would be inconsistent with [sic] due to existing built form, style and pattern of agricultural buildings”*. As noted above, the part of Area 5 which includes the site does not contain any buildings but is largely contained to the north by that part of Area 5 occupied by the caravan and camper van storage compound.
- 4.48 It is thus considered that there is an inconsistency in the south eastern extent of Area 5 as, the reality on the ground now is that this part, southward from the South Showground entrance is divorced from the far larger balance of Area 5 by the caravan storage and parking area. The south eastern portion of Area 5 thus relates more logically and in both character and visual terms to Area 21. This can be seen by reference to the aerial photograph at HBA Fig 2.
- 4.49 The Ardingly Landscape Character Assessment concludes by identifying a ‘preferred option’ for development at paragraph 7.5. It states that Area 21 (the site) *“is the most suitable area for new development. New housing would be in keeping with the existing settlement pattern of Ardingly and would be close to local services. In addition the area has the potential to be developed without significant impact to the character or appearance of the wider AONB. This character area displays few of the characteristics of the High Weald. Development in this location would have little effect on the landscape as it is bound to the south by existing housing and to the north by Ardingly Showground, which in itself is not representative of the AONB landscape”*

Perceptual Qualities

- 4.50 ‘Dark Skies’ is one of the eight defining components of the natural beauty of the High Weald National Landscape, the High Weald being noted as *“...having some of the darkest skies in the south-east of England. This gives the AONB a sense of remoteness and peacefulness and connects the natural environment to the cultural and historic landscape.”*
- 4.51 The High Weald National Landscape website shows satellite data from 2015 and 2019 to indicate the change in light pollution across the National Landscape. An extract from the 2015 and 2019 satellite data mapping is provided at [HBA Figure 14](#) below with the approximate location of the site outlined in red. This indicates that similar to much of the High Weald, light pollution across the area around Ardingly (and other settlements) slightly increased during this time. Ardingly lies in an area recorded as having low DN levels and towards the ‘darkest’ end of the spectrum of Darkest Night Skies in 2019.



HBA Figure 14 - Extracts from High Weald National Landscape website satellite data with approximate location of the site and Ardingly outlined in red. 2019 imagery is to the left with 2015 imagery to the right.

- 4.52 With regard to tranquillity on the site, the location of the site on the periphery of the village and Ardingly show ground and its containment within mature hedgerows offer a sense of isolation and tranquillity when stood on the Site, although the passing of traffic on the adjacent Headcorn Road is somewhat of a detractor.
- 4.53 The proximity of the recreation ground, settlement edge, Ardingly show ground and Selsfield Road mean that this is a clear sense of human and traffic activity and built form when stood on the site. The nearby Ardingly Conservation Area includes numerous listed buildings and in itself exhibits an attractive and relatively tranquil character.
- 4.54 The Site is not remote or wild land.

Visibility and Key Views

- 4.55 As noted in the various published landscape character assessments and landscape capacity study, the settlement of Ardingly is, for the most part, well contained in the wider landscape due to the incised and ridged landform with a high level of woodland cover on the ridge slopes; all typically characteristic of the wider High Weald National Landscape.
- 4.56 The site itself lies on a more open location at the plateau edge but is generally contained by the hedgerow boundaries on the site which, with the rash of low buildings on the Showground, together with the undulating topography and high level of woodland cover in the wider National Landscape countryside setting, essentially limits the visibility of the site. The primary visual envelope of the site is localised and limited to locations in close proximity to the site.
- 4.57 Although there are several high points, including ridgetop public rights of way and roads, in the wider countryside of the National Landscape to the east of the site and village, the site is nestled beyond wooded valley slopes and therefore is not visible from those locations.
- 4.58 To the north of the site, the hedge and tree-lined road verge (which is banked in places) and the built forms on the showground create a visual barrier to views of the site and the northern edge of Ardingly from the wider countryside of the National Landscape and on approach to the village from the B2028 Selsfield Road. From the B2028, the site is not readily appreciated,

more the hedgerow and trees on the eastern site boundary contribute to a sense of a green approach to the village. The gated entrance to the track/footpath 7AR/ 43AR appears as part of the showground site.

- 4.59 To the south and west, the built edge of Ardingly (including the Conservation Area) screens any wider countryside views to and from the site. The more open character of the western site boundary with Street Lane allows for transient glimpsed views towards the site over the hedgerow and through the field gates.
- 4.60 Public footpaths 7AR/43AR and 9AR run parallel and adjacent to the northern and southern site boundaries respectively and allow for predominantly open and short distance views across the site. Footpath 7AR continues along the western edge of the showground where glimpsed views are available of the site however these are predominantly screened or filtered by the high fencing and buildings at the showground as well as a line of offsite conifers.
- 4.61 Parts of footpath 9AR are separated from the site by a hedgerow and fence that creates a narrow 'tunnel' effect to the path. The eastern side of footpath 9AR passes along the northern edge of the Ardingly Play Area and amenity space and through the recreation ground. Views from here are therefore dominated by the intervening recreational uses.
- 4.62 From public footpath 20AR south of Street Lane, the site itself is not discernible beyond the intervening fields, vegetation and properties on Street Lane and Church Lane. The canopies to several mature trees in the vicinity of Street Lane and footpath 9AR form part of the skyline and backdrop to views from a short section of the footpath.
- 4.63 The following visual receptors (people) have been identified who may have views of the proposed development. Photographs have been taken from selected viewpoints to demonstrate representative or key views for the receptors. A number of photographs are provided where receptors are travelling along linear routes in order to help demonstrate the sequence of views and visual amenity of the routes Viewpoint locations and baseline annotated photographs (Type 1 visualisations) of winter and late spring views are provided at [HBA Appendix 4](#). These are cross referenced below (noting that some receptors viewpoints – such as the primary school, do not have corresponding photography):

Users of Public Rights of Way:

- Pedestrians using public footpath 7AR /43AR adjacent to the northern site boundary ([HBA Viewpoints 4, 7 and 8](#))
- Pedestrians using public footpath 9AR adjacent to the southern site boundary ([HBA Viewpoints 15 and 16](#))
- Pedestrians using public footpath 7AR / 43AR west and southwest of the showground ([HBA viewpoints 9 and 10](#))

Users of public open space and community space:

- Recreational users of the Ardingly Cricket Ground, recreation ground and play area ([HBA viewpoints 13, 14 and 15](#))
- Visitors to Ardingly Showground (no photograph as visitors tend to be during events when different structures and features are present in the view – [HBA Viewpoints 2, 10 and 4](#))

indicate views in proximity to the perimeter of the Showground)

- Pupils, staff and visitors to St Peter's School (no photograph)

Users of public roads

- Pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists and motorists using the B2028 Selsfield Road heading south from Little London, passing the site and on entry/exit from Ardingly (*HBA Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6* demonstrate the sequence of views along Selsfield Road)
- Pedestrians, equestrians, cyclist and motorists using Street Lane, east of St Peter's Church Centre (within the Conservation Area). (*HBA Viewpoints 11 and 12*)

4.64 The following private properties are likely to have private views of parts of the site or have potential to see development upon it:

- Properties at the western end of Street Lane may have distance oblique glimpsed views.
- 2 properties on Wakehurst Lane at the western side of the site may have glimpsed views.
- Properties at the northern end of Holmans that address the play areas and footpath 9AR.
- Properties at the northern end of Gowers Close (overlooking the play areas).
- Cobb Cottage and Cobb Cottage North at the junction with Selsfield Road and Cob Lane.
- Little Deerswood, Whiteoaks and Mascalls on the eastern side of Selsfield Road south-east of the site are set within well vegetated gardens and views heavily filtered by both garden vegetation and the tree and hedge line to Selsfield Road.
- Properties around Hett Place, Turnpike Court and Hapstead Cottages may have upstairs views towards the eastern edge of the site, but these are likely to be heavily filtered by vegetation on the site and recreation ground.

