

FINAL

## LANDSCAPE & VISUAL APPRAISAL

relating to an application for

*'Conversion and change of use of the existing former school into two dwellings with associated garaging/car ports, removal of existing flat roofs, portacabin and other playground structures. Construction of two detached dwellings with associated garaging within the existing former school field. New entrance onto highway and associated hard and soft landscaping'*

at

**The site of the former Warninglid Primary School,  
Slaugham Lane, Warninglid**

on behalf of

**Waafer Homes Ltd**

**September 2025**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Huskisson Brown Associates (HBA) is a firm of Chartered Landscape Architects, established in 1987 and registered since then with the Landscape Institute. HBA has been a member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment since 1992.
- 1.2 HBA has undertaken a range of environmental planning and landscape and visual assessment, appraisal and design work for many clients including public bodies, private companies and individuals on projects including commercial, industrial, retail, recreational, healthcare, agricultural, infrastructure and residential schemes. HBA also has experience in providing advice on landscape design and assessment to Local Planning Authorities as part of their development management function.
- 1.3 HBA has been commissioned by Waafer Homes Ltd to advise on landscape and visual matters and prepare a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) in relation to an application for the ‘*Conversion and change of use of the existing former school into two dwellings with associated garaging/car ports, removal of existing flat roofs, portacabin and other playground structures. Construction of two detached dwellings with associated garaging within the existing former school field. New entrance onto highway and associated hard and soft landscaping*’ on the site of the former Warninglid Primary School, Warninglid.
- 1.4 The site comprises the former school building, outbuildings, two playgrounds and playing field and lies to the north of the village of Warninglid on the eastern side of Slaugham Lane. The site lies within the High Weald National Landscape and the existing school building is a non-designated heritage asset. The site location and surrounding landscape context are illustrated in the accompanying *HBA Figure 1* (Landscape Context) and *HBA Figure 2* (Aerial Context). The proposal seeks to convert the existing school building into two residential dwellings alongside the construction of two new dwellings within the school grounds to the south of the existing building.
- 1.5 The client sought pre-application advice from Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) (ref. DM/24/3103) to which MSDC issued their informal response dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025 following emails and an onsite meeting with the applicant’s planning agent. The pre-application advice states in relation to landscape (and inter-related heritage and arboricultural matters) that:

*“The proposed conversion of the school, subject to the principle of the loss of the community facility, would include the pitched roof additions to the existing unsympathetic additions which would enhance the character of the building and its status as a NDHA. The removal of the existing portacabins would also enhance its setting and the rural character of the area. I do however, agree with Emily’s [conservation officer] concerns regarding the proposed garages, due to the existing close proximity between the school building and the highway, the addition of large buildings along the frontage would be overly prominent and appear cramped. The domestic appearance of these buildings would also detract from the character and appearance of the existing building and its original use...*

*... as currently proposed the extent of the development on the school field is considered to detract from the rural setting of the site and amount to overdevelopment due to the physical constraints of the site and number of dwellings proposed. Therefore should you wish to pursue a justification for further development on site as enablement, the quantum*

*of development should be reduced with a starting point of one additional dwelling. The design and position of the dwelling should also be reconsidered to reflect the rural AONB landscape and position within the setting of heritage assets.*

...

*The site includes a number of trees along the southern and western boundaries, along with a TPO Oak tree (TP/23/0005) within the playfield. These trees should be protected and retained as part of the proposal. Due to the proximity of the proposed access and the new dwellings to these trees harm could be caused as well as future pressure to be felled. A AIA and AMS will be required for any future application and any proposal should be designed to retain trees and protect from future pressure.*

...

*Concerns have been raised regarding the scale, design and number of the proposed dwellings as well as the proposed garaging in terms of the character of the area, rural AONB landscape, and impact on the setting of heritage assets. There are also concerns regarding the potential impact on the trees within the site. It is therefore recommended that these issues are addressed holistically and that future pre-application advice is sort prior to the submission of an application. "*

- 1.6 HBA was appointed after the pre-application submission, to provide landscape and visual recommendations to the Applicant and Design Team in order to help address the pre-application comments and to steer a sensitive design approach and site layout that responds to the local landscape character and context as part of an iterative LVA assessment and design process.

#### **Assessment Approach**

- 1.7 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 LVA report.
- 1.8 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. An LVA can be more informal but shares the essence of the approach adopted in EIA. As the proposal that is the subject of this application is not subject to an EIA, the report has been termed an appraisal.
- 1.9 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. A site visit was carried out on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 in fair weather

conditions and when vegetation was fully foliated and therefore screening at its highest. A professional judgement has therefore been made regarding the situation in winter.

1.10 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](#).

1.11 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 and have been used to inform the LVA:

- National Planning Policy Framework (Revised December 2024) and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance
- National Design Guide (January 2021)
- Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (March 2018), Mid Sussex District Council
- Mid Sussex Design Guide (November 2020), Mid Sussex District Council
- Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan (September 2019), Slaugham Parish council
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029 (2024), High Weald Joint Advisory Committee
- High Weald Housing Design Guide (November 2019), High Weald Joint Advisory Committee
- Routeways in the High Weald (2021), Jeremy Lake and Nicola Bannister on behalf of the High Weald AONB Partnership
- Planning Technical Advice Note: Dark Skies in the High Weald. Guidance for planners and developers on lighting proposals affecting the protected landscape. High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (July 2024)
- National Character Area Profile 122: High Weald (2025), Natural England
- Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (2003), West Sussex County Council, and interlinked studies:
  - *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (October 2005)
  - *The West Sussex Landscape Land Management Guidelines*
  - *West Sussex Landscape Character Guidelines: Local Distinctiveness*
- Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex (November 2005), Mid Sussex District Council
- Online review of current and historic Ordnance Survey mapping, MAGIC website, Historic England website, Slaugham Archives website ([www.slaughamarchives.org](http://www.slaughamarchives.org)), 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).
- Specialist surveys and reports prepared by other consultants to accompany this planning application, notably Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (May 2025) and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (2025) by Arborweald Environmental Planning Consultancy and the Heritage Statement (2025) by Manorwood.

### **Purpose 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.
- 1.13 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.
- 1.14 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.

## 2 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 A summary of planning policy and designations relevant to the landscape and visual context of the Site and against which the scheme proposals are to be tested (in landscape and visual terms) is set out below.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 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.”*

### **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**

- 2.7 PPG supports and informs the NPPF. The guidance relating to Natural Environment explains key issues in implementing policy to protect and enhance the natural environment. Under the Landscape sub-heading, the topic of ‘How can the character of landscapes be assessed’ notes that: *“To demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used”* (PPG Paragraph: 037, Reference ID: 8-037-20190721).
- 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**

- 2.10 The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (MSDP) was adopted by Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) in March 2018 and sets out the strategy for future development within the district. MSDC is in the process of reviewing and updating the MSDP. At the time of writing this LVA, the New District Plan 2021-2039 (New Plan) had been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination and subsequently heard at Stage 1 Examination Hearings in October 2024, the Inspector issuing their findings in June 2025 with a recommendation that MSDC either withdraw the New Plan from examination or that the New Plan will be formally failed on matters relating to the Duty to Cooperate. MSDC has legally challenged the



Inspector's findings. Emerging policies within the New Plan are therefore not considered in this LVA.

2.11 The following policies set out within the MSDP are of relevance to this assessment:

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...*

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

DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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

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

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

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;*
- *...*
- *creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- *incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed..."*

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

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

- *incorporates existing important trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design of new development and its landscape scheme; and*
- *prevents damage to root systems and takes account of expected future growth; and*
- *where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management; and*
- *has appropriate protection measures throughout the development process; and*
- *takes opportunities to plant new trees, woodland and hedgerows within the new development to enhance on-site green infrastructure and increase resilience to the effects of climate change; and*
- *does not sever ecological corridors created by these assets..."*

#### DP38: Biodiversity

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

- *Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; ..."*

### **Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD**

2.12 The Mid Sussex Design Guide was adopted in November 2020 and is a supplementary document (SPD) setting out principles based on Policy DP26: Character and Design of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

2.13 The following principles set out within the Design Guide are of relevance to this assessment:

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 DG4: Establish a landscape and green infrastructure network

*"The shape and form of open space should be positively planned at the outset and inform the layout of new development.*

*Open space should normally be provided as:*

- *An integral part of new development and should be located where it is safe, most accessible and central to a scheme rather than isolated towards the edge; and*
- *Part of a coherent landscape structure and linked to existing and proposed landscapes to form open space networks whenever possible, revealing existing landscape features.*

*New open spaces should maximise the opportunity to accommodate landscape features such as mature trees and water courses / ponds, while fulfilling drainage requirements (refer also to chapter 4 section 4.9 for guidance on the design of open spaces)."*

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.*

*From the outset, there should be a clear landscape strategy that is an integral part of the*

*design of new development covering all streets and public spaces while accounting for the growing process. Consideration must also be given to the future maintenance of trees and plants in the design. Native trees and shrubs and longer-lived species should be selected where possible and appropriate as they support a greater variety of wildlife, are often more suited to local conditions and better reflect the character of the wider countryside...”*

### **Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan**

- 2.14 The Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by Slaugham Parish Council and made in September 2019. The plan provides a framework for future development in the parish and forms part of the Mid Sussex Development Plan.
- 2.15 The following policies set out within the Neighbourhood Plan are of relevance to this assessment:

#### Policy 1: Protecting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

*“...Development proposals within the High Weald AONB will only be supported where they conserve or enhance the natural beauty and have regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan in particular:*

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

*Small scale proposals which support the local economy and social well being of the AONB will be supported where they are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of the AONB...”*

#### Policy 3: Green Infrastructure

*“Development proposals, which seek to conserve, maintain or enhance existing green infrastructure network will be supported.*

*Proposals to provide additional green infrastructure will be supported. Proposals which seek to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists through green infrastructure linkages will be particularly supported...”*

### **High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan**

- 2.16 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.
- 2.17 The Statement of Significance for the High Weald AONB emphasises that *“Each 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."*

2.18 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 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 R1 – To maintain the historic pattern, morphology and features of routeways.

*"To maintain and restore a routeway network that has a symbiotic relationship with settlement location, hinterlands and identity, and is a rare UK survival of an essentially medieval landscape; to protect the individual archaeological features of historic routeways such as sunken lanes; and to avoid harming character of routeways with urbanising features."*

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.”*

### **Landscape Designations**

- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 There are no sites designated nationally or internationally for their ecological value within 2km of the Site. With regards to non-statutorily designated sites, the Mill Pond Local Wildlife Site is located 500m northeast of the Site.
- 2.21 Within the Site an Oak tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (ref. TP/23/0005). The tree is located centrally within the Site, north of a portacabin.
- 2.22 Areas of Ancient Woodland are a common feature in the local landscape, with the areas closest to the Site being Jenners Wood, 7m west of Site running parallel with Slaughtam Lane, Elseys Wood 200m northeast of the Site, and Hawking Hill Shaw 340m north of the Site.
- 2.23 The Warninglid Conservation Area is located 700m south of the Site.

### 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. Relevant Landscape Character Areas are mapped on [HBA Figure 2 Landscape Character](#).

#### 3.3 National Landscape Character

3.4 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 is located within [NCA 122: High Weald](#).

