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PROOF OF EVIDENCE Landscape and Visual Matters

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APPEAL REF: APP/D3830/W/24/3350075
LPA REF: DM/24/0446

Client

Gladman Developments Ltd

Project

Land off Scamps Hill, Lindfield

Date

13 November 2024

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION1

2.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT1

3.0 THE PROPOSED SITE – LOCAL CONTEXT AND CHARACTER..... 2

4.0 THE APPEAL SCHEME..... 6

5.0 LANDSCAPE EFFECTS..... 7

6.0 VISUAL EFFECTS 9

7.0 THE SPECIALIST LANDSCAPE ADVICE -PLACE SERVICES. 12

8.0 POLICY 15

9.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION 17

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Figures and Photographs

Appendix 2: Annotated Illustrative Masterplan

Rev	Issue Status	Prepared/Date	Approved/Date
-	Draft	MGH 24/10/24	MGH 24/10/24
		MGH 13/11/24	MGH 13/11/24

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Michael Gary Holliday. I have a BA (Hons) degree and a Master of Philosophy degree (MPhil) in Landscape Design from Newcastle University. I am a Fellow of the Landscape Institute and a Director in FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. I have been a partner/director of the practice for over 24 years and have over 36 years' experience of landscape and development projects from initial conceptual design through to final completion and long-term aftercare. I am a Professional Practice Assessor and a member of the Membership Admission Panel on behalf of the Landscape Institute. I am also a registered Assessor with Building with Nature (BwN) which is an initiative developed by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to raise the standard of multifunctional Green Infrastructure.
- 1.2 FPCR have been involved with the appeal site since August 2020 when asked by Gladman to advise on landscape matters in relation to the site. FPCR produced the LVA accompanying the application and the landscape proposals. I was not initially involved the application work. I have been involved with the project since the summer of 2024, in the lead up to the appeal. FPCRs involvement ensured that landscape considerations were an important part of the evolving design work from the start.
- 1.3 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal reference is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Planning Application

- 2.1 The appeal scheme has been developed in response to the constraints and opportunities presented by the site. These include its landscape and settlement context.
- 2.2 The application was submitted by Gladman Developments to Mid Sussex District Council on 23 February 2024. The proposals (subject to this appeal) sought Outline Planning Consent for the erection of up to 90 dwellings with public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access point. All matters being reserved except for means of access.
- 2.3 The application was appealed for non determination. The Councils Statement of Case issued on 3 October 2024, set out the putative reasons for refusal. These did not include matters relating to landscape or visual impact.
- 2.4 The Statement of Common Ground between Gladman Development and Mid Sussex District Council dated 10 October 2024, confirmed at paragraph 4.15.1
- It is agreed between the parties that the site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designation for landscape character or quality nor is the site located within the Green Belt. The parties agree that the development of the appeal site has the potential to successfully integrate into the local surroundings without any unacceptable landscape or visual effects.*
- 2.5 Following the Case Management Conference, The Inspector noted that the effect of the proposal on the landscape is not contested by the main parties, but that it has been raised by third parties, and will need to be given consideration.

2.6 This proof of evidence addresses the effects of the scheme on the character and appearance of the area.

2.7 The assessment approach FPCR follow is tried and tested. This has been accepted by Inspectors at numerous appeals. The assessment of potential effects on both landscape character and visual resources set out in my proof follows the methodological approach set out in the latest Landscape Institute Guidelines (Edition 3, 2013), known as GLVIA3. The figures I draw on are at Appendix 1.

Scope of evidence

2.8 In my evidence, I will focus on the effects on the character and appearance of the area, and the mitigation within the scheme.

2.9 My evidence should be read in conjunction with the evidence of Gail Stoten who covers heritage effects and John Mackenzie who covers planning matters including the planning balance.

3.0 THE PROPOSED SITE – LOCAL CONTEXT AND CHARACTER

The site and context

3.1 The Site is situated at the eastern edge of the village of Lindfield and comprises three pastoral fields bounded by hedgerows and trees.

3.2 Immediately adjacent to the north the Site lies an area of farmland and Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland of Little Walstead Wood, with the Grade II* Listed Little Walstead Farmhouse located approximately 120m further to the north. The Grade II Listed Tythe Cottage is located approximately 100m to the east at Walstead with Walstead Common and Walstead Place Farm located approximately 230m and 380m to the south east. The modern housing of Honeysuckle Drive, Bay Road and Langmere Lane are located off Graveley Lane to the south of Scamps Hill. Scrase Stream is located adjacent to the Site to the west with the Lindfield Enterprise Park, East Wick and Noahs Ark Lane located beyond to the west. Scrase Stream continues out to the wider landscape to the north west with the Eastern Road Nature Reserve located beyond to the north west.

3.3 The Site boundaries are well contained by existing features:

- To the north the combined vegetation of the Eastern Road Nature Reserve, and the Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland of Little Walstead Wood encloses the Site;
- To the east the Site is enclosed by the existing mature hedgerows and trees of the gardens and grounds of the surrounding the Grade II Listed Tythe Cottage and Walstead;
- To the south the Site is enclosed by the existing trees and hedgerows located along Scamps Hill and the existing residential properties located further to the south; and
- The Site is enclosed to the west by the existing built form of Lindfield.

