

Land north of Burleigh Lane

Crawley Down

West Sussex

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

By

Landscape Perspective Ltd

On behalf of

Merrow Wood

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report

- 1.1.1 Landscape Perspective have been appointed by Merrow Wood to carry out a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of the application site at Land north of Burleigh Lane, Crawley Down, Mid Sussex, and its surrounding area in order to consider the likely physical and visual impacts arising as a result of the proposed development.
- 1.1.2 This LVA sets out landscape policy (together with any related policy on ecological and heritage assets) and any supporting planning guidance and then describes the constituent baseline landscape elements (land use, access, topography and landform, existing vegetation, statutory and non-statutory designations, settlement patterns and building heights, public Rights of Way, historic building context, landscape character context and landscape structure and capacity).
- 1.1.3 The LVA then describes the baseline character and amenity of the identified visual receptors considering the visual envelope, the different groups of people, places affected, the nature of the view and the visual amenity. The landscape constraints and opportunities are then set out to inform the proposed development. This is followed by a description of the development and then the effects of the proposed development are then considered against each of the landscape and visual receptors. The penultimate section of this LVA sets out a statement on policy compliance followed by a summary.
- 1.1.4 The site is located north of Burleigh Lane, at the south-eastern edge of the village of Crawley Down, about 6 miles east of the city of Crawley in the Mid Sussex District of West Sussex. The location of the Site is shown at Figure 01 in Appendix 1.

1.2 Desktop Research

- 1.2.1 The desktop survey carried out as part of the LVA included the review of Ordnance Survey maps, interactive maps, aerial photography, published landscape character assessment documents, planning policy and the emerging development proposals.

1.3 Field Work

- 1.3.1 The field work was carried out on 1st April 2025 and recorded the existing landscape elements within the Application Site; the contextual landscape elements; and identified a series of key visual

receptors. The visual assessment element includes a photographic survey of the Application Site taken from a series of representative key views, chosen to represent a range of locations from publicly accessible viewpoints.

2.0 Planning Policy Context and Guidance Documents

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Both National and Local Planning Policies of relevance to this LVA are set out below, and later in this assessment, at Section 7, are reviewed in the context of whether the scheme proposed complies with the policies described.

2.2 National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)

2.2.1 Paragraph 11 (a-d) sets out the fundamental principle of this document: that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

2.2.2 All development that is in accordance with the development plan should be approved ‘*without delay*’ and that ‘*where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date*’ permission should be granted for development ‘*unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.*

2.2.3 In relation to landscape, the NPPF defines sustainability as including the protection and enhancement of the ‘*natural, built and historic environment*’ (paragraph 8c).

2.2.4 Paragraph 96 states that:

‘*planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places*’ and a) ‘*promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other ...*

2.2.5 Paragraph 96 also advocates the creation of places which are b) safe and accessible through the use of:

'well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high-quality public space', as well as c) 'safe and accessible green infrastructure' and 'layouts that encourage walking and cycling'.

2.2.6 Paragraph 105 relates to rights of way and access, stating that these should be '*protected and enhanced*'. It is noted that better facilities should be provided for users of rights of way, for example by: '*adding links to existing rights of way including National Trails*'.

2.2.7 Paragraph 131 states that:

'the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve'.....

2.2.8 Paragraph 135 states that developments:

- a) *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- 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;*
- e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users....*

2.2.9 Paragraph 136 states that:

'Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments' and notes that: 'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and

community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible'.

2.3 Local Planning Policy

- 2.3.1 The site lies within the boundary of the Mid Sussex District Council Authority. Mid Sussex District Council adopted the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 in March 2018. The adopted District Plan set the vision and strategy, with accompanying site allocations and policies to achieve the vision and strategy.
- 2.3.2 *District Plan Policy DP4: Housing* committed the Council to reviewing the plan, starting in 2021, with submission to the Secretary of State in 2023. This accords with the 5-year review requirement set out in national policy.
- 2.3.3 The District Plan 2021 – 2039 contains an updated vision, strategy, site allocations and policies and will supersede the 2018 District Plan upon its adoption and is currently under Examination having been submitted in July 2024.
- 2.3.4 Site allocations within the 2018 District Plan, Site Allocations DPD (June 2022) and Neighbourhood Plans which have not yet been completed, will remain part of the Council's land supply and contribute towards meeting the housing need identified within this Plan.

The Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 submission draft Regulation 19 (December 2023)

- 2.3.6 Chapter 10 of the District Plan focusses on protecting the Countryside, and Policies DPC1 and DPC2 which replace DP12 and 13 of the current Local plan. However as the draft District Plan has not proceeded and is likely to be withdrawn these policies carry little or no weight.

2.4 Guidance Documents

- 2.4.1 The site is allocated in the adopted Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) June 2022 (SHELAA Housing allocations Ref 519) and allocated for 50 dwelling units. Allocation reference SA22. *(Refer to Figure 02 Appendix 1)*
- 2.4.2 The DPD sets out General Principles for Site Allocations which provide an overview of the District Plan requirements that are relevant for all the sites along with requirements set out in Council

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), planning guidance or strategy documents that may relate to the development of a site.

2.4.3 These 'General Principles' apply to all site allocations and are supplemented by site specific requirements set out for each policy. Relevant to this LVA, the Key Objectives of the General Principles for Site Allocations are summarised below followed by site specific principle and key objectives for the application site.