3.5 NCA 122 High Weald is described as:

*“...the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald. It is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 78 per cent of the NCA. The High Weald consists of a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. Wildflower meadows are now rare but prominent medieval patterns of small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape.”*

3.6 Key characteristics of the NCA 122 High Weald include:

- *“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.*
- *An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of farreaching 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...”*

3.7 Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO), including landscape character guidance, are provided for each NCA. The following are of relevance to the landscape of the site:

- **SEO1:** *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.

For example by:

- *Maintaining and restoring links between woodland and other woodland habitats (such as hedgerows, traditional orchards and parkland) and species-rich grasslands and heathland outside the main woodland. This will create a robust network of wooded and open semi-natural habitats that will benefit the internationally important populations of bats, as well as other species.*
- *Maintaining woodland cover...*
- **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.*

For example by:

- *Ensuring that the repair, restoration or conversion of vernacular buildings is carried out with due regard to their historical interest, using local materials and appropriate styles and techniques to maintain local distinctiveness, construction techniques and traditions.*
- *Encouraging new developments to follow the vernacular of the area, using locally sourced materials and adhering to the principles of the High Weald AONB design guidance*

### County Landscape Character

- 3.8 At a county level, the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex was published in 2003 and comprises a series of interlinked studies:
- *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (October 2005)*
  - *The West Sussex Landscape Land Management Guidelines*
  - *West Sussex Landscape Character Guidelines: Local Distinctiveness*
- 3.9 A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape sets out a 50 year vision for the landscape of the county as a whole, supported by more detailed visions for each of the five NCAs within West Sussex. Five key Strategy Objectives are outlined and county-wide landscape guidelines provided for achieving the objectives.
- 3.10 The Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex identifies landscape character areas within each of the NCAs, the Site lying within LCA **HW3 Ouse Valley** which is described as a “strongly linear valley adjoining Haywards Heath, its boundaries clearly defined by a marked break of slope. In the west, the river is a small, tree-lined stream amidst parallel streams and ridges...”. Approximately 200-500m south of the Site, the landscape including the village of Warninglid, lies predominantly within LCA HW4 High Weald Fringes.
- 3.11 Key characteristics of LCA HW3 Ouse Valley include:
- *“Shallow but well-defined attractive rural valley landscape largely within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).*



- *Relatively few panoramic or long views across or down the valley.*
- *Woodland cover less extensive than that of the High Weald fringes, despite an impression in places of a strong woodland presence strengthened by shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.*
- *Pattern of mixed arable and pastoral medium to large-sized fields.*
- *No settlements in the valley other than dispersed farmsteads although towns and villages lie on the valley edges.”*

3.12 The landscape and visual sensitivities of LCA HW3 Ouse Valley are identified as:

- *“High level of perceived naturalness in the landscape and drainage pattern and a rural quality with a general absence of development in western reaches of the valley.*
- *Pattern of medium to large-sized fields and watermeadows intermixed with woodlands and hedges imparts a scenic quality to the landscape.*
- *Legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.*
- *Scarce pockets of rich woodland biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.*
- *Valley-edge settlements include Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Cuckfield, the impact on the valley reduced by their woodland setting.*
- *Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures...”*

3.13 The overall landscape management guideline for LCA HW3 Ouse Valley is to “conserve the rural quality of the valley including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the mosaic of woodland and other habitats, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement farmstead pattern.” This is accompanied by specific guidelines to:

- *“Conserve and enhance the undeveloped character, drainage pattern and pastoral qualities of the valley.*
- *Protect existing views from ridge tops...*
- *Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, including along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes.*
- *Conserve and plant parkland trees and tree groups and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession. ...*
- *Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value. ...*
- *Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.”*

3.14 The West Sussex Landscape Character Guidelines: Local Distinctiveness for the High Weald character area sets out the characteristics of the High Weald including landscape and settlement. The overall character of the High Weald is described as ‘an essentially medieval landscape of rolling hills, networks of woodlands and shaws, irregular-shaped assart fields, remnant open heaths and ancient routeways... The Ouse valley is gently sloping with higher fertility, a less wooded character and with a greater proportion of arable farmland and large modern fields.’

- 3.15 The key landscape characteristics to be protected, conserved and enhanced include:
- *The tranquil, intimate and enclosed rural character of the area*
  - *The qualities of fine long views from ridges*
  - *The network of ancient woodland including larger deciduous woodlands, ghyll woodlands and shaws*
  - *The qualities of the River Ouse, its valley bottom and lower sides with medium-large scale field patterns of wet meadows and pastures bounded by hedges with trees*
  - *The dense network of hedgerows, restoring where necessary, retaining the oak standards and other hedgerow trees*
- 3.16 With regard to settlement characteristics, the guidance includes to maintain, protect and enhance where possible:
- *The existing dispersed pattern of farmsteads related to the agricultural/woodland use of land on ridges and valley sides avoiding valley bottoms.*
  - *The scale, vernacular style, massing and materials of rural buildings and their cartilage boundaries.*
  - *Larger settlements on gentle ridges or gentle valley edges ensuring that they are integrated into the landscape and screened, allowing views out where the existing pattern allows.*

#### **High Weald AONB Management Plan**

- 3.17 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..."*

- 3.18 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.”
- Fieldsapes and heath – “small, irregular and productive fields, bound by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths and inned river valleys (reclaimed marshland).”
- Dark night skies – “intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.”
- Aesthetic and perceptual qualities – “arising from the interaction of people with the landscape, including the notion of a quintessential English pastoral landscape, intimacy of scale, a sense of history and timelessness; rurality and tranquillity; glimpsed long views; freedom to explore and make connections with the natural world, and a rich legacy of features and ideas left by writers, poets and gardeners inspired by the landscape.”
- Land-based economy and rural living – “with roots extending deep into history, and which has visibly and culturally shaped the landscape.”

### **District Landscape Character Assessment**

- 3.19 A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex was published in November 2005 by Mid Sussex District Council. The assessment divides the district into 10 Landscape Character Areas (LCA), with the Site located within **LCA 9 Ouse Valley**, the extent, description and management objectives for which correspond with LCA HW3 Ouse Valley of the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex.

### **HBA Comment on published Landscape Character studies**

- 3.20 The Site lies within a wider landscape that is reflective of the published landscape character studies, with the shallow Ouse Valley defining the landscape and a mix of arable land and woodland. The settlement pattern is sparse, with few buildings within the landscape beyond the defined settlements at Warninglid and Slaugham. Where properties are located, they are set within tree and hedgerow planting which contributes to the wider landscape pattern.
- 3.21 The Site makes a limited contribution to the landscape character of the local landscape as a result of its previous use as a school. The trees and hedgerows that bound the Site contribute to the wider pattern of vegetation throughout the landscape character area and form a small part of views along the wooded ridge between Warninglid and Slaugham. Any development on the Site should therefore seek to retain and enhance these boundaries and ensure that any built form is reflective of the local vernacular and settlement pattern.
- 3.22 The characteristics of the site itself in its more local context, are described in more detail in Section 4 of the LVA, based upon our field assessments and desktop review.

## 4 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BASELINE

- 4.1 The Site and its local context are illustrated on *HBA Figure 1 Landscape Context* and *HBA Figure 3 Aerial Context*. Photographs of the Site are set out in *HBA Figures 6 and 7*.

### Location & Local Land Use

- 4.2 The Site is located 600m to the north of the village of Warninglid on the eastern side of Slaugham Lane and lies within the High Weald National Landscape. The A23 is located 1.5km to the east of the Site.
- 4.3 The Site occupies the site of the former Warninglid Primary School which closed in 2021. The Site covers an area of approximately 0.62ha and is roughly triangular in shape, defined by Slaugham Lane to the west, the boundary of Old School House to the north and a chain link fence with tree and hedgerow planting to the south and east. The Site comprises a brick, single storey former school building and associated infrastructure including a portacabin, a shed, two asphalt playgrounds and a grass playing field.
- 4.4 A close boarded fence defines the northern boundary between the Site and Old School House, adjacent to which is an asphalt playground and a small area of synthetic grass. In the centre of the playground is a wooden pergola.
- 4.5 The school building lies to the south of the northern playground and is irregular in shape, featuring a central brick building with bell tower and several more modern extensions.
- 4.6 To the south of the school building is a second asphalt playground, adjacent to which is an area of grass which includes a wooden play trail. At the southern end of the playground is a portacabin and a shed, with the rest of the Site occupied by a grass playing field.
- 4.7 A small pond is located to the east of the existing school building.
- 4.8 A chain-link fence follows the southern and eastern boundaries of the Site, with a row of silver birch trees along the southern boundary of the Site and a native hedgerow along the majority of the eastern boundary of the Site.
- 4.9 The western boundary of the Site onto Slaugham Lane is predominantly defined by a chain-link fence. At the northern end of the boundary, adjacent to the former school building, the chain link fence sits on top of a brick wall at the roadside. At the southern end, the western boundary steps around the footway to Slaugham Lane, with a gated access into the school located at the end of the footway and step in the site boundary. Through its southern half, the western boundary is marked by a chainlink and concrete post fence, with a mounded woodland belt on the eastern side within the Site. A line of timber telegraph poles and overhead cables also follow the western boundary.

### Built Form and Settlement

- 4.10 The Site is located to the north of the built area of Warninglid, as defined by the Mid Sussex District Plan in a cluster of scattered development along Slaugham Lane. The built area of the village follows Cuckfield Lane to the east, The Street to the south and Slaugham Lane to the north, with the built character of the village historic and varied. Buildings in the village are predominantly sandstone, brick and timber with clay roof tiles.

- 4.11 Immediately north of the Site is Old School House, a detached dwelling, the curtilage of which wraps around the northern end of the Site. Further north is a row of 5 cottages on the eastern side of the road, beyond which is a track providing access to Old Park House, a Grade II listed building, and Old Park Farm. A single dwelling is located on the western side of the road, opposite the access track.
- 4.12 In the wider landscape built form is mostly concentrated within the villages of Slaugham and Warninglid, with a cluster of residential and farm properties located around the site. Farms and dwellings are otherwise scattered throughout the Ouse Valley which separates the villages. Built form within the villages varies in age and style, with a concentration of listed buildings located within the Conservation Areas associated with the villages.
- 4.13 In the locality of the Site, residential properties are generally two storey and a mix of detached and semi-detached or terraced, with red brick, painted brick, and hung tiles used extensively, all with driveways and garages and with a range of set back distances, as well as different frontage and boundary treatments to Slaugham Road.
- 4.14 With regards to built form on the Site, there are several existing buildings relating to its previous function as a primary school. The former school building is located in the northern half of the Site and is a single storey brick building with an irregular shape. The original Victorian brick school building forms the central component of the building and has a pitched roof and a bell tower at its southern end. There have been several modern extensions to the north and south of the building, all of brick construction with flat roofs that are unsympathetic to the original building aesthetic and the local vernacular.
- 4.15 Within the school grounds there are several outbuildings and structures including a portacabin, pergola and timber sheds. A timber shelter with a pitched tile roof marks the existing main pedestrian access to the Site from Slaugham Lane.