The Wider Landscape Context

National Character Area

3.4 The site lies within National Character (NCA). 122 High Weald. This NCA stretches from Tonbridge to the north, Rye to the east, Bexhill, Uckfield and Haywards Heath to the south and Horsham to the west. The LCA covers a very extensive landscape area. The Key Characteristics for the NCA are described in the LVA CD 1.5 at para 4.2 Figure 3 Appendix 1 shows the landscape character areas.

A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (West Sussex County Council October 2005)

3.5 The Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape has been undertaken at a County wide level and identifies the distinctive landscapes within the district. The assessment identifies forty-two Landscape Character Areas. The Site falls entirely within the Landscape Character Area HW3 Ouse Valley. The key characteristics of HW3 Ouse Valley LCA are the same as the characteristics identified for the Ouse Valley (9) within the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (2005) outlined below.

3.6 Under the heading Landscape and Visual Sensitivities, the strategy states the following points:

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

3.7 Under the heading Landscape Management Guidelines the strategy states the following points of relevance:

'Conserve the rural quality of the valley including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the mosaic of woodland and other habitats, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement farmstead pattern...

...Protect existing views from the area and avoid skyline development, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.

Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.'

A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex (2005)

3.8 The Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken at a District wide level and identifies the distinctive landscapes within the district. The assessment subdivides the

landscape into ten Landscape Character Areas. The Site falls entirely within the Landscape Character Area Ouse Valley (9), its key characteristics are described as follows (not all are repeated):

- 'Strongly linear valley adjoining Haywards Heath, its boundaries defined clearly by a marked break of slope. In the west, the river is a small, tree-lined stream amidst parallel streams and ridges, the valley broader to the east, the river meandering through water meadows. The signature of the valley is the high, long brick-built Ouse Valley (Balcombe) Viaduct on the London to Brighton Railway Line.
- Shallow but well-defined attractive rural valley landscape of intimacy and unusual complexity with a single, unifying character based on strongly-defined valley edges.
- Parts of the valley are perceived as secluded and locally tranquil.
- A markedly convex v-shaped valley form developed along a heavily faulted rock sequence giving rise to a series of confined parallel tree-lined streams and ridges within and below the valley edges to the west.
- Eastern part of the valley contains a broader, meandering river with water meadows along the as yet narrow but gradually widening, flat valley floor.
- Relatively few panoramic or long views across or down the valley.
- Woodland cover less extensive than that of the High Weald fringes, despite an impression in places of a strong woodland presence strengthened by shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pattern of mixed arable and pastoral medium to large-sized fields is in places uncharacteristic of the High Weald.
- No settlements in the valley other than dispersed farmsteads although the townships of Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Cuckfield lie on the valley edges.

3.9 Under the heading 'Landscape and Visual Sensitivities' the assessment includes the following statements:

- 'Scarce pockets of rich woodland biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Valley-edge settlements include Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Cuckfield, the impact on the valley reduced by their woodland setting.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.'

Capacity of Mid Sussex District to accommodate development (LUC 2014)

3.10 LUC were commissioned in 2014 to provide the Landscape Capacity Study for Mid Sussex District Council, with the objective of considering the landscape capacity for development within the district. This followed on from earlier work completed by Hankinson Duckett Associates 2007.

3.11 The site lies within a much larger assessment area described in the study as the 'River Ouse and Sides (LCA 44). The conclusion for the area as a whole was that the area had a Low Landscape Capacity.

Mid Sussex District Council Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) (2020)

- 3.12 The SHELAA identifies a number of potential housing and employment Sites within Lindfield and wider rural context. The Site itself is identified as SHELAA Ref: 983, Land at Walstead Grange Scamps Hill Lindfield. The Site is identified as being '*relatively unconstrained*' with a '*reasonable prospect that Site could be developed within the Plan period*' with a '*medium-long term*' timescale.

Designations

- 3.13 There are no statutory or non-statutory landscape designations covering the Site. Any designations in the land around the site are shown on Figure 4 Appendix 1.

National Landscapes

- 3.14 The High Weald National Landscape is located approximately 0.8km to the north east.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

- 3.15 The nearest Listed Buildings are the Grade II Listed buildings Tythe Cottage and Grayfriars. Tythe Cottage is located adjacent to the Site to the east, while Grayfriars is located to the south of the junction of Gravelye Lane and Scamps Hill, located adjacent to the Site to the south. In the wider context the Grade II* Listed Little Walstead Farmhouse is located beyond woodland approximately 0.2km to the north east and the Grade II Nether Walstead is located approximately 0.7km to the east. The Lindfield Conservation Area is located approximately 140m to the west at Lindfield Common.

Scheduled Monuments

- 3.16 There are no Scheduled Monuments within or close to the Site. However, the nearest Scheduled Monument is the Motte and Bailey Castle 240m east of Dean's Watermill located approximately 1.1km to the north.
- 3.17 The effects of the scheme on heritage assets are covered in the proof of evidence of Gail Stoten

Ancient Woodland

- 3.18 Little Walstead Wood is an Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland located adjacent to the application Site to the north east.

