

Land to the west of Marwick Close, Bolney Road, Ansty

Proposed Residential Development

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

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1. Introduction

This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared on behalf of Devine Homes in relation to proposals for residential development on Land to the west of Marwick Close, Bolney Road, Ansty, West Sussex (Figure 1). The proposals are for the construction of 34 dwellings with associated services and infrastructure. The application area extends to 1.62 ha.

The Methodology used in preparation of this LVA is included in Appendix 1. The LVA Methodology used is consistent with revised guidance set out in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA)' published by the Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Assessment (GLVIA3 Third edition, 2013) and Technical Guidance Notes issued by the Landscape Institute relevant to the preparation of LVAs.

The purpose of this LVA is to assess fully the anticipated impacts and effects of the proposed development on landscape character and visual amenity and to inform the design process with regard to the protection of retained features, the siting and layout of development and creation of a landscape infrastructure and setting to the development which conserves, and where possible enhances, local landscape character, biodiversity and visual amenity. This LVA is set out as follows:

Section 2 describes the landscape policy context to the Site;

Section 3 describes the landscape character context for the Site by reference to national and local landscape character assessments;

Section 4 describes the appearance and landscape character of the Site and any constraints informed by a Site visit undertaken on 22nd September 2025 and other surveys prepared in support of the application;

Section 5 describes views to and from the Site and includes reference to representative viewpoints;

Section 6 provides an overview of the proposed development and the associated landscape proposals;

Section 7 sets out the assessment of the anticipated impact and effects of the proposed development on landscape character;

Section 8 describes the assessment of the anticipated visual impact and effects of the proposed development;

Section 9 provides a summary of conclusions and findings of the LVA.

For all Figures see Appendix 2.

2. Local Landscape Policy Context

The Site lies within the administrative area of Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC). The local planning policy context to the Site is described in the MSDC District Plan 2014-2031 and the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031 (made February 2017).

Policies and other guidance relevant within a landscape and visual context are set out below in Sections 2.2-2.6 (policy wording in italics).

2.1 *Designations*

The Site carries no landscape, heritage or wildlife designations. Within the 1km Study Area there are a number of designated assets:

- The High Weald National Landscape boundary lies approximately 250m to the north. The National Landscape boundary generally follows the A272 at this point, but skirts around the settlement of Ansty to the north.
- Listed buildings within the settlement of Ansty and wider Study Area. Those in the immediate vicinity include: Grade II Butler's Farmhouse approximately 150m west of the Site boundary; Grade II Mount Noddy Cottage on the B2036 approximately 220m east of the Site boundary. Grade II The Old Cottage and The Ancient Farm are located to the east, close to the junction between Bolney Road and Cuckfield Road.

Assessment of impacts and effects on conservation and wildlife sites and on heritage assets is outside the scope of this LVA. However, where relevant the LVA will consider impacts and effects on the setting of heritage assets, primarily with regard to intervisibility with the proposals.

2.2 *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)*

National policy emphasises the need for well-designed places sympathetic to landscape setting:

135. 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 (such as increased densities);[..]

Paragraph 187 emphasises conservation and enhancement of the natural environment:

187. 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;

Paragraph 189 addresses nationally designated landscapes:

189. 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.

Section 16 of the NPPF seeks to protect heritage assets:

16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations

213. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

2.3 Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 adopted March 2018

The Site is located outside the boundary of the built up area of Ansty. Policy DP12 is therefore relevant:

DP12: Protection and 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, and:

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

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

The Site is within 250m of the boundary of the High Weald National Landscape (formerly AONB). Policy with reference to the National Landscape (formerly AONB) setting is relevant:

DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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

Public footpath (ANS 70CR) linking Cuckfield Road and Bolney Road runs just within the southern site boundary (see Figure 3).

DP22: Rights of Way and other Recreational Routes

Rights of way, Sustrans national cycle routes and recreational routes will be protected by ensuring development does not result in the loss of or does not adversely affect a right of way or other recreational routes unless a new route is provided which is of at least an equivalent value and which does not sever important routes.

Policy DP26 addresses the character and design of new development:

DP26: Character and Design

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

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

The western part of the Site includes an area of existing woodland:

DP37: Trees, Woodland 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 the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.[..]

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

- incorporates existing important trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design of new development and its landscape scheme; and [..]*
- where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management;*

The Site is identified in the draft allocations in the Plan (Policy DPA17) Land to the west of Marwick Close, Bolney Road, Ansty.