### Topography and Hydrology

- 4.16 The Site is located within the undulating landscape of the Ouse Valley, with the river itself located 440m to the north of the Site at its closest point. Levels across the valley in the locality of the Site vary between 67m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at Slaugham Manor 1km northeast of the Site and 122m AOD at Colwood Court 1.7km to the south of the Site. Warninglid sits at approximately 110m AOD on a localised ridge.
- 4.17 The Site itself is broadly level due to its overall predominantly developed footprint and the nature of its previous use. There is an overall very gentle slope north-south, with levels indicated on the Topographical Survey (Offington, February 2023) at 89.92m AOD in the northeastern corner of the Site and 86.35m AOD in the southeastern corner of the Site. The southern half of the Site sits above Slaugham Road, with a 1m high mound with a woodland belt to the Site's western boundary defining the level change.

### Land Cover and Vegetation

- 4.18 The Site is predominantly grass and built form/hardstanding, with grass covering most of the southern half of the Site and areas of hard standing and built form concentrated to the north of the Site. The grass at the southern end of the Site previously served as the playing field for Warninglid Primary School and is described as semi-improved in the Preliminary Ecological Assessment (2025). There are number of saplings scattered throughout the grass

and areas of scrub encroachment along the eastern edge of the field. At the southern end of the field is an overgrown willow structure.

- 4.19 A row of around 20 no. mature silver birch *Betula pendula* trees (Group G4 and recorded as 'Category B' trees on the Tree Survey reported in Section 4.0 of the 'BS5837 (2012) Survey and Report' by Arborweald, May 2025) defines the southern boundary of the Site. In the northeastern corner of the Site, to the east of the primary school building, is an area of scrub, with blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and hazel *Corylus avellana* noted.
- 4.20 A small woodland belt follows the southern half of the Site's western boundary, the canopy being dominated by two English oaks *Quercus robur* (Tree no. T7 and T8 on the Tree Survey recorded as Category B and Category A trees respectively) and two beech *Fagus sylvatica* (Tree Group G7, average-good condition and Category A on the Tree Survey), with an understorey of hazel *Corylus avellana*, field maple *Acer campestre* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*.
- 4.21 The eastern boundary of the Site is defined by a native hedgerow comprising field maple *Acer campestre*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, with the ash trees exhibiting advanced signs of ash dieback. The hedgerow is approximately 2m high.
- 4.22 A mature oak tree is located centrally within Site at the edge of the existing playground and next to a chainlink fence and portacabin. It forms a notable feature tree on the Site and is protected by a Tree Protection Order (TPO) (ref. TP/23/0005). The tree is indicated in the Tree Survey as tree no. T2, being 16.6m tall, in average-good arboricultural condition and classified as a 'Category A' tree.
- 4.23 The Tree Survey assesses the condition of the trees and hedgerows on Site as average-good, with the exception of a single Ash tree (Tree T4) which is in poor condition and recommended for removal, the location of which is shown on the Tree Protection Plan which accompanies the report.
- 4.24 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was carried out by Arborweald Environmental Planning Consultancy in May 2025 which records the habitats on Site as "buildings, hardstanding, scrub, semi-improved grassland, individual trees, hedgerows, and woodland."

#### Nature Conservation and Biodiversity

- 4.25 The PEA determines that the site has "low ecological value within a local context". Key findings and recommendations set out in the PEA report include:
- There are no international/European designated sites or statutory designated sites within 2km of the Site.
  - The wider landscape contains two Habitats of Principal Importance covered under Section 41 of the National Environment and Rural Communities Act, consisting of deciduous woodland including ancient woodland, and traditional orchards.
  - 'Standard' mitigation is required to address the potential impacts of any development on the Site on protected species including bats, badgers, breeding birds, great crested newts, hedgehogs and reptiles.
- 4.26 The report states that the 'biodiversity value of the site is largely attributed to the following factors:

- *The dominance of sealed surfaces and built structures, which have no ecological value.*
- *The presence of some higher-quality habitat, namely the species-rich hedgerow and woodland edge along the southern and western boundaries.*
- *The poor connectivity between on-site habitats and the wider landscape.'*

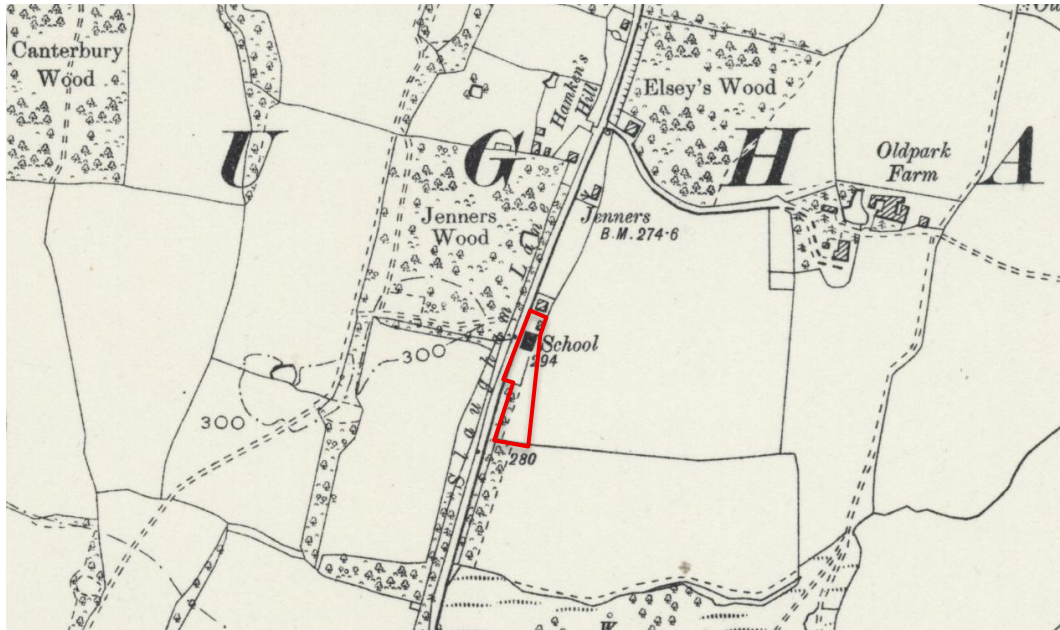
#### **Public Rights of Way and Recreational Land**

- 4.27 Public Rights of Way in the immediate area are shown on the Landscape Context Plan at [HBA Figure 1](#).
- 4.28 There are no public rights of way within or adjacent to the Site. There are a number of Rights of Way in the countryside to the east of the Site that provides links between Slaugham, Slaugham Lane and Warninglid. These are:
- Footpath 13S which connects Slaugham Lane approximately 500m south of the Site with footpaths 12S and 11S near Slaugham Farm Place and Slaugham Manor (approximately 1.2km north-east of the Site). Footpath 13S runs broadly north-south and parallel to the Site (400m to the east) for a 300m stretch.
  - Footpath 12S which forms part of the promoted long-distance recreational route, the High Weald Landscape Trail. The footpath runs generally north-south, connecting Cuckfield Lane with footpaths 13S and 11S at Slaugham Farm Place, briefly passing through Anne's Wood West. The footpath is located approximately 730m to the east of the Site at its closest point.
  - Footpath 10S which forms part of the promoted long-distance recreational route, the Sussex Ouse Valley Way. The footpath connects Slaugham Lane with Staplefield Road. The footpath meets Slaugham Lane 350m north of the Site. There is no intervisibility between the Site and the footpath.
- 4.29 The Site formerly provided recreational land for the school but no longer has an active recreational use.
- 4.30 There are no public open spaces or areas of open access in the locality of the Site.

#### **Historic Landscape**

- 4.31 Historic Ordnance Survey mapping indicates that the Site has been the site of the Warninglid Primary School since 1887, as shown on the Second Edition OS Mapping ([HBA LVA Figure 1](#) below). In more recent times, the extent of the school has increased to occupy a portion of the adjacent field within which the school playing field is now located, as shown on the aerial mapping ([HBA LVA Figure 2](#) below).





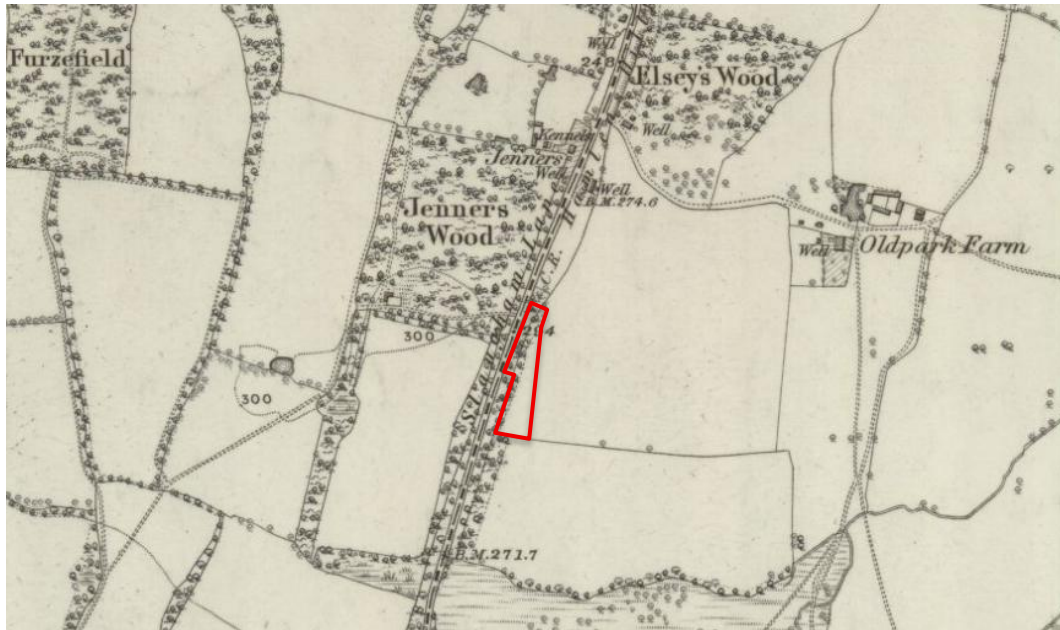
**HBA LVA Figure 1** – Ordnance Survey Six-Inch Second Edition (Surveyed 1895 to 1896, Published 1899).  
Source: National Library of Scotland



**HBA LVA Figure 2** – Aerial Mapping (2025). Source: Google Earth Pro

- 4.32 Prior to its use as a school, the Site was woodland, as shown on the First Edition OS mapping, published 1879 (see [HBA LVA Figure 3](#) below). The introduction of the school appears to have involved the removal of a stretch of road-side woodland belt/trees.





**HBA LVA Figure 3** – Ordnance Survey Six-Inch First Edition (Surveyed 1874 to 1875, Published 1879).  
Source: National Library of Scotland

- 4.33 Slaugham Lane is evident on historic mapping and is recorded as a drove on the online story map tool on the High Weald National Landscape website, a drove being a north-south route that would have historically been used to move livestock (generally between the South Downs and North Downs and into the woods of the High Weald) or for transporting iron, timber and agricultural goods. The exact historic use and character of Slaugham Lane is unknown.
- 4.34 The Heritage Statement by Manorwood describes the historic context, value and interests of the Site. When considering the setting of the Heritage Asset, the report states that *"The setting of the former school is defined by its semi-rural position on Slaugham Lane, behind a low brick boundary and simple gates, with open tarmac playgrounds to the south and west and mature trees to the lane and hedged boundaries. Approaches along the lane afford glimpsed views of the bellcote and principal gable, conferring modest landmark quality at a local scale. The relationship between the principal elevation, playgrounds and boundary enclosure aids appreciation of the original plan and function.*
- Later chain-link fencing, lightweight canopies and certain late 20th century portacabins introduce utilitarian elements that dilute the wider and immediate setting of the building."*
- 4.35 A photograph of the school from Slaugham Lane, dated 1950, is available on the Slaugham Archives website and reproduced below (see [HBA LVA Figure 4](#)). This indicates the somewhat institutional influence the school had upon the character of Slaugham Lane, notably in terms of the fenced boundary at that point in time, in contrast to the underlying rural character of historic routeways in the High Weald. This influence persists today (refer to photograph at [HBA LVA Figure 5](#) below).