Topography

- 3.19 The topography of the area is shown on Figure 5 Appendix 1.
- 3.20 To the north of the Site the topography gradually falls towards the River Ouse located at approximately 30m AOD, 1km to the north of the Site. The River Ouse valley extends east to west to the north of Haywards Heath and Lindfield and to the north of the River Ouse the topography rises to 75-80m AOD 2km to the north. The topography rises to the east and south east of the Site with localised high points at Costells Wood at 75m AOD, Pascott's Farm at circa 63m AOD and Awbrook and circa 83m AOD. The topography steadily rises from 35m AOD at Scamps Hill to circa 50m AOD towards the housing located along Northlands Avenue and Northlands Wood approximately 1km to the south. To the west of the Site, Lindfield and Lindfield Common are broadly located at 35-40m AOD.

- 3.21 Within the site there is a local area of higher land extending broadly to the north east. The proposed housing is on the west side of this higher land, facing the existing modern housing, with the eastern side of the higher land retained in green uses facing Walstead Grange.

Landscape value

- 3.22 The LVA (CD 1.5) contains an appraisal of landscape value from paragraph 4.28. This examined the role of the site and its immediate context in terms of the range of local factors set out in LI Technical Guidance Note 02-21, Assessing Landscape Value outside of National Designations. The LVA concluded that the site and its immediate context was of "Medium" landscape value. I concur with that judgment and do not consider the site to be part of a "Valued Landscape" within the meaning of paragraph 180 a of the NPPF. The council has not been alleged that the site is part of a "Valued Landscape".

Visual Baseline

- 3.23 A visual appraisal has been undertaken for the site in the LVA. This explored the nature of the existing visual amenity of the area and sought to establish the approximate visibility of the site from surrounding locations and receptors. A series of photo viewpoints were selected which support the analysis. The Consultation Response from Place Services (CD 4.24) confirmed they agreed with the viewpoints These are at Appendix 1.
- 3.24 Photographs have been taken to illustrate a view from a specific vantage point, or to demonstrate a representative view for those receptors that are moving through the landscape, e.g. rights of way users. The photographs show the limited visibility of the site
- 3.25 As the Inspector will visit the site, there is no need in this proof to repeat the descriptions of the relevant viewpoints, which are set out in the LVA (CD 1.5) from paragraph 4.44.

4.0 THE APPEAL SCHEME

- 4.1 The FPCR team worked with the wider design team to develop sensitive proposals and an appropriate landscape scheme. The landscape plan is attached at appendix 2.

Landscape Design and GI Objectives

- 4.2 The key objectives of the landscape and GI proposals for the scheme are to:
- Introduce an offset to the Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland of Little Walstead Wood located adjacent to the Site to the north east.
 - Retain existing habitats and the mature trees wherever possible and complement with new landscaping and planting.
 - Provide public open space within the Site for the new and existing community. Areas of public open space will be located across the Site through a series of interconnected spaces.
 - The development will be set within a strong green framework which draws upon and enhances what currently exists, to maximise recreational and wildlife value.
 - Existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees along the Site boundaries will be supplemented and reinforced by proposed planting across the Site.

- The eastern area of the Site is proposed as an area of open space that will comprise of existing hedgerows and trees that will be retained, along with new tree planting to form a parkland setting and a proposed orchard.
- Incorporate sustainable drainage features.

4.3 In summary the proposals include 4.42 ha of Green infrastructure (GI) out of an overall site of 6.62ha, or over 60% of the site as GI.

Landscape Management

4.4 All of the landscape areas and public open space features will be managed and maintained. This would be achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive Landscape Management Plan (LMP), to ensure the successful establishment and continued thriving of the landscape proposals.

5.0 LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

5.1 The LVIA contains an analysis of the landscape effects of the appeal scheme.

National level- NCA 122 High Weald

5.2 The Site lies within National Character area NCA 122 High Weald. The influence of the proposed development on the NCA will be negligible due to the very small size of the site in comparison to the scale of the NCA. The proposed development will result in a loss of open character within the field parcels, however it is well contained from the surrounding wider landscape and the proposed development will not be out of character with the surrounding built form of Lindfield. Landscape effects are assessed as Negligible at completion and in the longer term once the proposed planting is well established.

A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (West Sussex County Council October 2005)

5.3 At a county level the Site lies within the 'Ouse Valley'. The proposed development is of a relatively modest scale and nature in the context of the broader LCA. The 'Key Characteristics, Landscape and Visual Sensitivities and Land Management Guidelines' of HW3 Ouse Valley LCA are the same as the characteristics identified for the Ouse Valley (9) within the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (2005) outlined below.

5.4 The landscape effects on the LCA 'Ouse Valley' at completion and at year 15 are considered to be minor adverse / negligible on completion and at year 15.

A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex (2005)

5.5 At a district wide level the Site lies within the 'Ouse Valley'. The proposed development is of a relatively modest scale and nature in the context of the broader LCA. Under the heading 'Summary and Key Characteristics' the LCA states: 'No settlements in the valley other than dispersed farmsteads although the townships of Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Cuckfield lie on the valley edges.' The new development is located adjacent to the existing settlement of Lindfield to the south and west with existing mature hedgerows, Eastern Road Nature Reserve, and the Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland of Little Walstead Wood located adjacent to the Site to the north.

