



**Land East of Lunce's
Hill, Haywards Heath**

**Landscape and Visual
Impact Assessment**

Prepared by:
**The Environmental Dimension
Partnership Ltd**

On behalf of:
**Catesby Strategic Land Ltd and
Rurban Estates Limited**

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Plan EDP 7: Illustrative Landscape Strategy
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Section 1

Introduction, Purpose and Methodology

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Catesby Strategic Land Limited (Catesby Estates) (hereafter referred to as 'the applicant') to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of residential development on Land East of Lunce's Hill, Haywards Heath (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The site falls within Lewes District Council Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the Mid Sussex District Council LPA areas. The site extends to 8.81 hectares (ha), and is briefly described in **Section 2** of this LVIA. Full site details are given in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) accompanying the planning application. This LVIA is part of a suite of documents accompanying an outline planning application for the proposed development summarised in **Section 5** of this LVIA.
- 1.2 EDP is an independent environmental planning consultancy with offices in Cirencester, Cheltenham and Cardiff. The practice provides advice to private and public sector clients throughout the UK in the fields of landscape, ecology, archaeology, cultural heritage, arboriculture, rights of way and masterplanning. Details of the practice can be obtained at our website (www.edp-uk.co.uk). EDP is a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute¹ specialising in the assessment of the effects of proposed development on the landscape.

THE SITE AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.3 **Plan EDP 1** (Relevant Planning Designations and Considerations) illustrates the location of the site's boundaries and the study area for the LVIA. The site is located on the southern settlement edge of Haywards Heath, with the B2112 Lunce's Hill running adjacent to the site's western boundary.
- 1.4 The site's character and local context is illustrated on the aerial photograph contained as **Plan EDP 2**.
- 1.5 The site comprises five agricultural field parcels in pasture, primarily compartmentalised by hedgerows with trees and field ditches, with an agricultural outbuilding located on the western boundary. There is an area of Ancient Woodland adjacent to most of the eastern boundary, and ditches that run along the eastern and southern boundaries, which connect to the internal ditch network. Established hedgerows with trees run along the northern and southern boundaries, and several specimen trees are also located within the centre of the site. The western edge of the site is defined by a mix of fencing, hedgerows, tree lines and brick walling, backing onto the B2112 and gardens of private dwellings associated with Hurstwood Lane.

¹ LI Practice Number 1010

- 1.6 The proposed development is an outline planning application for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, together with the change of use of an existing barn for a flexible community and/or commercial use, along with associated outdoor space and landscaping, drainage infrastructure, hard and soft landscaping, parking, access and associated works (all matters reserved except for access). The proposals are illustrated on the Illustrative Masterplan at **Appendix EDP 1**.

PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THIS LVA

- 1.7 The purpose of this LVIA is to identify the baseline conditions of the site and surrounding area and to determine those landscape and visual characteristics that might inform the design of the development proposals, including recommendations for mitigation. It then appraises the likely effects of a development.
- 1.8 In undertaking the assessment EDP has:
- Undertaken a thorough data trawl of relevant designations, planning policies, and background documents, described in **Section 2**;
 - Assessed the existing (baseline) condition and character of the site and its setting, described in **Section 3**;
 - Assessed the existing visual (baseline) context, especially any key views to and from the site (**Section 4**). The establishment of baseline landscape and visual conditions, when evaluated against the proposed development, allow the identification and evaluation of landscape effects later in the LVIA at **Appendix EDP 4** and **Section 6**;
 - Described the landscape aspects of the proposed development that may influence any landscape or visual effects (**Section 5**);
 - In **Appendix EDP 4**, assessed the landscape and visual effects in accordance with the approach described below, and then summarised the findings in **Section 6**; and
 - Provided an analysis of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed scheme, which is determined by combining the magnitude of the predicted change with the assessed sensitivity of the identified receptors. The nature of any predicted effects is also identified (i.e. positive/negative, permanent/reversible).

METHODOLOGY ADOPTED FOR THE ASSESSMENT

- 1.9 The proposed development assessed by this LVA is not subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This LVA has, therefore, been undertaken in accordance with the principles embodied in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition (LI/IEMA, 2013)' (GLVIA3) and other best practice guidance insofar as it is relevant to non-EIA schemes.

- 1.10 **Familiarisation:** EDP's study has included reviews of aerial photographs, web searches, LPA publications and landscape character assessments. EDP has also obtained, where possible, information about relevant landscape and other designations such as National Parks (NP), National Landscapes ((NL) formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)), conservation areas, and parks and gardens listed on Historic England's 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England' (RPG).
- 1.11 **Consultation:** No consultation has taken place with the LPA regarding landscape and visual matters.
- 1.12 **Field Assessment:** EDP has undertaken a comprehensive field assessment of local site circumstances, including a photographic survey of the character and fabric of the site and its surroundings, using photography from a number of representative viewpoints. The field assessment was undertaken by a qualified landscape architect in clear conditions, in March 2024.
- 1.13 **Acknowledgement of any shortcomings:** A site assessment has been undertaken in the late winter to early spring months to gather a worst-case scenario. However, due to the timing of the visit, species such as Hawthorn had begun to produce some leaves. However, this did not impede the survey, and the surveyor was able to assess a worst-case scenario.
- 1.14 **Design Inputs:** EDP's field assessment has informed a process whereby the development proposals have been refined to avoid, minimise or compensate for landscape effects, and maximise the opportunities identified for landscape in the development. Such measures are summarised in **Section 5**.
- 1.15 **Assessment Methodology:** Predicted effects on the landscape resource and visual amenity arising from the proposed development (**Section 6**) have been determined in accordance with the principles embedded within published best practice guidance insofar as the assessment adopts the following well-established, structured approach:
- Likely effects on landscape character and visual amenity are dealt with separately;
 - The assessment of likely effects is reached using a structured methodology for defining sensitivity and magnitude (**Appendix EDP 2**). This framework is combined with professional judgement. Professional judgement is an important part of the assessment process; it is neither 'pro' nor 'anti' development but acknowledges that development may result in beneficial change as well as landscape harm;
 - As advised in GLVIA3, the appraisal takes into account the effects of any proposed mitigation; and
 - Typically, a 15-year time horizon is used as the basis for conclusions about the residual levels of effect. Fifteen years is a well-established and accepted compromise between assessing the shorter-term effects (which may often be rather 'raw' before any proposed mitigation has had time to take effect) and an excessively long time period.

STUDY AREA

1.16 To establish the baseline and potential limit of material effects, the study area has been considered at two geographical scales:

- First, a broad 'study area' was adopted, based mainly on desk-based study, allowing the geographical scope of the assessment to be defined based on the likely extent of views to/from the site, extent of landscape effects and the site's environmental planning context; and
- Second, following initial analysis and subsequent fieldwork, the broad study area was refined down to the land that is most likely to experience landscape effects. The extent of this detailed study area is 1km from the site boundary, although occasional reference may be made to features beyond this area where appropriate. This detailed study area is illustrated on **Plan EDP 1**.

Section 2

Findings of EDP Data Trawl

- 2.1 The findings of EDP's data trawl of relevant environmental and planning designations are illustrated on **Plan EDP 1** and summarised in this section with further detail provided in **Appendix EDP 5** and **6**.

BACKGROUND PUBLISHED EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS

- 2.2 The following documents are relevant and are discussed as appropriate later in this report (Please refer to the submitted Planning and Affordable Housing Statement for a full list of relevant planning documents):

Planning Policies

Lewes District Council

- Lewes District Council - Local Plan, Part 1 Joint Core Strategy 2010-2030 (2016) and Lewes Local Plan Part 2 (2020);
- Lewes District Council - Towards a Local Plan spatial strategy and policies directions (2023); and
- Wivelsfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030 (Published by Lewes District Council and Wivelsfield Parish Council) (2016, reviewed in 2021).

Mid Sussex District Council

- Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (2018);
- Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Submission Draft (2023); and
- Haywards Heath Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Our Bright Future (2016).

Landscape Character

National Level

- National Character Area (NCA) 121: Low Weald (2014).

County Level

- A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (2005); and
- The East Sussex County Landscape Assessment (2016).

District Level

- A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex (2005); and

- Lewes Landscape Character Assessment (2023).

Sensitivity Studies

- Lewes Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2023).

FINDINGS OF EDP DATA TRAWL

Landscape-related Designations and Other Considerations

2.3 Landscape-related designations and policy considerations within 2km of the site are shown on **Plan EDP 1**. In summary:

- National landscape designations: The site does not lie within or pertinent to a nationally designated landscape. The South Downs National Park (SDNP) is located approximately 3.7km south of the site. There is no intervisibility between the SDNP, and the site does not form part of its setting. Therefore, no further assessment on the SDNP will be included within this report;
- Local landscape designations: The site does not lie within or pertinent to a locally designated landscape; and
- Other landscape-related designations: The site does not lie within Green Belt, Strategic or Green Wedges, or Important Local Gaps.

Heritage Matters

2.4 Heritage assets can influence the visual character of the landscape and enrich its historic value. This LVIA addresses heritage assets only insofar as they are components of the wider contemporary landscape – not in terms of their significance and value as heritage assets, which is a matter addressed by the separate Heritage Assessment (prepared by Orion, report ref. PN4161/HS/1).

2.5 Within the wider study area, the following heritage assets are components of the contemporary landscape:

- Several Grade II listed buildings are located within 1km of the site, the closest being Grade II Listed Building 'Cleavewater', located approximately 20m north of the site; and
- Three Conservation Areas are located within 2km of the site.

Ecology Matters

2.6 A separate Ecological Assessment (prepared by Derek Finnie Associates, report ref DFA24115) considers the ecological assets on the site and within the study area. The following matters are relevant to the scope of this LVIA:

- The majority of the site is pastoral land of limited ecological value. Some habitats of site to local level value are present, including a network of hedgerows/trees and ditches;
- There are no international ecological designations (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites) within 2km of the site; and
- Three nationally ecological designated sites are located within 2km of the site. Ditchling Common SSSI is located to south of the site, Bedelands Farm Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located to the west of the site, and Ashenground and Bolnore Woods LNR is located to the north-west of the site.

Arboricultural Matters

2.7 A separate Arboricultural Assessment (prepared by EDP, report ref edp8571_r006) considers the arboricultural assets on the site and within the study area. The following matters are relevant to the scope of this LVIA:

- An Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (Cleave water wood) is located adjacent to the site on the eastern boundary; and
- There are no known Tree Preservation Orders located within or pertinent to the site.

Public Access and Rights of Way

2.8 A review of OS mapping data and East/West Sussex's Definitive Map is shown on **Plan EDP 1** and **2**, and reveals that:

- There is a network of PRoW across the detailed study area generally connecting between settlements, and between settlement and roads;
- PRoW are concentrated to the east and west of the site, with PRoW generally void of the area within 1km of the site. Beyond 1km south, the PRoW becomes more common in the landscape, and to the west, the railway line which runs broadly north south is a linear barrier to movement within the study area with limited crossing points. To the north, PRoW are limited due to the location of the town of Haywards Heath;
- PRoW within the immediate context of the site are limited to PRoW 3a, 15, and 28CU, adjacent to the western boundary, where they terminate at Lunce's Hill, and PRoW 29 and 25 that runs c.100m east of the site through woodland; and
- There are no PRoW located within the site.