Policy requirements associated with the allocation include:

1. *Provide suitable access from Upton Drive and Marwick Close.*
2. *Retain and enhance the trees and retain the ground levels along the A272 Bolney Road which forms the western boundary of the site.*
3. *Particular attention should be given to trees and hedgerows on the southern boundary adjacent to the PRoW and in the southwest of the site.*
4. *Maintain the rural character of the PRoW on the southern boundary of the site.*
5. *The layout of the site should take into account the location of the trees and allow for their future retention and to prevent overshadowing into private gardens.*
6. *The design and layout of the site should reflect a transition from the built environment to the rural countryside.*
7. *The design and layout of the site should reflect the rural character of the settlement and avoid being urban or suburban in character.*
8. *Integrate development with the site to the east (DPA16) by providing pedestrian and cycling connections and green infrastructure connectivity.*
9. *Provide good acoustic design to address noise impacts associated with the A272 Bolney Road.*
10. *Meet the requirements of other relevant development plan policies.*

2.4 High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029

The High Weald AONB Management Plan has been adopted by MSDC as one of fifteen local authorities which have adopted the Plan as their policy for the National Landscape.

The Site is located outside the National Landscape but under the definition of “setting” in the Management Plan is considered to be potentially within its setting:

The term ‘setting’ is used to refer to areas outside the National Landscape where development and other activities may affect land within a National Landscape. Its extent will vary depending upon the issues considered, however, due to the high synergy in character between the National Landscape boundary and the wider High Weald National Character Area (NCA)⁴, land within the NCA should be considered as falling within the setting of the National Landscape. Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000 requires public bodies to consider whether any activities outside the AONB may affect land in an AONB. Not all activities will be detrimental; conservation practices and economic activities outside the National Landscape can support the National Landscape’s conservation purpose.

The Management Plan sets out considerations regarding proposed development within the AONB setting:

It is not only development within the boundary of the High Weald AONB that needs to be informed by consideration of the Management Plan; national planning policy and guidance make clear that land within the setting of AONBs often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and here poorly located or designed development can do harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.

Planning Principal 2 states:

Noting that whether development is major or not in the context of the AONB (under para 183 of the NPPF) is a matter of planning judgement for the decision maker, the High Weald Partnership recommends that, in forming that judgement, specific consideration be given to the following:

- *The potential of the proposal to have a significant adverse impact on the natural beauty for which the AONB is designated and defined, as set out in this Management Plan, for example, where the nature, scale and setting of the proposal could significantly harm any of the character components.*

2.5 Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031 (made February 2017)

The Neighbourhood Plan includes a vision, objectives and policies which are relevant to the Site.

The Vision states:

In 2031 the villages of Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street will remain distinct communities from the larger nearby towns and villages such as Burgess Hill and Cuckfield, having seen no harmful expansion of their settlements into the surrounding countryside.

Ansty will have accommodated new housing to help meet the demand and need for new and affordable homes by using land within or close to the established settlement boundary. [..]

Defined objectives include:

- 1. To protect the environment of the Neighbourhood Plan area in terms of its rural identity, landscape setting and local green spaces of importance.*

2.6 Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document SPD Adopted November 2020

The Design Guide includes principles relating to proposed development within Mid Sussex:

Principle DG3: Work with the site's natural features and resources

The landscape characteristics should be considered from the outset of the design process. The existing natural landscape informs the existing character of most sites. It should be retained as much as possible so that it shapes the form of new development and is incorporated to enhance its setting while reducing its impact on the wider landscape. This includes the consideration of the topography, trees and vegetation, orientation, landform, geology, watercourses / drainage, field patterns, boundaries and ecology.

Principle DG7: Respond to topography and strategic views

Views across the open countryside from elevated locations in the District, especially in the High Weald and South Downs National Park, are an important part of the District's character and must be retained. Developments, particularly at a larger scale, must be carefully managed to

minimise adverse impacts. New buildings should not obscure or cause adverse impact on these existing views and attention must be given to reduce the impact of development against the skyline or ridgelines of hills.

Development proposals should soften their appearance within the landscape by minimising their visual impact through integrating them within the existing landform and with the careful siting of buildings and landscape.

Applicants should identify important views into and out of their site. This may include long distance views to landscape features or buildings or shorter distance views to attractive or distinctive townscape. Where appropriate development should be laid out so that these views are retained and where possible enhanced to improve legibility whilst ensuring that new development is appropriately screened so as not to impact on views towards the site.

Principle DG27: Integrate tree planting and soft landscape

Trees and soft landscape make an important contribution to the character of an area by providing both physical and visual amenity, improving biodiversity and enhancing sense of place. They have a strong impact on people's well-being, soften the impact of buildings and structures, and indicate the passage of the seasons through their growth and change through the year, and should therefore be incorporated throughout new development.

2.7 The High Weald National Landscape an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Planning Technical Advice Note: Dark Skies in the High Weald

The Site is outside the National Landscape boundary, but is potentially within its setting. Guidance on the preservation of dark skies associated with the National Landscape is therefore relevant.

The High Weald AONB is characterised by having some of the darkest skies in the South-east of England, with the least skyglow. This gives the AONB a sense of remoteness and peacefulness and connects the natural environment to the cultural and historic landscape.

Objective DS1 states:

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 within the High Weald, and from highways lighting.