2.4.4 SA GEN: General Principles for Site Allocations Key Objectives

Urban design principles

- *Design new development in accordance with District Plan Policy DP26: Character and Design and with the design principles set out in the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.*
- *Provide a high degree of integration and connectivity between new and existing communities.*
- *Design new development at a density that is appropriate for the location.*
- *Make a positive contribution towards local character and distinctiveness.*
- *Create safe communities through appropriate design and layout that reduces the likelihood of crime and anti-social behaviour.*

Landscape considerations

- *Undertake Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or Appraisal (LVIA) on any rural and edge of settlement sites. The LVIA will need to inform the site design, layout, capacity and any mitigation requirements.*
- *Provide a Landscape Strategy to identify how natural features on site have been retained and incorporated into the landscape structure and design of the site and informed the landscaping proposals for the site.*
- *Where development is required to adopt a landscape led approach, this includes respecting the local character of the area in built form by utilising appropriate architectural design, site layout and density which complements and contributes to the overall character and appearance of the area.*

Social and community

- *Contribute towards public open space, recreational and community facilities in accordance with District Plan policies and SPD's.*

Historic environment and cultural heritage

- *Respect listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, the historic landscape, registered parks and gardens and their settings and look for opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance.*
- *All heritage assets, including those that are undesignated, will need to be conserved and enhanced.*
- *Provide Heritage Impact Assessments, where appropriate.*

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- *Carry out and submit habitat and species surveys at the earliest opportunity*
- *Conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value and ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity. Avoid any loss of biodiversity through ecological protection and enhancement, and good design. Where it is not possible, mitigate and as a last resort compensate for any loss.*
- *Protect and enhance Green Infrastructure (GI) and corridors*
- *Improve access to, and understanding of natural greenspace and nature conservation features, including recognising the importance and role of green infrastructure to the ecosystem, biodiversity, public rights of way, health and well-being, the water environment, community facilities and climate change. Green Infrastructure is to be incorporated with SuDS, where possible, to improve biodiversity and water quality.*

Access and Highways

- *Identify how the development will provide safe and convenient routes for walking and cycling through the development and linking with existing networks beyond.*
- *Create a permeable road network within the site with clearly defined route hierarchies.*
- *Safeguard Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and protect their amenity.*

Flood risk and drainage

- *Provide a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)/surface water drainage strategy in areas at risk from fluvial or surface water flooding to inform the site layout and any appropriate mitigation measures that may be necessary.*
- *Priority will be given to use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) principles and methods where possible to drain the surface water from the development.*

SA22 Objectives and principles

2.4.5 Following the general guidance, the following site-specific requirements for site SA22 of relevance to this LVA are given below:

Urban Design Principles

- Concentrate higher density development towards the northern part of the site to reflect the existing settlement pattern, with a lower density towards the southern edges to help create a successful transition with Burleigh Lane.
- Orientate development to have a positive active frontage in relation to the existing settlement, attractive tree boundaries and to define open spaces and routeways.
- Seek to enhance the connectivity of the site with Crawley Down village by providing pedestrian and/or cycle links to Sycamore Lane, Burleigh Way and adjacent existing networks.

Landscape Considerations

- Retain and enhance existing mature trees and hedgerows on the site and around the boundaries and incorporate these into the landscaping structure for the site to limit impacts on the countryside. Open space should be provided as an integral part of this landscape structure and should be prominent and accessible within the scheme.
- Protect the rural character of Burleigh Lane and views from the south by minimising loss of trees and hedgerows along the southern boundary and reinforcing any gaps with locally native planting.
- Protect the character and amenity of existing public footpaths and seek to integrate these into the Green Infrastructure proposals for the site.

Social and Community

- Provide a Locally Equipped Accessible Play Space (LAP) that is inclusive to the local community.

Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage

- Provide appropriate mitigation to protect the rural setting of the Grade II listed Burleigh Cottage adjacent to the west of the site by creating a sufficiently sized landscape buffer of open space between the listed building and the new development. Provide a hedgerow/ tree belt screening between the open space and the development to protect the rural setting of Burleigh Cottage. The mitigation strategy should be informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment.

- *Protect the rural character of Burleigh Lane and the setting of Burleigh Cottage by retaining the stone gateways on Burleigh Lane along the southern boundary of the site.*

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- *Undertake an holistic approach to Green Infrastructure provision through biodiversity and landscape enhancements within the site connecting to the surrounding area.*
- *Conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value and ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity. Avoid any loss to biodiversity through ecological protection and good design. Where this is not possible, mitigate and as a last resort, compensate for any loss.*

Highways and Access

- *Provide access from Sycamore Lane.*
- *Provide a sustainable transport strategy to identify sustainable transport infrastructure improvements and how the development will integrate with the existing network, providing safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport through the development and linking with existing networks.*

Flood Risk and Drainage

- *Existing surface water flow paths cross the site and there is a watercourse adjacent to the east of the site. Provide a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to inform the site layout and any necessary mitigation measures that may be required.*
- *Design Surface Water Drainage to minimise run off to adjacent land, to incorporate SuDS and to ensure that Flood Risk is not increased.*

2.5 Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 2.5.1 The Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031 (dated January 2016) contains the following relevant Policies with regard to this LVA:
- 9.2 Policies Promoting the Design and Delivery of High-Quality Homes
 - 9.4 Policies Promoting the Natural Environment

Policies Promoting the Design and Delivery of High-Quality Homes

- 2.5.2 There are two policies in this group.
- CDNP05: Control of New Developments
 - CDNP06: Sustainable Drainage Systems

Policy CDNP05: Control of New Developments

'Subject to the other policies of this Neighbourhood Plan; Within the Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan Area, planning permission will be granted for residential development subject to the following criteria:

- a) The scale height and form fit unobtrusively with the surrounding buildings and the character of the area or street scene and where appropriate, special regard should be had to sustaining and enhancing the setting and features of heritage assets and the Areas of Townscape Character.*
- b) Individual developments will not comprise more than 30 dwellings in total, with a maximum density of 25 per Ha and spacing between buildings to reflect the character of the area11.*
- c) Amenities such as access, noise, privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining residents are safeguarded.*
- d) The individual plot sizes are proportionate to the scale of the dwelling.*
- e) Open green spaces are provided in accordance with the Local Plan standard provisions. Where practical open spaces should provide linkage/connection to elements of the local footpath network.*
- f) Construction materials are compatible with the materials of the general area and are locally sourced where practical.*
- g) The traditional boundary treatment of the area is provided and where feasible reinforced.*
- h) Suitable access and on-site parking is provided without detriment to neighbouring properties.*
- i) The development is arranged such that it integrates with the village*
- j) Housing need is justified.*
- k) The development does not impact unacceptably on the local highway network.*
- l) Issues raised in the local housing supply document site assessment are satisfactorily addressed.*
- m) Has a range of dwelling sizes and in particular provides dwellings that are suited to the needs of both young families and older residents.*
- n) Includes affordable homes as required by District policy.*
- o) Proposals for new housing developments must meet the standards set out in Appendix 1*
- p) Developments of 6 or more dwellings should provide a mix of dwelling sizes (market and affordable) that fall within the following ranges:*
 - Market Housing At least 75% 2-3 bedroom houses and up to 25% other sizes*
 - Affordable Housing At least 80% 2-3 bedroom houses and Up to 20% other sizes.'*