Planning Matters

- 2.9 The site is located within the LPA of Lewes and Mid Sussex. As shown at **Image EDP 2.1**, the central and eastern area of the site is located within the Lewes District Council (LDC) boundary, and the western area within the Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) boundary. Therefore, policies relevant to each district will be considered below.

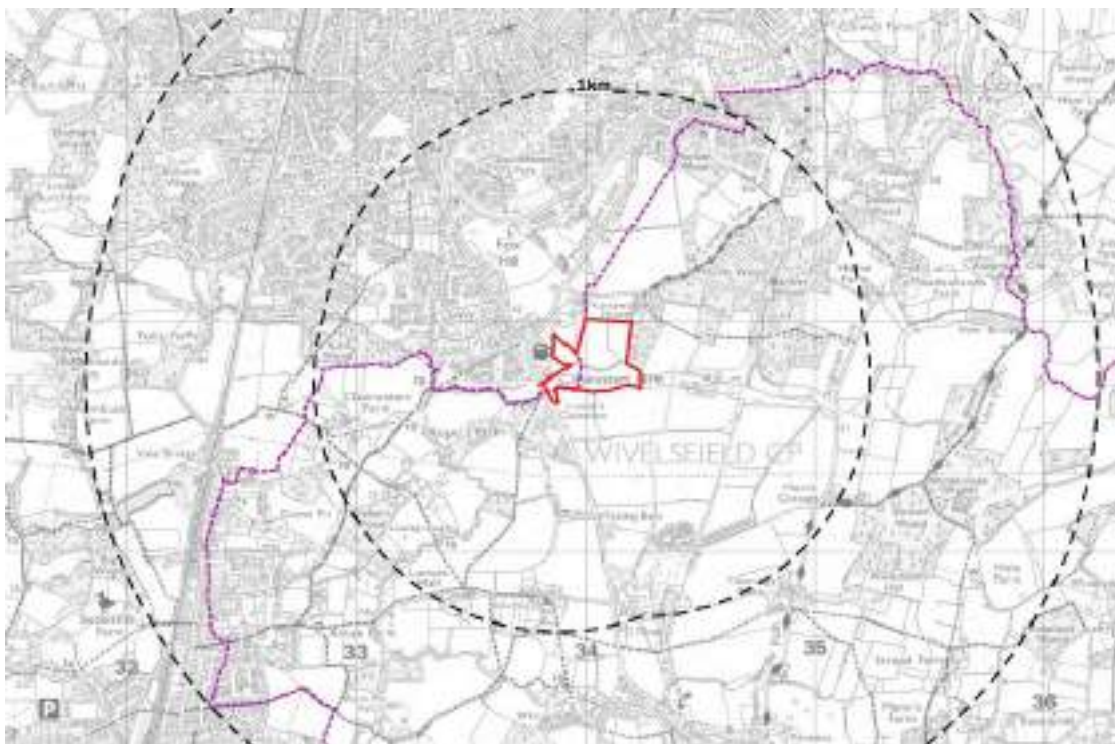


Image EDP 2.1: Map insert showing where the district boundaries cross the site.

Lewes District

Lewes District Local Plan – Part 1 Joint Core Strategy 2010-2030

- 2.10 The Lewes District Local Plan 2010-2030² was adopted in May 2016 and includes overarching general development policies, to which the development proposals will be tested. Policies that are relevant to the site in landscape and visual terms are summarised below, and the full wording can be found at **Appendix EDP 5**. Policy matters in regard to heritage and ecology will be detailed in the respective appraisals but will be supported by this LVA:

- **Core Policy 8 – Green Infrastructure:** Core Policy 8 outlines requirements for making provisions for the retention and enhancement of existing Green Infrastructure (GI) and designing quality GI that provides suitable links into the existing network;
- **Core Policy 10 – Natural Environment and Landscape Character:** Core Policy 10 seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the area, including its natural beauty and cultural heritage. The policy outlines

² https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/media/1718/Adopted-Joint-Core-Strategy-2016/pdf/Adopted_Joint_Core_Strategy_2016.pdf?m=1682440920647 – accessed 02/07/24

requirements for development proposals to engage with the existing distinct landscape character to avoid harmful impact upon landscape character and mitigate any negative impacts through sensitive design; and

- **Core Policy 11 – Built and Historic Environment and High Quality Design:** Policy 11 outlines requirements for providing a design that creates a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complimentary to the locality. Schemes should enhance the local distinctiveness, retain and enhance existing important landscape features, and respond positively to the existing townscape.

Lewes District Local Plan – Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies

- 2.11 The Lewes District Local Plan Part 2³ was adopted in February 2020 and seeks to deliver the strategic objectives and spatial strategy of the Local Plan Part 1 by allocating additional sites, and setting out detailed (non-strategic) development management policies. Policies that are relevant to the site in landscape and visual terms are summarised below, and the full wording can be found at **Appendix EDP 5**. Policy matters in regard to heritage and ecology will be detailed in the respective appraisals but will be supported by this LVA:

- **Policy DM2 – Rural Exception Sites:** Policy DM2 states that proposals outside of the planning boundaries must respect its character and setting, and be an appropriate scale and design;
- **Policy DM14 – Multi-functional Green Infrastructure:** Policy DM14 seeks to ensure that Green Infrastructure is incorporated in to development, with a focus on enhancing existing features; and
- **Policy DM27 – Landscape Design:** Policy DM27 states that landscape design should reflect, conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the local landscape, and retain and incorporate existing mature trees and hedgerows into the scheme.

Lewes District Council Towards a Local Plan Spatial Strategy and Policies Directions (Regulation 18 Consultation)

- 2.12 The LDC are currently updating the adopted Local Plan and are at the early stages of consultation (Regulation 18 Consultation⁴). At the time of writing this assessment, no policy details are available to assess the proposed development against, so the report will remain to assess the site and feed into the design process based on the currently adopted Local Plan.

Wivelsfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030 (made 2016, revised 2021)

- 2.13 The Wivelsfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan (WPNP) was made in September 2016⁵, and contains several policies relevant to landscape and visual matters. Policies that are

³ https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/media/1739/Local-Plan-Part-2-2020/pdf/Local_Plan_Part_2_2020.pdf?m=1682441636643 – accessed 02/07/24

⁴ <https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/gf2.ti/-/1568674/189608421.1/PDF/-/Local%20Plan%20Spatial%20Strategy.pdf> - accessed 02/07/24

⁵ <https://www.wivelsfield.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Wivelsfield-NP-Final-Version.pdf> - accessed 08/05/24

relevant to the site are summarised below, and the full wording can be found at **Appendix EDP 5**:

- **Policy 5 – Design:** Policy 5 seeks to ensure that new development demonstrates high quality design that reflects the local distinctiveness and integrates with its surroundings. The policy also highlights the importance of linkages to nearby green spaces and existing public routes.
- **Policy 6 – Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity:** Policy 6 states that new development must contribute to and enhance the natural environment by protecting existing features and providing additional habitat resources for wildlife and the community.

Mid Sussex District

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031

2.14 The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031⁶ was adopted in March 2018 and includes over-arching general development policies, to which the development proposals will be tested. Policies that are relevant to the site in landscape and visual terms are summarised below, and the full wording can be found at **Appendix EDP 6**. Policy matters in regard to heritage and ecology will be detailed in the respective appraisals but will be supported by this LVA:

- **Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside:** Policy DP12 refers to the protection of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, where focus should be on the enhancement of the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District;
- **Policy DP13: Preventing Coalescence:** Policy DP13 states that development should not result in the coalescence of settlements, and people travelling between settlement should have a sense that they have left one before arriving at the next;
- **Policy DP22: Rights of Way and other Recreational Routes:** Policy DP22 seeks to protect Rights of Way from loss and adverse effects;
- **Policy DP26: Character and Design:** Policy DP26 outlines requirements for new development to demonstrate high quality design that reflects the local distinctiveness and integrates with its surroundings; and
- **Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows:** Policy DP37 sets out criteria to protect existing trees, woodland and hedgerows across the district, and encourages enhancement where possible.

⁶ <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3406/mid-sussex-district-plan.pdf> – accessed 02/07/24

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

2.15 The MSDC are currently updating the adopted Local Plan, and submitted the draft Local Plan on 08 July 2024 for examination⁷. Once adopted, the policies from the Local Plan will supersede those above in the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, so are relevant to this proposed development. Policies that are relevant to the site in landscape and visual terms are summarised below, and the full wording can be found at **Appendix EDP 6**:

- **Policy DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure:** Policy DPN3 outlines requirements for making provisions for the retention and enhancement of existing Green Infrastructure (GI) and designing quality GI that provides suitable links into the existing network;
- **Policy DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows:** Similar to Policy DP37 of the adopted plan, Policy DPN4 sets out criteria to protect existing trees, woodland and hedgerows across the district, and encourages enhancement where possible;
- **Policy DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside:** Similar to Policy DP12 of the adopted plan, Policy DPC1 refers to the protection of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, where focus should be on the enhancement of the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District;
- **Policy DPC2: Preventing Coalescence:** Similar to Policy DP13 of the adopted plan, Policy DPC2 states that development should not result in the coalescence of settlements, and people travelling between settlement should have a sense that they have left one before arriving at the next; and
- **Policy DPB1: Character and Design:** Similar to Policy DP26 of the adopted plan, Policy DPB1 outlines requirements for new development to demonstrate high quality design that reflects the local distinctiveness and integrates with its surroundings.

Haywards Heath Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Our Bright Future (made 2016)

2.16 The Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan⁸ was made in February 2016 and contains several policies relevant to landscape and visual matters. Policies that are relevant to the site are summarised below, and the full wording can be found at **Appendix EDP 6**.

- **Policy E5: Local Gap:** Policy E5 details provisions to protect the coalescence of Haywards Heath and neighbouring towns/parishes, and a landscape buffer should be created;
- **Policy E6: Green Infrastructure:** Policy E6 seeks to retain green infrastructure and promote internal green links. Features typical of the Haywards Heath landscape should also be protected;

⁷ <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/a4rft3j0/district-plan-review-reg-19-web-version-with-hyperlinks.pdf> - accessed 02/07/24

⁸ https://www.haywardsheath.gov.uk/_UserFiles/Files/Neighbourhood%20Plan/HHNP%20version%20Final%20Submission%20%20Feb%2016f120.pdf - accessed 02/07/24

- **Policy E9: Character:** Policy E9 requires development to demonstrate how the local character will be protected and reinforced; and
- **Policy E11: Visual Impact:** Policy E11 outlines requirements for sites on the edge of settlement to be supported by an assessment of the views to and from the proposed development, and any identified visual impacts to be addressed through design.

Other Planning Matters

Relevant Planning Applications

DM/22/2272 - Land At Hurst Farm Hurstwood Lane Haywards Heath

- 2.17 An outline application for the erection of up-to 375 new homes, primary school, burial grounds, allotments, and open space, achieved resolution to grant outline planning permission at the District Planning Committee on 10 August 2023⁹. Application DM/22/2272 is located just to the north of the site, with the development boundary located 390m north of the site, and the southern end of the development where a primary school is proposed, located approximately 90m north-west of the site (**Image EDP 2.2**).