3. Landscape Character Context

Published Landscape Character Assessments provided a baseline description of the key features and elements which define local landscape character. The National Character Areas (NCA) cover the whole of England and Wales¹. The land at Bolney Road lies within NCA 122 High Weald. The identified key characteristics of this NCA are set out in Section 3.1.

The Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape 2005 presents a vision for the five National Character Areas which fall within the West Sussex boundary and is also referenced below in Section 3.2. At a county level, landscape character is set out in the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex 2005, referenced in Section 3.3. These assessments are now some years old, and it is acknowledged that baseline conditions may have changed in the interim. They nevertheless offer assessment of key characteristics which are relevant to the Site and its location.

A more up to date assessment of the area in which the Site is located is set out in the 2014 Study The Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study (June 2014), referenced in Section 3.4.

An assessment of the Site against the identified Character Areas is included in Section 4.

3.1 ***National Character Area 122 High Weald***

NCA 122 extends east and south east from Horsham towards Cranbrook in Kent and to the south coast. The Site is located in the far western part of the NCA near the boundary with NCA 121 Low Weald to the south.

Key characteristics are defined as:

- *A faulted landform of clays, sand and soft sandstones with outcrops of fissured sandrock and ridges running east–west, deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams forming the headwaters of a number of the major rivers – the Rother, Brede, Ouse and Medway – which flow in broad valleys.*
- *High density of extraction pits, quarries and ponds, in part a consequence of diverse geology and highly variable soils over short distances.*

¹ <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/>

- *A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads and medieval ridgetop villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries, with a dominance of timber-framed buildings with steep roofs often hipped or half-hipped, and an extremely high survival rate of farm buildings dating from the 17th century or earlier.*
- *Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a dense system of radiating droveways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wild flower-rich verges and boundary banks. Church towers and spires on the ridges are an important local landmark. There is a dense network of small, narrow and winding lanes, often sunken and enclosed by high hedgerows or woodland strips. The area includes several large towns such as Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough, Battle and Heathfield and is closely bordered by others such as Crawley, East Grinstead, Hastings and Horsham.*
- *An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far reaching views, giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity yet concealing the highest density of timber-framed buildings anywhere in Europe amidst lanes and paths.*
- *Strong feeling of remoteness due to very rural, wooded character. A great extent of interconnected ancient woods, steep-sided gill woodlands, wooded heaths and shaws in generally small holdings with extensive archaeology and evidence of long-term management.*
- *Extensive broadleaved woodland cover with a very high proportion of ancient woodland with high forest, small woods and shaws, plus steep valleys with gill woodland.*
- *Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin and managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing.*
- *A predominantly grassland agricultural landscape grazed mainly with sheep and some cattle.*
- *There is a strong influence of the Wealden iron industry which started in Roman times, until coke fuel replaced wood and charcoal. There are features such as a notably high number of small hammer ponds surviving today.*
- *Ashdown Forest, in contrast to the more intimate green woods and pastures elsewhere, is a high, rolling and open heathland lying on the sandstone ridges to the west of the area.*
- *An essentially medieval landscape reflected in the patterns of settlement, fields and woodland.*

- *High-quality vernacular architecture with distinct local variation using local materials. Horsham Slate is used on mainly timber structures and timber-framed barns are a particularly notable Wealden characteristic feature of the High Weald.*

Statements of Environmental Opportunity include:

SEO 1

Maintain and enhance the existing woodland and pasture components of the landscape, including the historic field pattern bounded by shaws, hedgerows and farm woods, to improve ecological function at a landscape scale for the benefit of biodiversity, soils and water, sense of place and climate regulation, safeguard ancient woodlands and encourage sustainably produced timber to support local markets and contribute to biomass production.

SEO 3

Maintain and enhance the distinctive dispersed settlement pattern, parkland and historic pattern and features of the routeways of the High Weald, encouraging the use of locally characteristic materials and Wealden practices to ensure that any development recognises and retains the distinctiveness, biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage assets present, reaffirm sense of place and enhance the ecological function of routeways to improve the connectivity of habitats and provide wildlife corridors.

3.2 A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape 2005

The Strategy sets out a vision for each of the five National Character Area areas within West Sussex. The Site is located within the High Weald NCA:

A Vision For The Landscape Of The High Weald

- *The characteristic mixture of highly distinctive and extensive woodlands, many of them ancient, including shaws and steep valley woodlands in the deep ghylls, is managed as a woodland resource and as wildlife habitats, with new plantings linking up once-isolated woodland features.*
- *Distinctive characteristics such as sandstone outcrops, the pattern of small, irregular fields bounded by shaws, historic routeways and rural lanes, old iron working sites and hammer ponds, are protected and conserved.*

- *The characteristic pattern of small fields is well-managed and is being maintained.*
- *New development of high quality fits with the characteristic settlement pattern of scattered villages, hamlets and dispersed farmsteads.*
- *The local distinctiveness of villages and their settings is evident, with a return to the greater availability and use of traditional local materials.*

3.3 Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex 2005

The Site is located within Landscape Character Area 10: High Weald Fringes, which is described as:

Densely-wooded southern flanks of the High Weald Forest Ridge, dissected gentle gill streams draining west to the River Adur and east to the River Ouse. Includes the settlements of Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield.