**HBA LVA Figure 4** – Photograph of Warninglid Primary School from Slaugham Lane (1950). Source: Slaugham Archives website



**HBA LVA Figure 5** – Photograph of Warninglid Primary School from Slaugham Lane (2025)

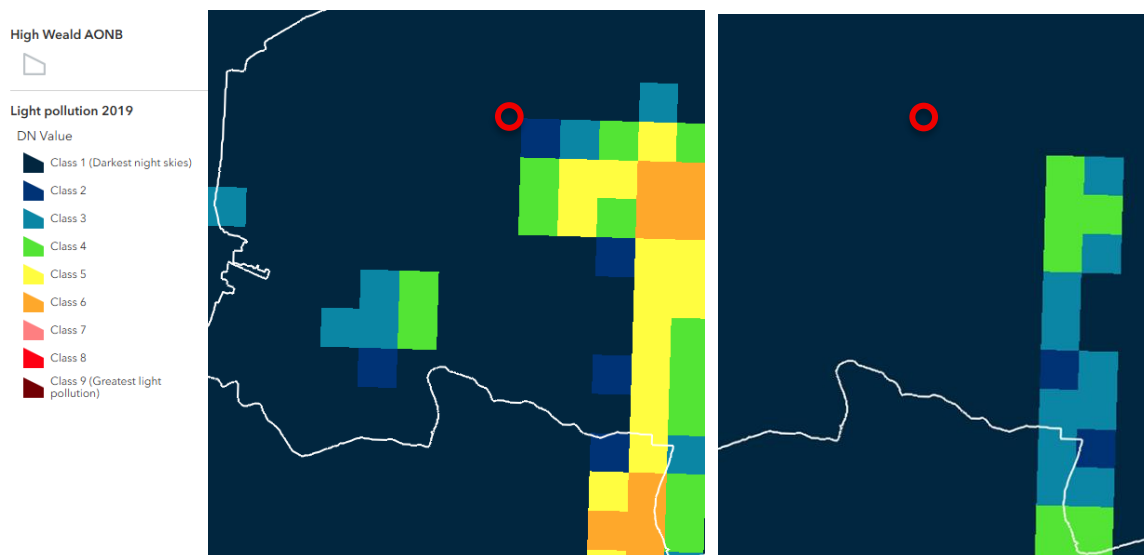
- 4.36 Historic Ordnance Survey Mapping indicates that the wider pattern of woodland and overall field pattern has remained unchanged over the last 150 years. They also indicate a degree of scattered built form and woodland cover along the route of Slaugham Lane that has altered over the years but remains an overall feature of the road corridor.
- 4.37 There are no statutory heritage designations on the Site. Warninglid Primary School is a non-designated heritage asset, the grounds of which contribute to the setting of the building. The Warninglid Conservation Area is located 700m south of the Site which contains a number of listed buildings including Rose Cottage (ref. 1025573) and The Half Moon Public House (ref. 1025611), both of which are Grade II. There is no intervisibility between the Site and the Warninglid Conservation Area. Beyond the conservation area listed buildings are

scattered throughout the local landscape, with the closest to the Site being Old Park House, Grade II (ref. 1181506), located 340m northeast of the Site.

- 4.38 Slaugham Place (remains of) Scheduled Monument (ref. 1005848) is located 1.2km northeast of the Site.

### Perceptual Qualities

- 4.39 '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."
- 4.40 CPRE The Countryside Charity prepared a Tranquillity Map of England (February 2007) that provides a broadbrush study of relative tranquillity levels based upon "Remoteness from people, habitat type, presence and visibility of rivers and woodlands, presence and visibility of unnatural features as detractors, openness of the landscape, overhead skyglow and identification of noise sources". The site lies in an area that is recorded as being towards the centre of the spectrum of relative tranquillity.
- 4.41 CPRE The Countryside Charity also produced England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies map (2016) which records levels of light pollution and dark skies based upon: "the level of radiance (night lights) shining up into the sky." The site is located in an area towards the darkest end of the night lights spectrum.
- 4.42 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 LVA Figure 6 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 wider area increased during this time, notably along the A23 corridor. The area around the Site remained in an area recorded as 0 DN value (ie at the Darkest Night Skies level) in 2019.



**HBA LVA Figure 6** – Extracts from High Weald National Landscape website satellite data with approximate location of the Site outlined in red. 2019 imagery is to the left with 2015 imagery to the right.



- 4.43 The Site is a former primary school with associated infrastructure and is not remote or wild land.
- 4.44 There is a relative sense of tranquillity on the Site, with bird song heard and a sense of peace and quiet on the Site and in the local landscape. This is, however, detracted from by the presence of built form and hard surfacing on the Site, the built forms exerting a high level of clutter and human influence owing to the Site's former use as a school, but with no human activity currently taking place.
- 4.45 There are no major transport routes within close proximity to the Site. Slaugham Lane follows the western boundary of the Site but is unlit and is not a major or particularly busy road, with only occasional passing vehicles or pedestrians heard and glimpsed from the Site. A line of overhead cables follows the route of Slaugham Lane, with a second line of overhead cables crossing the field immediately east of the Site in a north-south orientation.

#### **Visual baseline**

- 4.46 The existing visual context and potential visibility of the site and Proposed Development is described below. Whilst this primarily informs the assessment of visual effects of the Proposed Development it also in part feeds into some of the perceptual considerations relating to the assessment of landscape value.
- 4.47 Local roads and right of way were walked to consider available views of the site and to identify the range of visual receptors (people) who may experience changes to their views and visual amenity through any development on the site.
- 4.48 A 'Primary Visual Envelope' (PVE) has been prepared (*HBA Figure 3*), indicating those parts of the surrounding area from where it is considered that views of the Proposed Development are most likely to be possible. The PVE is based upon desk-based review of topographical data and aerial photography combined with field work undertaken in May 2025 to consider the actual visibility on the ground (with a professional judgement on the screening effect of summer vegetation). Not all areas within the PVE will be exposed to views, similarly there may be other locations outside the PVE that may have views, but on the basis of the site inspections, these are not considered to be significant. The PVE and existing visual context is described below.
- 4.49 The visibility of the Site is informed by the undulating landform and strong pattern of vegetation around Warninglid and the wider landscape of the Ouse valley, with field boundary vegetation and tree and hedgerow planting creating layers of vegetative cover which contribute towards a wooded backdrop to views and reduce the perception of built form within the valley. The Site is reasonably well contained by vegetation on all sides, with the Primary Visual Envelope focused on an area of rising and undulating land extending to the east and south-east of the Site across the Ouse Valley and towards Cuckfield Lane (east of Warninglid). To the west, the PVE is contained by a wooded belt and landform that means that visibility is restricted to Slaugham Lane.
- 4.50 The High Weald Landscape Trail has a number of viewpoints highlights along its route that are indicated on the route guidance and mapping. This includes a viewpoint from public footpath 12S near Upper Barn to the south-east of the Site (*HBA View 4 on HBA Figure 5, Sheet 3*).

- 4.51 The following visual receptors have been identified who may have views of the Proposed Development. Photographs have been taken from selected viewpoints to demonstrate representative views for the receptors. Viewpoint locations are illustrated on [HBA Figure 4](#), with Viewpoint Photographs illustrated as annotated images (Type 1 visualisations) on [HBA Figure 5, Sheets 1-3](#). These are cross referenced below.

Users of local roads:

- [Slaugham Lane](#), (for an approximate 200m stretch between The Old School House and a private access track to Slatehouse Farm). On approaching the Site from the south on Slaugham Lane (Refer to [HBA View 2 on HBA Figure 5, Sheet 1](#)), views are channelled along the road corridor by virtue of the roadside hedgerow planting. The existing school building and brick wall frontage becomes visible as the road straightens out 170m to the south of the Site, with the built form and playground either filtered by the row of birch trees on the Site's southern boundary or screened by other roadside vegetation further south on the road. When passing the Site, the brick wall with chain link fence above influences the visual amenity of the road corridor and restricts views into the Site. The school building is visible above and through the wall and chain link fencing, with close-distance glimpsed views of the playground also available through the gate. On approaching the Site from the north, views looking south are along the road corridor with the built form of Old School House being visible and blocking views of the Site until reaching the existing school building. (Refer to [HBA View 1 on HBA Figure 5, Sheet 1](#)). The road alignment and roadside trees and hedgerow prevent views towards the Site from elsewhere on the road.
- [Cuckfield Lane \(B2115\)](#), east of Warninglid (for an approximate 50m stretch to the east of Colwood Lane). No views were identified from the road corridor which follows a ridge to the south-east of the Site and is contained by a roadside hedge. Users of the road may have fleeting and glimpsed views out through any gaps in the hedge or over the hedge in winter. In those views, the rolling landform appears to limit visibility towards the Site which sits on the opposite side of a valley and relatively low in the landscape, beyond much intervening offsite vegetation. The existing built form is considered likely to be difficult to discern in any glimpsed and filtered long distance winter views that might be available.

Users of PRoW:

- [Footpath 13S](#). People using an approximate 600m stretch of the footpath between Slaugham Lane in the south and a private access track to Old Park Farm in the north, have views across the undulating farmland to the east of the Site.
  - At the southern end of the footpath, from higher ground, views north towards the Site are far-reaching across an open foreground of farmland set against a wooded backdrop formed by the ridge of high ground to the west of the site and wrapping around to Slaugham in the north. The Site sits in the middleground of the view, reading as part of the wooded backdrop and is not discernible in summer, being contained by the tree planting on its southern boundary, but the built forms on the Site are likely to be glimpsed (albeit filtered by vegetation) in winter. The Old School House and Old Park Cottages are visible in the view set against a wooded backdrop (Refer to [HBA View 4 on HBA Figure 5, Sheet 2](#)).

- Further north, the footpath dips through a local valley. From the lower valley slopes, views are foreshortened by the landform, such that views look across an open foreground of the farmland to the south-east of the Site, towards a wooded backdrop formed broadly by the woodland belt along Slaugham Lane and to the north, south and west of the Site as well as the trees and hedgerow around the Site and scattered in the wider countryside to the east. The existing school building is partially visible in summer, set within this overall wooded backdrop and setting. In winter the existing school building would be more visible and other built forms on the Site are also likely to be seen, filtered by winter vegetation. The adjacent Old School House is similarly visible in the view, set below the wooded backdrop. (Refer to [HBA View 3 on HBA Figure 5, Sheet 2](#)).
- There are no views towards the Site further north on the footpath due to the extensive network of vegetation associated with Old Park House.
- [Footpath 12S](#) (High Weald Landscape Trail). Users of Footpath 12S and the long-distance High Weald Landscape Trail have a range of wooded, and more open countryside views on this section of the route. The undulating landform and high degree of intervening vegetation prevent views of the Site for most of the footpath route. From an area of high ground on the north/south-west facing slopes to the north of Anne's Wood West (approximately 910m south-east of the Site), there are wide-reaching views across the valley within which the Site sits. In those views, the existing school building is visible as a small part of the middleground of a wider panorama and set below a wooded backdrop that also forms the skyline to the view. Farmland forms a relatively long and open foreground, with intervening field boundary hedges and vegetation partially screening views of the Site and also breaking up the foreground. The view is generally rural in character with scattered built forms visible albeit generally nestled in trees and muted in colour, including the school building, The Old School House and Old Park Farm (Refer to [HBA View 5 on HBA Figure 5, Sheet 3](#)). This view is also recorded as a viewpoint in the route guide for the High Weald Landscape Trail.