Policy CDNP06: Sustainable Drainage Systems

'Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they include sustainable drainage systems designed to manage the risk of surface water flooding within their boundaries, and that they will not increase flood risk elsewhere in the Parish. Examples of sustainable drainage systems include permeable driveways and parking areas, water harvesting and storage features (rain/grey), green roofs and soakaways. The preferred hierarchy of managing surface water drainage from any development is:

1. *infiltration measures;*
2. *attenuation and discharge to watercourses;*
3. *discharge to surface water only sewers. Such measures should protect the amenity and security of other properties and should not adversely affect the water table and associated aquifers or ancient woodland. Arrangements for the maintenance of drainage systems shall be required as a condition of planning permissions and these arrangements shall include details of who will manage and fund the maintenance for the lifetime of the development.*

Policies Promoting the Natural Environment

2.5.3 There are two policies in this group:

- CDNP08: Prevention of Coalescence
- CDNP09: Protect and Enhance Biodiversity

Policy CDNP08: Prevention of Coalescence

'Development outside the village boundary will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

- a) *It does not detract significantly from the openness and character of the landscape.*
- b) *It does not contribute to 'ribbon development' along the roads or paths linking the village to neighbouring settlements of Copthorne, Felbridge, Turners Hill and Crawley.*
- c) *It does not significantly reduce the gaps between the village and neighbouring settlements of Copthorne, Felbridge, Turners Hill and Crawley.*

Policy CDNP09: Protect and Enhance Biodiversity

Proposals for new residential, employment and retail development will be expected to protect and enhance biodiversity and wildlife. In particular planning applications for these proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a. *The safeguarding or protection of designated sites, protected species, ancient or species rich hedgerows, shaws, grasslands and woodlands;*

- c. *The provision of appropriate buffer zones around designated sites or features and/or the implementation of appropriate mitigation features.*
- d. *The safeguarding and preservation of ecological networks.*
- e. *The protection of trees of arboricultural or amenity value.*
- f. *The appropriate planting of new native trees and hedges.*

Key Objectives of The Neighbourhood plan

2.5.4 The Neighbourhood plan sets out a number of 'Key Objectives', under the heading 'Environment' objectives include:

- *Protecting and enhancing countryside features such as shaws, hedgerows, ponds and streams.*
- *Protecting and enhancing footpaths, cycle paths, bridleways and other Rights of Way*
- *Supporting a positive woodland policy which sets buffer zones for established trees and requires replacement trees on a two for one basis for those felled or damaged as a result of development.*
- *Providing guidance for residents and private landowners on planting for wildlife.*

3.0 Landscape Baseline Conditions

3.1 Land use and the site

- 3.1.1 The proposed site comprises three flat parcels of land and extends to approximately 2.25 ha. The westernmost and easternmost parcels consist of two fields set to pasture, whilst the central parcel contains a number of derelict modern outbuildings of a former local business centre called 'The Croft'.
- 3.1.2 The western boundary is partly shared with the grade II listed Burleigh Cottage (List Entry No 1354910) and the eastern boundary with a private detached dwelling called 'Sarane Lodge'.

3.2 Access

- 3.2.1 Current access to the site is from the south (Burleigh Lane) a private road which is also a Public Right of Way (56W). There are three stone gates which provide access to the site from Burleigh Lane. Access to The Croft is through a brick gate also at Burleigh Lane. (Refer to Figure 03 and Photograph 14 and 27-28 Appendix 1)

- 3.2.2 The site has a boundary with Burleigh Lane to the south and Hornbeam Place, Ash Tree Street and Sycamore Lane to the north. The western boundary is partly shared with the grade II listed Burleigh Cottage and the eastern boundary with a private detached dwelling called Sarane Lodge. (Refer to Figure 01 Appendix 1)

3.3 Topography and landform

- 3.3.1 The landform gently falls from the south 129m to the north 122m but appear reasonably level across the site. The site is entirely within Flood Zone 1, the area of lowest fluvial flood risk. (Refer to Figure 04 Appendix 1)
- 3.3.2 A partially wet and dry ditch runs north/south through the central part of the site. At the time of the field survey work only a small section of the southern half was wet, and the remaining section further north was dried up and choked by vegetation. The wet section in the southern extent featured very shallow flowing water 5-10cm deep. (Refer to Photograph 12 Appendix 1)

3.4 Existing vegetation

- 3.4.1 The application site is currently dominated by grasslands with scrub, woodland, species rich native hedgerows, (on Burleigh Lane boundary) with a few stands of Rhododendron ponticum, and areas of bracken and bramble scrub.
- 3.4.2 Species recorded include mature pedunculate oak, holm oak, beech poplar, ash, apple, willow, sycamore, beech, hornbeam and yew; and younger shrubs of cherry, hazel and holly.
- 3.4.3 Three distinct line of trees were found at the site:
- A line of mature Norway spruce *Picea abies* trees ran north/south centrally through the site. The line was dominated by Norway spruce, with two pedunculate oak trees scattered amongst them. c.20m high, 3m wide and 85m long.
 - A line of mature Austrian pine trees was present along the eastern site boundary. c.18m high, 3m wide and 40m long.
 - Further south of this was an additional line of trees consisting of Austrian pine and Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leylandii*.

3.5 Statutory and non-statutory designations

3.5.1 The site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations and is the nearest boundary of the High Weald AONB is 1.2km away. The site is 120m from nearest Ancient woodland at Burleigh Wood and 258m from the next nearest Ancient woodland to the southeast Burleigh House shaw plus 185m from the nearest Wood pasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat to the west. There are two non-statutory sites including a Country Park and Local Wildlife Site within 2km of the site. No sites of national importance are present within 2km; and none of international importance were found to be present within the desk study search area.