Key characteristics are defined as:

- *Wooded, often confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity partly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).*
- *South and east-draining gills and broad ridges sweeping gently down to the Low Weald.*
- *Western part drained by the headwaters of the River Arun, eastern part around Scaynes Hill by the River Ouse.*
- *Long views over the Low Weald to the downs.*
- *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 and larger fields, and small pockets of remnant heathland.*
- *Orchards and horticulture on lower slopes, particularly to the west.*
- *Biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.*

- *Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.*
- *Dispersed historic settlement pattern, close to Horsham, the principal settlements Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield and a few villages and hamlets.*
- *Some busy lanes and roads including A and B roads bounding the area to the west, and other roads crossing north to south, including the A23 Trunk Road.*
- *London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area at Haywards Heath.*
- *Mill sites, hammerponds and ornamental lakes and ponds.*
- *Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.*
- *Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses.*
- *Major gill woodland garden and visitor attraction at Leonardslee.*

3.4 The Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study (LUC, June 2014)

This Study identifies five new landscape character areas not covered by a previous 2007 Study. The Site is located within a new character area LCA 77. No detailed map of LCA 77 is available, but the LCA borders the A272 to the north and broadly covers an area south of the A272 which includes West Riddens Farm and sections of the B2036 and Cuckfield Road to the south, and stretches westward to include Butlers Farm and areas of woodland and eastward towards Upper Ridges and Heaselands. To the north the LCA borders the A272 between the junction with the A23 to the west and the junction with Cuckfield Road to the north east.

The Study sets out key characteristics and sensitivities associated with each new character area as described overleaf.

LCA 77: Ansty High Weald Fringe

Key characteristics:

- *Part of High Weald fringes on the edge of the AONB, forming a transitional landscape to the Low Weald.*
- *Gently undulating landscape with long views over the Low Weald.*
- *Wooded character with pockets of plantation and semi-natural woodland, substantial amounts of which are classified as ancient. Some woodland areas are designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.*
- *Includes the southern part of Ansty village; much of the existing settlement is concentrated here, with scattered farms and manor houses elsewhere.*
- *Field enclosures form a mosaic, with a mixture of small irregular fields of medieval origin and some larger enclosures.*
- *Some farm buildings and residences are designated as Listed Buildings.*
- *A sense of intimacy and seclusion offered by the high woodland cover, although this is impacted in places by the presence of busy road routes including the A272 and proximity to larger settlements such as Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill.*

Key landscape sensitivities:

- *Unobtrusive, scattered settlement pattern.*
- *Long views from open ground.*
- *Areas of valued semi-natural woodland cover conferring an intimate and secluded feel.*
- *Historic, small-scale field pattern defining much of the area, with an estate influence.*
- *Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, locally designated for their contribution to the District's biodiversity resource.*

The overall sensitivity of LCA 77 is concluded to be *Moderate*. The Study includes assessment of landscape condition, settlement setting, sense of rurality and settlement separation. The Study notes that:

- *hedgerows are mostly intact, but some field boundaries have been lost*
- *the LCA contributes to the wooded surroundings of Ansty*
- *wooded areas provide a sense of enclosure and rural feel but in places this is impacted by roads and proximity to settlement*
- *LCA contributes to separation between Cuckfield and Haywards Heath and a buffer between Ansty and larger settlements of Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill*

The Study also assesses landscape value, which is concluded to be *Moderate/High*. The Study notes that:

- *LCA abuts High Weald National Landscape*
- *Designations includes ancient woodland and two Sites of Nature Conservation Importance*
- *LCA contributes to National Landscape setting*
- *LCA includes listed buildings and areas of historical field pattern, retaining an estate character in some areas*
- *Some areas have sense of seclusion but are impacted by roads and proximity to settlement. Other areas more open and farmed.*

LCA 77 is concluded overall to have *Low/Medium capacity*.

4. Baseline Landscape Character Assessment

The Site extents are shown on Figure 1. The local landscape context is shown on Figure 3. This baseline landscape character assessment is informed by a site visit undertaken on 22nd September 2025 and by:

- Tree Survey Schedule and Tree Constraints Plan (David Archer Associates, January 2026)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Partnership, July 2025)

Impacts on wildlife and ecologically designated assets are outside the scope of this LVA but will be referenced as appropriate in a landscape context.

Based on a desk top overview of the site context and designations a 1 kilometre study area was identified for the purposes of this LVA.

4.1 Site Description

The Site is located to the south and east of the A272 Bolney Road and west of Marwick Close on the southern edge of the village of Ansty.