4.65 The views from private properties have not been assessed in this LVA but none are considered to result in a level of visual effect that would be detrimental to residential amenity. The need for any Residential Visual Amenity Assessment as part of this planning application would be a matter for Mid Sussex District Council to consider.

Landscape Value

4.66 Landscape value is defined by GLVIA3 as:

"The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of different reasons".

4.67 Whilst the NPPF does not define 'valued landscapes', it is acknowledged and established by case law, that value is not merely something that is designated either by statute, such as a National Landscape, or non-statutory process. However, in this instance, the Site lies within the High Weald National Landscape, a valued landscape under NPPF Paragraph 187a. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029 sets out 8 Core Character Components of the High Weald for which the landscape is valued/designated. The designation is therefore considered as a landscape receptor in its own right.

4.68 GLVIA3 notes at paragraph 5.19, where the valuing of the landscape is addressed that: *"A review of the existing landscape designations is usually the starting point in understanding landscape value, but the value attached to undesignated landscapes also needs to be carefully*

considered and individual elements of the landscape – such as trees, buildings or hedgerows – may also have a value. All need to be considered where relevant “. It may also be appropriate to have regard to the other factors including those identified in Box 5.1, Page 84 of GLVIA3, listed as ‘range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes’. The Box 5.1 criteria have been updated and refined in TGN 02/21 ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations’ (Table 1) to cover the headings of:

- Natural heritage
- Cultural heritage
- Landscape Condition
- Associations
- Distinctiveness
- Recreational
- Perceptual (scenic)
- Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)
- Functional

4.69 In the case of the Site, it is useful to note Footnote 40 in TGN 02/21, which states that:

“In cases where a particular area within a National Park or AONB may not demonstrate the level of quality expected of its designation status, this does not mean that its value is diminished. Such an area is still a component of the nationally designated area with the characteristics associated with the park or AONB as a whole, and the aim should be to bring it back or much closer to the quality and character of the wider designated area so that it can be a positive contribution to the statutory purpose (to conserve and enhance the area’s natural beauty).”

4.70 An assessment has therefore also been made against the TGN 02/21 Table 1 criteria to identify the landscape characteristics of value in relation to the Site in its local context, and to indicate where the special qualities of the National Landscape designation are (and are not) reflected within the Site. This assessment has helped to inform both the LVA and the approach to the scheme design and landscape mitigation strategy as part of an iterative design and assessment process. The assessment of landscape effects (Section 6 of this LVA) considers how these features are impacted by the proposed development.

4.71 The landscape value of the Site in its local context is assessed against Table 1 of TGN 02/21 below, identifying crossover with the core character components of the High Weald National Landscape where relevant.

Natural heritage

4.72 The site has some natural heritage value through its hedgerow boundary to Selsfield Road which also contributes to the approach to the village. Ecological assessments indicate there are no distinctive habitats or ecological communities on the site. Mature trees in the landscape immediately surrounding the site (including in the recreation ground) contribute positively to the landscape.

- 4.73 'Woodland' is a core character component of the High Weald National Landscape. The site is not wooded and does not contribute to the pattern of woodland in the wider landscape beyond the Showground.

Cultural heritage

- 4.74 Locally, historic landscape patterns have been disturbed by the Showground although the PRoW have been generally persistent (but are not considered to represent historic routeways). The site contributes to a small degree to the setting and appreciation of the Ardingly Conservation Area.

Landscape Condition

- 4.75 Landscape condition (or landscape quality) is defined in the GLVIA3 glossary as:

"A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual area, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements."

- 4.76 Given the findings of the above baseline and character studies and the typical evaluation criteria set out in Appendix 1, Table 1, the overall landscape condition/quality of the wider site setting and the site itself is regarded as ordinary. This is largely due to the altered character of the landscape comprising the Showground. It is not an intact landscape albeit it is now somewhat regimented by the fenced divisions, the circulation system and is managed in a rather institutional manner. The site is further affected by the soil mound.

Associations

- 4.77 There are no known cultural or other associations that contribute positively to the perception of the site.

Distinctiveness

- 4.78 The perimeter tree lines and hedgerows are the key landscape attributes of the site that contribute positively to a sense of identity. The eastern site boundary hedge, combined with the offsite tree lined verge of Selsfield Road contribute to an attractive 'green' approach to the village of Ardingly and also contain and create a soft edge to the recreation ground.

Recreational

- 4.79 The offsite recreation ground, playgrounds, public footpaths and informal use of the paths across the site provide amenity and recreational value, the footpaths linking to the wider landscape of the showground and beyond, albeit the showground is of limited visual appeal and appears rather barren when not in use.

Perceptual (scenic)

- 4.80 The site is located within a landscape of variable scenic and perceptual quality. Attractive aesthetic features arise from the Ardingly Conservation Area, the tree lined verge 'green' approach to the village on Selsfield Road/B2028 and the wider well wooded and farmed landscape of the High Weald National Landscape beyond the Showground.

- 4.81 The South of England Showground and associated buildings, wire mesh fencing, caravan storage park, organised tracks, hardstanding and large signed entrance gates are detractors and do not enhance the character of Selsfield Road or the High Weald National Landscape within which they lie.
- 4.82 The seasonal use of the site for overflow parking and the presence of utilitarian built forms, human and vehicular activity associated with the Showground and Selsfield Road/B2028 are both visual and auditory detractors.
- 4.83 The general gentle southern slope of the site and the artificial bund gives this part of the landscape a somewhat 'man-made' character and does not contribute to the wider naturally undulating landform that is a special quality of the High Weald National Landscape.
- 4.84 'Aesthetic and perceptual qualities' are a core character of the High Weald National Landscape, with landscape defined by a sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness. The site in its context does not represent this on account of the above.

Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)

- 4.85 The site is not remote or wild land and lies between a settlement edge and events ground. It does not have high levels of tranquillity but lies in the High Weald National Landscape that is recognised for its Dark Night Skies and tranquillity. The site lacks any tranquillity when in use for parking.

Functional

- 4.86 The contributions of the site towards the core character components / special qualities of the High Weald National Landscape have been outlined above and are considered to be limited.

HBA conclusion on landscape value

- 4.87 On balance, the landscape of the site in its local context is assessed to be of overall **medium** landscape value (Refer to [Appendix 1 – Table 2](#) for landscape value criteria), albeit set within a wider, nationally valued, landscape.
- 4.88 The intention of any proposed development on the Site should therefore be to conserve and enhance the characteristics of the Site reflective of the core character components of the National Landscape, with particular regard to the objectives set out within the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029.