Image EDP 2.2: Illustrative masterplan for application DM/22/2272. The site is denoted by the yellow line.

⁹ <https://midsussex.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s16411/DM.22.2272%20Land%20at%20Hurst%20Farm%20Hurstwood%20Lane%20Haywards%20Heath%20-%20Final%20-D%2010.8.23.pdf> – accessed 02/12/24

2.18 On landscape and visual impacts, the committee report stated that:

- *“There would be some limited benefit from the undergrounding of the electricity pylons that run across the southern part of the site, which will be a requirement of developing the school.*
- *It is acknowledged that there would be a change to the landscape from the development, however, this would only be of very local significance. No significant environmental effects of more than local significance would result from the proposal and it is not considered necessary to secure any wider mitigation.*
- *Whilst there will be development to the east of Hurstwood Lane on land designated as being within the countryside, it is important to recognise the existing development around the site. There is a relatively new housing development to the northeast that projects further eastwards than the site of this planning application.*
- *The new houses proposed in this development would be seen against the backdrop of the existing well established housing to the north at Birch Way and Greenhill Park. The existing tree belt on the eastern side of Hurstwood Lane would be retained so the development on the eastern side of Hurstwood Lane should not appear unduly prominent from the road.*
- *It is considered that whilst there would be a significant change at the site itself by virtue of new development taking place on a green field site, the wider character of this part of the countryside would be retained and the development would be assimilated into this part of Haywards Heath.”*

DM/22/0733 - Land At Rogers Farm Fox Hill Haywards Heath

2.19 An outline application for the erection of up-to 20 new homes on open, agricultural fields was granted planning permission on 21 October 2022¹⁰. Application DM/22/0733 is located adjacent to the site's western boundary, on the west side of Lunce's Hill, opposite the existing access into the site (**Image EDP 2.3**). The development is located immediately to the south of the recently completed development of 99 homes (application ref. DM/15/3448). At the time of the site visit in March 2024, development DM/22/0733 was still under construction, with several of the dwellings near completion.

DM/19/3121 - Braydells Hurstwood Lane Haywards Heath

2.20 An outline application for the erection of up-to four new homes on open garden land associated with the property of Braydells was granted planning permission in 2021. The development is located adjacent to the northern boundary and was under construction at the time of the site survey.

¹⁰ https://padocs.midsussex.gov.uk/PublicAccess_Live/Document/ViewDocument?id=4FD9F58F34A24226AA62B48788CF4636 – accessed 02/12/24



Image EDP 2.3: Illustrative masterplan for application DM/22/0733. The site is denoted by the yellow line.

2.21 On landscape and visual impacts, the committee report stated that:

- *“It is recommended that the proposed development can be supported as it would have an acceptable impact on local landscape character and views.*
- *The LVIA concludes that the proposed development would have a minor adverse effect on landscape character and that this would be localised. The visual effects of the proposal would also be limited to very local views from the road and the adjacent public footpath. The landscape and visual impacts would be mitigated by the retention of existing boundary trees, which would be reinforced with new planting. It is proposed that these woodland belts would also be brought into positive management to ensure the long-term health of the trees and understorey. The overall conclusions of the LVIA are not disputed”.*

2.22 These recent and granted developments illustrate the changing nature of the landscape surrounding the site, and how the site relates well to the emerging development context of the town.

Section 3

Existing (Baseline) Conditions: Landscape Character

- 3.1 This section provides an assessment of the 'baseline' (existing) conditions in respect of the character of the site and its landscape context. It summarises any relevant published landscape assessments that contribute to a better understanding of the landscape context. Such assessments provide a helpful understanding of the landscape context but rarely deliver sufficiently site-specific or up-to-date information to draw robust conclusions about the significance of any change proposed by the development. Accordingly, EDP has undertaken its own assessment of the site, which is included in this section, at paragraph 3.12 et seq.

NATIONAL CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- 3.2 At the national level, the character of England has been described and classified in the National Character Area (NCA) profiles published by Natural England¹¹. The site and its surroundings fall within NCA 121, namely Low Weald which extends c.120km from Ashford in the east to Milland in the west. NCA 122, High Weald is located c.1km to the north of the site.
- 3.3 For the scale of the development proposed on the site, it is considered that the description of landscape character undertaken at the sub-regional level is more relevant in establishing the landscape resource baseline. As such, of much greater use are the more localised assessments at county and district level, described in the following paragraphs.

COUNTY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

- 3.4 The site is located across a county border, sitting between East Sussex and West Sussex. The eastern area of the site is located in East Sussex, with the most western area located in West Sussex. Therefore, this LVIA has considered the county level landscape character assessments for both counties.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles> (Accessed 07.06.2024)

The East Sussex Council Landscape Assessment¹²

LCA 14 - Western Low Weald

3.5 An assessment of the landscape character in the county of East Sussex was undertaken in 2016. The central and eastern extent of the site falls in the Landscape Character Type (LCT) Western Low Weald. The assessment includes over 30 key characteristics for the LCT. Those deemed relevant to the site and detailed study area are listed below, with the full list available in **Appendix EDP 5**:

- *“A gently undulating and low lying topography with highest points on the green sand ridges and lowest in the river and stream valleys.*
- *Fields are generally small and irregular; many formed from woodland clearance and often bounded by remnant woodland strips known as shaws.*
- *A largely pastoral landscape, especially on the heavy clay soils. Red Sussex cattle and Southdown sheep are local breeds which have been present for many centuries.*
- *Scattered tree features including distinctive mature oaks, tree belts, woods, parkland and hedgerow trees give an impression that the area is well wooded.*
- *A few scattered larger woods which are usually ancient in origin notably Plashett, which is an SSSI, and Warningore woods.*
- *Generally across the area there is a strong historic landscape structure with a patchwork of medieval assart fields and hedgerow boundaries.*
- *Areas of tranquillity away from the main centres of settlement and roads.*
- *Few main roads cross the area with the exception of the two north south A26 and A275 roads. The B2112 to the west of the area is a busy commuter route which puts pressure on the historic village of Ditchling.”*

The West Sussex Landscape – Land Management Guidelines¹³

HW4 – High Weald Fringes

3.6 An assessment of the landscape character in the county of West Sussex was undertaken in 2003. Since this assessment, the MSDC produced a district wide landscape character assessment in 2005. This assessment uses the same boundaries and key characteristics as the 2003 assessment. For the purposes of this LVA, the proposed development will be assessed against the MSDC 2005 landscape character assessment, as the two assessments are essentially similar and the Mid Sussex assessment post-dates the county assessment.

¹² <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/landscape/landscape> (accessed 10.06.2024)

¹³ <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/landscape-and-environment/landscape-character-assessment-of-west-sussex/> (accessed 10.06.2024)

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

- 3.7 The site is covered by several landscape character assessments due to its location across two local authorities, the extent of these character areas are illustrated at **Plan EDP 3**. The majority of the site is located within the Lewes Landscape Character Assessment.

Lewes Landscape Character Assessment

LCA C3 - Ditchling Common Western Low Weald

- 3.8 Lewes District Council undertook a Landscape Character Assessment in 2023 for the rural landscape within the district outside of the South Downs National Park. The central and eastern extent of the site is located in the Landscape Character Area (LCA) C3 Ditchling Common Western Low Weald. The assessment includes several key characteristics for the LCA. Those deemed relevant to the site and detailed study area are listed below, with the full list available in **Appendix EDP 5**:

- *“The landform is undulating between approximately +35m AOD to +75m AOD.*
- *Generally medium-scale field enclosures with some smaller field enclosures in the more settled southern and western parts of the Landscape Character Area, many formed from woodland clearance and often bounded by remnant woodland strips known as shaws.*
- *Predominantly assarted, enclosed agricultural land of ancient form, as well as some amalgamated, enclosed agricultural land of modern form in the northern part of the Landscape Character Area and planned, enclosed agricultural land of pre-modern form in the central and southern parts.*
- *Mixture of arable and pasture land use, with hedgerow and hedgerow tree boundaries of varied condition.*
- *Ancient woodland scattered across the area, including larger areas within the southern part of the Landscape Character Area such as Blackbrook Wood and a number of small to medium-sized areas in close proximity to one another in the northern part, including Strood Wood and Wilderness Wood.*
- *Landscape heavily characterised by the influence of large continuous and amalgamated blocks of woodland, creating high levels of enclosure, a wooded backdrop in views and limiting long-distance views including those towards the rising landform of the South Downs National Park to the south.*
- *Ancient, fairly straight, north to south drove ways include the B2112, Streat Lane, Hundred Acre Lane.*
- *Main transport routes include the B2112 in the western part of the Landscape Character Area and the railway line denoting the southern boundary, which create localised audible and visual detracting features and decrease tranquillity in comparison to the more rural areas.*

- *Often an audible perception of vehicles which increases in proximity to the B2112."*

Landscape Management Guidelines

- 3.9 The assessment provides guidelines for Landscape Management within the LCA C3 Ditchling Common Western Low Weald. It states that blue and green infrastructure should be retained and enhanced, with improvements made to existing hedgerows and vegetation. PRow networks should be preserved and enhanced with aims of relevant designations supported. Measures that combine flood management and ecological initiatives are encouraged, and the setting of the South Downs National Park should be preserved.

Development Guidelines

- 3.10 The assessment provides a series of guidelines for development within the LCA. Guidelines relevant to the site have been included below:
- *"Development should be limited and designed to retain the rural character of the majority of the area, noting that there are several areas with prominent urbanising features.*
 - *Protect and retain existing vegetation across the Landscape Character Area, including ancient woodland and on the edge of settlement areas.*
 - *The height, scale, massing and articulation of any new development to be of a similar character of the existing valued context via locally characteristic building forms, high quality detailing and sympathetic contemporary architecture.*
 - *Any new development should be set within a robust landscape framework as part of a wider blue green infrastructure strategy.*
 - *Any new development should include materials which are well integrated into the wooded backdrop within views through colour studies and references to published guidelines.*
 - *Ensure any development including lighting is assessed for its visual impact, including from the South Downs National Park.*
 - *Reinstatement of historic field boundaries where they have been lost to amalgamation and retain the ancient field pattern."*

Mid-Sussex District Council Landscape Character Assessment

LCA 10 High Weald Fringes

3.11 Mid-Sussex District Council commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment in 2005¹⁴. The western extent of the site is located in the LCA: 10 High Weald Fringes. The assessment includes several key characteristics for the LCA. Those deemed relevant to the site and detailed study area are listed below, with the full list available in **Appendix EDP 6**:

- *“Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.*
- *Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields and larger fields, and small pockets of remnant heathland.*
- *Biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.*
- *Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.*
- *Some busy lanes and roads including A and B roads bounding the area to the west, and other roads crossing north to south, including the A23 Trunk Road.*
- *London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area at Haywards Heath.*
- *Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timberframing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.”*

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

3.12 The description of the High Weald Fringes also defines ‘Landscape and Visual Sensitivities’, of which the relevant ones are as follows:

- *“Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.*
- *Unobtrusive settlement pattern in many parts.*
- *Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the visual impact of new development, particularly on the south side of Haywards Heath, unless appropriate steps are taken to integrate new development into the landscape.”*

SITE LANDSCAPE FEATURES, FABRIC, AND CHARACTER

3.13 Site visits took place in March 2024. The visits were complemented by a review of aerial photography, mapping and field assessments from publicly accessible locations (e.g. from local roads and Public Rights of Way (PRoW)).