A series of illustrative landscape character views (Viewpoints LC1 to LC4) is included at Figure 2, which illustrate the topography of the Site, existing land use, structures and overall character. Key landscape features are also identified on the Representative Viewpoints and Landscape Analysis Plan (Figure 3).

The Site is broadly triangular in shape and mainly comprises a grassed field with a small copse of mature oak, hazel and other trees and scrub located in the western parts of the Site. The land falls from around 78m AOD in the north eastern corner to a low point of 70 m AOD in the south west corner. An overhead power line runs diagonally across the Site from north east to south west.

The Site is enclosed by mature wooded boundaries to the north, south and east, much of which lies offsite. These provide a strong sense of visual enclosure. The wooded boundary to the north with the A272 Bolney Road is set on a shallow cutting slope down to the road. There is a mix of residential development on the north side of Bolney Road. The southern and eastern boundaries comprise areas of unmanaged native hedge and scrub.

A Tree Schedule and Tree Constraints Plan has been prepared by David Archer Associates (January 2026). The tree survey identifies a number of dead or dying ash within the boundary vegetation, in particular on the southern boundary (G13).

There are gated access points in the south east corner and halfway along the northern boundary.

The recent residential development at Marwick Close adjoins the north eastern Site Boundary. This is an open boundary with a post and rail fence and areas of parking and houses.

To the south the land falls to areas of rolling pasture, agricultural land and woodlands typical of this part of the Weald.

There is ribbon development along Cuckfield Road (including recent development at Crouch Fields) separated from the Site by a small paddock and wooded boundaries.

Public Footpath 70CR follows the southern Site boundary but the path alignment is currently largely blocked by overgrown vegetation. There is a small area of informal offsite parking where the path joins Bolney Road to the west of the Site.

4.2 Overview Landscape Character and Significance

Table 1: Landscape Receptor Sensitivity

Landscape Character Receptor	Landscape value	Susceptibility to change	Landscape Receptor Sensitivity	Brief description
NCA 122 High Weald	National	Low	Medium	The Site is representative of the landscape of small irregularly shaped fields enclosed by hedgerows with wooded shaws. The landscape is more undulating than the description of steeper sided valleys described in the NCA. The sense of tranquillity and remoteness is, however, influenced by the proximity of the development at Marwick Close and the busy traffic on the A272 Bolney Road.
Landscape Character Area 10: High Weald Fringes (Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex 2005)	Local	Low	Medium	This description of small irregular fields with wooded enclosure is repeated in the key characteristics of the High Weald Fringes LCA. The LCA description identifies the influence of busy A and B roads on rural character and tranquillity.
LCA 77 (The Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study (LUC, June 2014)	Local	Low	Medium	This LCA provides a more focused description of the landscape around Ansty and identifies the concentration of the settlement in the southern parts of the village. The description again identifies the sense of enclosure provided by the small irregular field pattern, woodlands and hedges and the impact of the A272 Bolney Road on rural character.

Landscape Character Receptor	Landscape value	Susceptibility to change	Landscape Receptor Sensitivity	Brief description
Site features: Landscape pattern; trees and hedgerows, boundaries	Site	Medium	Low	The Site does reflect the local pattern of small irregular, grazed fields enclosed by mature hedgerows and with the small wooded shaw in the western corner of the Site.
Site features: historic and cultural associations	Site	Low	Low	There are no known historic features or cultural associations linked to the Site.
Site features: ecology, land management, land use and land cover	Site	Medium	Low	There are a number of mature oaks located in the western parts of the Site and the hedgerow boundaries form important local wildlife corridors. The main areas of the Site comprise areas of former grazing land.

4.3 Landscape Character Baseline Assessment Summary

The Site comprises a small triangular shaped field on the southern edge of the village of Ansty. The land parcel mainly comprises a small grass field which has been under grazing. The field is enclosed by a narrow belt of mature woodland between the Site and the A272 Bolney Road to the north and mature unmanaged hedges to the east and south. There is a small wooded shaw in the western most corner of the field with a number of mature oak and an understorey of hazel, hawthorn and other locally native shrubs and trees. A line of overhead cables runs from the north eastern corner south west across the Site.

The Site is typical of the *pattern of small, irregular fields bounded by shaws* within an undulating landscape typical of the Wealden landscape described in the various published national and local landscape character assessments. The Site does retain a degree of a sense of *intimacy and seclusion*, but the proximity of the busy A272 Bolney Road and the existing residential development at Marwick Close influence rural character and the sense of remoteness. The Site benefits from a high level of visual enclosure, bordered by dense hedges, scrub and trees on all boundaries. The Site reflects the findings of the 2014 Landscape Capacity study for the Ansty High Weald Fringe and is concluded to be of medium landscape value with a medium assessment of susceptibility to accommodate the proposed residential development and overall medium landscape sensitivity.