- 5.6 The proposals will retain and enhance the existing network of hedgerows and trees located across the Site, enhancing the existing GI. The proposals will also respond to the existing settlement pattern with the proposed development being set back from the wider valley of the LCA adjacent to the existing settlement of Lindfield and set back from the Grade II Listed Tythe Cottage and Walstead Grange to the east limiting the intervisibility of the proposed development.
- 5.7 The landscape effects on the LCA 'Ouse Valley' area as a whole at completion and at year 15 are considered to be minor adverse / negligible and completion and at year 15

The Site and its immediate context

- 5.8 The primary change to the Site's landscape resource would arise as a direct result of the replacement of fields with residential development and associated infrastructure. Whilst built development would inevitably alter the physical fabric and character of the Site, the proposals will retain and enhance existing landscape features where feasible and introduce new GI across the Site and along the Site boundaries. These include the mature trees. Built development has been kept to the north western part of the site which has the closest relationship with the existing settlement edge.
- 5.9 The proposed development is located in close proximity to the existing properties located off Noahs Ark Lane to the west and Scamps Hill to the south, with the existing mature trees of Eastern Road Nature Reserve and the Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland of Little Walstead Wood enclosing the Site to the north and north east. To the east the Site is enclosed by existing green infrastructure surrounding the Grade II Listed Tythe Cottage and Walstead.
- 5.10 The proposed housing development and Site boundary will be set back approximately 20m from Scrase Stream to the west, with the proposed SuDS basin located within an area of open space to the north west. The proposed housing will be set back from the Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland of Little Walstead Wood with a proposed area of open space and play provision in the form of a LEAP forming a buffer to the Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland located to the north east. The proposed housing will also be set back from the Grade II Listed Tythe Cottage and Walstead Grange beyond existing hedgerows and trees that will be retained and an area of open space approximately 120m wide that will form a buffer to Walstead Grange to the east.
- 5.11 A shared cycleway/footpath connection through the Site is proposed connecting the western extent of the Site from Scamps Hill along the northern edge of the Scamps Hill hedgerow, before connecting to Scamps Hill adjacent to the proposed vehicular access to the Site.
- 5.12 The existing and proposed GI located through the Site will form a series of green corridors, which will break up the built form of the proposed development, with existing hedgerows and trees through the Site and along the boundary being reinforced with new native planting. The proposed GI will include a series of open spaces, while new hedgerows, trees, an orchard and informal planting within areas of POS will serve to enhance biodiversity and habitat value across the Site.
- 5.13 A proposed attenuation basin within the open space of the Site to the north west will be enhanced through the implementation of wetland / marginal planting and management of the proposed attenuation basin will improve the overall biodiversity within the Site. The area of

land adjacent to the Scrase Stream is outside of the red line boundary for the application, but within the “blue land”. This area will also be managed as part of the GI of the site.

- 5.14 The proposals would not erode the wider landscape setting, with the proposed development in keeping with the scale of the adjacent built form to the south and west, while the existing GI located across the Site will be retained. The Site is already separated from the wider landscape context by the existing GI located adjacent to the Site to the north and north east and the proposals will be successfully assimilated into the surrounding context. Overall, the proposals have responded to the constraints of the Site including topography, views and existing landscape features and retains and enhances the vast majority of existing GI across the Site.
- 5.15 The overall landscape effects upon the Site and the immediate landscape arising from the proposals are assessed as moderate adverse at completion and moderate/minor adverse at year 15. I agree with these conclusions.

6.0 VISUAL EFFECTS

- 6.1 The Visual Envelope (VE) (Figure 6) of the proposed development identifies the surrounding land from within which views towards any part of the proposed development are likely to be possible. The VE is not however, an indicator of the effect of the proposed development on the view but simply, its visible extent in the surrounding landscape.
- 6.2 The visual envelope is very localised in its extent, existing mature trees of Eastern Road Nature Reserve, the hedgerow to the north and the Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland of Little Walstead Wood encloses the Site to the north. To the east the Site is enclosed by existing green infrastructure surrounding the Grade II Listed Tythe Cottage and Walstead Grange. To the south the VE extends towards Scamps Hill encompassing the residential properties located off Scamps Hill, Honeysuckle Drive, Bay Road, Blackberry Drive, Gravelye Lane and Kidbrook.
- 6.3 Further to the south the Site is enclosed by the existing green infrastructure, with the Site enclosed to the west by the existing built form of Lindfield. The VE extends towards the residential properties located off Noahs Ark Lane and East Wick, Lindfield Enterprise Park and Lindfield Common to the west.
- 6.4 There could be some limited locations (beyond the extent of the VE shown) that could have a potential distant or very limited view to a part of the development. The visual receptors described below are shown on Figure 6 Appendix 1.