¹⁴ env18-landscape-character-assessment.pdf

- 3.14 The site comprises predominantly pastoral farmland, with the site split into five small field parcels slightly irregular in shape (see **Plan EDP 2**). These are delineated by a network of locally valuable native hedgerows, with sporadic hedgerow trees. A field ditch is also present along the east/west internal field boundary. Boundary treatment varies across the site. Mature treed hedgerows form the southern and northern boundaries (**Image EDP 3.1** and **3.2**), and the western boundary is formed by mature treed hedgerows in the north-west corner, and a mix of buildings and fence lines in the south-western corner (**Image EDP 3.3**). The eastern boundary is delineated by adjacent woodland, with a ditch running down the boundary.



Image EDP 3.1: Vegetation along the southern boundary.



Image EDP 3.2: View from within the site, looking towards the western boundary.



Image EDP 3.3: View from within the site, looking towards the western boundary.

- 3.15 The site is bounded by a small pastoral field to the north, a large Ancient woodland to the east, medium sized arable fields to the south, and settlement to the west and north-west; including the B2112 Lunce's Hill road. The site is accessed from the B2112, on the western boundary. No other access is present on the site, including any PRow.

- 3.16 As shown in **Image EDP 3.4**, the local land use to the north and south is similar to that of the site, albeit more regular shaped agricultural fields predominantly in arable use, and delineated by maintained hedgerows and sporadic trees. The wider land use to the north does however transform into urban settlement, which carries on around to the west where settlement is the prominent land use. **Image EDP 3.5** shows recently developed and approved development in the immediate context of the site, highlighting the changing landscape within the detailed study area. To the east, land use is a mix of large woodlands interspersed by medium to large scale agriculture.



Image EDP 3.4: Google aerial image of the landscape surrounding the site.

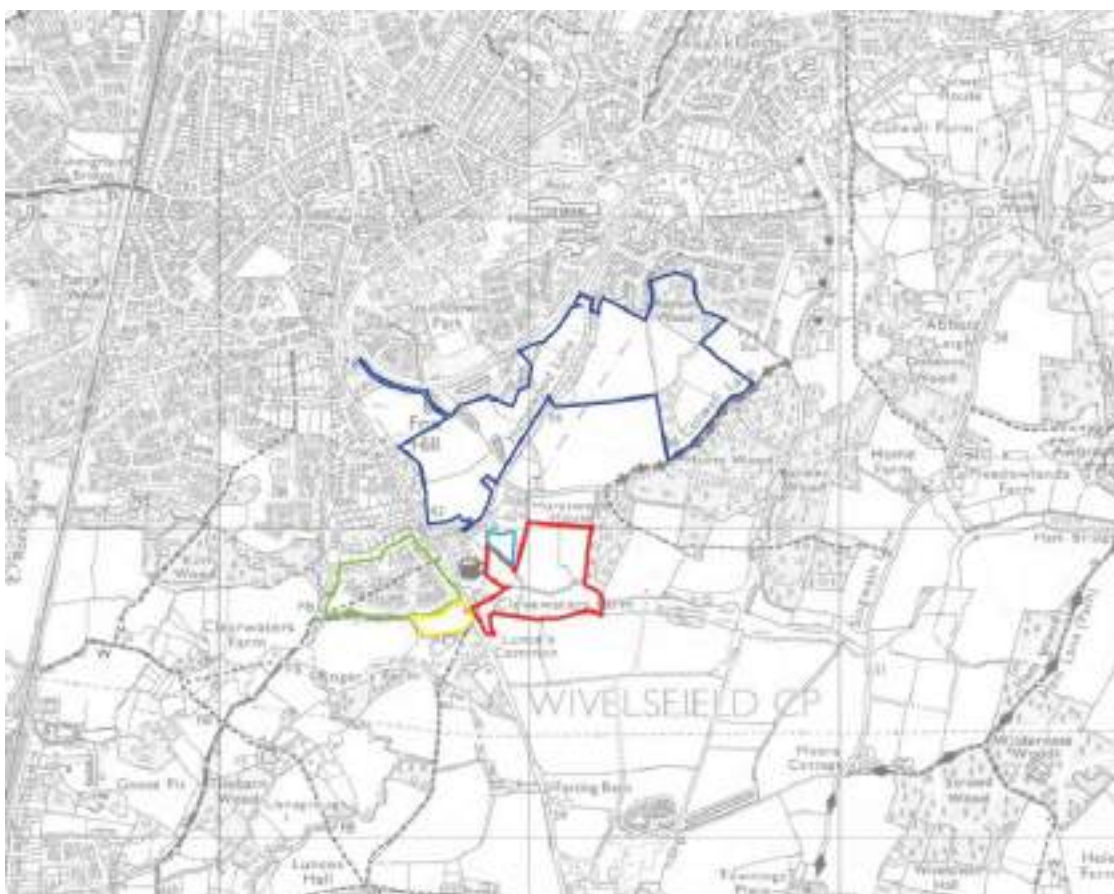


Image EDP 3.5: Map highlighting locations of new and approved developments within the immediate context of the site. The redline area is the site, the dark blue area is approved application DM/22/2272, the light blue area is approved application DM/19/0206, the yellow area is approved application DM/22/0733 currently under construction, and the green area is recently completed Fox Hill development.

- 3.17 As shown on **Plan EDP 3**, the site sits within a 'shallow bowl', with rising undulating landform present to the north, east and south. Landform to the west slightly rises from the site but generally falls towards a watercourse to the west. The site itself is predominantly flat, with the high point found along the northern edge, and the lower ground on the southern edge.
- 3.18 The quality and condition of the landscape varies across the site. Grazing did not appear to be that intense at the time of surveying, and there was little sign of disturbance of the ditches and vegetation from animals. The formalised hedgerows found internally and on the western boundary are more intensely managed, but the key features are the mature trees found along the boundaries and in the internal hedgerows.
- 3.19 Overall, the character of the site is a working agricultural landscape on the edge of a settlement, with suburban influences from the west in the form of residential housing, and the B2112 road adjacent to the west boundary. There is a relatively enclosed, contained feel to the site due to its location within a 'shallow bowl' and well-treed boundaries.

IDENTIFIED RECEPTORS AND THEIR SENSITIVITY

- 3.20 One of the purposes of this LVA is to identify the landscape receptors that will be potentially impacted by the proposals. Landscape receptors can include the constituent elements of the landscape (landscape features and fabric) and the character of the landscape in different areas. It also includes a consideration of the aesthetic and perceptual factors which contribute to landscape character. The landscape receptors identified include those within the site and within the detailed 'study area'. They are summarised as follows.

Landscape Features and Fabric

- Pastoral farmland with irregular sized fields and varied field boundaries;
- Ancient Woodland adjacent to the western boundary;
- Hedgerows and specimen trees along the site's boundaries and internal field boundaries;
- Ditches along the site's boundaries and internal field boundaries; and
- Topography.

Landscape Character

Host Landscape Character Areas:

- LCA 14: Western Low Weald;
 - LCA 3: Ditchling Common Western Low Weald; and
 - LCA 10: High Weald Fringes.
- 3.21 The landscape character of the site is considered representative of the host LCAs, in particular the presence of small, irregular shaped fields, with specimen trees and hedgerows aligned with field boundaries, located within an enclosed, undulating landscape. The site pertains a strong connection to the B2112 to the west, which is a feature commonly recognised in all the character areas.

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

- 3.22 The sensitivity of a landscape resource is the product of the inherent value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to the type of development proposed in a particular location.

Landscape Value

- 3.23 Landscape value is the innate value of the landscape resource irrespective of the type of development proposed and, as such, is determined within the baseline.

The Site and its Context

- 3.24 GLVIA3 and the 2021 LI Technical Note TGN 02-21 assist in delivering a framework for an objective landscape assessment of value. The criteria defined within TGN 02-21 is reproduced below in **Table EDP 3.1**, with EDP's observations alongside, based on published material and from EDP's field assessment. For each of the nine criteria, the site and local area is judged on the basis of a range from 'High', through 'Medium' to 'low' in terms of the performance against these criteria.

Table EDP 3.1: Consideration of Landscape Value

TGN 02-21 Criteria	The Site and its Landscape Character
Landscape Condition	Medium. The site comprises pastoral field parcels, with field boundaries consisting of hedgerow, trees, ditches and post and rail fencing. The landscape within the site is in a reasonable physical condition with some intact landscape features present along the boundaries.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Medium. The site is largely representative of its host character areas, formed of several small field parcels with strong landscape features present along some of the boundaries. The site is well enclosed by woodland and topography to the west and south, limiting its connection to the wider landscape, whereas there is a strong connection with the settlement edge to the north and west. The woodland adjacent to the eastern boundary, and the vegetation along the southern boundary do form a backdrop to the local landscape. As a result, the site has some aesthetic appeal.
Distinctiveness	Medium. Beyond being an open area of pastoral land adjacent to the settlement edge of Haywards Heath, the site has no particularly strong sense of identity or distinctiveness. The small irregular field parcels are noted as distinctive features of the site, but these are not rare landscape features. The site is largely representative of its' host character areas.
Natural Heritage	Medium/Low. The site does not contain any sensitive features of natural heritage importance. An Ancient Woodland is located adjacent to the eastern boundary, so the site is located within its context.
Cultural Heritage	Low The Heritage Impact Assessment confirms that the site has limited archaeological interest. There are pockets of localised historical or cultural interest within the wider context, associated with Haywards Heath.
Recreational	Low The site has limited recreation value. There is no public access or PRow that pass through the site.

TGN 02-21 Criteria	The Site and its Landscape Character
Perceptual (Wilderness and tranquillity)	Medium/Low. The site is predominantly pastoral and is a working farmland landscape. The presence of settlement to the west, and the B2112 road adjacent to the western boundary, reduces the sense of wilderness. Tranquillity does increase along the eastern edge, where the distance from urban influences are greatest, and there is a stronger connection to the adjacent woodland.
Associations	Low There are no known associations between the site, or its wider context, and notable people, events or the arts.
Functional	Low. The site is predominantly working farmland where soils are disturbed and the diversity of landscape elements is limited. However, the presence of vegetated field boundaries and connection to ancient woodland to the east does somewhat increase its functionality.

- 3.25 Having assessed the site in accordance with the methodology and TGN 02-21, overall, it is considered of no more than medium value. The condition of the landscape within the site is generally reasonable, with some biodiversity and Green Infrastructure value found internally along field boundaries. Beyond being an open area of agricultural land typical for farmland in close proximity to a settlement, the site has no particularly strong sense of identity or distinctiveness and comprises unremarkable agricultural land. The local context of the site pertains similar attributes as the site (as described above), although the value of the landscape does increase to the east, where ancient woodland is found, and to the south, where there is a separation from urban influences beyond the southern boundary, defined by the existing hedge/tree line associated with the edge of the site.