3.6 Settlement pattern and Building heights

3.6.1 The site currently lies outside the built-up area boundary (BUAB) for Crawley Down but is proposed to be included in the boundary in the current District Plan Review which will replace the current adopted District Plan in due course subject to the findings of the Examination process. It relates well to the existing built area and presents a natural extension to the settlement. *(Refer to Figure 05 Appendix 1)*

3.6.2 The site is also outside the Townscape character Area boundary of the Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan but adjoins it on the eastern boundary, the boundary currently includes the Listed building and garden to Burleigh Cottage. The site is not within a Conservation Area. *(Refer to Figure 06 Appendix 1)*

3.6.3 There is dense housing to the north and north-east of the site, for the most part this is mid-20th century and early 21st century development with a mixture of single storey, storey and a half and two storey units.

3.6.4 The development to the south-west of the site is of a lower density and comprises mostly 20th century detached dwellings. The 17th century grade II Burleigh Cottage is located to the eastern edge of this group, adjacent to the site's western boundary.

3.6.5 Immediately to the east of the site are a small group of three 20th century detached dwellings (Sarane Lodge, Glenariff and Trishlands). These properties have access directly from Burleigh Lane. *(Refer to Figure 07 Appendix 1)*

3.7 Public Rights of Way

3.7.1 Figure 03 of Appendix 1 shows the Sussex Border path No 56W, a long-Distance Trail, runs east west along the southern boundary of the site, which connects to the west, to a further Long Distance Trail, the Worth Way, running parallel to it. Other footpaths in the vicinity include that along Hornbeam Place, to the immediate north of the site, and a path that runs along the eastern boundary connecting Hornbeam Place to Burleigh Lane, identified as a New Public Right of Way in the Crawley Neighbourhood Plan, albeit it is not listed as such on the *West Sussex Public Right of Way Map* (Refer to Figure 07 Appendix 1).

3.8 Historic buildings and context

3.8.1 The application site does not have any heritage constraints, but the western boundary is partly shared with grade II listed Burleigh Cottage.

3.8.2 A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) was carried out in September 2020 by Roberto Prieto-Labrador and Ben Kirk to accompany an application relating to a previous development proposal at Burleigh Lane, Crawley Down on behalf of a different applicant, Manor Wood.

3.8.3 Their report provided a Heritage Impact Assessment in relation to the proposed site, as requested by Mid Sussex District Council, and the potential impact of its future development on the setting and significance of the nearby designated Burleigh Cottage (listed grade II)

3.8.4 The report states:

'There have been several archaeological investigations within the area where the site is located. The closest archaeological investigation took place immediately north of the site, which recorded several undated pits and holes, as well as other finds that span from the Middle Ages to the mid-20th century. However, no designated archaeological assets have been identified in the site.'

'The site is not located near to or within a Conservation Area or Historic Park and Garden. No Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Battlefields or World Heritage Sites are located within or adjacent the site.'

3.8.5 The 2020 HIA set out Mitigation measures which should be included within a detailed scheme for residential development of the site are as follows:

'The retention of an undeveloped open space to the south-western corner of the site is vital to preserve part the open rural character of the area around Burleigh Cottage. This is the most sensitive parcel of the site given its proximity to Burleigh Cottage. The existing mature trees and

hedges located at the site's western boundary should be retained, as they are considered part of the original rural character of the area and the historical field divisions.

The developed areas should extend to the east and north-east of the site and should be separated from the retained open area by a footpath which would link Burleigh Lane to Sycamore Lane. Screening should be inserted along the new footpath to the eastern and northern edge of the retained area by the introduction of densely planted groups of native trees and hedgerow to screen as far as possible the modern development from the rural undeveloped area.'

3.9 Landscape Character Context

National Landscape Character Assessment (NCA)

3.9.1 The site lies within NCA No 122 High Weald. The High Weald National Character Area encompasses 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.

3.9.2 Key characteristics of the NCA that are relevant to this LVA are set out below:

- *Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a dense system of radiating drove ways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks. There is a dense network of small, narrow and winding lanes, often sunken and enclosed by high hedgerows or woodland strips.*
- *Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin and managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing.*
- *An essentially medieval landscape reflected in the patterns of settlement, fields and woodland.*
- *High-quality vernacular architecture with distinct local variation using local materials. Horsham Slate is used on mainly timber structures and timber-framed barns are a particularly notable Wealden characteristic feature of the High Weald.*

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

SEO 2: Maintain and restore the natural function of river catchments at a landscape scale, promoting benefits for water quality and water flow within all Wealden rivers, streams and flood plains by encouraging sustainable land management and best agricultural practices to maintain

good soil quality, reduce soil erosion, increase biodiversity and enhance sense of place. Maintain and enhance the geodiversity and especially the exposed sand rock.

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.

SEO 4: Manage and enhance recreational opportunities, public understanding and enjoyment integrated with the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, a productive landscape and tranquillity, in accordance with the purpose of the High Weald AONB designation.

County / Borough Character Assessment

- 3.9.3 The 2005 Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment prepared by Mid Sussex District Council with support from West Sussex County Council. It was prepared to help protect and enhance the distinctive character of the District and to manage change, and is now 20 years old.
- 3.9.4 It was drafted in accordance with the West Sussex Structure Plan 2001 – 2016 and the Mid Sussex Local Plan adopted in 2004 and has not been updated since the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 was adopted in March 2018, and has also therefore not been updated to accord with the forthcoming This District Plan 2021 – 2039.
- 3.9.5 The assessment sub-divides regional character areas into 10 distinct landscape character areas, the site falling within LCA No 6 High Weald, the largest Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex, and puts the site within a local landscape character area No 4 of Crawley Down Southern fringe which it describes as having the following characteristics:
- *Almost entirely small-medium size pasture fields from assarts (medieval).*
 - *Relatively low boundary loss (1-25%).*
 - *Some semi-open fields, but boundary vegetation gives enclosure and separation from Crawley Down.*
 - *Contains scattered settlement and expansion out from Crawley Down.*

- *Bounded by gill woodland to the south.*

3.9.6 As the character area is the largest, it doesn't specifically mention the landscape around Crawley Down, focussing on the broader characteristics such as topography and landform, geology, settlement patterns, but it does evaluate key issues in terms of changes to the character, landscape and visual sensitivities and sets out a list of management directives and guidelines, the relevant guidelines have been extracted and copied below:

Land Management Guidelines

- *'Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe.*
- *Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession, and replant parkland trees.*
- *Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.*
- *Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.'*

3.10 Landscape Structure analysis

3.10.1 In addition to the landscape characterisation of the study area HDA undertook a structural analysis of the study area. The aim of landscape structure analysis is to identify the main elements which contribute to the structure, character and setting of the settlements. This technique, in conjunction with the local character assessment, forms a basis for then identifying appropriate directions for settlement growth, in landscape terms.