Residential Properties and Settlement

- 6.5 Residential receptors of Noahs Ark Lane and East Wick are located adjacent to the Site to the west. Views from the two-storey semi-detached and detached properties front, side and back onto the Site and will comprise of views from the front, rear ground and upper floors.
- 6.6 For the majority of properties the immediate foreground views of the existing adjacent road, hedgerow, trees and Scrase Stream to the east will not change. At completion full to partial middle ground views beyond Scrase Stream will change from views across an area of pastoral land with views towards an area of retained grassland and the proposed residential development, open space and SuDS basin located beyond.
- 6.7 The overall visual effect for these residential receptors is assessed as moderate / minor adverse at completion and at year 15.

- 6.8 Residential receptors of properties located off Gravelye Lane and Kidbrook are located in close proximity to the Site to the west. Properties include approximately ten semi-detached two storey dwellings that back onto Scamps Hill to the south west and a number of properties that back onto Gravelye Lane in close proximity to the junction of Scamps Hill. There are no views from further south along Gravelye Lane.
- 6.9 At completion views from these residential properties in close proximity to the Site will be to an area of retained grassland with the proposed development located beyond the existing boundary hedgerow.
- 6.10 The overall visual effect for these residential receptors is assessed as minor adverse at completion and at year 15.
- 6.11 Residential receptors of Honeysuckle Drive, Bay Road, Blackberry Drive are located approximately 25m to 65m to the south of the Site and front and side onto the Site. These properties would experience glimpsed to no views towards the Site due to being set back from Scamps Hill beyond the intervening vegetation located along the vehicular route that forms a prominent feature along the road. Where glimpsed views towards the proposed development will be possible, views will be glimpsed through the understorey of the existing GI located along Scamps Hill.
- 6.12 The overall visual effect for these residential receptors is assessed as negligible at completion and at year 15.
- 6.13 Residential receptors of Scamps Hill are located adjacent to the Site to the south. For the majority of properties that front onto Scamps Hill located adjacent to the south eastern corner of the proposed Site existing foreground views will not alter. For these properties existing views north of Scamps Hill Road will be towards the wider grounds of Walstead Grange, while oblique view towards the Site will be towards the eastern extent of the proposed Site. The eastern area of the Site is proposed as an area of open space that will comprise of existing hedgerows and trees that will be retained, along with new tree planting to form a parkland setting and a proposed orchard.
- 6.14 The overall visual effect for these residential receptors is assessed as moderate adverse at completion and at year 15.
- 6.15 Residents of Walstead Grange and Tythe Cottage are located to the east of the site. Views will largely be to the open space and new parkland planting. The proposed residential development will be set back approximately 120m beyond the area of open space and proposed and existing GI. Once established the GI located across the Site will help to break up and filter views of the proposed residential development.
- 6.16 The overall visual effect for these residential receptors is assessed as moderate adverse at completion and at year 15.

Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Other Footpath Users

- 6.17 PRoW - 2LR - Sussex Ouse Valley Way is located approximately 245m to the north east of Site and its closest point is located to the north of Little Walstead Farm and Walstead Common. Views towards the Site are obscured and filtered by intervening tree and woodland cover that includes the Eastern Road Nature Reserve, and the Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland of Little Walstead Wood located adjacent to the Site to the north.

- 6.18 Visual effects for users of the PRow are assessed as negligible/none at completion and at year 15.
- 6.19 The PRow receptor 5LR is located adjacent to the south eastern corner of the Site at its closest point where the PRow route meets Scamps Hill road. Only when located at the Scamps Hill road junction adjacent to the housing located along the vehicular route oblique views towards the Site are possible. Existing foreground views for this receptor at the junction of Scamps Hill are towards the boundary hedgerow and the wider grounds of Walstead Grange.
- 6.20 Visual effects for users of the PRow are assessed as negligible at completion and at year 15.

Roads & Transport Users

- 6.21 Vehicular and road receptors of Noah's Ark Lane and East Wick are located adjacent to the Site to the west. Views will be predominately focussed along the vehicular route as it passes through the housing and views towards the Site. Visual effects for users of the road are assessed as minor adverse at completion and at year 15.
- 6.22 Views towards the Site from Scamps Hill will mainly be partial or glimpsed beyond the boundary hedgerow.
- 6.23 The existing boundary hedgerow along Scamps Hill will remain unchanged except for two short breaks, in order to provide vehicular and pedestrian access into the Site. Where the two Site access locations are proposed, there will be a loss of hedgerow vegetation and views into the site. Visual effects for users of the vehicular route are assessed as moderate / minor adverse at completion and at year 15.
- 6.24 Views from the road receptors of Gravelye Lane to the south of the Site are confined to a short section of the road located directly opposite the junction with Scamps Hill.
- 6.25 For the users of Gravelye Lane, full views at the junction of Scamps Hill will be towards the trees and hedgerow located along the Site boundary with partial to glimpsed views beyond towards the proposed access and residential development within the Site.
- 6.26 The overall visual effect for these vehicular receptors are assessed as minor adverse/negligible at completion and at year 15.
- 6.27 Views from the users of East Mascalls Lane to the south east of the Site are glimpsed to none. The overall visual effect for these vehicular receptors are assessed as negligible/none at completion and at year 15.