5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

- 5.1 The proposal is for 35 no. dwellings with associated drainage works, landscaping and parking.
- 5.2 The design of the proposed development now submitted for reserved matters has been informed by the parameters and principles approved in the outline planning application, the design for which was steered by landscape and other environmental considerations; notably in landscape and visual terms, the Site's setting within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 5.3 The overall site layout has been adjusted from that shown on the Parameter Plans and Illustrative Masterplan in the outline application in order to respond to Officer's comments on the outline scheme and to accommodate larger houses and gardens. Changes to the scheme include moving the proposed buildings on the northern edge of the site further south to allow a wider separation between the new buildings and the offsite PRoW/access track to the north and orientating dwellings to provide passive surveillance and active frontages on the site boundaries. This has the consequence of pushing the proposed developable area south, into an area that was proposed for Green Infrastructure and SuDS on the approved Parameter Plans. A wider verge and area of planting is now proposed in the northeast corner of the site at the junction with Selsfield Road.
- 5.4 The proposed development assessed in this LVA is illustrated on the following submitted drawings and documents:
- Proposed Site Layout (AH314-PL.03 by Antler Homes)
 - Sections (AH314-PL.28 and PL.29 by Antler Homes)
 - Elevations (AH314-PL.05 to PL.26 by Antler Homes)
 - Design Statement (by Antler Homes)
 - Soft Landscape Plans (HBA-825.3-02 to 05)
 - Hard Landscape Plan (HBA-825.3-07)
 - Proposed Drainage Strategy (14267_1601 to 1603 by GTA Civils)
- 5.5 Those aspects of the development proposal which are relevant to the assessment of landscape and visual effects are described below.

Landscape Design

- 5.6 The development proposal for the site has sought to follow the policy requirements of Policy SA 25 to achieve the objective:
- "To deliver a sympathetic and well integrated extension to the village of Ardingly informed by a landscape led masterplan, which conserves and enhances the landscape character of the High Weald AONB and the setting of nearby heritage assets."*
- 5.7 The development proposal has aimed to respect the key sensitivities outlined in the various published landscape characterisation studies (including the AONB Management Plan and county and local character assessments, High Weald Housing Design Guide, High Weald Planning Technical Advice Notes and the High Weald Colour Study, the Landscape Capacity Study and within this LVA and supporting appendices, in particular:

- Retention and augmentation of the existing boundary hedgerows and trees, and creation of a new tree and hedgerow framework across the site. This would provide a strong and in-character landscape structure which complements and contributes to the wider landscape setting of the National Landscape and village edge.
- The single avenue of ornamental cherry (and other species) on the northern site boundary are of mixed quality but contribute to the existing PRoW (footpath 7AR) in this location. They have generally been accommodated within the scheme design other for where removal is required to accommodate a new access point into the development. A new native hedgerow is proposed to be implemented to the south of the tree line to define the edge of the new development and create a stronger green edge to footpath 7AR in this location. The scheme now proposes a new circulation road behind the hedgerow along the northern edge of the site, with the proposed buildings set further back from the footpath than was proposed on the Parameter Plans and Illustrative material approved at the outline stage.
- The proposal would utilise the existing showground access from Selsfield Road, therefore retaining the existing strong green frontage and approach to the village. A slightly wider area of green verge and native planting (incorporating a large number of native tree specimens) is now proposed in the northeast corner of the site at the junction with Selsfield Road to help soften the edge of the new development and contain and integrate the new built forms into the wider landscape setting.
- On the eastern side of the site, proposed built form would be set back from the inside edge of the frontage tree cover to Selsfield Road to retain the perception and integrity of the leafy approach to the village. Some additional native scrub planting is proposed on the site-side of the existing hedge along the Selsfield Road frontage, with tree planting used to provide additional canopy cover where space allows, and to break up proposed areas of on-street parking along this side of the development within the site.
- The western site boundary follows the line of an existing offsite track where a new native hedgerow with groups of native trees is proposed to be established within a 3m – 7m wide belt of scrub and additional native trees. The LVA for the outline application set out the need for a minimum 10m wide landscape buffer in this location in order to safeguard from development or ancillary features and deliver the 'strategic landscaping at its western end' as required by Policy SA 25 and referenced by Place Services in their Specialist Landscape Advice to MSDC dated 8th June 2022. The scheme amendments propose a reduced landscape buffer but include an increased set back of the proposed buildings from the boundary.
- A strong defensible landscape edge (including native hedgerow and trees) is proposed to the built edge of new streets and open space, to both soften the appearance and setting of built forms and promote legibility between public and private domains.
- Off-site to the south-west, the existing area of open field and the hedgerow frontage to the Conservation Area and listed buildings is retained in its current form. This would also retain the historic separation between the two separate epochs of the village that the Conservation Areas denote.
- Proposed new buildings would be 2 and 2.5 storeys in height, in keeping with the scale

- and heights of existing dwellings at the village edge.
- The amenity of public footpath 7AR to the north of the site is respected in the development proposal through the creation of a robust landscape edge with existing retained trees in a grass verge set beyond a hedgerow boundary to the proposed circulation road within the site. The proposed buildings would be set back around 11m from the footpath.
 - Proposed streets would predominantly be tree-lined with new tree planting mostly incorporated in grass verges outside of private gardens. In some locations trees are also planted at the boundary of private gardens. Mixed native hedges incorporating a high percentage of evergreen species are proposed at the back of the grass verges / in front of private gardens to provide privacy to properties, continuity to the streetscape and contribute to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).
 - Augmented native planting is proposed throughout the streetscape and to define open spaces. (incorporating native cultivars and planting for pollinators) and flowering lawns to the rear and native hedgerows planted adjacent to a post and rail fence to define the property boundaries. The hedgerows would be planted as 1.5-1.8m high instant hedges to provide screening and a characteristic boundary treatment.
 - Areas of scrub are proposed to be retained and some new areas created at the periphery of the site to contribute to BNG.
 - Natural water management and SuDS has been incorporated into the scheme design by way of an attenuation basin, SuDS tree pits and attenuation planters to the individual houses. The attenuation basin has been designed by GTA Civils and Transport and is indicated on the proposed drainage strategy (drawings 14267_1601 to 1603). The basin is designed for hydrological function and is anticipated to be seasonally wet so will also be planted with a mix of native shrubs and herbaceous plants to provide biodiversity value. The design of the basin will include a post and rail safety fence and a life ring.
 - A below ground pumping station is also required which is proposed to be located to the southeast corner of the site, with a green kiosk above ground. The pumping station will be located 13m from the closest new dwelling and approximately 16m from the MUGA/sports court in the offsite recreation ground. Native scrub planting is proposed to wrap around the northern and eastern sides of the pumping stations to help screen its appearance.
 - Hard and Soft Landscape Plans are submitted with the application and draw from the guidance set out in the High Weald National Landscape Planning Technical Advice Note: Soft Landscaping & Planting Plans in Development Proposals and the High Weald National Landscape Housing Design Guide.
 - Hard landscape surface treatments comprise permeable tarmacadam to road and pavement surfaces with concrete block paving used to delineate raised tables, parking spaces and driveways. Pathways within the landscape areas at the southern edge and northeast corner of the site would have a crushed gravel surfacing. A palette of muted colours is proposed as indicated on the Hard Landscape Plans at [Appendix 7](#).
 - Timber post and rail fencing and some areas of low brick wall are proposed to delineate between private gardens and public realm/streetscape.
 - The use of materials and style of buildings is proposed to respect the existing built character

and local distinctiveness in Ardingly and avoid pastiche. The proposed material palette is set out in the Design Statement by Antler Homes and includes a mix of red multi stock facing bricks with orange/red contrasting detail bricks, hanging/club tiles, white weatherboardings and off-white render. The roofs of the proposed dwellings would be a mix of red, brown and orange tiles. Where appropriate, locally sourced materials which support conservation of the National Landscape (such as timber) are proposed.