5. Baseline Visual Assessment

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

A broad visual envelope or zone of theoretical visibility was identified through a desk top analysis of contour and topographical information.

A ZTV plan was not considered necessary. Following the desk top analysis a site visit was undertaken in order to identify the actual visual envelope and views to the Site as defined by relief, landscape features and also built development.

10 representative viewpoints from publicly accessible locations have been identified. Viewpoints are described in Table 2 and viewpoint locations are shown on the Viewpoint Location Plan in Figure 3. Photographs taken from each of the representative viewpoint locations are included in Figure 4. Photographs were taken on 22nd September 2025. The weather was clear and mostly sunny. All images were taken with a 50mm DSLR digital lens. In a number of cases single frames have been combined to provide panoramas to illustrate the Site in the wider context.

Table 2: Baseline Visual Assessment

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Baseline Assessment: Visual Receptor Description
1	Near view east towards the Site from Bolney Road adjacent to the small area of off road parking. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28775 23046 Altitude: 65 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: <10 m	Low Low	The wooded copse at the western end of the land parcel prevents views to the main part of the Site. Visual receptor: Residents and road users on residential street.
2	Near view east along the alignment of Public Footpath 70CR which follows the Site southern boundary. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28802 23044 Altitude: 67 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: <10 m	Low Medium	The footpath alignment is largely blocked by vegetation. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Baseline Assessment: Visual Receptor Description
3	Near view north through gated access to the Site from Public Footpath 70CR. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28987 23039 Altitude: 71 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: <10 m	Low Medium	The existing residential area on Marwick Close is also glimpsed in this view. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way
4	Near view south west from Marwick Close towards the Site. OS Grid Ref: TQ 29003 23174 Altitude: 78 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 35 m	Low Low	The existing Site is visible beyond the end of the residential cul de sac. Visual receptor: Residents and road users on residential street.
5	Near distance view south west towards the Site from the A272 Bolney Road at the junction with Marwick Close. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28990 23230 Altitude: 76m AOD Distance to centre of Site: 63m	Low Low	Existing dwellings and wooded vegetation on the northern boundary prevent views to the Site. Visual receptor: Residents and road users on residential street.
6	Middle distance view west towards the Site from Public Footpath 62CR. OS Grid Ref: TQ 29650 23245 Altitude: 67 m AOD Distance to centre of Site: 665 m	Medium Medium	Trees and woodland screen views to the Site. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way
7	Near distance view south west from Cuckfield Road opposite the entrance to Crouch Fields. OS Grid Ref: TQ 29134 23215 Altitude: 77 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 162 m	Low Low	The Site is screened by intervening houses and vegetation. Visual receptor: Residents and road users on residential street.

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Baseline Assessment: Visual Receptor Description
8	Near view south west along the A272 Bolney Road along the Site northern boundary. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28987 23039 Altitude: 71 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: <10 m	Low Low	The Site is screened with the exception of a break in the tree cover at the location of a gated access to the field. Visual receptor: Residents and road users on residential street.
9	Middle distance view south from Public Footpath 25CR towards the Site. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28666 23914 Altitude: 79 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 780 m	High High	The Site is screened by intervening areas of trees and woodland. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way within a National Landscape
10	Near distance view north from Public Footpath 75CR towards the Site. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28981 22710 Altitude: 60 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 360 m	Medium Medium	The Site is screened by intervening areas of trees and woodland. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way

5.1 Visual Baseline Assessment Summary

The baseline visual assessment demonstrates that the Site benefits from a high level of visual enclosure. There is dense mature vegetation cover on all boundaries which prevents views from the surrounding area with the exception of near, glimpsed views from Footpath 70CR on the southern boundary and from Marwick Close to the north. There are no views to the Site from the A272 due to the change in level and the density of the vegetation cover. Intervening vegetation prevents potential longer distance views from the north, south and east.

Footpath 70CR is currently not accessible due to vegetation cover. The footpath alignment would be cleared, but with clearance limited to the path alignment in order to maximise the retention of existing vegetation cover.

There is no intervisibility between the Site and locations within the National Landscape.

6.0 Proposed Residential Development

The proposed site layout is shown on Figure 5. The proposals are for the construction of 34 dwellings with access from Marwick Close. The existing overhead cables will be run to ground.

The Tree Protection Plan (David Archer Associates January 2026) shows that almost all boundary vegetation would be retained. A part of group G7 would be removed and parts of G11 and G13 on the southern boundary would also be removed in order to open up the alignment to Footpath 70CR and as part of the proposed drainage works. G13 largely comprises dead or dying ash.

The proposed site layout and the landscape setting are designed to address the specific requirements of Policy DPA 17 (and wider landscape and environmental policies), with the retention and enhancement of boundary vegetation, creation of an inward facing development within a strong landscape infrastructure that allows rear gardens and planting to create a softer transition to the countryside edges, adoption of modest building heights and use of locally distinctive materials to deliver a development whose character conserves and enhances the local area. The proposals would also maintain and enhance the setting to PRoW 70CR through clearance of the alignment and management of retained vegetation. The landscape proposals also incorporate a number of ecological enhancements consistent with the recommendations set out in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Partnership, July 2025).