## Landscape Value

- 4.52 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".*

- 4.53 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 an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 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.
- 4.54 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*

4.55 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).”*

4.56 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.

4.57 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

4.58 The Site has no distinctive geological or geomorphological features of interest.

4.59 The Preliminary Ecological Assessment does not indicate the presence of any wildlife and habitats of ecological interest or any distinctive ecological communities. The hedgerow, line of birch trees and woodland belt to the Site boundaries and the mature Oak specimen within the Site are generally characteristic of the local landscape character and contribute to a sense of place.

- 4.60 'Woodland' is a core character component of the High Weald National Landscape. The Site is not wooded but includes a small belt of trees/woodland along part of the western boundary that contributes towards the pattern of woodland in the wider landscape and the wooded backdrop in views across the valley. Tree and hedgerow planting to the Site boundaries provides a degree of connectivity between other woodland habitats along the ridgetop, including an area of ancient woodland to the west of Slaugham Lane.

#### Cultural Heritage

- 4.61 The former Warninglid Primary School is a disused non-designated heritage asset, with the adjacent hard surfaced playground and playing field contributing to its heritage setting on account of the former school function of the building itself. During its use the Site would have contributed to rural community life, part of the 'land-based economy and rural living' core character component of the High Weald National Landscape. The school grounds have both limited aesthetic quality and time depth, having developed over time and needing to incorporate a range of both functional and security features associated with its former school use, such as outdoor storage huts and sheds, secure fencing and access gates. From a landscape perspective, the positive features that contribute to the setting of the building are the boundary brick wall and the general sense of space that is delivered by the presence of the school grounds, although their visual appearance is cluttered and of low quality which in landscape terms, detracts.
- 4.62 Slaugham Lane is recorded as a drove/ historic routeway, reflecting one of the character components of the High Weald National Landscape. The lane is not narrow and deeply sunken as is traditional of the historic routeways in the National Landscape. It is in part edged with trees, hedges and boundary banks, including the banked woodland belt to part of the Site's western boundary, but the presence of chainlink fencing and the roadside brick wall along its interface with the Site do not typify the historic character of a drove.

#### Landscape Condition

- 4.63 Landscape condition is defined by GLVIA3 as:
- "A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements".*
- 4.64 The Site has not been in use since 2021 and has become overgrown, with scrub encroachment in the northeastern corner of the Site and to the edge of the playing field and vegetation breaking through the surface of hard standing across the Site. The school building is now derelict and boarded up which detracts from the aesthetic qualities of the building. The more modern flat roof extensions which are not reflective of the local vernacular also detract.
- 4.65 The Site is set within a relatively strong landscape structure defined by trees, woodland belt/tree belt and hedgerows which contributes to the wider landscape pattern and is characteristic of the local landscape. The mature oak tree in the centre of the Site forms a prominent feature and is visible in views from the Ouse Valley to the east. Trees and tree groups across the Site are recorded as being predominantly A and B Category in the Tree Survey for the Site.



- 4.66 The overall condition of the site is mixed, as noted above, with some elements considered to be poor and others (such as the mature Oak and Beech trees) considered to be good condition (Refer to Appendix 1 – Table 1).

Associations

- 4.67 There are no known cultural or other associations that contribute to the perception of the Site.

Distinctiveness

- 4.68 The Site has an association with the local community due to its former function as the village school. The building has recognisable architecture, generally typical of a Victorian village school and features a central bell tower. The adjacent Slaugham Lane is a drove and contributes to the historic pattern of routeways across the High Weald.
- 4.69 Boundary tree, woodland and hedgerow planting to the Site contributes towards the wooded backdrop to views across the Ouse Valley and the wider pattern of woodland and agricultural fields that denote the green separation between Warninglid and Slaugham.
- 4.70 'Woodland' is a core characteristic of the High Weald National Landscape, with a small belt of woodland/tree belt lying within the Site which, in conjunction with the boundary hedgerow planting to the eastern boundary of the Site, contributes to the pattern of small areas of woodland throughout the local landscape.

Recreational

- 4.71 The Site has no recreational value but formerly provided a school playground. It forms part of the backdrop of views from locations on public footpaths 13S and 12S, with footpath 12S forming part of the promoted High Weald Landscape Trail.

Perceptual (Scenic Quality)

- 4.72 The Site forms part of a wider landscape defined by a pattern of undulating agricultural fields and woodland, with the boundary planting to the site contributing to a belt of woodland which forms the backdrop to views looking west across the valley. The former school building is reflective of the local vernacular however more modern flat-roof extensions and increasing levels of hard surfacing and security and storage paraphernalia (eg. fences and storage units) across the Site have reduced its scenic value, no longer reflecting the local vernacular.
- 4.73 '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. There is an overall sense of enclosure on the Site, with vegetated boundaries to much of the Site. Its proximity to Slaugham Lane and the human influences on the Site in terms of built form and hard surfaces prevent a sense of remoteness or intimacy. The Site forms part of the wooded ridge which forms the backdrop to views across the Ouse Valley from land to the east and southeast of the Site.

Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)

- 4.74 The Site is located between the villages of Slaugham and Warninglid and adjoins a trafficked rural road and is therefore not remote. When stood on the Site, there is a relative sense of

peace and quiet, and birdsong can be heard with only occasional noise from passing traffic on Slaugham Lane, the sense of tranquillity increasing in the wider countryside to the east of the Site. The Site lies within an area recorded as having the darkest skies, dark skies being a character component of the High Weald National Landscape.

- 4.75 The Site is not wild land.

Functional

- 4.76 The Site is a derelict primary school and makes a limited contribution to the healthy functioning of the landscape. The existing hedgerow and woodland planting within the Site provide foraging and nesting opportunities for breeding birds.
- 4.77 The contributions of the Site towards the core character components of the High Weald National Landscape have been outlined above.

HBA conclusion on landscape value

- 4.78 As a derelict part-brownfield site, the landscape value of the Site is mixed, with negative value arising predominantly from the redundant nature of the buildings and presence of extensive hardstanding and visual clutter, whilst positive value derives mostly from the character and aesthetic of the original school building architecture, the existing landscape structure of hedgerows, woodland / tree belt and mature specimen Oak and Beech trees and the combined contribution of these to the countryside setting to east and south-east and to the character of Slaugham Lane. It is also acknowledged that the Site lies within the High Weald National Landscape, statutorily designated on account of its natural beauty and therefore valued at a national level.
- 4.79 Based upon the assessment above, the Site in its local context is of overall **medium** landscape value in its current form (Refer to [Appendix 1 – Table 2](#) for landscape value criteria). However, the location of the Site within the National Landscape, elevates the value of the landscape setting of the Site.
- 4.80 The Site is part of a ‘valued landscape’ in the context of NPPF Paragraph 187 a) and considered at the higher end of the hierarchy referenced therein.
- 4.81 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 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The design of the proposed development has been steered by landscape and other environmental considerations to develop a scheme that responds to the existing landscape context and setting: notably in landscape and visual terms, the Site's setting within the High Weald National Landscape and its contribution to the character components of the National Landscape, including the character of the adjoining Slaugham Lane (historic routeway), dark skies and the perceptual qualities of the High Weald.
- 5.2 The approach to landscape design has also been informed by the High Weald Design Guide, with particular regard to appropriate boundary treatments and the use of materials.
- 5.3 Those aspects of the development proposal which are relevant to the assessment of landscape and visual effects are described below.

### Description

- 5.4 The proposed development seeks to convert the existing school building into 2 no. residential dwellings and to create an additional 2 no. detached dwellings in the southern half of the Site on an existing area of grass to the south of the location of the existing portacabin and sheds.
- 5.5 The conversion of the school building would include the replacement of the flat roofs to the more modern parts of the building with gabled roofs to reflect the architecture of the Victorian school building and the local vernacular. Where the building is extended between plot 2 and its garage, a contemporary palette of sustainable building materials including vertical timber cladding, zinc and a sedum roof would be used to contrast with the traditional materials of the building and reflect the material palette of the proposed additional dwellings.
- 5.6 The proposed dwellings in the southern portion of the Site would be two storeys high and of a more contemporary design with the use of sustainable building materials such as zinc roofs and vertical timber cladding proposed to be used in conjunction with more traditional materials. To either side of the front door, the building would be red/brown brick with gabled tile roofs to match the material palette of the existing school building. To the centre of the building, surrounding the front door, would be vertical timber cladding, above which would be a flat zinc roof. Each dwelling would have a garage with a sedum green roof.
- 5.7 Access to the converted school building would utilise existing accesses to the Site. Access to the two dwellings to the south of the Site would be via two additional entrances from Slaugham Lane, one created to the centre of the western boundary in the location of the existing gated pedestrian access, and the second towards the southwestern corner of the Site. Two tree groups would be removed to accommodate the additional accesses; a group of 4 no. Hazel trees would be removed to the south of the existing shed to create an access to plot 3 and a group comprising 1 no. Norway Spruce and 3 no. Western Red Cedar would be removed in the southwestern corner of the Site to create an access point to plot 4.
- 5.8 The existing asphalt playgrounds to the north and south of the school building would be removed. Gravel parking areas would be created to the front of each dwelling, with paved access to the property and rear gardens and planting beds to the front of the properties. The change in surface treatment would reflect the guidance for surfaces and materials set

out in the High Weald Design Guide which favours the use of permeable surfaces and discourages the use of large areas of asphalt surfacing.

- 5.9 Post and rail fencing and adjacent native hedgerows would form the boundaries to the gardens of each dwelling. To the west of the converted school building, the existing brick wall would be retained, with the adjoining chain link fence removed. The chain link fence adjacent to the woodland which bounds the southern half of the western boundary Site would be removed and replaced with a post and rail fence.
- 5.10 Measures would be taken to minimise ambient light levels and light spill from the buildings. External lighting would only be provided where needed, for example on building access points, and would incorporate PIRs or timers. It is envisaged that the design of lighting could be controlled by condition.