Other Visual Receptors

- 6.28 Walstead Burial Ground, is located approximately 0.9km to the south east of the Site. The grounds are bordered by a boundary brick wall and a brick and post and rail fence along the southern section of East Mascalls Lane. There are a number of mature trees and shrubs located within the grounds with the immediate context of the Site bordered by mature trees and hedgerows which surround the Burial Ground. Views out from the western and north western extent of the burial ground are focussed on the adjacent arable fields, areas of grassland and paddocks with views towards the Site and further afield prevented by the existing trees and woodland surrounding Walstead Grange.
- 6.29 The overall visual effect for visitors is assessed as negligible/none at completion and at year 15.

- 6.30 Lindfield Common is located approximately 135m to the north west of the Site. Lindfield Common is bordered and fronted onto by housing located along the adjacent Lewes Road and West View, with the housing located off Meadow Lane, Backwoods Close backing on to the common to the south. Views from Lindfield Common are enclosed from the wider landscape by the surrounding built form.
- 6.31 Visual effects for users of the common receptors are assessed as negligible/none at completion and at year 15.
- 6.32 The Lindfield Enterprise Park consist of a small number of business units located adjacent to the north west of Scrase Stream and north west of the Site. Users of the Enterprise Park are considered to be of lower visual sensitivity as focus is generally on people at their place of work where views of the landscape are not important to the quality of the work being undertaken.
- 6.33 Views from the business park are focussed on foreground views of the existing car park and boundary vegetation located along Scrase Stream. Visual effects for these receptors are assessed as moderate/minor adverse at completion and at year 15.

7.0 THE SPECIALIST LANDSCAPE ADVICE -PLACE SERVICES.

- 7.1 Mid Sussex District Council engaged Place Services to provide specialist landscape advice on the application. The consultation response is included at CD 4.24 in full.
- 7.2 The overall summary of the consultation response was *“Supportive subject to attached recommendations and / or conditions”* and *“There is capacity for the proposed development to be incorporated into the landscape and therefore we have included a number of recommendations to improve the submitted scheme.”*
- 7.3 Place Services reviewed the submitted LVA and noted,
The submitted Methodology (Appendix A) provides insufficient information regarding descriptions of the descriptive thresholds (Para 1.13) for the major, moderate, minor and negligible Level of Effects. We would also expect this to be supports by a matrix which shows how the sensitivity and magnitude of change is combined to produce the overall level of effects for each receptor.
Whilst information is missing from the Methodology, we agree with the principle of the approach which combines the judgments made considering landscape value and susceptibility to form an overall judgement on sensitivity, before assessing the magnitude of change to define the resulting overall landscape effects.
- 7.4 At FPCR we do not describe what is meant by *“major moderate or minor”* leaving this for the general English definitions of the words. There is nothing in GLVIA 3 which states a requirement to set definitions for words in general use. There is also no requirement for a matrix to be used to combine judgements. GLVIA 3 sets out at para 3.35 that there should not be an overreliance on matrices. The Guidance encourages an emphasis on narrative text to describe the landscape and visual effects and the judgements.
- 7.5 Paragraph 3.30 of GLVIA sets out that there are several possible approaches to combining judgements, one approach is described,
Overall profile: The judgements against individual criteria can be arranged in a table to provide an overall profile of each identified effect. An overview of the distribution in the profile of the

assessment for each criterion can then be used to make an informed overall judgement about the likely significance of the effect. This too should be expressed in text, supported by the table.

7.6 This is the approach used in the LVA for making judgements and is in accordance with guidance.

7.7 Place Services do however go on to conclude,

However, we generally agree with most of the judgements provided although would have preferred these were substantiated further with additional information within the methodology. Where our judgements may differ for the provided judgements regarding landscape and visual impacts, these are not deemed substantial and therefore no revised LVA is required for submission.

7.8 Place Services generally agreed with the choice of viewpoints used in the LVA and judged overall effects for residential receptors. They note,

More sensitive receptors include the Sussex Diamond Way (VP 15/16) and the Sussex Ouse Way (VP7/12), however the LVA evidences the limited views of the application Site and surroundings owed to the extent of intervening vegetation which is characteristic of the local LCAs.

7.9 And

Receptors on Scamps Hill (Receptor 1) have been accurately identified as experiencing major/moderate adverse harm during construction and moderate/minor adverse harm on completion. To reduce the overall effects from Scamps Hill, we expect the submitted layout plans to consider reducing effects from the southern boundary and enhance the existing vegetated boundary which defines the southern perimeter.

7.10 The southern boundary vegetation can be enhanced as part of the detailed landscape proposals.

7.11 The consultation response concluded:

Overall, we judge that the proposed development can be accommodated within the landscape in this location owed to the extent of surrounding vegetative screening and location on the edge of Lindfield settlement.

7.12 The Place Services response also included a series of recommendations if the scheme was minded for approval.

7.13 These are repeated below along with my commentary

The existing hedgerows and treed boundaries that divide the Site into three fields are evident on historic mapping and therefore their retention and enhancement is pertinent to the design and accordance with Policy DP37. Whilst the Illustrative Masterplan indicates the general retention of these hedgerows, we advise that minimal trees and sections of hedgerow are removed to facilitate the access points.