Landscape Character Areas

- 3.26 LCA 14: Western Low Weald, LCA C3: Ditchling Common Western Low Weald, and LCA 10: High Weald Fringes, are all located within the site. The landscape within the site is considered a typical example of the LCAs that it forms part of, without any particular features or associations that would increase its landscape value above that of the surrounding landscape. Therefore, the value of the landscape within the site associated with the LCAs is considered as medium.

Landscape Susceptibility to Change

- 3.27 The susceptibility of a landscape resource is defined as the ability of the receptor (whether the overall character, individual fabric elements or perceptual aspects of the landscape) to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

The Site and its Context

- 3.28 The site is located in a well enclosed landscape, and its predominantly flat and low-lying with gently undulating topography to the north and south, dense woodland to the east, and well-treed settlement to the west. Vegetation along the northern and southern boundaries also add to the sense of containment. The small field pattern with internal field boundary vegetation reduces the scale of the site, with the main potential developable area being pasture. The site is located in the context of settlement and suburban influences, including the B2112, which does reduce the rural perception of the site. Notable landscape features present on-site are found along the boundaries and internal fields. Based on the above, the susceptibility to change for the site and its context for the type of development proposed is medium/low.

Landscape Character Areas

- 3.29 LCA 14: Western Low Weald is a large, county-wide LCA that covers the landscape to the east and south of the site, bordering the settlement of Haywards Heath in places. The majority of the site is covered by LCA 14. The LCA includes several small settlements and the larger settlement of Wivelsfield Green to the south, so settlement is typical within this expansive LCA. The LCA is well-wooded, particularly around the site, which limits intervisibility and provides a sense of enclosure. Where key features are present, they are predominantly found along the boundaries of the site where development of this type is less likely to occur. Therefore, the susceptibility to change for LCA 14 for the type of development proposed is low.
- 3.30 LCA C3: Ditchling Common Western Low Weald is an expansive district LCA that covers parts the landscape to the east and south of the site, bordering the settlement of Haywards Heath in places. The majority of the site is covered by LCA. The LCA is well-wooded, particularly around the site, which limits intervisibility and provides a sense of enclosure. Where key features are present, they are predominantly found along the boundaries of the site where development of this type is less likely to occur. Therefore, the susceptibility to change for LCA C3 for the type of development proposed is low.
- 3.31 LCA 10: High Weald Fringes is a large, district LCA that covers the landscape to the west and north of the site. Only a small section of the site is covered by the LCA (most westerly area adjacent to the B2112), which is isolated from the wider LCA by settlement. The LCA boundary includes the large settlement of Haywards Heath, so settlement is typical within this expansive LCA, and the dominant feature of the LCA within the study area. The LCA is well-wooded to the west of Haywards Heath, which when combined with dense settlement, limits intervisibility and provides a sense of enclosure within the study area. Due to the limited area coverage of the LCA within the site, notable landscape features are limited. Therefore, the susceptibility to change for LCA 10 for the type of development proposed is very low.

LANDSCAPE BASELINE SUMMARY

- 3.32 The landscape character receptors to be assessed within this LVA are summarised in **Table EDP 3.2** for clarity.

Table EDP 3.2: Landscape Character Receptor Summary

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity
The Site and its Context	Medium	Medium/Low	Medium/Low
LCA 14: Western Low Weald	Medium	Low	Medium/Low
LCA C3: Ditchling Common Western Low Weald	Medium	Low	Medium/Low
LCA 10: High Weald Fringes	Medium	Very Low	Low

Section 4

Existing (Baseline) Conditions: Visual Amenity

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 This section provides an assessment of the 'baseline' (existing) conditions in respect of the visual amenity of the site and its surroundings.
- 4.2 This chapter identifies those visual receptors which merit detailed consideration in the assessment of effects, and those which are not taken forward for further assessment as effects *"have been judged unlikely to occur or so insignificant that it is not essential to consider them further"* (GLVIA3, para. 3.19).
- 4.3 Visual amenity (as opposed to 'visual character' described in the previous section) is not about the visual appearance of the site, but has to do with the number, distribution and character of views towards, from or within the site. An analysis of visual amenity allows conclusions to be reached about who may experience visual change, from where and to what degree those views will be affected by the proposed development.

ZONES OF THEORETICAL AND PRIMARY VISIBILITY

- 4.4 The starting point for an assessment of visual amenity is a computer-generated 'zone of theoretical visibility' (ZTV). The ZTV is derived using digital landform height data only and therefore it does not account for the screening effects of intervening buildings, structures or vegetation, but it does give a prediction of the areas that, theoretically, may be able to experience visual change (see **Plan EDP 5**); it thus provides the basis for more detailed field assessment.
- 4.5 The ZTV is then refined by walking and driving local roads, rights of way and other publicly accessible viewpoints to arrive at a more accurate, 'field-tested' zone of primary visibility (ZPV). The ZPV is where views of the proposed development would normally be close-ranging and open, whether in the public or private domain, on foot, cycling or in a vehicle. In this instance, the field assessment was undertaken by an experienced Landscape Architect in March 2024.
- 4.6 Beyond the ZPV lies a zone of visibility that is less open, being either partly screened or filtered. Views from within this zone would include the proposal – it may not be immediately noticeable, but once recognised would be a perceptible addition to the view.
- 4.7 **Plan EDP 6** illustrates the findings of the visual appraisal from which it can be seen that the ZPV extends as follows:
- **North:** The rising topography and strong field boundary vegetation to the north, limits views of the site to adjacent receptors. No views of the site are experienced beyond 1km, and where views of the site are experienced, they are heavily filtered by vegetation and existing settlement;

- **East:** Dense woodland along the eastern boundary screens views of the site from the east, limiting views to adjacent receptors only, which are located in the dense woodland, which heavily obscures views of the site;
- **South:** The rising topography to the south screens views from receptors to the south, limiting views to local receptors within 200m of the site; and
- **West:** Existing settlement and vegetation associated with Lunce's Hill limits views of the site to adjacent receptors. Existing woodland to the west of the road also heavily filters views towards the site.

VISUAL RECEPTOR GROUPS

- 4.8 Within the ZPV and wider area, the people ('receptors') likely to experience visual change can be considered as falling into a number of discernible groups.

Rights of Way Users

- 4.9 PRoW within, or in proximity to, the detailed study area are shown on **Plans EDP 2 and 5**. Within the Study Area there are a number of PRoW, and below, those deemed to potentially experience views of the site have been addressed.

PRoW 3a

- 4.10 PRoW 3a is located adjacent to the site's western boundary, on the western side of Lunce's Hill, where it terminates. The PRoW runs east/west along the edge of the settlement, predominantly in a woodland belt. Views of the site are generally screened by woodland and settlement, limiting views to a short 10-20m section of PRoW to the most eastern extent where it terminates at Lunce's Hill (**Photoviewpoint EDP 7**).

PRoW 15

- 4.11 PRoW 15 is located adjacent to the site's western boundary, on the western side of Lunce's Hill, where it terminates. The PRoW runs north/south through isolated residential dwellings before heading into open countryside on the other side of the local ridgeline to the south. Views of the site are generally screened by topography, with views at close proximity heavily filtered by woodland (**Photoviewpoint EDP 6**), limiting views to a short 15-20m section of PRoW to the most eastern extent where it terminates at Lunce's Hill (**Photoviewpoint EDP 7**).

PRoW 25

- 4.12 PRoW 25 is located approximately 145m north-east of the site. The PRoW runs north-east/south-west through dense woodland, and terminates 145m from the site, where it meets PRoW 29. Users of the PRoW are surrounded by dense woodland, so views from the PRoW are restricted, and no views of the site are experienced from this short length of by-way. Therefore, effects on this PRoW have been judged unlikely to occur or so negligible that it is not essential to consider them further, so users of PRoW 25 will not be assessed further in this LVA.

PRoW 29

- 4.13 PRoW 29 is located approximately 100m north-east of the site. The PRoW runs east/west through dense woodland and through the centre of agricultural fields. Due to the dense woodland adjacent to the site, the majority of users of PRoW 29 do not experience views of the site (**Photoviewpoint EDP 4**). A 150m section of the footpath runs through the dense woodland adjacent to the site, where heavily obscured views of the site are experienced in winter (**Photoviewpoint EDP 3**).

PRoW 28CU

- 4.14 PRoW 28CU is located approximately 140m north-west of the site. It is located within settlement (recently diverted due to new development), and terminates on the west side of Fox Hill/Lunce's Hill. The majority of the footpath runs through dense settlement to the west, screening views west towards the site. A 20m section runs through the car park of The Fox and Hounds Pub, where glimpses of the site through settlement and vegetation is possible (representative **Photoviewpoint EDP 8**).

Road Users

Minor Road Users

B2112 Lunce's Hill/Fox Hill

- 4.15 The B2112 splits its name at the junction of Cape Road to the west of the site. For the purposes of this assessment, the B2112 will be referred to as Lunce's Hill. The B2112 is a frequently used through road, connecting the large settlement of Haywards Heath to the large settlement of Burgess Hill. The B2112 runs north/south along the majority of the sites western boundary. Views of the site from this road vary from open, where the site is accessed off the road, to heavily filtered by existing settlement.

Hurstwood Lane

- 4.16 Hurstwood Lane is a narrow rural lane that connects the eastern edge of Haywards Heath to the southern edge, serving several individual dwellings, and the emerging Hurst Farm development. Settlement runs along the entirety of the southern side of the lane as it passes the site, which generally screens views of the site. Access points into properties afford fleeting oblique glimpses of the site.

Colwell Lane

- 4.17 Colwell Lane is a narrow rural lane that acts as a connection between the eastern and southern edge of Haywards Heath. Part of the lane is a restricted byway that prohibits four wheeled vehicles using it, so the western section of the lane predominantly acts as a shared driveway to several individual properties. Views of the site from this section are predominantly screened by roadside vegetation, with partial views afforded at a field entrance (**Photoviewpoint EDP 1**). Along the restricted section, intervening vegetation partially screens views of the site (**Photoviewpoint EDP 2**).

Residential Dwellings/Groups

- 4.18 For the purposes of this LVA, residential receptors have been placed into groups where similar attributes and experiences have been identified. **Image EDP 4.1** provides the locations of these groups.



Image EDP 4.1: Residential receptor group locations.

Group A – Properties off Colwell Lane

- 4.19 Properties associated with Colwell Lane are generally low density with large gardens. The landscape surrounding the lane contains hedgerows and is well-treed. This alongside the boundary vegetation of the site, heavily filters views of the site from these properties (**Image EDP 4.2**).



Image EDP 4.2: Reverse view from within the northern area of the site, looking north towards Colwell Lane.

Group B – Properties off Colwell Lane South and Hurstwood Lane

- 4.20 This resident group also includes the properties currently under construction, associated with the Braydells development (DM/19/0206) (see **Image EDP 3.5**). Properties associated with Colwell Lane South and Hurstwood Lane are generally low to medium density with gardens backing onto the site. Due to the proximity, views into the site are experienced from lower and upper storey windows of some of the properties, although these are somewhat filtered by the existing vegetation associated with the site (**Images EDP 4.3** and **4.4**).