- A Local Area for Play (LAP) is proposed to be incorporated in the south-west corner of the site and would incorporate informal natural play opportunities including climbing logs and stepping stones.
- The existing bund on the site is proposed to be removed and the material moved to an alternative location within the Showground.
- The final lighting scheme will be determined by the submission of information pursuant to the discharge of Condition 22 of the planning application. This will include measures to minimise ambient light levels and light spill from the buildings. External lighting will only be proposed where needed, for example on adopted streets and building access points, and all would incorporate PIRs or timers where appropriate.
- New and retained areas of planting and public realm would be managed to ensure biodiversity, continued aesthetic value and good plant health as specified in a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) to be secured by condition.

- 5.8 The overarching objective of the landscape proposals is to create an attractive place for the new and existing community of Ardingly, that protects and enhances the rural/settlement edge and respond to the National Landscape location and ensure that the inevitable changes arising from the development would be appropriately mitigated over time.
- 5.9 The overall planting strategy is to embed the development into a multi-layered soft landscape framework that respects the character of the village and the National Landscape and creates a sensitive transition between a new settlement edge, the showground and the wider countryside.

6 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 6.1 The methodology used for this LVA is set out in [Appendix 1](#).
- 6.2 Landscape and visual effects are related subject areas but are assessed separately. Landscape effects derive from changes in the natural and built environments which may give rise to changes in their fabric, character and quality and how these are experienced. Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of a development proposal.
- 6.3 Effects can be positive (beneficial), negative (adverse) and are sometimes neutral. This last ranking may most frequently occur where the change is very limited. It may also occur where a visual change may be very discernible but is considered no better or worse than what it replaced having regard to the context of the view.
- 6.4 Effects on landscape character, value, and visual amenity can arise from many causes, for example, perceived changes to:
- the scale, grain and pattern of the landscape, for example by alien or engineered landform or out of context planting or changes to land cover;
 - deterioration or erosion of the rural landscape by the urbanising effects of traffic, hard surfacing, structures and built development, lighting and signs and associated loss of tranquillity; and
 - views or loss of views between surrounding locations and the proposed development.

Assumptions and Limitations

- 6.5 This report is based on assumptions made about the likely landscape and visual effects that would arise from the proposed development, as illustrated on Proposed Site Layout (AH314-PL.03 by Antler Homes). It assumes the landscape proposals as indicated on Soft Landscape Plans (HBA-825.3-02 to 05) would be implemented and that landscape treatments would be appropriately managed in the longer term as set out in a LEMP to be approved by the Local Planning Authority as required by condition.
- 6.6 The assessment has considered the landscape and visual effects both upon completion (Day 1), and for residual effects after 15 years (Year 15) when the planting would have established and matured sufficiently to provide mitigation.
- 6.7 Construction effects have not been considered in this LVA. This is because the sequencing and timing of construction is unknown and the scheme would not be expected to give rise to any unusual or long-term effects. It should also be noted that any landscape and visual effects arising during construction would be temporary in nature and given the scale of the development, would also be likely to be relatively limited in duration.
- 6.8 Heritage assets such as Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings contribute to the overall landscape character, context and setting of an area and are therefore considered in terms of landscape baseline. However, the LVA does not address the historic significance, importance or potential impacts on heritage assets and designations; these assets are assessed in the context of landscape and visual matters only.

Landscape Effects Assessment

6.9 The appraisal of landscape effects can be described as a consideration of the effect in terms of:

- **Sensitivity** of the receptor made up of judgements about:
 - the **value** attached to the receptor; and
 - the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the specific proposals.
- **Magnitude of the effect** made up of judgements about:
 - the **size and scale** of the effect, for example is there a complete loss of a particular element of the landscape or a minor change;
 - **geographical extent** of the area that will be affected; and
 - the **duration of the effect** and, rarely, its reversibility.

Landscape Susceptibility

6.10 Landscape susceptibility is defined by GLVIA3 as:

"The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptors to accommodate the specific Proposed Development without undue negative consequences."

6.11 In terms of the susceptibility of the Site and its immediate setting to the type of change proposed, the following features are of key influence:

- The proposal is for the development of open land with 35 no. dwellings at the northern edge of the village on a site allocated in the MSDC Sites Allocation DPD as a site suitable for residential development and with outline permission for a similar development proposal.
- The broad site location is also considered to be the most appropriate location for new development around Ardingly in landscape capacity studies prepared for MSDC and published in 2007 and 2014. The supporting evidence to the Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan identifies the site as the preferred location for housing development in the parish, in landscape and visual terms.
- The proposal would introduce a new land use and built form to a plot of open land at the edge of the settlement. The residential buildings would be of a broadly similar height, form and style to some of houses in the immediate area.
- The landform of the site would not be unduly altered through the introduction of roads and housing although there would be localised removal of manmade bunds and localised earthworks to accommodate an attenuation basin and swale.
- The location of the site sandwiched between the existing village edge and the somewhat stark built form of the showground site, allied to the existing open character, landscape structure and flat landform of the site and the overall wooded character of the containing landscape of the High Weald National Landscape, means that effective in character landscape mitigation can be readily accommodated that would be in keeping with the special qualities of the National Landscape.

- It is recognised that the loss of green field land for development in the High Weald National Landscape cannot be regarded as other than an adverse effect in landscape terms albeit, in this instance, the intrinsic quality of the land has been eroded to some degree by its use as a parking area for the Showground.

6.12 For these reasons, on balance, the susceptibility of the site to accommodate built form is ranked as **low** ([Appendix 1 Table 3](#)).

Landscape Sensitivity

6.13 By combining the separate judgements of medium landscape value and low landscape susceptibility, the landscape sensitivity of the site in its context is judged to be of **medium – low** landscape sensitivity (refer to [Appendix 1 – Table 8](#)).

Landscape Effects

6.14 Potential landscape and visual impacts include/would arise from:

- The introduction of new built forms, surfacing, boundary treatments and lighting and creation of new vehicular access from the access track off Selsfield Road;
- The introduction of new planting and soft landscape treatments, notably to site boundaries;
- The introduction of a residential use across the site;
- The removal of an existing manmade bund from the site and remodelling of some areas of landform to accommodate a SuDS basin and swale;
- Loss of 10 no. established trees/tree groups, all recorded as being 'low' quality (BS category C) in the Tree Survey Report by GreenLink Ecology Ltd, on account of their condition and/or young age. These comprise 2 no. ornamental Cherry (*Prunus* spp – trees T71 and T72 in the Tree Survey) and 1 no. Silver Birch (*Betula pendula* – tree T70 in the Tree Survey) on the site's northern boundary to accommodate the new access road, 1 no Oak (*Quercus robur* – T25 in the Tree Survey) and a group of self-seeded Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) (Group G2 in the Tree Survey) to accommodate the SuDS basin, and 5 no. other young trees of varied species (trees T21, T22, T23, T24 and T34 in the Tree Survey) to accommodate the roads and dwellings,
- Loss of a short section of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) hedge (hedge H4 in the Tree Survey) to accommodate the new footpath connection to Selsfield Road,
- Consequential changes to how the site is perceived on approach to the village and within the High Weald National Landscape.