3.10.2 If development is consistent with the setting and structure of the local settlement pattern and its landscape context, then the essential character of those settlements and the surrounding area will be retained.

3.10.3 If future development is not consistent with that structure, then the relationship between the town or village and its setting will be damaged, and the landscape character of the District adversely affected.

3.10.4 HDA's Landscape Structure Analysis uses a 'sieve-mapping' technique, drawing on both the desk assessment and detailed field assessment. The information has been mapped and grouped into nine zones, the site falling within Zone 2 Crawley and surrounding areas including Crawley Down, which it describes as a large village, '*the majority of the settlement is situated at the top of the outlier however an eastern portion of the village is located on generally east facing slopes. Pasture is the predominant land use on the slopes to the south of the settlement.*'

3.11 Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study 2007

3.11.1 As part of a series of studies to inform the Local Development Framework process, Mid Sussex District Council commissioned Hankinson Duckett Associates to carry out a Landscape Capacity Study to assess the physical and environmental constraints on development in the District, with a view to identifying the capacity of the Mid Sussex District landscape to accommodate future development.

3.11.2 Landscape capacity is defined as the extent to which a particular area or type of landscape is able to accommodate change without significant effects on overall landscape character; or change in landscape type. It reflects the inherent sensitivity of the landscape itself and its sensitivity to the development in question; and the value attached to the landscape, or to specific elements within it.

3.11.3 The Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity study (2007) based their judgement on an assessment of capacity, combining landscape sensitivity and landscape value, and mapping it on a landscape character area basis.

3.11.4 The assessment of landscape character and visual sensitivity, took into account the following factors, namely:

- *Inherent landscape quality, i.e. the intactness and condition of the landscape*
- *Contribution each area makes to the distinctive setting of a particular settlement.*
- *Consistency with the form or pattern of existing settlement and the relationship the settlement has with the underlying landscape structure.*
- *Contribution to the rurality of the surrounding landscape, either by virtue of its own inherent rurality or the containing influence of the landscape being assessed on neighbouring settlements.*

- *Contribution to the separation between existing settlements. Landscape value includes consideration of:*
- *National and local landscape designations, which do not include gap policies.*
- *Non-landscape designations for example; Heritage, amenity, biodiversity and flood zones.*
- *Contribution to outstanding assets which includes the AONB.*
- *Special cultural or historic associations, time depth and Perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or remoteness.*

3.11.5 Each aspect of the sensitivity and landscape value analysis were assessed on a five-point scale (very low, low, medium, high, very high) and a corresponding value (1-5) assigned.

3.11.6 For the purposes of arriving at an overall rating for sensitivity or value the scores were aggregated, subject to a two-stage process and reviewed and values adjusted up or down to reflect individual situations. The results from these assessments were then combined to give an overall judgement relating to landscape capacity.

Landscape sensitivity

3.11.7 In order to assess the sensitivity of the landscape to development, assumptions were made as to the likely built form of any new development areas. It was assumed that buildings would be largely 2 or 3 storeys in height with occasional landmark buildings of 4-5 storeys. There would be open space provision and a strong landscape framework with tree planting of appropriate scale, area and design to ensure that the development achieves a good fit in the landscape.

Landscape capacity

3.11.8 The Consultants gave the Crawley Down Southern Fringe (LCA 04) a Landscape capacity score of Medium. (see extract below)

'A rating of Medium identifies a landscape character area with the capacity for limited development, in some parts of the character areas, having regard for the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.'

No	Landscape Character Area	Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Landscape Capacity
01	East Crawley - Copthorne Settled Woodland Matrix	Substantial	Moderate	Low
02	Rowfant High Weald	Moderate	Substantial	Low
03	Crawley Down Northern Fringe	Substantial	Slight	Low / Medium
04	Crawley Down Southern Fringe	Moderate	Moderate	Medium
05	Major's Hill High Weald	Substantial	Substantial	Negligible / Low
06	Selsfield High Weald	Substantial	Moderate	Low
07	Turners Hill High Weald	Substantial	Substantial	Negligible / Low
08	Felbridge High Weald	Moderate	Slight	Medium / High
09	Tilkhurst High Weald	Substantial	Moderate	Low
10	Hill Place High Weald	Slight	Moderate	Medium / High
11	Rockwood High Weald	Moderate	Moderate	Medium
12	Sunnyside High Weald	Moderate	Substantial	Low
13	Brambletye High Weald	Substantial	Substantial	Negligible / Low
14	Kidbrook High Weald	Slight	Substantial	Low / Medium
15	Luxford High Weald	Substantial	Substantial	Negligible / Low
16	East Grinstead Eastern High Weald	Substantial	Substantial	Negligible / Low
17	Stonequarry High Weald	Moderate	Substantial	Low
18	East Grinstead Green Wedge	Substantial	Moderate	Low
19	Pease Pottage – Handcross High Weald	Substantial	Moderate	Low

3.11.9 The description of the southern fringe was as follows:

Larger field sizes than to the north of Crawley Down. Sits on high ground adjacent to the village and gently sloping south. Significant contribution to separation between Crawley Down and Turners Hill.'

3.11.10 In June 2014 LUC carried out a further Capacity Study of Mid Sussex District to accommodate development Report for Mid Sussex District Council which reviewed the previously assessed areas against a slightly revised scale for landscape capacity. The conclusion for LCA No4, the 'Crawley down Southern Fringe', was the same in the 2014 study as that of 2007. (Refer to Figure 09 Appendix 1)

4.0 Visual Baseline Conditions

4.1 Visual Relationship between the Site and Surrounding Area

4.1.1 The field studies undertaken have demonstrated that the visual envelope is very limited due to the nature of the local landscape and intervening vegetation on the boundaries, albeit gappy in parts along with the orientation and location of the surrounding development.