7.14 I agree with this advice and the illustrative masterplan shows how the hedgerows and trees can be retained apart from where needed for access.

Flood Zone 3 areas are located close to the eastern and western site boundaries. A SuDS basin has been proposed in the northern corner adjacent to the flood risk area and woodland boundary. We agree with this choice of location however advise that the basin has a maximum gradient of 1:4 to provide a multifunctional public space which is accessible during dry periods.

The basin should also be planted with wet/dry tolerant species and trees to soften the basin and contribute to the biodiversity of the overall scheme. Precast headwalls and galvanised railings should be avoided, where a softer approach would be preferred.

- 7.15 The details of the suds will be detailed at reserved matters stage, but subject to management requirements I would expect the advice provided by Place Services to be followed.

Green Lanes, Private Roads and Parking areas should all be proposed as permeable block paving to contribute to the visual amenity of the scheme.

- 7.16 These details would again be determined at reserved matters stage

We have no objections to the 3m shared cycleway/footpath inside the site boundary adjacent to Scamps Hill, and also the pedestrian link in the western corner. We advise that this route is proposed with sufficient space between the hedgerowed boundary to Scamps Hill so not to impact on the root protection areas (RPA) of vegetation on this boundary. Retention of trees/hedgerows here is pertinent to ensuring the reduced visual impact of the development from Scamps Hill.

- 7.17 I agree it would be important to protect the roots of hedges and trees, and this will be possible. There are various techniques that can be used to protect roots through construction.

The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) demonstrates that there are a larger number of good quality Category A/B trees. Only 1 tree, 3 hedgerows and 1 group is required for removal to facilitate the development. With the exception of the T18(C), all other removals are related to access for paths or roads. We generally support the notion that limited hedgerow and tree removal is proposed across the development, however encourage sufficient protection for retained trees either side of the removal areas is implemented.

- 7.18 I agree that the trees should be protected and expect that this will be covered by planning condition.

An area of Ancient Woodland is located to the north of the Site. To ensure that the proposed development does not contribute to significant pedestrian activity in the Ancient Woodland, we advise that controlled access through designated routes or full access restriction is applied.

- 7.19 No access is proposed to the ancient woodland and the detailed landscape measures can be used to restrict physical access.

Providing enhanced ecological corridors adjacent to the Ancient Woodland should be demonstrated to ensure there is not ecological deterioration and fragmentation of the woodland. This is particularly important to the north of the Site where the residential development is located in close proximity of the woodland, however should also be incorporated within proposals.

- 7.20 A generous buffer to the woodland is proposed and the treatment in the area can enhance the overall ecological value.

Reconfiguration of the turning head adjacent to the attenuation basin within the public open space could be explored to lessen the impact.

- 7.21 This can be explored at reserved matters stage.

There are opportunities to include natural play which can be distributed adjacent to the internal hedgerow to the east or along the western boundary and into the large public open space, connecting to the play area.

- 7.22 Natural Play would be appropriate within the site and the existing landscape framework, provides good opportunities with changes in level.

Green verges can then be used as rain gardens/bioretention areas collecting rainwater runoff.

- 7.23 This can be explored at reserved matters stage, as part of the SuDs design

Additional seating and benches surrounding the SuDS basin and open spaces within the residential area is recommended.

- 7.24 These can be provided.

- 7.25 Overall, the Place Services consultation response confirms the site as an appropriate one for residential development and makes appropriate recommendations that can be followed up at reserved matters stage, to ensure an attractive and appropriate scheme. The annotated Illustrative masterplan at Appendix 2 shows how the recommendations can be adopted.

8.0 POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework December 2023

- 8.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's commitment to delivering sustainable development. A holistic approach is encouraged, balancing benefits with impacts across all aspects of the development process. The NPPF is dealt with in the Proof of John Mackenzie, so I only draw attention to the specific section on landscape.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment.

- 8.2 Paragraph 180a identifies how the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by (amongst others), protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status, or identified quality in the development plan).
- 8.3 Part (b) of Paragraph 180b states that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be recognised.
- 8.4 The site is not part of a "Valued Landscape". The scheme takes account of the character of the local area, and will protect the perimeter woodland and majority of the trees apart from those needing removal for the site access. The new planting can be in accordance with local guidance.

Mid Sussex District Plan (2014-2031)

- 8.5 The Mid Sussex District Plan was adopted on the 28th March 2018, the adopted district plan also contains a number of saved policies from the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004.

- 8.6 The following policies are of relevance to landscape and visual matters and the proposed development:

Policy: DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

- 8.7 The key landscape-related components of this policy are:

“The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

• ...it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan...

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

Built-up area boundaries are subject to review by Neighbourhood Plans or through a Site Allocations Development Plan Document, produced by the District Council...’

- 8.8 Residential development is not one of the listed uses as acceptable in the countryside. The Council's Statement of Case Council's (paragraph 3.15) acknowledges “compliance with Policy DP12 insofar as the development is deemed to maintain the quality of the rural and landscape character in terms of visual impact”. This policy is addressed in the proof of evidence of John Mackenzie.