The proposed landscape infrastructure (Figure 5) seeks to strengthen and enhance the existing landscape pattern and to introduce a number of habitat and recreational amenity features to benefit local residents. These include:

- Strengthening of all boundary vegetation where necessary with a mix of native trees and scrub creating wildlife buffers/corridors;
- Creation of a small semi natural open space in the wooded south western corner of the site incorporating informal natural play features and habitat enhancements in the form of wildflower meadow, tree, scrub and hedge planting, creation of log piles and hibernacula, bug hotels and bat boxes;
- Creation of a small community orchard close to the site access in the north eastern site corner;
- Amenity street tree planting with underplanting of a mix of low growing native and ornamental shrubs throughout the proposed residential area;
- Incorporation of a sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) with a swale/water attenuation feature on the southern boundary seeded with a wet meadow mix.

7.0 Landscape Character Impact Assessment

This section of the LVA assesses the anticipated impacts and effects of the proposed development against the landscape receptors described in the LVA Methodology. The overall assessment of effects is in accordance with Table 3 of the LVA Methodology.

7.1 Landscape Character Areas

7.1.1 *NCA 122 High Weald*

In terms of geographical extents the proposals would only affect a very small part of the NCA. The baseline assessment concludes that the existing character, use and appearance of the Site does in part reflect the key characteristics of the NCA. Residential development would enable the retention of the boundary features and small area of woodland in the south western parts of the Site which most strongly reflect the character of the wider National Landscape.

The overall magnitude of change is assessed as Very Low.

Significance of Landscape Effect: Negligible

7.1.2 *Landscape Character Area 10: High Weald Fringes (Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex 2005)*

In terms of geographical extents the proposals would only affect a relatively small area of LCA 10, with localised effects on a location on the settlement edge. The baseline assessment concludes that the existing character, use and appearance of the Site does reflect key characteristics of the LCA and similarly LCA 77 as described in the landscape capacity study. As with reference to the NCA, residential development would enable the retention of the boundary features and small area of woodland in the south western parts of the Site which most strongly reflect the character of the wider National Landscape. The impact assessment also reflects the fact that there are existing urbanising influences from the neighbouring development at Marwick Close and the A272.

The overall magnitude of change is assessed as low.

Significance of Landscape Effect: Minor adverse

7.2 Site Features

7.2.1 Landscape pattern; trees and hedgerows, boundaries

The proposed development would be set within the existing site features and landscape pattern, with only very limited removals of existing vegetation. The landscape proposals would strengthen the landscape pattern with the enhancement of the retained hedge and hedgerow trees and boundary woodland edges. Retained grasslands would be enhanced for biodiversity and amenity and further boundary planting would contribute to landscape pattern and site features.

The overall magnitude of change is assessed as Very Low.
Significance of Landscape Effect: Negligible

7.2.2 Cultural and historical associations

There are no known cultural and historical associations linked to the Site and there are no neighbouring features which would be affected by the proposals.

The overall magnitude of change is assessed as Neutral.
Significance of Landscape Effect: Neutral

7.2.3 Ecology, land management, land use and land cover

The majority of the Site comprises the open grassland. This is assessed as of limited ecological and agricultural value. Residential development as proposed would result in the loss of this open, largely green landscape, although over time it is considered that the landscape setting to the residential development would contribute to the character of the views and integrate the development into the local landscape. The proposals would enable the opening of access to Footpath 70CR and enhancement and management of retained and proposed landscape elements.

The overall magnitude of change is assessed as Low
Significance of Landscape Effect: Minor adverse

7.3 Landscape Character: Overview of Impacts and Effects

This assessment concludes that the boundary features and woodland in the south western parts of the Site are important features which reflect the key characteristics of the various published NCA and LCAs. The overall character of the Site is influenced by the neighbouring residential development at Marwick Close and the busy A272 such that the Site has more of a settlement edge as opposed to rural character. The proposals will retain these boundary features, although some vegetation removal would be necessary on the southern boundary in order to restore the alignment to Footpath 70CR. The proposals, therefore, seek to restrict development to the less sensitive, central areas and to retain all important landscape features within and bordering the Site and to enhance these through planting and management, creating a landscape setting sensitive to the location and providing a range of habitat and recreational/amenity features.

This assessment concludes that the proposed development would not affect the setting to the High Weald National Landscape.

8.0 Visual Impact Assessment

Table 3 below provides an assessment of the visual impact of the proposed development from the representative viewpoints described in the baseline visual assessment in Section 5.