6.15 The site is allocated for development in Policy SA 25 of the MSDC Site Allocation DPD for 35 dwellings and has an approved outline application (DM/22/1575) for up to 35 dwellings. The approved outline application was accompanied by a series of Parameter Plans and an Illustrative Masterplan that indicated a different design scheme to that now proposed, the main differences being that the proposed line of development on the northern edge of the site has been moved further south in order to create a wider separation between the PRow and proposed built form, as requested by MSDC in connection with the outline approval and that

larger housing units and gardens are now incorporated. This has resulted in the overall built footprint of the proposed development shifting further south and a subsequent reduction and reshaping of the proposed Green Infrastructure on the southern side of the proposed development. The reserved matters scheme incorporates less Green Infrastructure on the southern side of the site and an increased depth to the landscape area and verge in the northeast corner at the junction with Selsfield Road. The proposed street network and pattern of routes through the site have also been consolidated.

6.16 An LVA was prepared for the outline application and found in relation to landscape effects that:

“The site adjoins existing housing to the south west and the recreation ground to the south east beyond which is further housing, albeit the settlement boundary is relatively soft and generally masked by planting and set at a lower level than the site. It abuts the visually unattractive Showground including a caravan and mobile home stage area to the north and an area of open land used as overspill parking for the Showground lies to the west whilst the eastern boundary fronts Selsfield Road. The site itself is also open land that is used as an overflow parking facility although one boundary is truncated by a soil mound.

The proposed change to a residential land use and character would therefore not be wholly out of character with the semi-rural fringe of the local landscape formed by the Showground and might be considered to round off the settlement boundary. It would, nevertheless, represent a loss of open land that could not be replaced. However, the site is currently being proposed by MSDC as being suitable for development.

The landscape value of the site and its local context has been considered and ranked as being of medium value but set within a landscape that is highly valued at the national level as part of the High Weald AONB.

...

The proposal is for the development of open land with 35no. dwellings at the northern edge of the village on a site proposed to be allocated under Main Modification 1 of the Sites Allocation DPD as a site suitable for residential development.

The broad site location is also considered to be the most appropriate location for new development around Ardingly in landscape capacity studies prepared for MSDC and published in 2007 and 2014. The supporting evidence to the Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan identifies the site as the preferred location for housing development in the parish, in landscape and visual terms.

Whilst the proposal would introduce built form to a plot of open land, the residential buildings would be of a broadly similar height, form and style to some of houses in the immediate area, albeit most existing development is set lower in the landscape.

The existing row of ornamental trees along the north side of the site would be retained but subject to review of those trees that are not thriving which should be replaced.”

The common boundaries with the Recreation Ground would be retained and no more than 2 pedestrian links though it are envisaged to encourage connectivity and integration but these need to be carefully located to minimise damage to this historic landscape boundary

feature. Elsewhere the Recreation Ground boundary vegetation should be inspected and, if appropriate reinforced with native species.

The gappy hedgerow along the balance of the southern site boundary would be retained and augmented as appropriate and there would be a robust landscape boundary formed by the proposed woodland shaw on the western boundary.

In terms of the magnitude of landscape effect, (Appendix 1 Table 4) it is considered that the proposal would result in the "partial loss of one or more key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline i.e. predevelopment landscape and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic when set within attributes of the wider receiving landscape".

In this instance the effect is considered to be adverse, mainly being derived from the introduction of 2 storey dwellings at the village edge in a currently open area that has something of the character of a field of pasture. The overall adverse effect is considered to be medium magnitude of adverse landscape effect.

In accordance with the methodology, a **medium** magnitude of landscape effect in a landscape of **medium-low** sensitivity would give rise to a **slight / moderate adverse** landscape effect (Appendix 1 Table 8) at Day 1 but confined to a relatively small area.

Over time, the maturing and appropriate management of the boundary hedgerows and structural landscape, secured by legal agreement, would help to further embed the site into the local area. On this basis, the adverse effect would be expected to reduce, possibly being regarded as **slight adverse** by Year 15 but confined to a relatively small area."

6.17 The landscape effects identified for the outline application are not considered to be materially different to those now likely to result from the reserved matters scheme. The key differences in terms of landscape impacts and effects are outlined below:

- The proposed scheme now submitted for reserved matters incorporates an increased spread of built development and residential land use across the site on account of the shift of built forms further south away from footpath 7AR and the incorporation of a perimeter circulation road to achieve active frontages onto the site boundaries, as requested in Officer feedback to the outline application. From a landscape and visual perspective this results in better natural surveillance and amenity to the nearby PRoW which are considered to be positive effects. However it also results in an overall reduction in the depth of open space and Green Infrastructure created along the southern edge of the site and the resultant need for an engineered attenuation basin to fit within the space, which are considered to be negative. The more detailed design approach at reserved matters has also identified the need for a pumping station to be provided, which is proposed to be located in the southeast corner of the site adjoining the recreation ground. The basin would be planted with native species to help to integrate it into the wider Green Infrastructure and mask its appearance and a similar approach taken to the pumping station building. Post and rail safety fencing and life-saving equipment would be installed around the basin which would need to be carefully accommodated within the landscape scheme to ensure it still provides its necessary function but does not detract in terms of landscape character

or visual amenity. The proposed landscape treatment of the southern site boundary would provide reduced open space and a reduced recreational function to that envisaged in the outline application but would still deliver increased planting and a generally soft landscaped edge to the recreation ground and open space, save for where the attenuation basin adjoins the site boundary and a pumping station would be located in proximity to the MUGA and public footpath. The wider offsite open space to the south and informal recreation of fields to the west would continue to provide recreational value and an open setting to this edge Ardingly.

- To the northern side of the site, the reserved matters scheme proposes an increased separation distance between public footpath AR7 and proposed buildings through moving the proposed dwellings further south and beyond a circulation road. The proposed buildings are also now oriented to face the public footpath providing increased passive surveillance. There would therefore be a slightly reduced perception of new built form from the public footpath which is considered to be positive.
- The proposed reserved matters scheme includes a reduced width of landscape buffer to the western site boundary (previously indicated to require a 10m wide landscape belt and now proposed as 3m – 7m in width). Whilst this is considered to be a negative effect of the reserved matters scheme in comparison to the outline scheme, the proposed development still allows for a new native hedgerow with native tree groups to be created as a robust and in-character boundary treatment. The proposed built forms would be set back from the western site boundary and the retained offsite track by an increased distance to that envisaged in the outline application although it is also acknowledged that built forms would extend further south in relation to the boundary.
- The reserved matters scheme now results in a biodiversity net gain of 20.75% for area habitat units and 85.6% for hedgerow units.

6.18 As can be noted, the reserved matters scheme introduces design amendments that would result in a range of both positive (beneficial) and negative (adverse) landscape effects when compared to the approved outline scheme. On balance it is considered that the proposed reserved matters scheme would not result in a materially different landscape effect overall to that which was assessed for the outline application. It is acknowledged that there would be some additional and localised adverse landscape impacts arising from the reserved matters application, in particular resulting from the attenuation basin and pumping station, however these are not considered to result in a change to the thresholds/rankings assessed for the outline application.