### **Landscape Strategy**

- 5.11 The proposed redevelopment would be implemented alongside a landscape strategy as illustrated on the Landscape Strategy plan ([Drawing HBA-976-001](#), at [Appendix 2](#)), that seeks to embed the proposed development in its local setting and contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the core character components of the High Weald National Landscape. This includes:
- Retention of the overall landscape structure on the Site, with the exception of two tree groups to the Site's western boundary which would be removed to allow for the creation of accesses to plots 3 and 4. Replacement tree planting would be carried out to fill gaps in the southern Site boundary, contribute to Slaugham Lane, and augment the eastern boundary.
  - The eastern boundary hedgerow and trees would be retained and augmented with additional tree planting to increase tree canopy cover in views from the east.
  - All existing A Category and B Category trees would be retained. The mature specimen oak tree that lies centrally and forms a focal feature within the Site would be retained, with the proposed dwellings positioned to avoid the RPA of the tree.
  - Within the small woodland belt to the Site's western boundary log and deadwood piles would be created for invertebrates. The removal of invasive species and general management of the woodland planting is proposed to improve its condition and ecological function.
  - Introducing an overall 'greener' finish to the frontage with Slaugham Lane, through removal of chainlink fencing and new planting behind the existing brick wall to the school.
  - Replacement of non-porous and monolithic surfacing with permeable hard and soft surfaces.
- 5.12 A simple landscape treatment would be applied to the proposed dwellings, with ornamental planting beds to the front of the dwellings (incorporating a range of planting for pollinators), 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. Scrub

encroachment would be cleared from the grass to the rear of the dwellings. Garages would have a sedum green roof finish.

- 5.13 The proposed dwellings in the southern half of the Site would be set back from the road behind the existing woodland belt, with a lawn creating a buffer between the woodland and the hard surfacing associated with the dwellings. The set back of the dwellings from the road behind enclosed front gardens would reflect the guidance for boundaries and front gardens set out in the High Weald Design Guide.

## 6 LANDSCAPE & 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. It assumes that the scheme as indicated on the Landscape Strategy (drawing HBA-976-001 rev D) would be implemented and managed for the longer term.
- 6.6 The assessment has considered the landscape and visual effects both upon completion (Day 1), and for residual effects after 15 years 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 scheme would not be expected to give rise to any unusual or long term effects.
- 6.8 A Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by Manorwood and should be referenced in relation to impacts upon the setting of the non-designated heritage asset. This considers that the proposed conversion, extension and alteration of the existing school building would enhance the building's character and the introduction of two additional dwellings in the southern half of the Site would have a neutral effect.

### Landscape Effects

- 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:

- Whilst the Site lies outside of the settled village, it is a developed and brownfield Site through its northern half, having been a school since 1878 and therefore subject to built form and human influence for almost 150 years. The Site is set within a local built context of a part of Slaugham Lane that includes a cluster of residential development. The proposed residential use is therefore not out of character or scale with the locality.
- The original school building adds a degree of time-depth to the landscape and its architecture contributes to the streetscene and will remain as part of the proposal.
- The remainder of the Site is grassland contained by established hedgerow, tree belt and woodland belt that provide containment and screening or visual filtering to this part of the Site when perceived from Slaugham Lane and the wider countryside to the east and south-east and reflect the wider landscape pattern.
- The tarmac playground with adjoining playing field and brick wall frontage to Slaugham Lane plays a role as part of the landscape setting to the non-listed heritage asset of the former school building. In landscape terms however, they also exert a degree of negative influence in terms of the clutter of chain link fence, hardstanding and storage buildings.
- The Site is a relatively level platform due to its former use as a school such that development could be readily accommodated with minimal change to the underlying topography.
- In its local setting, the Site lies on a localised ridge that is typical of the complex topography of the High Weald, with the boundary planting to the Site contributing to the perception of a wider wooded ridge that frames views across the Ouse Valley from the east and south-east, but not forming part of the skyline. The proposal would not change this.
- Slaugham Lane which adjoins the Site is a High Weald ‘Routeway’, one of the character components of the High Weald. The character of the Lane is currently influenced by the existing school building and chain link fencing as well as roadside parking (adjoining but outside of the Site) and the low bank of woodland belt

planting along the western Site boundary. There are also a number of PRow (High Weald 'Routeways' within the local setting of the Site including the High Weald Landscape Trail. These offer intervisibility across the landscape within which the Site sits.

- The local landscape setting is characterised by an established pattern of hedgerows, and strong woodland and tree cover which assist in creating a strong landscape pattern and framework that contains the Site.

6.12 The Site in its local landscape context demonstrates a range of factors that suggest predominantly low susceptibility but with some features of medium susceptibility. On balance it is therefore considered to be of **low - medium** overall susceptibility to the type of change proposed (refer to [Appendix 1 Table 3](#)).

### Landscape Sensitivity

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

### Landscape Effects Assessment

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 Slaugham Lane;
- The introduction of new planting and soft landscape treatments;
- The re-purposing of a vacant and derelict building and introduction of a residential use across the Site;
- The removal of existing chain link fence, built forms and hard surfacing including a tarmac playground;
- Loss of established trees and other vegetation, including an area of grassland and scrub to accommodate new dwellings and their accesses;
- Consequential changes to how the site is perceived in the landscape setting of the High Weald.

6.15 The proposed development would result in an overall increase in the amount of built form on the Site as a whole. This should be considered in the context of the Site already including a derelict building, large areas of tarmac playground/surfacing and built forms such as portacabins and sheds. In the northern half of the Site there would be an overall, albeit very modest, decrease in the amount of built form and surfacing (957.9m<sup>2</sup> of tarmacadam surfacing and 86.3m<sup>2</sup> of built form would be removed with an introduction of 138.2m<sup>2</sup> of new built form and 599.8m<sup>2</sup> of hard surfacing) and a resultant increase in soft landscaped areas (326.2m<sup>2</sup> of semi-improved grass removed and 914.4m<sup>2</sup> of flowering grass lawn and soft landscape established). In the southern portion of the Site, there would be an introduction of new built form and therefore a resultant loss of green field (2592.8m<sup>2</sup> of semi-improved grass would be removed, with an introduction of 985.3m<sup>2</sup> of new built form and surfacing with the remaining 1607.5m<sup>2</sup> re-established as flowering grass lawn and soft landscape to the proposed dwellings.



- 6.16 The conversion of the existing school building would involve the removal of the existing flat roofs to the modern extension and their replacement with gabled roofs. The intrinsic built form, aesthetics and character of the Victorian school building would be retained, including retention of the brick wall frontage to Slaugham Lane that characterises this part of the road and has an association with the former school use.
- 6.17 The proposed new buildings would be located in the most contained part of the Site and set back from Slaugham Road behind an existing woodland belt, minimising the perception of an increase in built development on the Site. A new access point would be created at the southern end of the woodland belt and an existing access widened at the northern end, resulting in the loss of some of the trees in the woodland belt that follows the western Site boundary, shortening the length of tree belt in the north and creating a gap in the southern end of the belt from which new built form would be perceived. The proposed built forms are positioned to minimise the perception of built form through the gaps and with a second layer of hedgerow and garden planting proposed to help retain a sense of green space beyond the gaps.
- 6.18 The proposed development would introduce an active residential use to a vacant and unused educational building and introduce a residential use to the southern part of the Site. The residential use would result in an increase in human activity on the Site, including vehicle movements and increased lighting, both of which would adversely affect tranquillity and dark skies to a small degree. The level of vegetation cover to the Site would contain any effect such that it is not considered to impact the wider landscape of the High Weald National Landscape (acknowledging that any increase in lighting is considered to be adverse in areas of dark skies). Measures would be taken to minimise ambient light levels and light spill from the buildings. The above should also be considered in the context of the former active use of the school and previous activity that would have been associated with it. It is considered that the any potential residential garden paraphernalia (eg. sheds, climbing frames etc) could be controlled by planning condition or legal agreement to avoid adverse effects in this regard.
- 6.19 Uncharacteristic chain link fencing would be removed from the Site frontage (and from within the Site). A post and rail fence would be installed through the southern part of the western Site boundary between the existing woodland belt and Slaugham Lane. The chain link fencing would also be removed from the top of the brick wall to Slaugham Lane, to the west of the existing school building, and the wall made good. The removal of the chain link fence and educational paraphernalia from the Site frontage, as well as the removal of the modern additions to the Victorian school building and proposed architectural alterations would improve both the perception of the Victorian building from Slaugham Lane and the character of this part of the lane. New tree planting and mixed native and nectar-rich planting behind the brick wall would also help to create a softer and greener aesthetic and character to this part of the road (and High Weald routeway) without screening views or detracting from the presence of the original school building on the Site. At the southern end of the Site, the existing woodland belt onto Slaugham Lane would for the most part be retained with two new accesses created at either end of the belt (the northern-most extending an existing access point). Some vegetation would be lost in these locations. The proposed development would initially alter the character of this part of Slaugham Lane when considered at a site-level, i.e. there would be a perception of residential development

beyond the roadside belt where there was formerly redundant school playing field. This is not considered to be out of character with the locality, given the presence of dwellings throughout this part of the lane and neither is it considered to adversely affect the overall character of Slaugham Lane.

- 6.20 There would be a very slight decrease in the amount of hardstanding on the Site overall, with the existing asphalt surface to the playground removed and gravel driveways and paved paths created. The replacement of the dark asphalt and monolithic surface with gravel to the private driveways and parking areas would improve permeability and reflect the guidance for surfaces and materials set out in the High Weald Design Guide.
- 6.21 There would be no material alterations to the landform or topography of the main part of the Site with only minor alterations considered necessary to accommodate the proposed access to the southern most of the proposed dwellings.
- 6.22 In terms of landscape fabric, two groups of trees would be removed from the western boundary of the Site in order to provide access to the proposed dwellings (as noted above). The existing boundary vegetation would otherwise be retained and augmented through the removal of invasive species and with gapping up planting to both the wooded/tree belt to Slaugham Lane and the southern boundary. New tree planting is also proposed to the eastern Site boundary where additional native trees would be planted on the site-side of the existing hedgerow to provide increased tree canopy cover that would contribute to both the containment of the Site and the overall perception of woodland cover in this part of the High Weald.
- 6.23 In the northern half of the Site, the existing mature Oak specimen that is protected by TPO would be retained and would continue to form a key landscape feature on the Site. Arboricultural impacts and tree protection measures are addressed in the Arboricultural Assessment by Arborweald that accompanies the planning application. The growing conditions and immediate landscape setting of the Oak would be enhanced through the removal of the tarmac playground within which it sits and removal of the chain link fence and portacabin that lie within its Root Protection Area. The Oak would instead be located in the grassed lawn to Plot 2 and read as part of a green space that is associated with the original Victorian school building.
- 6.24 In terms of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), this is addressed in detail in the BNG Metric and Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Arborweald. Overall, 2,919m<sup>2</sup> of semi-improved grass would be removed from the southern half of the Site, 174m<sup>2</sup> of scrub would be removed from the northeastern corner of the Site and two groups of trees would be removed from the Site's western boundary. The loss of vegetation would be partially mitigated onsite through the planting of native hedgerows to define the curtilage of each dwelling, new tree planting and the creation of lawns and ornamental planting beds to the front and rear of each dwelling, however as the majority of this lies within private gardens, additional habitat creation is required offsite to meet trading rules for BNG.
- 6.25 The proposed development would be set within an established landscape structure that is in character with the wider landscape and is proposed to be augmented. A new pattern would be created on the Site through the layout of new built form and the creation of new hedgerow boundaries to properties. This pattern is considered to be reflective of the local landscape. Existing and new landscape features would contribute to the wider landscape patterns and

embed the new built form within the Site when perceived from the countryside to the east, where the new built form would appear as part of the existing pattern of scattered built form seen within and against a backdrop of woodland. The original school building would remain a noticeable although muted feature as perceived from the countryside.