Image EDP 4.3: Reverse view from within the western area of the site, looking north-west towards Hurstwood Lane.



Image EDP 4.4: Reverse view from within the western area of the site, looking north-west towards Colwell Lane South.

Group C – Properties on the East side of Lunce's Hill

- 4.21 Properties on the eastern side of Lunce's Hill back on directly to the site. Due to the proximity, open views into the site from lower and upper storey windows are experienced from these properties (**Image EDP 4.5**).

Group D – Properties on the West side of Lunce's Hill

- 4.22 Views from properties on the western side of Lunce's Hill are generally heavily filtered by settlement and vegetation (**Photoviewpoint EDP 8**). Where the western boundary opens up in the south-west corner, views from adjacent properties increase, although existing settlement associated with Lunce's Hill continues to partially screen views into the site (**Image EDP 4.6**).



Image EDP 4.5: Reverse view from within the southern area of the site, looking west towards Lunce's Hill.



Image EDP 4.6: Reverse View from within the western area of the site, looking west towards Lunce's Hill.

Group E – Properties associated with Greenhill Park and Birch Way

- 4.23 Views from properties on the edge of Greenhill Park and Birch Way are located approximately 800m north of the site. The properties are located on elevated ground, which affords filtered distance views of the eastern area of the site (**Image EDP 4.7**).



Image EDP 4.7: Reverse view from within the eastern area of the site, looking north towards Greenhill Park and Birch Way.

Visual Sensitivity

Receptor Value

4.24 As detailed in paragraph 3.21 et seq., in accordance with our methodology and guidance, we have attributed the value of each receptor to be assessed within the study area as the following:

- **PRoW:** The PRoW in the study area being assessed are predominantly used for the purposes of accessing the open countryside with an emphasis on the enjoyment of the views from the designated routes, and therefore, they are considered to be of high value;
- **B2112, Minor Road:** The B2112 is considered a main road, connecting two large settlements. The main focus for drivers along this road is what is in front of them, and travelling from 'A to B', with the enjoyment of the view of less importance. Therefore, users of the B2113 are deemed to have a low value;
- **Hurstwood Lane and Colwell Lane, Minor Roads:** The remaining minor roads in the area are narrow rural lanes, where speeds are much lower and the chances of temporarily stopping are increased. The focus still remains on what is in front of the driver, but the appreciation for the views experienced are higher due to the nature of how users of these roads navigate, resulting in a medium value for users of Hurstwood Lane and Colwell Lane; and

- **Residential Properties:** Views from primary spaces on the lower storey of properties on the edge of settlement, overlooking open countryside, are assessed to pertain a very high value, where enjoyment of the views are a key element of using these primary spaces. Views from upper storey windows, where the focus is less on the view but the function of the room, have a high value attributed to them. Where properties are located within existing settlement, and views are influenced by the urban context, the value attributed to these views reduce to high from lower storey windows, and medium from upper storey windows.

Receptor Susceptibility to Change

4.25 Each receptor group to be assessed within the study area has been judged on its ability to accommodate the type of development proposed on the site, in accordance with our methodology and professional guidance:

- **PRoW 3a and PRoW 15:** Users of the sections of PRoW 3a and PRoW 15 are considered to experience a medium susceptibility to changes arising from development of the type proposed. Views from these PRoW are of countryside in the setting of settlement and infrastructure, so there is some capacity for these receptors to accommodate change;
- **PRoW 29:** PRoW 29 is located in open countryside with minimal influence from settlement or infrastructure. Therefore, the primary focus is on the landscape, and users of PRoW 29 experience a high susceptibility to change;
- **PRoW 28CU:** PRoW 28CU is located in settlement, and in particular a pub car park. Views from this PRoW are predominantly of dense settlement and infrastructure, so there is capacity to accommodate changes to the view of the type of development proposed, resulting in a low susceptibility to change for users of PRoW 28CU.
- **B2112 Lunce's Hill:** The B2112 passes through dense settlement, with residential properties flanking both sides of the road the majority of its length. Views of the site are fleeting, so there is capacity to accommodate changes to the site, resulting in a low susceptibility to change for users of the B2112.
- **Hurstwood Lane and Colwell Lane:** Hurstwood Lane is predominantly sided by low density settlement as it passes the site. A section of Colwell Lane is sided by low density settlement, whilst the eastern section is restricted vehicle use. The site itself is not the primary focus of the views. Therefore, there is capacity for changes to the site, resulting in a medium susceptibility to change for users of Hurstwood Lane and Colwell Lane;
- **Group A, B, C, and E residents:** People at home, and in particular where there are open views from primary living spaces, are considered to have a higher susceptibility to changes arising from development of the type proposed. Therefore, the susceptibility to changes from primary living spaces associated with Group A, B, C and E residents is deemed very high, reducing to high from upper storey windows; and

- **Group D residents:** Residents in Group D are located within settlement, and existing views of settlement and infrastructure is typical of the views experienced from these properties, with the site located in the background of the views. Therefore, the susceptibility to changes from primary living spaces associated with Group D residents is deemed high, reducing to medium from upper storey windows.

Overall Visual Sensitivity

- The overall sensitivity of PRoW 3a and PRoW 15 users is considered to be high/medium;
- The overall sensitivity of PRoW 29 users is considered to be high;
- The overall sensitivity of PRoW 28CU users is considered to be medium;
- The overall sensitivity of B2112 Lunce's Hill users is considered to be low;
- The overall sensitivity of Hurstwood Lane and Colwell Lane users is considered to be medium; and
- The overall sensitivity of Group A, B, C and E residents is very high to high sensitivity, and Group D residents high to medium sensitivity. It is noted that views from private residential properties are not protected by national planning guidance or local planning policy. Accordingly, changes to the character, 'quality' and nature of private views are not a material planning consideration in the determination of a planning application. However, they remain relevant to this review of the predicted extent and nature of visual change.

Summary of Visual Receptors to be Assessed

4.26 **Table EDP 4.1** details the visual receptors that experience views of the site and have the potential to experience larger than negligible effects from the type of development proposed. These receptors will be assessed further in **Section 6**.

Table EDP 4.1: Visual Receptor Summary

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity
PRoW 3a	High	Medium	High/Medium
PRoW 15	High	Medium	High/Medium
PRoW 29	High	High	High
PRoW 28CU	High	Low	Medium
B2112 Lunce's Hill	Low	Low	Low
Hurstwood Lane	Medium	Medium	Medium
Colwell Lane	Medium	Medium	Medium
Group A Residents	Very High to High	Very High to High	Very High to High
Group B Residents	Very High to High	Very High to High	Very High to High
Group C Residents	Very High to High	Very High to High	Very High to High

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity
Group D Residents	High to Medium	High to Medium	High to Medium
Group E Residents	Very High to High	Very High to High	Very High to High

REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS

4.27 Within the ZPV, there are clearly many individual points at which views towards the site are gained. A number of viewpoints have been selected that are considered representative of the nature of the views from each of the receptor groups. The selection of the representative viewpoints is based on the principle that the appraisal needs to test the 'worst case' scenario, and in selecting these viewpoints, they have sought to include:

- A range of viewpoints from all points of the compass, north, south, east and west;
- A range of viewpoints from distances at close quarters at the site boundary and up to distant viewpoints at 250m and more from the site; and
- Viewpoints from all the above receptor groups.

4.28 The representation of views is supported by eight photoviewpoints (PVPs), the number and location of which has not been agreed with the LPA. The locations are illustrated on **Plan EDP 6**. Photographs from the selected viewpoints are contained in **Appendix EDP 3**. The purpose of these viewpoints is to aid assessment of a visual receptor(s). These viewpoints are not assessed separately.

4.29 The representative photoviewpoints are listed in **Table EDP 4.2** together with an appraisal of the sensitivity of visual receptors at each location. The sensitivity has been derived from the baseline knowledge of the viewpoints, a knowledge of the type of development proposed, and the criteria set out in the methodology at **Appendix EDP 2**.

Table EDP 4.2: Summary of Representative Photoviewpoints

PVP No.	Location	Grid Reference	Distance and Direction of View	Reason(s) for Selection and Sensitivity of Receptor
1a and 1b	View from Colwell Lane to the north of the site on the settlement edge, looking south towards the site	534050, 122114	103m, south	Colwell Lane users – medium sensitivity. Resident Group A – very high to high sensitivity.
2a and 2b	View from Colwell Lane to the north of the site, looking south towards the site	534128, 122114	109m, south	Colwell Lane users – medium sensitivity

PVP No.	Location	Grid Reference	Distance and Direction of View	Reason(s) for Selection and Sensitivity of Receptor
3a and 3b	View from WIV/29/1 within the woodland to the north-east of the site, looking south-west towards the site	534245, 122103	114m, south-west	PRoW 29 users – high sensitivity
4	View from WIV/29/1 to the east of the site, looking west towards the site	534468, 121941	281m, west	PRoW 29 users – high sensitivity
5a and 5b	View from B2112 Lunce's Hill to the south-west of the site, looking north-east towards the site	533879, 121577	70m, north	B2112 road users - low sensitivity
6	View from PRoW WIV/15/1 to the west of the site, looking east towards the site	533756, 121568	128m, east	PRoW 15 users – high/medium sensitivity
7a and 7b	View from B2112 Lunce's Hill / PRoW WIV/15/1 & WIV/3/1 junction adjacent to the site's western boundary, looking east across the site	533823, 121703	6m, east	PRoW 3a and 15 users – high/medium sensitivity B2112 road users – low sensitivity Resident Group C – very high to high sensitivity Resident Group D – high to medium sensitivity
8a and 8b	View from B2112 Lunce's Hill to the west of the site, looking east towards the site	533758, 121839	102m, east	PRoW 28CU users – medium sensitivity B2112 road users – low sensitivity Resident Group D – high to medium sensitivity

FUTURE BASELINE

- 4.30 A number of assumptions are made to define the 'no development' scenario or future baseline of the site. The future landscape and visual baseline in this location would largely depend on natural processes, climate and land management practices, as well as the completion of several approved housing developments in line with the agreed designs.

- 4.31 The site's existing topography would remain unchanged without development. However, the visual perception of these landforms could change due to vegetation growth or removal. Conventional tillage practices, especially on slopes or in areas that experience heavy rainfall, can accelerate soil erosion. This can lead to the loss of topsoil, which is the most fertile layer, reducing the land's long-term agricultural productivity. Intensive farming tends to deplete soil nutrients, especially if monoculture practices are used. This may impact on future vegetation growth and potential perceptions on pastoral landscape.
- 4.32 It is assumed that current land management and natural processes will continue, and therefore, the future baseline of the site will remain largely unchanged.
- 4.33 As shown at **Image EDP 2.2**, if built out, development DM/22/2272 would substantially alter the landscape character to the north of the site, with changes to the defined character areas in the county and district landscape character assessments. The development would also bring settlement closer to the site from the north, as well as introduce large areas of public open space with tree planting. The introduction of this development would potentially alter the visual experiences of the site from receptors to the north, either screening views of the site, or altering the focus of the view to that of the DM/22/2272 development.
- 4.34 Development DM/19/0206 is currently under construction at the time of writing this report. The introduction of this development would bring development closer to the north-western boundary, increase density of settlement to the north-west, and alter views from existing residents associated with Hurstwood Lane.
- 4.35 Development DM/22/0733 is recently completed at the time of writing this report. As part of the implementation, areas of landscape are located along the boundary to Lunce's Hill (**Image EDP 2.3**). The proposed planting includes several specimen trees within a 'woodland mix' of planting. If planted and established, views of the site will be changed from receptors to the west of Lunce's Hill, with the landscaping filtering views east from the development towards the site.