Policy DP 26 -Character and Design

- 8.9 Policy DP26 requires that all buildings and surrounding spaces be “well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside”. MSDC accept that no conflict arises with Policy DP26 – Character and Design, and this policy is covered in the Proof of evidence of John Mackenzie.

Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

- 8.10 This policy states that the District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected.
- 8.11 It goes on to note that development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.
- 8.12 Also, proposals for new trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of suitable species, usually native, and where required for visual, noise or light screening purposes, trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of a size and species that will achieve this purpose.
- 8.13 The council is not alleging any conflict with this policy and the most valuable trees and hedges within the site would be protected and new planting proposed.

9.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Site is situated at the eastern edge of the village of Lindfield and comprises three pastoral fields bounded by hedgerows and trees.
- 9.2 Immediately adjacent to the north the Site lies an area of farmland and Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland of Little Walstead Wood, with the Grade II* Listed Little Walstead Farmhouse located approximately 120m further to the north. The modern housing of Honeysuckle Drive, Bay Road and Langmere Lane are located off Graveley Lane to the south of Scamps Hill. Scrase Stream is located adjacent to the Site to the west with the Lindfield Enterprise Park, East Wick and Noahs Ark Lane located beyond to the west.
- 9.3 The proposals (subject to this appeal) sought Outline Planning Consent for the erection of up to 90 dwellings with public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access point. All matters being reserved except for means of access.
- 9.4 The Site lies within National Character area NCA 122 High Weald. The influence of the proposed development on the NCA will be negligible. The site is well contained from the surrounding wider landscape and the proposed development will not be out of character with the surrounding built form of Lindfield.
- 9.5 At a district wide level, the Site lies within the 'Ouse Valley'. The proposed development is of a relatively modest scale and nature in the context of the broader LCA. The new development is located adjacent to the existing settlement of Lindfield to the south and west with existing mature hedgerows, Eastern Road Nature Reserve, and the Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland of Little Walstead Wood located adjacent to the Site to the north. The proposals will retain and enhance the existing network of hedgerows and trees located across the Site, enhancing the existing GI. The proposals will also respond to the existing settlement pattern with the proposed development being set back from the wider valley of the LCA adjacent to the existing settlement of Lindfield. The landscape effects on the LCA 'Ouse Valley' area as a whole at completion and at year 15 are considered to be minor adverse / negligible.
- 9.6 The Site and its immediate context will inevitably be subject to a higher degree of landscape change. Fields would be replaced with residential development and associated infrastructure. Whilst built development would inevitably alter the physical fabric and character of the Site, the proposals will retain and enhance existing landscape features where feasible and introduce new Green Infrastructure across the Site and along the Site boundaries. These include the mature trees. Built development has been kept to the north western part of the site which has the closest relationship with the existing settlement edge.
- 9.7 The proposed development is located in close proximity to the existing properties located off Noahs Ark Lane to the west and Scamps Hill to the south, with the existing mature trees of Eastern Road Nature Reserve and the Ancient and Little Walstead Wood enclosing the Site to the north and north east. To the east the Site is enclosed by existing green infrastructure surrounding the Tythe Cottage and Walstead.
- 9.8 The existing and proposed GI located through the Site will form a series of green corridors, which will break up the built form of the proposed development, with existing hedgerows and trees through the Site and along the boundary being reinforced with new native planting. The proposed GI will include a series of open spaces, while new hedgerows, trees, an orchard and

informal planting within areas of POS will serve to enhance biodiversity and habitat value across the Site.

- 9.9 A proposed attenuation basin within the open space of the Site to the north west will be enhanced through the implementation of wetland / marginal planting and management of the proposed attenuation basin will improve the overall biodiversity within the Site. The area of land adjacent to the Scrase Stream is outside of the red line boundary for the application, but within the "blue land" This area will also be managed as part of the GI of the site.
- 9.10 The proposals would not erode the wider landscape setting of Lindfield, with the proposed development in keeping with the scale of the adjacent built form to the south and west. Overall, the proposals respond to the constraints of the Site including topography, views and existing landscape features and retain and enhance the vast majority of existing GI across the Site.
- 9.11 The overall landscape effects upon the Site and the immediate landscape arising from the proposals are assessed as moderate adverse at completion and moderate/minor adverse at year 15.
- 9.12 In terms of visual effects, the visual envelope is very restricted. Changes to views are largely limited to those from the road past the site, Scamps Hill and from the adjacent housing and employment units. The majority of visual effects are at a minor level.
- 9.13 Place Services provided the professional landscape consultation response on the application for the Council. The overall summary of the consultation response was "*Supportive subject to attached recommendations and / or conditions*" and that "*There is capacity for the proposed development to be incorporated into the landscape and therefore we have included a number of recommendations to improve the submitted scheme.*" The recommendations were mainly matters of detailed design that can be incorporated at reserved matters stage.
- 9.14 In terms of Policy, Mid Sussex District Council have not identified conflict with any landscape or character/ Design related policy.
- 9.15 Overall, in my view there would be very limited and localised landscape and visual effects arising from the appeal scheme.

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