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Proof of Evidence
Landscape and Visual Issues

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In respect of Appeal by
Hertfordshire Holdings Ltd

Concerning
**Land south of the A271 and
east of the A22,
Lower Horsebridge,
Hailsham**

On behalf of
Wealden District Council

Appeal ref
APP/C1435/W/23/3335625
Council Ref
WD/2022/3222/MAO

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1 Introduction

1.1 Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1.1 My name is Michelle Bolger. I am a Fellow of the Landscape Institute and Director of *Michelle Bolger Expert Landscape Consultancy (MBELC)*. I have a degree and a Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Greenwich University. I also have a degree in English from Durham University and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education from London University. I was formerly Chair of the Landscape Institute's Education and Membership Committee and a Trustee on the Landscape Institute Board. I have previously worked as a Senior Associate for Gillespies LLP and Liz Lake Associates.
- 1.1.2 I have prepared Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) to accompany planning applications for a range of projects including residential development, light transit, highways, leisure, retail, commercial and enabling development, both as standalone documents and as part of Environmental Impact Assessments. On behalf of local planning authorities and other bodies such as South Downs National Park Authority, National Resources Wales and the National Trust, I have reviewed LVIA's prepared for a range of developments including Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.
- 1.1.3 I have jointly delivered a series of training workshops on LVIA for other landscape architects, local authority officers and on Planning Inspectorate training days, most recently in March 2023 on assessing landscape value. I have devised and delivered training on acting as an expert witness at Public Inquiries for local authority officers and other landscape architecture practices. On behalf of the Landscape Institute, I co-authored the latest Technical Guidance Note (TGN 02/21) on *Assessing landscape value outside national designations*.
- 1.1.4 Over the last twenty years, I have presented evidence at appeal, DCO Examination, call-in and local plan inquiries on behalf of appellants, local planning authorities and local action groups regarding the landscape and visual impacts of proposals for residential, commercial, Gypsy and traveller sites, light transit, nuclear and other energy developments.

1.2 Scope of my Evidence

1.2.1 In January 2024 I was asked by Wealden District Council (WDC) whether I could support the reasons for refusal (RfR) with regard to the current appeal (APP/C1435/W/23/3335625) which concerns an outline application (WD/2022/3222/MAO) for up to 124 no. residential dwellings and associated infrastructure on land south of the A271 and east of the A22, Lower Horsebridge, Hailsham. The appellant is Hertfordshire Holdings Ltd. Having reviewed the details of the scheme, I confirmed that I was prepared to defend the landscape elements of the first Reason for Refusal (RfR) and was appointed by WDC to prepare evidence for the appeal.

1.2.2 My evidence addresses the first RfR:

The site lies outside any development boundary and within open countryside where the principle of residential development would be unacceptable having regard to local planning policy as it would be contrary to policies GD2, DC17 and EN27 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998 and Policy WCS6 and WCS9 of the Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (2013) (CS). These, taken together and amongst other objectives, preclude development within open countryside, set a classification of settlements suitable for additional housing and the quantum of housing and also seek development that respects the character of the area.

The proposed development would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the locality. Any residential development on this site will inevitably and irrevocably change the character and appearance of this part of the River Cuckmere corridor, which is an important swathe of undeveloped land separating the village of Lower Horsebridge from the urban area of Upper Horsebridge and Hailsham, by extending development southwards and the harmful urbanising impact which would arise from the development. The application site is considered integral to the character and visual setting of the River Cuckmere corridor. As such, the application site holds not only visual significance in terms of the landscape setting but also in terms of the historic settlement form and character and its relationship to the listed buildings to the north and west.

The proposed development for 124 dwellings on this site represents an unacceptable and inappropriate form of development. The development as indicated on the submitted plans is considered to be overdevelopment of the site, fails to reflect the existing grain of development and is poorly related to the surrounding built form and landscape. The development would appear as a highly urbanised housing estate, out of keeping with the rural location and existing low density development.