Table 3: Visual Impact Assessment

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Description and Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects Year 1	Visual Effects Year 10
1	Near view east towards the Site from Bolney Road adjacent to the small area of off road parking. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28775 23046	Low Low	The wooded copse at the western end of the land parcel prevents views to the main part of the Site. Magnitude of Change: Low	Negligible	Neutral
2	Near view east along the alignment of Public Footpath 70CR which follows the Site southern boundary. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28802 23044	Low Medium	The existing vegetation currently blocks access to the footpath. Vegetation clearance would be necessary in order to restore the alignment of Footpath 70CR. This would open up potential views from the footpath to the development. The existing development at Marwick Close would be a feature of these views, but the proposed development would bring this closer to the path users. Magnitude of Change: Low	Minor adverse	Negligible
3	Near view north through gated access to the Site from Public Footpath 70CR. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28987 23039	Low Medium	The new housing would be visible in this glimpsed view from the Public Footpath but this view would be mitigated over time with planting on the southern boundary Magnitude of Change: Low	Minor adverse	Negligible

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Description and Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects Year 1	Visual Effects Year 10
4	Near view south west from Marwick Close towards the Site. OS Grid Ref: TQ 29003 23174	Low Low	The new housing would occupy the central part of the view but would be seen in the context of the existing residential development on Marwick Close Magnitude of Change: Low	Minor adverse	Negligible
5	Near distance view south west towards the Site from the A272 Bolney Road at the junction with Marwick Close. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28990 23230	Low Low	The Site is screened by intervening houses and vegetation. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
6	Middle distance view west towards the Site from Public Footpath 62CR. OS Grid Ref: TQ 29650 23245	Medium Medium	The Site is screened by intervening areas of trees and woodland. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
7	Near distance view south west from Cuckfield Road opposite the entrance to Crouch Fields. OS Grid Ref: TQ 29134 23215	Low Low	The Site is screened by intervening houses and vegetation. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Description and Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects Year 1	Visual Effects Year 10
8	Near view south west along the A272 Bolney Road along the Site northern boundary. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28987 23039	Low Low	The residential development would potentially be glimpsed through this break in the vegetation but would be mitigated over time through planting on the northern boundary. Magnitude of change: Very Low	Negligible	Neutral
9	Middle distance view south from Public Footpath 25CR towards the Site. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28666 23914	High High	The Site is screened by intervening areas of trees and woodland. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
10	Near distance view north from Public Footpath 75CR towards the Site. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28981 22710	Medium Medium	The Site is screened by intervening areas of trees and woodland. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

8.1 Visual Amenity: Overview of Impacts and Effects

Overall the Site benefits from a very high level of visual enclosure which would be largely retained. There are no longer distance views to the Site due to the high levels of woodland cover in the surrounding area. The only partial views to the Site are from Footpath 70CR on the southern boundary and from within Marwick Close to the north east.

There would be no visual impact on the setting to the High Weald National Landscape.

9.0 Conclusions

This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) describes the anticipated impacts and effects on landscape character and visual amenity associated with the proposed residential development on the land to the west of Marwick Close, Bolney Road, Ansty.

This LVA concludes that the Site does reflect some key characteristics described in the published NCA for the High Weald and the local LCAs describing the High Weald Fringes (LCA10 in the Mid Sussex and West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment) and the Ansty High Weald Fringe (LCA77 in the Mid Sussex Capacity Study). The Site reflects the character of small irregular fields, enclosed by mature wooded shaws and hedges within an undulating landscape. The character of the Site is also influenced by the neighbouring residential development at Marwick Close and the noise associated with the busy A272, giving more of a settlement edge character as opposed to a rural character.

The most important features from a landscape, ecological and arboricultural perspective are the boundary hedges and trees and the small area of woodland in the south western parts of the Site. These would be largely retained, maintaining the strong sense of enclosure to the Site. There would be removal of self sown scrub and dead ash on the southern boundary to re-establish the alignment of Footpath 70CR and to enable drainage works. This would create a slightly more open southern boundary in the short term, but would not affect longer distance views from the south.

This assessment concludes that there will be minor adverse localised effects on landscape character in the short term as a result of the change in use from the existing open field to residential development, reducing to negligible over time as the landscape setting to the development matures. The important boundary features and the woodland in the south western parts of the Site would be largely retained and enhanced through further planting and management, creating a strong landscape setting to the development.

With regard to visual amenity, the Site benefits from a high level of visual enclosure. Views are restricted to glimpsed or partial near views through boundary vegetation on the southern boundary and from Marwick Close. Some vegetation clearance would be necessary to re-establish the path alignment on the short section of Footpath 70CR within the Site, but it is anticipated that retained vegetation supplemented by infill hedge planting between the path and the proposed development would provide visual separation.

This assessment concludes that there would be no effects on the setting to the High Weald National Landscape as a consequence of the proposed development.

Land to the west of Marwick Close, Bolney Road, Ansty
Landscape and Visual Appraisal
February 2026

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