Section 5

The Proposed Development and Mitigation

5.1 The proposed development is illustrated in **Appendix EDP 1**. The DAS supporting this application provides full details of the development proposals.

5.2 To summarise the proposed development is:

“an outline planning application for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, together with the change of use of an existing barn for flexible community or commercial use, along with associated outdoor space and landscaping, drainage infrastructure, hard and soft landscaping, parking, access and associated works (all matters reserved except for access)”.

DESIGN EVOLUTION

5.3 Several key constraints and opportunities have been identified as part of the baseline appraisal and early design process. Key themes around landscape and visual matters have been identified, and are as follows:

- **Landscape character:** Retention and reinforcement (and potential reinstatement) of hedgerow boundaries, and potential for planting new hedgerows which contribute to local landscape character;
- **Visual amenity of Public Rights of Way surrounding the site:** Particular consideration of those to the west where open views of the site are apparent;
- **Visual amenity of road users:** Minor routes in close proximity to the site, particularly where the site is seen on the approach to Haywards Heath;
- **Visual amenity of residential receptors:** In particular, receptors adjacent to the north-west and western boundaries;
- **Development relationship with existing landscape features:** Key sensitive features, including the ancient woodland and ditches will be protected and incorporated into the scheme to protect and enhance these features; and
- **Development relationship with existing settlement:** The potential relationship of new development set against the surrounding built environment characteristics, including the distinctive massing, scale and materials of Haywards Heath.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

5.4 As highlighted above, the landscape and visual sensitivities of the site and its context have influenced the current masterplan through an iterative design process. Thus, the proposed development incorporates a degree of integral (or embedded) mitigation designed to avoid

or reduce potential landscape and visual effects. These measures are illustrated on the Illustrated Landscape Strategy (**Plan EDP 7**) and can be summarised as follows:

- 5.5 The overall principles of the landscape strategy are to create a new settlement edge with areas of Public Open Space (POS) to form a soft and sympathetic interface between Haywards Heath and the open countryside to the east and south;
- 5.6 The retained specimen tree and hedgerows within the centre of the site will be protected from impact where possible and integrated into the design as a key landscape feature and character of the area. A substantial number of specimen trees are also proposed throughout the site; and
- 5.7 New habitats will be introduced across the site to increase species diversity, reduce risk of pests and diseases, and improve amenity value in the area, achieving a minimum 10% BNG across the site.

Proposed Landscape Mitigation

- 5.8 To soften the perceptual impact of development from the adjacent PRow to the west, the built edge will be offset from this boundary, limiting development to only road infrastructure in close proximity to this part of the site.
- 5.9 To screen and filter views of the proposed development, there will be an integration of green streets, street trees, and layered shrub planting into the development, which will aim to break up the built-form and layer the landscaping through the entire scheme.
- 5.10 The proposed development will likely have impacts on the existing landscape character areas, which is typical of a residential development replacing agricultural land. To mitigate for this change, the proposed development has been offset from the most sensitive edges, with suitable landscaping proposed in those areas to soften and integrate the development into its setting. Development density has also been reduced in the more sensitive areas to change.

Proposed Landscape Enhancement

- 5.11 The existing external and internal field boundaries will be strengthened with additional planting where required. This will enhance the connectivity of these existing landscape features and increase their longevity. The development will also provide (via suitable planning conditions) a long-term management plan for the retained tree and hedgerow stock to enhance the existing condition and ensure its long-term health and vigour.

Section 6 Summary of Effects

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1 The assessment of effects on the landscape resource includes consideration of the potential changes to those key elements and components that contribute towards recognised landscape character or the quality of designated landscape areas, these features are termed 'landscape receptors'. The assessment of visual receptors requires the identification of potential visual receptors that may be affected by the proposed development.
- 6.2 As noted above, following the identification of these various landscape and visual receptors, the effect of the proposed development on each of them is assessed through consideration of a combination of:
- The overall sensitivity to the proposed form of development that includes the value attached to the receptor following the baseline appraisal, combined with the susceptibility of the receptor to the change proposed, determined during the assessment stage;
 - The likely effectiveness of any proposed mitigation; and
 - The overall magnitude of change that will occur - based on the size and scale of the change, its duration and its reversibility.
- 6.3 A full assessment of the potential landscape and visual impacts is provided in the assessment tables found at **Appendix EDP 4**. Below is a summary of those findings.
- 6.4 The effects of the proposed development on the following landscape receptors are assessed at **Appendix EDP 4**:
- Landscape character and fabric of the site itself;
 - Landscape character of the LCA 14 Western Low Weald;
 - Landscape character of the LCA C2 Ditchling Common Western Low Weald; and
 - Landscape character of LCA 10 High Weald Fringes.
- 6.5 The effects of the proposed development on the following visual receptors are assessed at **Appendix EDP 4**:
- Users of PRoW 3a, PRoW 15, PRoW 28CU, and PRoW 29;
 - Users of B2112 Lunce's Hill, Hurstwood Lane, and Colwell Lane; and

- Residents associated with Colwell Lane (Group A), residents off Colwell Lane South and Hurstwood Lane (Group B), residents on the east side of Lunce's Hill (Group C), residents on the west side of Lunce's Hill (Group D), and residents associated with Greenhill Park and Birch Way (Group E).

CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

- 6.6 Construction activities, movement of site traffic, lighting, noise and sounds will be ever-present during the construction process. This is not unusual and will be carefully controlled by a conditioned construction method statement. Recommendations for protection of retained trees and hedgerows, in accordance with relevant British Standards such as BS 5837, will ensure that the rooting areas of trees and hedgerows are not adversely affected by the construction process.

Construction Effects on Landscape Character

- 6.7 The results of the landscape assessment at **Appendix EDP 4** are summarised in **Table EDP 6.1**.

Table EDP 6.1: Summary of Landscape Character Effects during Construction Phase

Receptor	Construction Effect
Landscape character and fabric of the site itself	Moderate, direct, short term, temporary, adverse.
Landscape character of the LCA 14 Western Low Weald	Moderate/Minor, direct, short term, temporary, adverse.
Landscape character of the LCA C2 Ditchling Common Western Low Weald	Moderate/Minor, direct, short term, temporary, adverse.
Landscape character of LCA 10 High Weald Fringes	Minor, direct, short term, temporary, adverse.

Construction Effects on Visual Receptors

- 6.8 The results of the visual assessment at **Appendix EDP 4** are summarised in **Table EDP 6.2**.

Table EDP 6.2: Summary of Visual Receptor Effects during Construction Phase

Receptor	Construction Effect
PRoW 3a	Moderate, indirect, short term, temporary, adverse.
PRoW 15	Moderate, indirect, short term, temporary, adverse.
PRoW 28CU	Minor, indirect, short term, temporary, adverse.
PRoW 29	Moderate/Minor, indirect, short term, temporary, adverse.

Receptor	Construction Effect
B2112 Lunce's Hill	Moderate/Minor, direct, short term, temporary, adverse.
Hurstwood Lane	Minor, indirect, short term, temporary, adverse.
Colwell Lane	Moderate/Minor, indirect, short term, temporary, adverse.
Residents Group A – Properties off Colwell Lane	Moderate, indirect, short term, temporary, adverse.
Residents Group B – Properties off Colwell Lane South and Hurstwood Lane	Major/Moderate, indirect, short term, temporary, adverse.
Residents Group C – Properties on the east side of Lunce's Hill	Major, indirect, short term, temporary, adverse.
Residents Group D – Properties on the west side of Lunce's Hill	Moderate, indirect, short term, temporary, adverse.
Residents Group E – Properties associated with Greenhill Park and Birch Way	Moderate/Minor, indirect, short term, temporary, adverse.

Summary of Construction Effects

- 6.9 These level of effects on landscape and visual receptors at construction is not uncommon on a greenfield site, and is not an indication of bad design, but an outcome based on the conversion of an edge of settlement greenfield site converted to a residential development. As detailed above, a construction method statement will mitigate for this effect where possible, and where adverse effects are experienced (at a localised level), these will be a short, temporary impact (approximately 3-4 years). The level of effects will also reduce throughout the construction phase, as more of the development is built out and less construction activities are required. Therefore, this assessment has focused on the potential long-term impacts of the development, and the impacts of the construction phase will not be considered as part of the assessment of the proposed development.

OPERATION EFFECTS (YEARS 1 AND 15)

- 6.10 This section assesses effects of the proposed development at Year 1 and Year 15. At Year 1 the principal effects as a result of the proposed development would be as a result of the transition of the site from an agricultural landscape to a predominantly suburban development, in an undesignated landscape, and prior to the maturation of mitigation planting.
- 6.11 At Year 15 any mitigation planting would have matured to an extent that remaining adverse effects are considered to be residual albeit that these effects may diminish further with time and as vegetation continues to mature. At Year 15 the principal effects as a result of the proposed development will be as a result of the transition of the site from an agricultural landscape to a predominantly suburban scene, in an undesignated landscape, and after some maturation of mitigation planting.

Landscape Character Effects (Years 1 and 15)

- 6.12 The effects of the proposed development on the following landscape receptors at Years 1 and 15 are assessed at **Appendix EDP 4**. The results of this landscape assessment are summarised in **Table EDP 6.3**.

Table EDP 6.3: Summary of Landscape Character Effects at Years 1 and 15

Receptor	Year 1	Year 15
Landscape character and fabric of the site itself	Moderate, direct, long term, permanent, adverse.	Moderate/Minor, direct, long term, permanent, adverse.
Landscape character of the LCA 14 Western Low Weald	Moderate/Minor, direct, long term, permanent, adverse.	Minor, direct, long term, permanent, adverse.
Landscape character of the LCA C2 Ditchling Common Western Low Weald	Moderate/Minor, direct, long term, permanent, adverse.	Minor, direct, long term, permanent, adverse.
Landscape character of LCA 10 High Weald Fringes	Minor, direct, long term, permanent, adverse.	Minor/Negligible, direct, long term, permanent, adverse.