It is considered that the adverse harm caused by the development resulting in urbanisation of agricultural land and impact on the landscape and historic character would be contrary to local planning policies that seek to protect and complement the environment. The development does not therefore meet the definition of sustainable development within the National Planning Policy Framework and the adverse harm identified would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal. The development would therefore be contrary to Policies GD2, DC17, EN1, EN2, EN8, EN14, EN27, EN29 and TR13 of the Wealden Local Plan; Spatial Planning Objective SPO13 and Policies WCS6, WCS9, WCS12, WCS13 and WCS14 of the Core Strategy, Policy LBH1¹ of the Hellingly Neighbourhood Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework policies relating to sustainable development including Paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, those requiring good design in particular Paragraphs 130, 131 and 134 and those that seek to ensure that development protects and enhances the natural and built environment in particular Paragraph 174 in addition to advice in the Wealden Design Guide 2008, adopted Supplementary Planning Document, Chapter 2 Section 3, Chapter 5 Section 8 and Chapter 7.

¹ This is a typing error. The policy number should be LHB1

1.3 The Appeal Documents

1.3.1 I have reviewed the drawings and documents submitted with the application. Details of the application are contained in Section 3 of the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) and I do not repeat it in my evidence.

1.3.2 In particular, I have considered the following documents and drawings that were submitted with the application:

- Landscape and Visual Appraisal, Terrence O'Rourke, November 2022 (CD 1.14);
- Desk Based Heritage Assessment, Terrence O'Rourke, November 2022 (CD 1.16);
- Planning, Design and Access Statement, Terrence O'Rourke, December 2022 (CD 1.7);
- Arboricultural Impact Appraisal and Method Statement, Barrell Tree Consultancy, December 2022 (CD 1.10a);
- Tree Protection Plan 22175-2, Barrell Tree Consultancy (CD 1.10b);
- Illustrative Landscape Strategy Western Development Area, TOR-XX-XX-DR-L-P-013, Terrence O'Rourke (CD 1.15);
- Illustrative Masterplan TOR-XX-ZZ-DR-A-P010 Rev B; Terrence O'Rourke (CD 2.8);
- Parameters Plan Maximum Building Heights and Access, TOR-XX-ZZ-DR-A-P011 Rev B, Terrence O'Rourke (CD 2.9);
- Site Access Plan, 332110699_5501_SK009 Rev. P01, Stantec (CD 2.11);
- Topographical Survey T-332110699-01, Rev A, Precision Point Surveys (CD 1.23);

1.3.3 I have also reviewed documents and plans issued by the Appellant after the appeal:

- Illustrative Masterplan TOR-XX-ZZ-DR-A-P010 Rev. C, Tor&Co (CD 8.1);
- Parameters Plan, Maximum Building Heights & Access TOR-XX-ZZ-DR-A-P011 Rev. C, Tor&Co (CD 8.2);
- Heritage statement addendum, Ref. 231703C, Tor&Co, November 2023 (CD 8.3).

1.3.4 I have considered the following consultation responses:

- WDC Planning & Environmental Services, 25 April 2023 regarding Arboriculture and Landscape (CD 3.11) and 28 April 2023 regarding Biodiversity and Landscape (CD 3.1).

1.4 Structure of my Evidence

1.4.1 My evidence is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides a summary of the landscape planning context;
- **Section 3** reviews published landscape character assessments;
- **Section 4** describes the character of the site and its immediate context;
- **Section 5** assesses the landscape value of the site;
- **Section 6** considers other landscape assessments that have included the site;
- **Section 7** assesses the landscape effects of the development;
- **Section 8** assesses the visual effects of the development;
- **Section 9** considers the compliance of the proposals with landscape related planning policies; and
- **Section 10** contains a summary and conclusions and forms my **Summary Proof**

1.4.2 **MB Appendix 1** includes Figures that have been prepared to illustrate my evidence and they are presented as a separate A3 document. Photographs included in MB Appendix 1 have been prepared in accordance with The Landscape Institute's (LI) Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19 *Visual Representation of Development Proposals* (CD 9.6). They have been prepared to assist the inquiry. They are not intended as a criticism of the viewpoint locations used in the Appellant's Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA).

1.4.3 The remaining appendices are appended to this evidence.

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 The methodology used in preparing my evidence is based on the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Third Edition 2013 (GLVIA3) (CD 9.4) prepared by the LI/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. GLVIA3 is the key guidance regarding assessing landscape and visual impacts. The methodology used is set out in **MB Appendix 2**.