- 4.1.2 There are publicly accessible views into the site from the north, south, east and less so from the west, all of which are described below. (*Refer to Figure 11 Appendix 1 for photographic location points and photographs*)
- 4.1.3 Potential visual receptors in the study area include local residents or workers, those travelling through the landscape (on foot, by car or bike or horse), and visitors or recreational landscape users. The identification of views is carried out from external spaces within the public domain, and not from buildings or private spaces.
- 4.1.4 Photographs were taken in April where leaf cover was minimal which demonstrates the maximum visibility into and out of the site. Photographs from key viewpoints are included in Appendix 1.

Views from the north

- 4.1.6 Views from publicly accessible viewpoints are available from Sycamore Lane and Hornbeam Place and from Ash Tree Street looking south across the application site. These views are at times filtered by existing vegetation, but there are gaps within it and at times clear views into the site across the whole site towards the southern boundary. Some of the views are of the existing dilapidated buildings of the former business centre 'The Croft' which will be demolished as part of the proposals. (*Refer to photographs 1-9 Appendix B*)

Views from the east

- 4.1.7 Views from publicly accessible viewpoints are available through gaps in the vegetation on the eastern boundary along the footpath which runs north south. The existing vegetation is a mix of hedgerow plants and tall trees, including Austrian Pine and Leyland Cypress. (*Refer to photographs 10-12 Appendix 1*)

Views from the west

- 4.1.8 Views from the west, from publicly accessible viewpoints are not yet available, but new views will be available at the vehicular entrance to the site when it is constructed, which requires the demolition of two properties on Woodlands Close. There are no publicly accessible views into the site at present. (*Refer to photographs 13-14 Appendix 1*)

Views from the south

- 4.1.9 Views from publicly accessible viewpoints are available all along the southern boundary of the application site Burleigh Lane, at some points glimpsed, at other points there are clear views, depending on the thickness of the vegetation. (Refer to photographs 15-28 Appendix 1)

5.0 Development proposals

5.1 Masterplan proposals

- 5.1.1 In order to identify and describe the effects that are likely to occur it is necessary to understand the changes that may affect the landscape and visual resources.
- 5.1.2 The proposed development is for 48 units, a mix of 1-4-bedroom houses, and access to the site will be via Woodlands Close, requiring the purchase and demolition of two residential properties (No 9 and 11). The development is split into two halves, either side of the central water course, the access road will split into two loops serving each half. (Refer to drawing FL24-2191-045 Illustrative Site Layout)
- 5.1.3 The proposals include a natural play area (LAP) within the communal amenity space which runs through the centre of the application site, which will be accessed by a network of footpaths. New footpath links will be formed to the south to Burleigh Lane and to the north to Hornbeam Place.
- 5.1.4 The scheme incorporates an enhanced water course (stream) running through the centre of the site which will also act as a green corridor, linking to a further green corridor to the north at Ash Tree Street. Two balancing ponds designed as part of the SUDS scheme have been included in the landscape buffer on the northern boundary, with the properties set back into the site.
- 5.1.5 A 4m easement runs either side of the stream, devoid of any development, and each side of that will be shared surface roads accessing the properties. The perimeter of the site has been set aside as an ecological buffer zone to the existing hedgerows and trees with an area to the west allocated for habitat relocation. These buffer zones will be intensively managed and will be sown with coarse grasses and wildflowers, including the use of tussock-forming grass species such as cock's foot, Yorkshire fog, tufted hair-grass and false oatgrass.

5.2 Habitat protection and enhancement

- 5.2.1 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report produced by Urban Edge Environmental Consulting (May 2025) set out a number of recommendations for habitat protection and enhancement to be included in the scheme design and proposals, and all of these recommendations have been taken on board in the development of the sit layout that forms part of the application. These recommendations for enhancements include:
- *Green spaces will be sown with a native wildflower grassland seed mix.*
 - *Buffers of less intensively managed vegetation (e.g. coarse grasses and wildflowers) will be created within soft landscaped areas to maintain/enhance ecological connectivity*
 - *Hedgerow creation and/or restoration will use a range of native fruit, seed, nut and nectar bearing shrub species appropriate to the location.*
 - *New wetland habitat will be created within the Proposed Development as part of the drainage strategy and to increase aquatic habitat availability*
 - *The landscaping plans for the survey area will utilise plant species which encourage bats by providing additional food sources or roosting opportunities.*
 - *The value of the survey area for birds will be enhanced by installing a range of artificial nest boxes in new buildings and on retained trees.*
 - *The value of the survey area for bats will be enhanced by installing a range of artificial roost boxes onto new buildings and retained trees.*
 - *The value of the survey area for hedgehog will be enhanced by installing hedgehog houses to quiet, sheltered locations with plenty of natural vegetative cover.*

6.0 Assessment of Landscape & Visual Effects

6.1 Assessment of effects on the landscape elements of the site

- 6.1.1 The proposed development will result in the demolition of the existing dilapidated buildings and associated hard standing and the construction of 48 residential properties with its associated infrastructure, roads, parking areas, landscaping.
- 6.1.2 A number of existing trees will be removed, to facilitate the development and to improve the biodiversity of the site, allowing for new native planting to replace them as part of the mitigation measures. Existing hedgerows will be retained and reinforced and new habitats created throughout the scheme.

6.1.3 Existing topography will be unaffected, historic boundary features (walls and gates) will be retained and restored, and the existing water course will be enhanced as part of a SuDS drainage strategy, with new wetland areas created in areas which are currently pasture. The existing areas of pasture will largely be lost, and replaced by new buildings, but areas of grassland will remain in the landscape buffer zones around the boundaries of the site and either side of the water course in the 4m easement.