6.19 The overall landscape effect of the proposed development in the reserved matters scheme is therefore considered to be **medium adverse** in magnitude at Day 1 (refer to [Appendix 1, Table 4](#)), resulting in a **slight / moderate adverse importance of landscape effect** (refer to [Appendix 1 Table 9](#)) at Day 1 that would be confined to a relatively small area immediately adjoining the site.

6.20 As was considered for the outline application, subject to appropriate long-term management and maintenance, the existing and augmented boundary hedgerows and new structural landscape would over time help to further embed the site into the local area, resulting in a

reduction in the magnitude and importance of landscape effect to **slight adverse** by Year 15 and remaining confined to a small area immediately around the site.

6.21 With regard to the High Weald National Landscape designation, the proposed development has sought to respond to the landscape management guidelines identified in the High Weald AONB Management Plan, notably:

- **“Objective R2: ‘To protect and enhance the ecological function of routeways’:** through the retention and enhancement of the existing roadside vegetation to Selsfield Road and trees along footpath 7AR and proposed additional planting in these areas;
- **“Objective S2: Enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure new development reflects the character of the High Weald in its siting, scale, layout and design”:** through the introduction of new dwellings and a palette of materials which respond to the local vernacular.
- **“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”:** through the siting of the development within a part of the National Landscape that is not unspoilt and offers scope to deliver new in-character landscape treatments that would contribute to the existing well-treed approach to Ardingly and wider sylvan character, where the visual impacts are limited, and where the proposed development can become embedded within the local landscape pattern.

6.22 Overall, the proposed development is considered to result in a neutral landscape effect on the core components and purpose for designation of the High Weald National Landscape as a result of the above changes. The exception to this is dark skies, where the proposal would introduce lighting into a currently unlit site. In this regard the design incorporates measures to minimise light spill, with external lighting proposed only where necessary, such as on building access points. Where lighting is included it would incorporate PIRs or times. The final lighting scheme is pursuant to further information submitted in line with Condition 22 of the planning application.

6.23 Refer to **Appendix 3** for the assessment in response to the Planning and Technical Advice for the High Weald National Landscape.

Visual Effects Assessment

6.24 The approach to visual effects assessment involves a consideration of the effect in terms of;

- **Sensitivity** of the visual receptor (viewer) made up of judgements about:
 - the **susceptibility** to change of the viewer (receptor); and
 - the **value** attached to views.
- **Magnitude** of visual effect:
 - For example, if there is a complete loss of a particular element or only a minor change, together with a consideration of extent and permanence.

6.25 The visual sensitivity should then be considered against the magnitude of effect, to determine the ranking of visual effect that would arise. This has been undertaken for appropriate locations identified as part of the baseline work.

- 6.26 Viewpoint locations and their users (receptors) have been selected to represent a range of potential visual effects which may occur from the proposed development.
- 6.27 The following receptors have been identified for consideration in the assessment of visual effects:

Users of Public Rights of Way:

- Pedestrians using public footpath 7AR /43AR adjacent to the northern site boundary (*HBA Viewpoints 4, 7 and 8*)
- Pedestrians using public footpath 9AR adjacent to the southern site boundary (*HBA Viewpoints 15 and 16*)
- Pedestrians using public footpath 7AR / 43AR west and southwest of the showground (*HBA viewpoints 9 and 10*)

Users of public open space and community space:

- Recreational users of the Ardingly Cricket Ground, recreation ground and play area (*HBA viewpoints 13, 14 and 15*)
- Visitors to Ardingly Showground (no photograph as visitors tend to be during events when different structures and features are present in the view – *HBA Viewpoints 2, 10 and 4* indicate views in proximity to the perimeter of the Showground)
- Pupils, staff and visitors to St Peter's School (no photograph)

Users of public roads

- Pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists and motorists using the B2028 Selsfield Road heading south from Little London, passing the site and on entry/exit from Ardingly (*HBA Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6* demonstrate the sequence of views along Selsfield Road)
- Pedestrians, equestrians, cyclist and motorists using Street Lane, east of St Peter's Church Centre (in the Conservation Area). (*HBA Viewpoints 11 and 12*)

Value

- 6.28 Typical values for certain types of view locations are set out in *Appendix 1, Table 5*.
- 6.29 In this instance, no designated or protected views have been identified and views from outside of the settlement towards the site tend to be influenced by the character of the Showground. Views have therefore all been ranked as **medium** value.

Visual Susceptibility

- 6.30 The susceptibility to change depends upon receptor occupation or activity and the extent to which attention focuses on views and visual amenity. Typical criteria for judgement of visual susceptibility is set out in *Appendix 1, Table 6*.
- 6.31 In this instance, the most susceptible visual receptors include people engaged in outdoor informal recreation, on public rights of way, whose interest is likely to be focused on the rural landscape and views. These receptors are considered to have high susceptibility. However, in this instance, the footpaths closest to the site are not truly rural in character as they cross or are

influenced by the character of the Showground landscape. These receptors have therefore been ranked as having **medium** susceptibility.

- 6.32 Users of the recreation ground, play area and sports facilities and visitors to the Showground are considered to have **low** visual susceptibility as their activity is not dependent upon an appreciation of views of the landscape. Pupils, staff and visitors to St Peter's Primary School are similarly ranked in terms of their visual susceptibility.
- 6.33 Residents at home have a **high** susceptibility to visual change but are not considered in the LVA.
- 6.34 Travellers on local roads at the edge of the settlement (Cob Lane, Street Lane and Selsfield Road) are considered to have a **medium** susceptibility as whilst these are not promoted scenic routes, they lie within the National Landscape and/or Conservation Area where an appreciation of the surrounding landscape is of some relevance to the route experience.

Visual Sensitivity

- 6.35 Derived from the rankings of susceptibility and value, described above and indicated below, the following are the sensitivities adopted for this assessment ([Appendix 1, Table 8](#)):
- Users of PRoW in immediate vicinity of the site
(Sus-M, Val-M) – **medium sensitivity**;
 - Users of Selsfield Road, Street Lane and Cob Lane
(Sus-M, Val-M) – **medium sensitivity**;
 - Visitors to the Showground
(Sus-L, Val-M) – **medium low sensitivity**;
 - Users of Ardingly Cricket Ground, recreation ground and play area
(Sus-L, Val-M) – **medium low sensitivity**;
 - Pupils, staff and visitors to St Peter's School
(Sus-L, Val-M) – **medium low sensitivity**;

Visual Effects Assessment

- 6.36 The assessment of the visual effects of the development at completion is presented in a tabular form below.

IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL EFFECTS TABLE – DAY 1 & YEAR 15					
Visual Receptor (and location relative to closest part of site). Refer to Appendix 4 for Location Plan and Photos	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Day 1	Importance of Effect Year 15 (summer)	Comment
Users of Public Rights of Way					
Footpath 7AR/43Ar Pedestrians travelling east	Medium	Minimal / Low adverse at western end of footpath 43 Ar,	Slight adverse effect at western end of footpath 43Ar rising to	Minimal effect at western end of Footpath 43 Ar but Sight / Moderate	Footpath 43Ar currently provides open views south across the site to the settlement edge and the recreation

IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL EFFECTS TABLE – DAY 1 & YEAR 15					
Visual Receptor (and location relative to closest part of site). Refer to Appendix 4 for Location Plan and Photos	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Day 1	Importance of Effect Year 15 (summer)	Comment
/ west on the footpath where it passes a 90m stretch of the northern site boundary and on approach to the site from the west. 0m – 350m to northern and western site boundaries HBA Photo Viewpoints 4, 7 and 8		rising to High adverse where at Day 1, pedestrians passing the site boundary (on an approximate 90m length of the footpath) and new built form would be prominent looking over a newly planted hedge (offering no screening at Day 1). Effects would be reinforced by the introduction of a new entrance road at eastern end of footpath on approach to Selsfield Road.	Moderate Substantial adverse effect where receptors would be immediately adjacent to site over a length of path of approximately 90m.	adverse where immediately adjacent to site over a length of path of approximately 90m.	ground. Introduction of built form and a site access road flanking the southern side of the existing row of ornamental trees would inevitably change the open character of views, the outlook becoming suburban at the eastern end of the path nearest Selsfield Road. Over time, planting will help embed the new development with its immediate surroundings.
Footpath 9Ar Pedestrians travelling east /west on the footpath passing southern site boundary for a length of 70m and on approach to the site from the west. 0m – 200m to southern and western site boundaries HBA Photo Viewpoints 15 and 16	Medium	Minimal / Low adverse at western end of footpath 9Ar on approach to the Site (Viewpoint 16) rising to High adverse adjacent to closest point of proposed built development (Viewpoint 15) where new built form would be prominent at Day 1 including new housing, roads, a small green pumping station unit and parking spaces set beyond a planted boundary. Reducing to Minimal / Low adverse where	Slight adverse rising to Moderate / Substantial adverse effect adjacent to closest point of proposed built form. i.e. over a length of path of approximately 70m., reducing to Slight adverse effect south of the Recreation Ground.	Minimal adverse effect on views from the western end of footpath 9Ar where receptors approach the site and where gaps in the existing hedge to the footpath allow, the proposed development may remain perceptible beyond the established hedgerow and trees to the western site boundary at Year 15. Moderate adverse effect where views would remain available from an approximate 70m stretch of the footpath passing the southern site	Footpath 9Ar currently provides largely open views across the site to the Showground but filtered at the eastern end by the intervening recreation ground and vegetation. Introduction of built form into the site would therefore inevitably change the open character and the outlook would become more suburban and contained. Over time, planting will help embed the new development with its immediate surroundings.

IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL EFFECTS TABLE – DAY 1 & YEAR 15					
Visual Receptor (and location relative to closest part of site). Refer to Appendix 4 for Location Plan and Photos	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Day 1	Importance of Effect Year 15 (summer)	Comment
		the footpath approaches the site to the south of the Recreation Ground and new development would be less noticeable in the views.		boundary and approaching the site. Although new planting proposed as part of the development would have matured to provide some softening of built forms, there would remain direct views into the site due to the creation of new footpath links and built forms would be present in place of the existing open views across a field to the showground.	
Footpath 7 Ar/ 43 AR west and southwest of the Showground Pedestrians travelling north - south along the western side of the showground 'compound' 413m + from western site boundary HBA Photo Viewpoints 9 and 10	Medium	Minimal /No change.	Minimal adverse effect from southern end of route.	Minimal adverse effect from southern end of route.	Views south-east are dominated by the Showground compound; fencing, buildings, caravans and hardstanding. The site and built form on the village edge are not readily discernible beyond this. Fragmented views possibly available towards the development across part of the Showground but largely limited by landform and intervening vegetation and only likely to be perceptible from the southern extremity of this North South route. Only upper part of development likely to be glimpsed so no change assumed by Year 15.
Public Views: Users of public roads					
B2028 Selsfield Road: 0m – 550m to eastern site boundary HBA Photo Viewpoints 1,	Medium	No/Minimal adverse to north and south of the site but rising to Low at the entrance and where the site fronts onto Selsfield Road.	No/Minimal effect to north and south of site rising to Slight adverse effect at the site frontage.	No/Minimal effect to north and south of site rising to Slight Adverse effect at the site frontage.	From the north, the site is screened by elements on the Showground including the caravan and mobile home storage area and from the south by the vegetation on the boundary of the recreation ground which limits views. At the site frontage, which is raised above the level of the

IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL EFFECTS TABLE – DAY 1 & YEAR 15					
Visual Receptor (and location relative to closest part of site). Refer to Appendix 4 for Location Plan and Photos	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Day 1	Importance of Effect Year 15 (summer)	Comment
2, 3, 4, 5, and 6					road, development would be set behind the trees in the verge and the existing frontage hedge as well as being set back into the site beyond a perimeter site access road. The upper parts of development would be seen. Where a new pathway is created in the south-eastern corner of the Site, there would be a direct view into the development and the landscape area on the southern boundary, but this would be fleeting and built form would in time be softened / filtered by the new planting. Only upper parts of development likely to be glimpsed in most views, so no change assumed by Year 15.
Street Lane 200m – 320m to western site boundary HBA Photo Viewpoints 11 and 12	Medium	Low adverse	Slight adverse effect.	Minimal adverse effect.	Open views are available looking east towards the site through a gateway entrance and above the roadside hedge to this part of Street Lane. The immediate foreground of open space provided by the field to the west of the site would remain as would the wider influence of the showground fencing and conifers. New hedgerow with trees on the western site boundary and within development would help to retain the overall sylvan perception of the site in the view and embed the development into the landscape but upper parts of buildings would likely still be noted at Year 15.
Cob Lane 25m to eastern site boundary HBA Photo Viewpoint 6	Medium	Low adverse at the junction with Selsfield Road, but elsewhere on Cob Lane there would be no effect.	Slight adverse effect at the junction with Selsfield Road, but elsewhere on Cob Lane there would be no effect.	Slight adverse effect at the junction with Selsfield Road, but elsewhere on Cob Lane there would be no effect.	The Cob Lane junction with Selsfield Road is opposite the site frontage/eastern boundary where the site is slightly raised above the level of Selsfield Road. The proposed buildings would be set behind the existing retained trees in the verge and the existing frontage hedge as well as being set back into the site beyond additional planting

IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL EFFECTS TABLE – DAY 1 & YEAR 15					
Visual Receptor (and location relative to closest part of site). Refer to Appendix 4 for Location Plan and Photos	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Day 1	Importance of Effect Year 15 (summer)	Comment
					and a circulation road within the site. The proposed access road entrance (which is already an access/entrance to the Showground) and upper parts of the new buildings would be likely to be seen at Day 1. The upper parts of the development would remain likely to be glimpsed at Year 15.
Users of public open space and community space:					
Users of Ardingly Cricket Ground, recreation ground and play area 5m+ to southern site boundary HBA Photo Viewpoints 13, 14 and 15	Medium low	Low / Medium adverse	Slight / Moderate adverse effect.	Slight adverse effect.	The attractive vegetated boundaries to the north and west of the recreation ground would be retained and a new buffer of planting provided at the edge of the site/recreation ground that would provide increased screening and containment of the proposed development from the recreation ground in the longer term. However, the development would be likely to exert a slightly suburbanising influence on the recreation ground compared to its present rural character (albeit already influenced by the showground fencing and structures) due to the introduction of built forms, roads, vehicles and an attenuation basin in what is currently perceived as open space next to the receptors.
Visitors to the Showground (main site) 100m – 200m to western site boundary Note: no photograph as visitors tend to be during events when different	Medium low	Low adverse	Slight adverse effect.	Minimal adverse effect.	Visitors to the main showground site will not be focused on views of the site which will only be in view from the southern part of the Showground where existing offsite and northern boundary trees would filter views towards the new development. Views of new built form on the site would in time be further screened by the proposed boundary hedgerow. Glimpses of rooftops may persist but the overall composition and quality of the

IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL EFFECTS TABLE – DAY 1 & YEAR 15					
Visual Receptor (and location relative to closest part of site). Refer to Appendix 4 for Location Plan and Photos	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Day 1	Importance of Effect Year 15 (summer)	Comment
structures and features are present in the view – HBA Viewpoints 2, 10 and 4 indicate views in proximity to the perimeter of the Showground					views would be unaltered by the proposed development.
Pupils, staff and visitors to St Peter's Primary School 30m+ to southern site boundary	Medium low	Minimal / low adverse where new development may initially be glimpsed through any hedgerow gaps to the school and footpath 7Ar.	Slight adverse effect (allowing for the worst case)	Minimal adverse effect.	School is set at slightly lower level than the site and partly screened from the wider open space to the west of the site by a gappy hedgerow. Glimpsed winter views of the new dwellings may be possible from the northern edge of the playground and school grounds but main school building is set to the southwest of the plot. Planting to the western site boundary and southwestern corner of the site will further screen views in the longer term. The open fields to the west of the site would remain a feature.

Summary of Visual Effects Assessment

6.37 The open nature of the existing site means that where views are possible, the proposed development would somewhat inevitably adversely alter the visually open character of the site within those views. Despite this, the adverse visual effects of the Proposed Development would be geographically localised and limited to people (receptors) using the public footpaths which adjoin the site to the north and south, users of the recreation ground and users of Selsfield Road where they approach the village and pass the site. Glimpsed views would also be possible from Cob Lane at the junction with Selsfield Road and from a section of Street Lane in the Ardingly Conservation Area. There would also be a number of private views of the site available to people in their homes and gardens however private views are not protected in planning and these are not assessed in the LVA. In the longer term, new in-character planting to the site boundaries and within the site would soften the appearance of the new development and help embed them into the views.

6.38 The proposed development submitted for the reserved matters application represents a more

detailed development proposal than was submitted at the outline stage and therefore more information has been able to be considered in relation to the siting of buildings, landscape and engineered features than considered at the outline stage. The reserved matters scheme is not considered to result in any new visual receptors experiencing views of the development or an increase in the magnitude and importance of visual effect that would be experienced by the visual receptors compared to the development consented in the outline application.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The LVA has described the landscape and visual context for the Proposed Development at Land West of Selsfield Road in Ardingly which is submitted as a reserved matters application for up to 35 dwellings, associated landscaping and infrastructure. This follows the grant of outline permission (Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) application ref: DM/22/1575) by decision notice dated 8th June 2023 and the allocation of the site under Policy SA 25 of the Mid Sussex Site Allocations DPD.
- 7.2 The Site lies to the north of the village of Ardingly, within the High Weald National Landscape and on an area of land that provides seasonal overflow parking for the Ardingly Showground. The site lies at the edge of a 'plateau' of land sited between the village and Showground, that is significantly influenced by the Showground to the north (which includes numerous built structures, safety fencing and an area of caravan and camper van storage in proximity to the site), and residential and recreational uses at the edge of the village to the south. Although pleasant, it is uncharacteristic and quite distinct from the wider countryside and recognised special qualities of the High Weald National Landscape
- 7.3 The wider area around the site is assessed in the 2007 Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study as having Medium landscape capacity to accommodate housing development and subsequently in the 2014 Capacity Study as having Medium landscape capacity to accommodate development, both documents forming Evidence Papers to the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan. This is the highest level of capacity assessed around the village of Ardingly.
- 7.4 At a more local level, the supporting evidence for the Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan assessed the site as having a Medium/High and Medium capacity to accommodate development and identifies the majority of the Policy SA25 area as the preferred location for housing development in the parish.
- 7.5 The reserved matters scheme introduces design amendments that would result in a range of both positive (beneficial) and negative (adverse) landscape effects when compared to the approved outline scheme. The LVA finds that on balance, the proposed reserved matters scheme would not result in a materially different landscape effect overall to that which was assessed for the outline application. It is acknowledged that there would be some additional and localised adverse landscape impacts arising from the reserved matters application, in particular resulting from the attenuation basin and pumping station, however these are not considered to result in a change to the thresholds/rankings assessed for the outline application.
- 7.6 The overall landscape effect of the proposed development in the reserved matters scheme is therefore considered to be the same as that for the outline scheme, this being of **medium adverse** in magnitude at Day 1 (refer to [Appendix 1, Table 4](#)), resulting in a **slight / moderate adverse importance of landscape effect** (refer to [Appendix 1 Table 9](#)) at Day 1 that would be confined to a relatively small area immediately adjoining the site.
- 7.7 As was considered for the outline application, subject to appropriate long-term management and maintenance, the existing and augmented boundary hedgerows and new structural landscape would over time help to further embed the site into the local area, resulting in a reduction in the magnitude and importance of landscape effect to **slight adverse** by Year 15

and remaining confined to a small area immediately around the site.

- 7.8 With regard to the High Weald National Landscape designation, the proposed development has sought to respond to the landscape management guidelines identified in the High Weald AONB Management Plan. Overall, the proposed development is considered to result in a neutral landscape effect on the core components and purpose for designation of the High Weald National Landscape as a result of the above changes. The exception to this is dark skies, where the proposal would inevitably introduce a degree of lighting into a currently unlit site. In this regard the detailed lighting design is to be determined by the submission of information pursuant to the discharge of Condition 22 of the planning application and would include measures to minimise ambient light levels and light spill from the buildings.
- 7.9 In terms of visual effects, the LVA finds that the proposed development submitted for the reserved matters application would not result in any new visual receptors experiencing views of the development or an increase in the magnitude and importance of visual effect that would be experienced by the visual receptors compared to the development consented in the outline application.
- 7.10 The open nature of the existing site means that where views of the site are possible, the proposed development would somewhat inevitably adversely alter the visually open character of the site within those views. Despite this, the adverse visual effects of the Proposed Development would be geographically localised and limited to people (receptors) using the public footpaths which adjoin the site to the north and south, users of the recreation ground and users of Selsfield Road where they approach the village and pass the site. Glimpsed views would also be possible from Cob Lane at the junction with Selsfield Road and from a section of Street Lane in the Ardingly Conservation Area. There would also be a number of private views of the site available to people in their homes and gardens however private views are not protected in planning and these are not assessed in the LVA. In the longer term, new in-character planting to the site boundaries and within the site would soften the appearance of the new development and help embed them into the views.
- 7.11 Subject to the implementation of the proposed landscape strategy (indicated on the submitted Hard Landscape Plan and Soft Landscape Plans) and with appropriate long-term management as identified in a LEMP (to be submitted to and approved by MSDC as required by planning condition) it is considered that the proposed development would become embedded into its local setting at the edge of the village and would contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the key character components of the High Weald National Landscape.