1.5.2 The assessment of landscape value is consistent with the LI's TGN 02/21 *Assessing landscape value outside national designations* (2021) (CD 9.5).

1.6 Appellant's LVIA

1.6.1 I disagree with the conclusions of the submitted Appellant's LVA and the reasons for reaching alternative conclusions are set out in this PoE. In addition, the LVA:

- Refers to a superseded landscape character assessment from 2014 instead of the current one published in May 2022;
- Lists the TGN 02/21 in Table 1.1 as a reference document but does not carry out an assessment of landscape value in accordance with TGN 02/21.
- Refers to Figure 22 from its own Methodology as guidance on landscape value and susceptibility (paragraph 1.64). Figure 22 is not guidance on determining value or susceptibility. It is guidance on how these two factors can be combined to decide on landscape sensitivity.

1.6.2 The photographs in the LVA are presented as long thin panoramas intended to be printed on A1 paper. This format is useful to provide landscape context, but it is known to misrepresent distance and scale. TGN 06/19 recommends that it should be used in conjunction with single frame images. The misrepresentation is exacerbated when the images are printed at A3 or viewed on a monitor which will be the case for most people viewing the photographs.

1.6.3 The photographs in **MB Appendix 1** consist of a context panorama and a single frame image both of which are intended to be printed at A3. I consider that this presentation is more helpful for both other professionals and members of the public who are viewing the photographs.

1.6.4 Visualisations were requested from the appellant to assist the inquiry and it was requested that single frames be provided alongside the panoramas as recommended by TGN 06/19. The Appellant's landscape expert witness, Paul Warren, replied on 5th March 2024 that they agreed that visualisations would be helpful for the inquiry, and I, therefore, assume they will be preparing them. They have not been issued in time for me to comment on them in my evidence.

1.7 Duty to the Inquiry

- 1.7.1 I understand my duty to the Inquiry and have complied, and will continue to comply, with that duty. I declare that the evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal is true. It has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of the Landscape Institute and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2 Landscape Planning Policy Context

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 In this section, I set out the policies, local and national, that I consider are relevant to the landscape and visual issues. In the following sections, my evidence describes the existing landscape character of the site and the surrounding area and considers the impact of the proposed development. While doing this I consider whether the proposed development would achieve landscape and visual-related national and local policy objectives.

2.1.2 My evidence considers the policies as written, the weight to be given to policies is considered in the evidence of the Council's planning witness.

2.1.3 The Wealden development plan consists of the adopted Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (2013) and 'saved' policies from the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998). Made Neighbourhood Plans include Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan (March 2020) and the Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan (February 2021) (**MB Figure 3**).

2.2 Wealden Local Plan, 1998 (LP 1998) (CD 5.1)

2.2.1 The adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998 consists of saved policies that have not been replaced by Wealden District Core Strategy (WDCS) 2013. The table below groups them according to the topics as listed in the first RfR. The following text considers policies relevant to landscape and visual issues.

Policies related to a location outside development boundary (RfR Paragraph 1)	GD2, DC17, EN27
Policies related to urbanisation, impact on landscape and historic character and sustainable development (RfR Paragraph 4)	GD2, DC17, EN1, EN2, EN8, EN14, EN27, EN29 and TR13

2.2.2 **Policy GD2** states that ‘Outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, development will be resisted unless it is in accordance with specific policies in this Plan.’²

2.2.3 **Policy DC17** concerns housing development in the countryside and states that ‘Housing development will not be allowed outside development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map unless it conforms with other policies in the Plan.’³ The text preceding the policy explains that housing development outside the development boundary would not be permitted unless it meets one of a range of criteria.⁴ The application does not meet any of the criteria.