6.2 Assessment of effects on national landscape character areas

- 6.2.1 Key characteristics of the NCA 'No 122 High Weald' that are relevant to this LVA were identified at 3.9.2, and none of the key characteristics would be affected by the proposed development.
- 6.2.2 Of the Statements of Environmental Opportunity set out in the NCA that are of relevance to the application site, SE02, promotes the maintenance and restoration of water courses/streams by encouraging sustainable land management and increasing biodiversity, and enhancing the sense of place.
- 6.2.3 The development proposals have included as a key part of the landscape strategy, the enhancement of the small water course that crosses the site north to south, and making a feature of it, and planting up its banks with appropriate riparian plants, therefore the proposals are embracing this environmental opportunity.
- 6.2.4 SEO 3 calls for the distinctive settlement pattern to be respected, and for the historic pattern and features of the routeways of the High Weald to be maintained, and for locally characteristic materials to be used to ensure that any development recognises and retains the distinctiveness, biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage assets present, reaffirming the sense of place and enhancing the ecological function of routeways to improve the connectivity of habitats and provide wildlife corridors. All of the above suggestions have been taken on board within the scheme design.
- 6.2.5 SEO4 asks for recreational opportunities to be maintained and enhanced, increasing public understanding and enjoyment integrated with the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment. The scheme design promotes a more natural approach to the soft landscape design of the development, using native species, and leaving areas within a buffer zone less intensively managed, with natural play area included within the heart of the scheme for

informal recreation. The scheme therefore has also picked up on the opportunities identified in this final SEO.

6.3 Assessment of effects on local landscape character areas

- 6.3.1 The 2005 Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment puts the application site into LCA No 6 High Weald, and a local landscape character area No 4 of 'Crawley Down Southern Fringe.' In terms of the land management guidelines that were set out in the study, together with guidelines on respecting the settlement pattern locally, it looks for development to conserve and strengthen existing hedgerows and ensuring that effects of adverse incremental change are minimised by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.
- 6.3.2 The scheme design has ensured that existing hedgerows are maintained and reinforced with new native planting, infilling gaps and adding in hedgerow trees to provide screening and biodiversity enhancements all in keeping with the existing landscape character and therefore complies well with these guidelines.
- 6.3.3 In summary, the changes are localised in extent, but the development would result in the temporary loss of a low number of localised features, however mitigation is possible and can maintain or restore these losses.

6.4 Assessment of effects on the visual elements of the site

- 6.4.1 As mentioned above at 4.1.1, the visual envelope is very limited to local views, and for publicly accessible views these are available from north, east and south, along publicly accessible footpaths and roads.
- 6.4.2 These views are at times filtered by existing vegetation, but there are gaps within it and at times clear views into and across the whole site, including views of the dilapidated former business centre.
- 6.4.3 Some of the existing vegetation will be removed, both within the site and to facilitate development and on the boundaries to allow for replanting with native broadleaved species and these tree removals will change the views as these trees are on the skyline from some viewpoints.

- 6.4.4 As part of the mitigation measures, gaps in the hedgerows on these boundaries will be reinforced with new native hedgerow planting and additional native trees behind new post and wire fences, and a broad landscape buffer zone established on the northern and southern boundaries behind which the residential units and road and footpath network will be constructed together with planting added throughout the development.
- 6.4.5 In summary, the changes are localised in extent, but the development would result in a change to the views, the new residential units and associated infrastructure will be visible, but at a distance, and filtered by existing and proposed vegetation, albeit the new planting will take 5-10 years to provide screening.

7.0 Compliance with Policy

7.1 National Planning Framework (NPPF December 2024)

- 7.1.1 Paragraph 11 states that if proposals are in accordance with up to date development plans they should be approved without delay, and therefore as the proposed development is allocated (Allocation reference SA22) in the adopted Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) June 2022 (SHELAA Housing allocations Ref 519) and allocated for 50 dwelling units, the proposed development put forward and assessed in this report should be approved subject to the proposals complying with the Key Objectives and Principles set out in the site specific section of the DPD. Analysis as to whether these objectives and principles have been met is given at 5.4 above.
- 7.1.2 The scheme design responds well to paragraph 96 through the inclusion of well-designed, clear and legible shared surfaces and pedestrian routes, high-quality public space in the centre of the scheme as well as safe and accessible green infrastructure throughout, and to paragraph 105 by connecting to the surrounding public footpaths with new links through existing gates.
- 7.1.3 The proposals comply with Paragraph 135 with a layout that responds to the settlement pattern of the neighbouring development sympathetic in design to the local character and history. The inclusion of appropriate hard and soft landscape responds to the local setting, particularly through the enhancement of the water course through the centre of the scheme with the green corridor either side which links through to a further green space to the north which will establish a strong sense of place.

- 7.1.4 In accordance with Paragraph 136 the scheme will include new tree planting throughout the development, using native tree species, which will be maintained and managed by a management company in accordance with a 10-year Management Plan.

7.2 Local Planning Policy

- 7.2.1 The Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 submission draft Regulation 19 (December 2023) policy '*DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside*' requires development outside of built up areas boundaries, and therefore in the countryside, to maintain or where possible enhance the quality of the rural and landscape character of the district including not adversely affecting the environmental and social benefits that the countryside delivers and also to be supported by a specific policy reference. In this case, the application site has been given a specific policy reference both in the DPD and NP and is proposed to be included in the boundary in the current District Plan Review which will replace the current adopted District Plan in due course subject to the findings of the Examination process and therefore complies with Local Planning Policy.
- 7.2.2 Policy DPC1 also requires the development proposals to be informed by the national regional and local landscape character and to comply with the capacity studies which confirm the capacity of the site to accommodate development.
- 7.2.2 An assessment of effects of the proposed development on the landscape character of the application site and study area has been undertaken at Section 6, and has concluded that the proposed scheme complies with all of the guidelines and requirements of the National and Local Landscape Character Area studies and that the effects of the proposed development on the landscape features of the site will result in the temporary loss of a low number of localised features, however mitigation is possible and can maintain or restore these losses.
- 7.2.4 The proposals have complied with the capacity proposed in the DPD site allocation document which refers to a maximum of 50 dwellings being suitable and have proposed slightly less units at 48 dwellings.
- 7.2.5 The Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study 2007 and the LUC study In June 2014 concluded that the application site fell within an area (Crawley Down Fringe) that had a rating of 'Medium' in terms of capacity to accommodate change without significant effects on overall landscape character, i.e

it has the capacity for limited development, in some parts of the character areas, having regard for the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

- 7.2.6 The approach taken to the scheme design has been to respect the setting and form of the existing settlement around it, particularly respecting the Grade II listed building to the west, through the retention of an undeveloped open space to the south-western corner of the site to preserve part the open rural character of the area around Burleigh Cottage.
- 7.2.7 The second Policy of The Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 that has been considered of relevance to this LVA is DPC2, as it covers Strategic and Local Gaps, and the importance of maintaining separate identities to settlements. As the application site has been allocated in the adopted Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations Development Plan Document, this has been considered by the LPA to present a natural extension to the settlement of Crawley Down without causing sprawl or resulting in coalescence therefore the application complies with this policy.