- 6.26 The scheme could not be easily reversible and therefore is regarded as long term /permanent.
- 6.27 As can be noted in the narrative above, the proposed development would result in a range of both positive and negative landscape effects, in some cases effect also being neutral (or positive effects neutralising negative effects).
- 6.28 In terms of the magnitude of landscape effect at Day 1, ([Appendix 1 - Table 4](#)) it is considered that taking into account the range of effects described above and applying a precautionary approach, the proposed development would result in an overall initial "Minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline i.e. predevelopment landscape and /or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the wider receiving landscape" at Day 1. This equates to a **low adverse** magnitude of landscape effect at Day 1 that is considered to be contained to the Site and its immediate context of Slaugham Lane.
- 6.29 When combined with the medium high sensitivity of the landscape, this gives rise to landscape effects assessed as **slight to moderate adverse** importance at Day 1, to the Site and its immediate setting.
- 6.30 At Year 15, the new development would have become more embedded in the landscape and new planting proposed as part of the scheme would have established and matured and contribute both to the countryside edge to the east and the character of Slaugham lane to the west. The magnitude of landscape effect is therefore considered to reduce by Year 15 to **minimal beneficial**. When combined with the medium sensitivity of the landscape, this results in an importance of landscape effect assessed as **minimal – slight beneficial** at Year 15.
- 6.31 With regard to the High Weald National Landscape designation, the proposed development is considered to affect the special qualities/character components of its' natural beauty as follows:
- **Natural systems (geology, soils, water and climate)**  
The underlying characteristic landform of the High Weald would be unaltered.
  - **Settlement**  
The proposed development would improve the architectural quality of the existing Victorian school building by removing the modern extensions and range of clutter including chain link fencing, sheds and a portacabin from its immediate setting. The proposed development is not located within a historic settlement and neither would it alter the pattern of clustered and generally linear but scattered development on this part of Slaugham Lane.
  - **Routeways**  
The overall vegetated character of Slaugham Lane would remain where it passes the southern part of the Site. The proposed buildings would be set within an existing landscape structure and set back from Slaugham Lane, the new residential use and

built forms would be perceived beyond the roadside vegetation but would not dominate and would not alter the overall character of the lane which has residential development around the Site. The roadside character would be enhanced where Slaugham Road passes the existing school building, due to the removal of chain link fence, modern extensions and portacabin from the streetscene and introduction of a soft finish behind the wall.

- **Woodland**

Existing boundary vegetation including a small belt of trees/woodland would be retained. Vegetation on the Site contributes to the wider pattern of woodland and tree cover as perceived across the Ouse Valley. The proposed development would introduce additional tree planting that would augment the perception of tree cover and the wooded setting but this would not make a material difference at a landscape scale.

- **Fieldscapes and heath**

The existing hedgerow to the eastern Site boundary that addresses the wider farmland beyond would be retained and augmented with additional tree planting that would increase canopy cover to this field boundary.

- **Dark night skies**

The proposed residential use of the Site would result in an increase in lighting that would adversely affect dark skies to a small degree. The level of vegetation cover to the Site would contain any effect such that it is not considered to impact the wider landscape of the High Weald National Landscape (acknowledging that any increase in lighting is considered to be adverse in areas of dark skies but also noting that the Site is not a 'dark sky sensitive area' eg. ancient woodland or a wildlife-rich site or habitat, and would be designed to minimise light spill).

Developments located away from dark sky sensitive areas e.g. ancient woodland and wildlife-rich sites and habitats • Avoidance of inappropriate light development into dark sky areas with new dwellings in remote or topographically exposed areas, or adjacent to wildlife sensitive sites • Design site layout to minimise light spill • Use domestic lights less than 500 lumens • Shield any lights above 500 lumens and angle lights downwards • Avoid tall street-lighting columns where possible • Use PIRS and low level bollards with timers for amenity routes and spaces • Illuminance standards are referenced for road lighting

- **Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities**

Views from the High Weald Landscape Trail are assessed separately in the visual effects assessment but contribute to the 'aesthetic and perceptual qualities' that are a core character component of the High Weald's natural beauty. The perception of the overall undulating landform and wooded and farmed character of the landscape from the High Weald Landscape Trail would not be adversely affected by the proposed development.

- **Land-based economy and rural living**

As a school, the Site would have previously contributed to rural community life, and the presence of the Victorian school building serves as a visual reminder of its

previous use. The architecture and aesthetic of the original school building would be retained along with the brick wall frontage to Slaugham Road, with the existing modern extensions, chain link fence, porta-cabin and sheds that all detract from the Victorian building, proposed to be removed. The bell tower would remain a noticeable roof silhouette in views towards the Site from the countryside and from Slaugham Lane with new buildings and tree planting set back behind existing vegetation and separated from the school building by a new hedgerow and an existing mature specimen Oak tree.

6.32 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 roadside vegetation within the Site; and*
- *“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 removal of uncharacteristic architectural features from the existing school building and the introduction of contemporary dwellings 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 an existing strong network of vegetation where the visual impacts are limited and the development can become embedded within the local pattern of ridgetop settlement against a wooded backdrop.*

6.33 Overall, the proposed development is considered to result in a very localised beneficial magnitude (and importance) of landscape effect on the core components and purpose for designation of the High Weald National Landscape as a result of the above changes, albeit at a localised site-scale. The exception to this is dark skies, where the proposal would introduce some lighting into a currently unlit Site. In this regard the design incorporates measures to minimise light spill and the proposal should be considered in the context of the Site having previously had an active use that would have involved a degree of illumination.

### Visual Effects Assessment

6.34 The approach to a 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.

6.35 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.

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

Users of the public rights of way network:

- Footpath 13S
- Footpath 12S which forms part of the High Weald Landscape Trail

Road users:

- Slaugham Lane
- Cuckfield Road

Residential receptors

- Residents in nearby properties on Slaugham Lane may have private views towards the Site and the proposed development. These receptors are not considered by this assessment which assesses publicly available views.

### Visual Susceptibility

- 6.38 The susceptibility to change depends upon receptor occupation or activity and the extent to which attention focuses on views and visual amenity.
- 6.39 In this instance, the most susceptible visual receptors include people engaged in outdoor informal recreation, on public rights of way or permissive routes, whose interest is likely to be focused on the rural landscape and views. These receptors are considered to have **high susceptibility** and usually include not only pedestrians but also cyclists and equestrians where appropriate.
- 6.40 For the purposes of this assessment, workers and visitors to the existing site and in the agricultural land to the east have been discounted.
- 6.41 Vehicle travellers, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians on the local roads are considered to have a **medium susceptibility** to visual change. Users of these roads are likely to be travelling for a purpose other than to enjoy the view although it is acknowledged they are travelling through a designated landscape.
- 6.42 Residents at home are considered to have a **high susceptibility** to visual change but, as is normal practice, are not specifically considered in this LVA.

### Visual Value

- 6.43 Typical values for certain types of view locations are set out in **Appendix 1, Table 6**.
- 6.44 In this instance, the view from the High Weald Landscape Trail is recognised as a viewpoint in the route mapping and promotional literature for this long-distance route and is considered to be of **high** value. Other views from local rural PRoW are looking across a designated landscape and towards a (non-designated) heritage asset and provide an appreciation of the local context of the High Weald and the Ouse valley and are ranked as **medium high** value because of this. Views from the local roads are considered to be of **medium** value.

### Visual Sensitivity

- 6.45 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):

**Pedestrians on the High Weald Landscape Trail**

- (Susceptibility: H, Value: H) **high sensitivity.**

**Pedestrians using public footpath 13S**

- (Susceptibility: H, Value: M-H) **high sensitivity.**

**Vehicle travellers, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians on local roads**

- (Susceptibility: M, Value: M) **medium sensitivity.**

### Effects of completed development on visual amenity (Day 1 – Winter, Year 15 Summer)

- 6.46 The assessment of the visual effects of the development, both at completion and at Year 15 is presented in a tabular form below.

VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT – DAY 1 & YEAR 15					
Visual Receptor and existing view Refer to Figures for photo Viewpoints.	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Year 15 (summer)	Description of change and visual effects
<b>Users of the Public Rights of Way network</b>					
<b>Footpath 13S</b> Pedestrians on Footpath 13S between Slaugham Lane and boundary vegetation to Old Park House and Old Park Farm  <b>HBA Figure 5 View 3</b> (340m southeast of the Site) <b>and View 4</b> (390m south of the Site)	High	Low adverse	Slight adverse effect	No effect	<p>At Day 1 Winter from Footpath 13S the overall composition of the view would remain, with the Site forming a small component of views looking across the undulating topography and a field foreground towards a characteristic wooded backdrop, with buildings set below and within the tree cover.</p> <p>At Day 1 in winter, the proposed development would be filtered by the existing Site boundary vegetation. To the south of the Site (<b>HBA View 4</b>), the southernmost proposed dwelling would be likely to be visible in glimpsed and filtered views through the tree line on the Site's southern and eastern boundary where the new buildings are not considered to be prominent or particularly noticeable features but there would be a greater sense of built development in this small part of the view. In winter the existing school building and other nearby buildings in the local and wider landscape would remain visible. Traveling north on the footpath, views looking west towards the Site (<b>HBA View 3</b>) would remain foreshortened by the landform, with the Site continuing to blend into a wooded backdrop and being filtered by the existing vegetation on the eastern Site boundary and in the intervening field. The roofs of all the buildings on the Site would be likely to be visible above the existing hedgerow and filtered by intermittent tree canopies, with the first or ground floor of the buildings potentially glimpsed where the hedgerow structure is less dense. This would be perceived in the context of an existing winter view where scattered built form below and within vegetation cover is currently a feature. The existing school building would remain visible and is considered to contribute positively to the sense of scattered built form nestled in woodland, the bell tower would also remain a visible feature.</p> <p>At Summer Year 15 the existing boundary vegetation and additional tree planting to the Site would mostly screen views of the new dwellings from the footpath, with occasional glimpses of the new buildings possible beyond the summer vegetation. The existing school building would remain visible above the boundary hedgerow in views from the east and would be separated from any glimpses of the new dwellings. The overall character, quality and composition of the view would remain as the existing view.</p>



VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT – DAY 1 & YEAR 15					
Visual Receptor and existing view Refer to Figures for photo Viewpoints.	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Year 15 (summer)	Description of change and visual effects
<b>Footpath 12S (High Weald Landscape Trail)</b> Pedestrians on Footpath 12S looking northwest towards the Site from a 50m stretch of the footpath immediately north of Anne's Wood West.  <b>HBA Figure 5 View 5</b> (910m southeast of the Site)	High	Minimal adverse	Minimal adverse effect	No effect	<p>At Day 1 in winter, the composition of the view would remain, with the Site forming a very small component of views looking across the undulating topography and a long foreground of open farmland towards the rising valley sides and ridge beyond the Site and a characteristic wooded backdrop, with buildings set below and within the tree cover.</p> <p>At Day 1 Winter from Footpath 12S, the proposed dwellings would be glimpsed beyond existing vegetation as part of the distant middleground to views from an approximate 50m stretch of the footpath immediately north of Anne's Wood West and the location of the viewpoint recognised in the promotional material for the High Weald Landscape Trail. The proposed dwellings and the existing school building would be likely to be partially obscured by both onsite and offsite vegetation but may be glimpsed above the existing hedgerow. Further north on the footpath, views of the proposed development would be screened by the topography and vegetation cross the valley.</p> <p>At Summer Year 15 the existing boundary vegetation and additional tree planting to the Site would screen views of the proposed development from the footpath, with only partial and occasional glimpses of the roofs of the proposed dwellings likely to be available. At both Day 1 and Year 15, the existing school building would remain visible and is considered to contribute positively to the sense of scattered built form nestled in woodland, the bell tower would also remain a visible feature. Where occasional glimpses of the rooftops to the proposed dwellings remain, this would be seen as part of an overall scene and visual pattern of scattered rooftops seen within tree cover and against a woodland backdrop.</p>
<b>Users of local roads</b>					
<b>Slaugham Lane</b> Vehicle users, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians travelling in both directions along Slaugham Lane between the access track to	Medium	Low (adverse and beneficial)	Slight beneficial and slight adverse effect	Minimal beneficial effect	<p>At Day 1 winter when travelling north on Slaugham Lane, the new dwelling on plot 4 would be visible from the road to the south of the Site, glimpsed through the existing tree planting and where a group of existing trees are proposed to be removed. Further north on the road, to the west of plots 3 and 4, views into the Site would be filtered by the existing vegetation along the western boundary of the Site, with the buildings glimpsed where the existing vegetation is less dense and where accesses to the</p>

VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT – DAY 1 & YEAR 15					
Visual Receptor and existing view Refer to Figures for photo Viewpoints.	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Day 1 (winter)	Importance of Effect Year 15 (summer)	Description of change and visual effects
<p>Slate House Farm from Slaugham Lane and Old School House</p> <p><b>HBA Figure 5 Views 1</b> (20m north of the Site) <b>and 2</b> (180m south of the Site)</p>					<p>properties open gaps in the vegetation. The proposed refurbishment of the school, including the replacement of the flat roofs with gabled roofs would be visible, improving the architectural quality of the school building in the view and reflecting the local vernacular. The change of use of the land would be noted through the removal of the chain link fence to the western boundary (which in itself would have a positive effect in removing an existing visual detractor) and the presence of new garages and gardens to the private dwellings, all of which would be seen above the existing brick wall and through gateways in fleeting views when travelling past the existing building and when travelling south towards the Site for a short stretch of the road, adjacent to The Old School House. The Victorian school building, roadside brick wall, mature specimen Oak and woodland belt to the south would remain the key features of the view.</p> <p>By Summer Year 15 plots 3 and 4 would be screened by the existing boundary vegetation to the Site and additional tree and hedgerow planting, with only views along the new driveways to the proposed dwellings available from the road. The woodland belt would remain the key visual element of the view. The establishment of new trees and garden vegetation both adjacent to the new gravel driveways and behind the brick wall frontage would soften the roadside edge of the Site, especially when considered against the baseline situation of tarmac playgrounds and chain link fencing. The alterations to the school building visible at Day 1 would remain, improving the architectural quality of the building and enabling the building to be better integrated into its setting. The existing Victorian building and brick wall frontage and mature Oak would remain the focus when passing the Site.</p>
<p><b>Cuckfield Road</b> Vehicle users, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians travelling on Cuckfield Road to the east of Warninglid</p> <p>No photograph as no summer view identified.</p>	Medium	No change	No change	No effect	<p>No summer views identified and only one hedgerow gap identified that may offer fleeting and glimpsed winter views towards the Site. Hedgerow cutting may also result in views opening up over the hedgerow. The proposed development is likely to be screened by intervening landform and multiple layers of field boundary vegetation including the vegetation around the Site boundaries but would form a minor component of the view is visible such that the proposed change is unlikely to be discerned.</p>

## 7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The appraisal has described the landscape and visual context for the Proposed Development at the former Warninglid Primary School, Slaugham Lane, Warninglid which seeks to convert the existing school building into 2 no. residential dwellings and create an additional 2 no. detached dwellings in the southern portion of the Site on an existing area of grass.
- 7.2 The Site comprises the former Warninglid Primary School building, several outbuildings, two asphalt playgrounds and a playing field. A large TPO Oak tree lies central to the Site. The Site is bounded by a native hedgerow to the east, trees to the south and southwest, a wall to the northwest and its boundary with Old School House to the north. To the west of the Site is Slaugh Lane which is recorded as an historic drove. The Site and surrounding area lie within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 7.3 The site lies in the Ouse Valley Landscape Character Area (LCA) of both the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex and the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex, a rural valley landscape with ridgetop villages and a pattern of medium to large-sized fields interspersed with woodland. The published landscape character studies note a need to conserve the rural character of the valley, with particular regard to trees, hedgerows and local distinctiveness.
- 7.4 As a derelict part-brownfield site, the landscape value of the Site is mixed, with negative value arising predominantly from the redundant nature of the buildings and presence of extensive hardstanding and visual clutter, whilst positive value derives mostly from the character and aesthetic of the original school building architecture, the existing landscape structure of hedgerows, woodland / tree belt and mature specimen Oak and Beech trees and the combined contribution of these to the countryside setting to east and south-east and to the character of Slaugham Lane. It is also acknowledged that the Site lies within the High Weald National Landscape, statutorily designated on account of its natural beauty and therefore valued at a national level.
- 7.5 The Site in its local context is of overall medium landscape value in its current form (Refer to Appendix 1 – Table 2 for landscape value criteria). However, the location of the Site within the National Landscape, elevates the value of the landscape setting of the Site.
- 7.6 The Site is part of a 'valued landscape' in the context of NPPF Paragraph 187 a) and considered at the higher end of the hierarchy referenced therein.
- 7.7 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 and with regard to the objectives set out within the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029.
- 7.8 The Proposed Development has been steered by landscape and other environmental considerations to respond to the Site's setting within the High Weald National Landscape and the core character components set out in the High Weald Management Guidance. The proposed development would include the conversion of the existing school building into 2 no. dwellings, the removal of modern extensions to the building and other paraphernalia including a portacabins, storage sheds and lengths of chain-link fencing around the Site. Two additional dwellings would be constructed at the southern end of the Site on the existing playing field. The proposed dwellings would be set back from Slaugham Lane behind an

existing woodland belt. The existing asphalt playgrounds would be removed to accommodate gravel driveways and parking areas as well as new gardens and areas of soft landscape.

- 7.9 The Proposed Development would change the use of and introduce additional built form onto a derelict Site within the High Weald National Landscape where there is existing built form. New buildings, hard surfacing and gardens would replace an area of existing grassed playing field. The proposed buildings would be set within an established landscape structure that is characteristic of the local area and contributes to the local landscape pattern, notably providing enclosure and containment to the Site and reading as part of the overall tree and woodland cover that contributes to the perception of the landscape of the High Weald when viewed from the wider landscape. The removal of modern extensions to the existing school building, chain link fences, a portacabin, sheds/structures and asphalt surfacing would improve the aesthetic quality of the Site and its relationship with the adjacent Slaugham Lane, a historic drove and 'Routeway' within the National Landscape. The introduction of planting to the rear of the existing brick wall and new tree planting would assist in providing additional 'greening' to the character of the lane.
- 7.10 The proposal would be implemented alongside a landscape strategy that seeks to retain and enhance the landscape structure of the Site. Existing boundary vegetation would for the most part be retained and enhanced through the removal of invasive species and positive long-term management, with the exception of 8 no. trees to be removed from the western boundary of the Site to accommodate new accesses. Additional tree planting along the eastern boundary of the Site, adjacent to the existing hedgerow, would augment the boundary treatment and increase the overall canopy cover. The existing TPO oak tree to the centre of the Site would be retained, with the removal of tarmac surfacing, a porta cabin and chain link fence from the RPA of the tree.
- 7.11 The LVA assesses that at Day 1 and before new planting has established, the Proposed Development would result in a slight to moderate adverse importance of landscape effect to the Site in its local context. By Year 15, the importance of landscape effect would reduce to minimal to slight beneficial on account of the Site becoming embedded into the local landscape and enhancements to boundary vegetation (Refer to Appendix 1, Table 9).
- 7.12 Overall, the proposed development is considered to result in a very localised beneficial magnitude (and importance) of landscape effect on the core components and purpose for designation of the High Weald National Landscape as a result of the above changes, albeit at a localised site-scale. The exception to this is dark skies, where the proposal would introduce some lighting into a currently unlit Site. In this regard, the design would incorporate measures to minimise light spill from the buildings and only incorporate external lighting where needed (eg. for safety/security). It is envisaged that the detailed design of lighting could be controlled by condition. The proposal should also be considered in the context of the Site having previously had an active use that would have involved a degree of illumination.
- 7.13 The visual effects of the Proposed Development would be localised and limited to people (receptors) using Slaugham Lane to the west of the Site and parts of footpaths 12S (The High Weald Landscape Trail) and 13S to the southeast and east of the Site.

- 7.14 From Slaugham Lane to the south of the Site, views of the proposed development would be partially screened by the existing boundary vegetation, with the main changes arising from the creation of new accesses that would allow fleeting views along the new driveways towards the dwellings. Passing the main part of the Site and approaching from the north, the proposed refurbishment of the existing Victorian school building would positively alter views, with the existing brick wall frontage retained with new planting set beyond the wall, but existing chain link fencing, building extensions, asphalt playground and portacabin removed. The aesthetic of the existing Victoria school building and the nearby mature Oak tree would remain a key visual focus of the view, beyond the roadside wall. At Day 1 in winter, users of Slaugham Lane are assessed as experiencing both a slight beneficial and slight adverse importance of visual effect, becoming an overall minimal beneficial effect by summer Year 15 on account of enhancements to the streetscape through the establishment of new planting behind the roadside wall, enhancement to the architecture of the Victorian building and establishment of new hedgerow, ornamental and tree planting around the proposed dwellings that will have helped to embed them into the views.
- 7.15 From Footpaths 12S and 13S, the overall composition of the views would remain unchanged, with the Site forming a small or very small component of views looking across the undulating topography and a foreground of open farmland towards the wooded ridge beyond the Site that together with the vegetation on the Site and within the locality, creates a characteristic wooded backdrop to views, with buildings set below and within the tree cover. From footpath 12S and 13S, views of the proposed development are limited but where available would be filtered by the existing boundary vegetation to the Site at Day 1, with glimpses of the proposed dwellings likely to be possible where vegetation is less dense and the roofs glimpsed above the hedgerow and behind existing canopy vegetation. As a result, the proposed development would have a minimal or slight adverse importance of visual effect on receptors on the footpaths, reducing to no effect by summer Year 15 as new tree planting delivered as part of the proposed development would have established and provide increased canopy and screening cover.
- 7.16 Subject to the implementation of the Landscape Strategy and its longer term management, it is considered that the proposed development would offer enhancement of the existing Victorian building and perception and contribution to the landscape character, notably as perceived from Slaugham Lane. The immediate setting of the school building in an asphalt playground would be lost. The key positive landscape feature of a mature Oak tree would be retained and set within a grassed garden to the converted school building that would enhance its immediate landscape and growing conditions whilst also retaining a connection to the school building. The proposed new dwellings would be separated from the existing school building and set within an established landscape structure that would for the most part be retained and augmented with additional tree and hedgerow planting.
- 7.17 Over time, the removal of detracting features alongside the creation of strengthened boundaries and management of the existing woodland belt would help to retain and enhance the character of Slaugham Lane and the wider landscape and embed the new dwellings into a well contained site, appropriate to the patterns and well-wooded character of the High Weald National Landscape.