Predicted Effects on the Character and Fabric of the Site

- 6.13 In terms of the topography and hydrology of the site, the proposals would result in some localised land regrading to facilitate the development and would introduce new Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features across the site.
- 6.14 The landscape fabric and habitats of the site (boundary trees, hedgerows and ditches) would be retained, strengthened and enhanced with further planting to infill gaps and increase diversity where possible. Some loss of the internal boundary hedgerows would occur to accommodate new infrastructure, but this would be fully mitigated by enhancement to existing hedgerows, as well as the addition of species-rich hedgerows across the scheme. Internally, there would be an entire loss of the agricultural land and field margins to accommodate the residential development. This would be replaced by built form, hardstanding and private gardens, as well as substantial areas of soft landscaping formed of grassland, shrub planting, woodland, and trees (equating to c.51% of the total site area).
- 6.15 The introduction of built form and POS to replace agricultural land would change the character of the site and indirectly impact its context; on a site in reasonable condition that is located on the suburban fringe and influenced by surrounding settlement and infrastructure, the type of development proposed is not entirely out of character for the site. The design process has also taken into consideration existing key features typical of the landscape and integrated them into the scheme by offsetting built form from these features and designing them into green corridors where possible.

Predicted Effects on the Published Landscape Character Areas

- 6.16 Naturally, the host LCAs containing the site and the area immediately surrounding the site would be subject to the greatest change, and this is predicted to diminish with distance

from the site and intervening landform and features. The proposed development would introduce built form to a small area of the host LCAs where recent changes to the landscape from nearby development has also changed the perception of the site and LCAs within this area. The site relates to the existing settlement edge to the north and west, and is more divorced from the more rural, open, rolling landscape to the south of the site. The proposals would minimise impacts on the more rural character to the south through enhancing the natural boundary found along the southern boundary.

- 6.17 Part of the scheme within the LCAs is proposed landscape mitigation and open spaces (including natural open space, woodland, parks, amenity spaces, and SuDS). Features beneficial to the LCA would also be introduced (hedgerow networks, trees etc), and key features already found on the site typical of the LCA would be retained and protected in green corridors where possible. The footprint of the built form would be offset from the more sensitive edges to allow for a suitable development buffer that would provide a transition from urban to rural landscape and would limit intervisibility between the proposed development and wider LCAs.

Summary of Landscape Character Effects

- 6.18 The assessment finds that the residual level of effect of the proposed development on the landscape character and fabric of the site would be at most, **moderate/minor adverse**. This is primarily as a result of the change of use from agriculture to residential at a local scale. The proposals have sought to retain and enhance the existing landscape fabric of quality within the site, wherever practical, and respond to the site's urban context to the west. Proposed landscaping and open space accounts for c.51% of the total site area, which has sought to introduce high quality landscape features onto the site to balance the adverse changes and improve on the overall landscape fabric and recreational values of the site character.
- 6.19 The residual level of effect of the proposed development on the character and fabric of the immediate context, would be **moderate/minor adverse**. Development has been offset from the most sensitive edges, with landscape buffering proposed to reduce potential impacts. Development has been focused to link closely with existing settlement and suburban influences are already present in the immediate context, so is more typical of the local character. The proposals also offer stronger connectivity of green spaces and habitats with the immediate context.
- 6.20 LCA 14 Western Low Weald and LCA C2 Ditchling Common Western Low Weald would have **minor adverse** residual effects, and LCA 10 High Weald Fringes would have **minor/negligible** adverse residual effects. This is in part due to the limiting impact on existing quality features typical of the character areas, existing settlement forming part of the LCAs, and the site being located on settlement edge. The proposed development has aimed to engage with the existing landscape character to mitigate adverse impacts and introduce features that are beneficial to the LCAs, such as woodland belts.

Visual Effects (Years 1 and 15)

- 6.21 Visual effects relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes and to the overall

effects with respect to visual amenity. Effects upon these receptors are derived through the changes to the views experienced and through this, the change to the overall visual amenity of the study area as brought about by the proposed development.

- 6.22 The effects of the proposed development on the following visual receptors at Years 1 and 15 are assessed at **Appendix EDP 4**. The results of this landscape assessment are summarised in **Table EDP 6.4**.

Table EDP 6.4: Summary of Visual Receptor Effects at Years 1 and 15

Receptor	Year 1	Year 15
PRoW 3a	Moderate, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.	Moderate/Minor, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.
PRoW 15	Moderate, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.	Moderate/Minor, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.
PRoW 28CU	Minor, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.	Negligible, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.
PRoW 29	Moderate/Minor, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.	Negligible, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.
B2112 Lunce's Hill	Moderate/Minor, direct, long term, permanent, adverse.	Minor, direct, long term, permanent, adverse.
Hurstwood Lane	Minor, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.	Negligible, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.
Colwell Lane	Moderate/Minor, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.	Minor, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.
Residents Group A – Properties off Colwell Lane	Moderate, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.	Moderate/Minor, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.
Residents Group B – Properties off Colwell Lane South and Hurstwood Lane	Major/Moderate, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.	Moderate, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.
Residents Group C – Properties on the east side of Lunce's Hill	Major, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.	Major/Moderate, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.
Residents Group D – Properties on the west side of Lunce's Hill	Moderate, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.	Moderate/Minor, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.
Residents Group E – Properties associated with Greenhill Park and Birch Way	Moderate/Minor, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.	Negligible, indirect, long term, permanent, adverse.

Public Rights of Way Network

PRoW 3a and PRoW 15

- 6.23 Users of PRoW 3a and 15, would experience changes to the view from a c.25m section of the PRoW, located on the edge of existing settlement and infrastructure. Views from the majority of the PRoW within the detailed study area would not experience views of the proposed development. The proposed development would introduce additional settlement to the views from these sections and would form a focus in the views experienced. However, existing settlement and infrastructure are the primary focus in the foreground, so the proposals would be seen within the wider context of development.

PRoW 28CU

- 6.24 Users of PRoW 28CU would experience very limited changes to the view from a c.20m section of the PRoW, located within existing settlement and infrastructure. Views from the majority of the PRoW within the detailed study area would not experience views of the proposed development. The proposed development would introduce additional settlement to the views from this section of PRoW but would not form a focal point in the views experienced. Existing settlement and infrastructure would continue to form the primary focus of the views and, alongside existing vegetation, would heavily obscure views of the proposals.

PRoW 29

- 6.25 Users of PRoW 29 would experience very limited changes to the view from a c.100m section of the PRoW, located within dense woodland to the east of the site. Views from the majority of the PRoW within the detailed study area would not experience views of the proposed development. Due to the existing woodland and the offsetting of built form along the eastern boundary, the proposals would be barely discernible in the view, limiting impacts on this PRoW.

Minor Road Users

B2112 Road

- 6.26 The B2112 Lunce's Hill road runs adjacent to the western boundary of the site and would be directly impacted along a c.100m section where the new site access would be linked to the road. Views from the majority of the B2112 within the detailed study area would not experience views of the proposed development. Due to the constant motion of vehicle users in a busy suburban environment, views would be fleeting and typical of the roads surroundings, with the primary focus remaining on the road ahead, and views of the proposals experienced in the background.

Hurstwood Lane

- 6.27 Users of Hurstwood Lane would experience very limited changes to the view from a section of the road that runs near the north-west of the site. Views from the majority of the road within the detailed study area would not experience views of the proposed development. Due to the existing settlement and vegetation associated with the road, the proposals would be barely discernible in the view, limiting impacts on this road.

Colwell Lane

- 6.28 Colwell Lane runs to the north of the site in an east/west direction, and views of the proposals would be experienced from a c.175m section of the road. Views from the majority of Colwell Lane within the detailed study area would not experience views of the proposed development. The orientation of the road would result in oblique views of the site, heavily filtered by layers of field boundary vegetation. The primary focus of the road ahead would be maintained and impacts on the wider view minimal.

Residential Dwellings

- 6.29 Views from residential properties are limited to those located within close proximity of the site, with the main impacts experienced from properties adjacent to the site. Properties that face onto the site will experience changes in the view due to the proposed development. Existing vegetation associated with the site will somewhat filter these views, and the majority of residential views will be obscured by existing settlement and vegetation.

Summary of Visual Effects

- 6.30 The proposed development would be most noticeable in close-range views i.e. from within the immediate context, where existing settlement already has particular influence. Users of PRoW adjacent to the site would experience, at most, **moderate/minor adverse** effects. This level of effect is assessed in the balance on the impacts across the total length of the PRoW within the detailed study area, as impacts on the local PRoW would be very limited to small sections of the PRoW, and views of the proposals would be experienced within the wider view of existing settlement.
- 6.31 Road users adjacent to the site would experience, at most, **minor adverse** effects due to the wider presence of settlement and reduced intervisibility screened by existing vegetation and settlement along the majority of the roads.
- 6.32 Residents immediately surrounding the site would experience the most elevated change due to the proposed development. This is due to the orientation of windows facing the site and the use of those rooms throughout the day, resulting in at most, **major/moderate adverse** effects for a small number of residents, reducing to **moderate** and **moderate/minor adverse** for the majority of impacted residents. Impacts on residents beyond the immediate vicinity of the site are limited due to intervening landform, vegetation and settlement.

Section 7

Conclusions

- 7.1 It is clear that the site, albeit in a semi-rural location, is impacted by existing, future planned and emerging development, and sits largely divorced from the wider landscape to the east and south. It is not designated, nor does it sit within the setting of landscape designation. As a result, it is less constrained than other parts of the two districts that are located in or near the setting of the High Weald National Landscape and South Downs National Park. The site sits adjacent to an area of ancient woodland, and contains mature trees and hedgerows, which would be retained as part of the proposals. Built form has been offset a suitable distance from the ancient woodland, and the existing vegetation framework has been incorporated into green corridors where possible.
- 7.2 Based upon the consideration of sensitivity herein, it is considered that the site exhibits a worst case medium/low sensitivity and is therefore able to accommodate development assuming care is taken to protect and enhance existing valued features.
- 7.3 It is considered that the Illustrative Landscape Strategy for the scheme has been sensitively designed, with a particular focus on the eastern edge of the scheme. On-site opportunities and constraints, as well as matters relating to landscape character and visual amenity, have been considered to ensure that the scale, form and appearance of the development proposal is consistent with the local context, and retains the distinctive features of the site.
- 7.4 As a result of the proposals, there would be an inevitable change to land use from agriculture to residential properties and POS. The location of the site is on the edge of the settlement of Haywards Heath and would extend the settlement into the site and urbanise its appearance. Landscape mitigation equating to c.51% of the site area is proposed along all boundaries and throughout the scheme, which would break up the element of built form, balance the adverse impacts on the existing landscape fabric, and soften its character to create a strong sense of place.
- 7.5 The assessed visual effects are tempered by the fact the site is already urbanised to some degree by the settlement and infrastructure on the western boundary. The resultant level of visual effects is due primarily to the high sensitivity of visual receptors within close proximity of the change in land use and is not a reflection on the quality of the proposals. The introduction of a layered approach to the landscape, whereby wide 'green corridors' will be accommodated in the layout will further reduce impact on the surrounding receptors by breaking up the built form and creating a development that will be typical of the settlement pattern found in the local context.
- 7.6 Accordingly, this LVIA concludes that the site has the capacity for the development as proposed on the masterplan, and that there is no 'in principle' policy, landscape or visual reason why the site should not be developed. The scheme is an example of high-quality design that has evolved to work with the existing landscape and will provide long lasting beneficial features to complement the local distinctiveness of the area.