7.3 Guidance documents

Site allocations DPD (June 2022 Adopted version)

- 7.3.1 The Site allocations DPD which includes the application site (Ref SA22) set out a number of general and site-specific objectives and principles for the development of the site, which are given at 2.4 above. One of the requirements is for any applicant to undertake an LVA of on any rural and edge of settlement sites to inform the site design, layout, capacity and any mitigation requirements, which has led to this LVA being produced.
- 7.3.2 As evident in the site layout drawing which accompanies the application (drawing ref FL24-2191-045 Illustrative Site Layout Rev D) the design team have responded to these objectives and principles in the following ways in order to comply with policies and guidelines:

Site allocations DPD for SA22	Design response
Urban Design Principles	
Concentrate higher density development towards the northern part of the site to reflect the existing settlement pattern, with a lower density towards the southern edges to help create a successful transition with Burleigh Lane.	The settlement pattern of the proposed development reflects the pattern of the adjoining developments to the north.
Oriентate development to have a positive active frontage in relation to the existing settlement, attractive tree boundaries and to define open spaces and routeways.	Existing trees have been retained along Burleigh Lane and Sycamore Lane and Hornbeam Place, and on western boundary to Burleigh Cottage. Leyland Cypress trees and Austrian Pines on eastern boundary will be retained and gaps interplanted with native broadleaved species.
Seek to enhance the connectivity of the site with Crawley Down village by providing pedestrian and/or cycle links to Sycamore Lane, Burleigh Way and adjacent existing networks.	Footpath links have been included in the scheme linking into Burleigh Lane and Hornbeam Place and Woodlands Close, where the main vehicular access into the site will also be located.
Landscape Considerations	
Retain and enhance existing mature trees and hedgerows on the site and around the boundaries and incorporate these into the landscaping structure for the site to limit impacts on the countryside. Open space should be provided as an integral part of this landscape structure and should be prominent and accessible within the scheme.	Trees have been retained along Burleigh Lane and Sycamore Lane and Hornbeam Place, and on western boundary to Burleigh Cottage. Leyland Cypress trees and Austrian Pines on eastern boundary will be retained and gaps interplanted with native broadleaved species. New trees will also be planted within the development to provide character and visual amenity and increase the biodiversity of the site. A Linear open space has been formed running north south through the centre of the development either side of an enhanced water course, incorporating a play area accessible to all residents.
Protect the rural character of Burleigh Lane and views from the south by minimising loss of trees and hedgerows along the southern boundary and reinforcing any gaps with locally native planting.	All existing trees on the southern boundary on Burleigh Lane will be retained subject to a condition survey and protected during construction. Additional native trees will be planted to reinforce the boundary and provide further screening.
Protect the character and amenity of existing public footpaths and seek to integrate these into the Green Infrastructure proposals for the site.	The existing footpath network around the site will be retained and additional footpath links formed to improve pedestrian permeability through the site.

Social and Community	
Provide a Locally Equipped Accessible Play Space (LAP) that is inclusive to the local community.	A LAP has been included within the scheme which will be accessible to all the community.
Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage	
Provide appropriate mitigation to protect the rural setting of the Grade II listed Burleigh Cottage adjacent to the west of the site by creating a sufficiently sized landscape buffer of open space between the listed building and the new development. Provide a hedgerow/ tree belt screening between the open space and the development to protect the rural setting of Burleigh Cottage. The mitigation strategy should be informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment.	A PEA has been produced which has informed the scheme design. Existing vegetation on the western boundary will be retained and will be within rear gardens, and a large landscape buffer with no built form will be provided between the grade II listed building and the development which will also become a new habitat for the development.
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure	
Undertake an holistic approach to Green Infrastructure provision through biodiversity and landscape enhancements within the site connecting to the surrounding area.	Recommendations set out in the PEA have been taken on board within the scheme designs, all planting proposed will be native and appropriate to the context of the site. The maintenance of the landscape will be in accordance with an LEMP which will be submitted for approval.
Highways and Access	
Provide access from Sycamore Lane.	Access will be provided from Woodlands Close, not Sycamore Lane.
Provide a sustainable transport strategy to identify sustainable transport infrastructure improvements and how the development will integrate with the existing network, providing safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport through the development and linking with existing networks.	A Transport Strategy will be provided to accompany the application.
Flood Risk and Drainage	
Existing surface water flow paths cross the site and there is a watercourse adjacent to the east of the site. Provide a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to inform the site layout and any necessary mitigation measures that may be required. Design Surface Water Drainage to minimise run off to adjacent land, to incorporate SuDS and to ensure that Flood Risk is not increased.	An FRA will be provided to accompany the application. A surface water drainage report will be provided to accompany the application, the scheme design has been designed to be SuDS compliant and to ensure that Flood Risk is not increased.

8.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been undertaken by Landscape Perspective Ltd for the proposed residential development of 48 dwellings on land north of Burleigh Lane, Crawley Down. The site is allocated for development (Ref SA22) in the Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations DPD (June 2022) and forms a logical extension to the settlement.
- 8.2 The LVA assesses the baseline landscape and visual conditions and concludes that the site has medium landscape capacity, with limited visibility from the surrounding area due to existing vegetation and topography. Key features such as mature hedgerows, trees, and the central watercourse have been retained and enhanced within the design.
- 8.3 Mitigation measures include native planting, green infrastructure, habitat enhancements, and a central open space with a natural play area. The scheme is fully compliant with national and local planning policy, including NPPF (2024), Mid Sussex District Plan policies DPC1 and DPC2, and neighbourhood plan requirements. It is landscape-led, respects local character, preserves the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed Burleigh Cottage, and integrates with the surrounding footpath network.
- 8.4 The proposal delivers a high-quality, sustainable development with minimal adverse landscape and visual effects, supported by appropriate mitigation.