2.2.4 **Policy EN1** considers sustainable development in relation to the location, layout and design of development, renewable energy and waste management proposals and in assessing the effects of proposals on the environment, including on water and air quality.⁵

2.2.5 **Policy EN2** concerns development pattern and transportation and requires new development ‘to maintain the existing settlement pattern and ensure that major new developments generating significant travel movements are located efficiently in relation to existing development and to public transport.’⁶

2.2.6 **Policy EN8** relates to development within Low Weald. The text preceding the policy describes the area around Hailsham as a transitional landscape where ‘*Streams and ghylls flow south from the slopes of the High Weald feeding the River Cuckmere ... Hailsham is on the edge of the Low Weald where it gives way to the Coastal Levels.*’⁷ The policy wording states:

‘Development within the Low Weald will only be permitted if it conserves the low rolling agricultural character of the landscape. In considering any proposal, particular regard will be had to:

(1) areas of unspoilt and remote countryside;

(2) the setting of settlements;

(3) areas on the fringe of adjacent statutorily designated landscapes;

² CD 5.1 Wealden Local Plan December 1998, Page 12

³ CD 5.1 Wealden Local Plan December 1998, Page 51

⁴ CD 5.1 Wealden Local Plan December 1998, Page 51

⁵ CD 5.1 Wealden Local Plan December 1998, Page 14

⁶ CD 5.1 Wealden Local Plan December 1998, Page 14

⁷ CD 5.1 Wealden Local Plan December 1998, Page 32

- (4) the retention of woods, boundary trees and hedges;*
- (5) attractive vernacular buildings and groups of buildings.’⁸*

2.2.7 Policy EN14 considers landscaping and states:

‘In appropriate cases, the Council will require landscaping, including surface treatments, to be carried out as part of development proposals. Where required, such schemes should:-

- (1) seek to retain existing trees, significant hedgerows and other valuable site features;*
- (2) normally comprise primarily native species;*
- (3) complement the scale and character of the proposed development and the locality;*
- (4) have regard to associated nature conservation benefits;*
- (5) be implemented at the earliest practicable opportunity and thereafter satisfactorily maintained during the early years.’⁹*

2.2.8 The text preceding the policy states that ‘Particular regard to landscaping proposals will be appropriate in relation to prominent sites, large scale developments, rural fringe locations and other areas of a sensitive landscape character.’¹⁰

2.2.9 Policy EN27 considers Design and states that ‘Proposals for development will be permitted when the following layout and design criteria are met: (inter alia)

- (1) the scale, form, site coverage, density and design of the development and the use of materials and landscaping should respect the character of adjoining development and, where appropriate, promote local distinctiveness. The design, materials and landscaping should be of an appropriate high standard.’¹¹*

⁸ CD 5.1 Wealden Local Plan December 1998, Page 32

⁹ CD 5.1 Wealden Local Plan December 1998, Page 25

¹⁰ CD 5.1 Wealden Local Plan December 1998, Page 25

¹¹ CD 5.1 Wealden Local Plan December 1998, Page 32

2.3 Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan, 2013 (WDCS) (CD 5.2)

2.3.1 Reason for Refusal 1 lists a number of policies the appeal proposals conflict with. The table below groups them according to the topics as listed in RfR 1. The following text considers policies relevant to landscape and visual issues.

Policies related to a location outside development boundary (RfR Paragraph 1)	WCS6, WCS9
Policies related to urbanisation, impact on landscape and historic character and sustainable development (RfR Paragraph 4)	Spatial Planning Objective SPO13, Policy WCS6, WCS9, WCS12, WCS13, WCS 14

2.3.2 The **Hailsham/Hellingly Area Strategy** identifies Hailsham as a traditional market town dating back to Medieval times. Main urban expansion sites are located on the eastern outskirts of the town and to the north in Hellingly Parish.¹²

2.3.3 **Policy WCS6 Rural Areas Strategy** sets out the strategy for settlements within rural areas. Both Lower Horsebridge and Lower Dicker are included in this policy as it removes their development boundaries (defined in LP 1998).

2.3.4 **Policy WCS 13 Green Infrastructure** refers to ‘*all forms of recreational open space and areas of particular importance or potential for wildlife.*’¹³ The policy states that the existing green infrastructure network should maintain and improve biodiversity and landscape character.¹⁴

2.4 Wealden Design Guide 2008 Supplementary Planning Document (WDG SPD) (CD 6.5)

2.4.1 Chapter 2 Key Principles of Section 3 Landscape, Trees and Wildlife requires development proposals to address a number of issues which include:

- ‘*The implications of the site’s intended use(s) and the intensity of such use(s) for the landscape and wildlife;*
- *The scale, massing and design detail of the proposed scheme;*
- *The integration of the proposals and enhancements into the existing landscape setting.*’¹⁵

¹² CD 5.2 Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan, Page 39

¹³ CD 5.2 Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan, Page 66

¹⁴ CD 5.2 Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan, Page 67

¹⁵ CD 6.5 Wealden Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, Section 3 Page 4

2.5 Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2028, Made July 2021 (HNP) (CD 5.4)

2.5.1 The HNP covers the period up to 2028 with two broad aims:

- a) To protect the rural character of the area.¹⁶
- b) To retain the separate character and identity of the four main settlements in the Parish (Hellingly Village, Lower Horsebridge, Lower Dicker and Roebuck Park).¹⁷

2.5.2 Hellingly is described as a rural parish lying immediately to the north of the rapidly expanding town of Hailsham and as such faces significant challenges in meeting the broad aim. One of the settlements within Hellingly neighbourhood plan area is Lower Horsebridge. The rural setting and context of Lower Horsebridge are identified as key features of the village. *‘This is very pronounced on the approach to the village and within its core where the southern side of the road is largely undeveloped and permits long views over the recreation ground and Low Weald landscape.’*¹⁸ *‘Local distinctiveness derives from its historic landscape and pattern of uses, primarily pastoral farming.’*¹⁹

2.5.3 It is noted that the ‘village and land surrounding are liable to flooding because of the proximity of the Cuckmere and its tributaries. Because of these natural constraints, the field pattern has survived relatively well to both sides of the A27.’²⁰

2.5.4 Policy LHB1 aims to ensure the retention of the identity and character of Lower Horsebridge (**MB Figure 3**).

‘Where the principle of new development within Lower Horsebridge Character Area is considered appropriate proposals will be required where appropriate to clearly demonstrate (inter alia):

- i) How it supports the preservation and enhancement of designated heritage assets and their settings.*
- ii) Acknowledgement of buildings that make a positive contribution to the settlement and its character and appearance.*
- iii) How the proposed development protects the historic development pattern and the key views and vistas as shown on Map 4.*

¹⁶ CD 5.4 Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2028, Page 6

¹⁷ CD 5.4 Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2028, Page 6

¹⁸ CD 5.4 Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2028, Page 32

¹⁹ CD 5.4 Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2028, Page 32

²⁰ CD 5.4 Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2028, Page 31

iv) That there is no erosion of the sense of openness and rural character of the existing setting of the settlement.

Where new development is considered acceptable, subject to other policies within the NDP developments shall:

vi) Ensure they respect the prevailing scale, mass, footprint, materials and appearance of positive and locally distinct buildings.

vii) Seek to ensure the retention of field patterns along with hedgerows and trees along boundaries.’²¹

2.5.5 **Policy LHB 2** is not mentioned in the decision notice. I assume this is because the proposed development was not considered to be within Lower Horsebridge. As it is not clear to me which settlement the proposed development is intended to belong to, I have included the first two Specific Design Criteria for Lower Horsebridge from LHB2 below:

i) Designs that do not respect local character, identity and distinctiveness will not be supported

ii) New dwellings should not exceed two storeys in height.

2.6 **National Policy**

2.6.1 National Policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, revised December 2023) (CD 7.1). To satisfy national policy objectives planning decisions should:

- Protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment (Paragraph 8c);
- Take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (Paragraph 9);
- Protect and enhance Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and access (Paragraph 104);
- Ensure that developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting (Paragraph 135b & c);
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place (Paragraph 135d);
- Protect and enhance valued landscapes (Paragraph 180a);
- Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (Paragraph 180b).

²¹ CD 5.4 Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2028, Page 33

2.7 Emerging Wealden Local Plan (Regulation 18), March 2024 (CD 6.6)

2.7.1 The new local plan is being prepared following the withdrawal of an earlier Draft Local Plan in February 2020. The main changes proposed include:

- Development boundaries (DP) are identified for Lower Horsebridge. The DP for Hailsham has been updated to include the housing estate at Welbury Meadows (Policy SS1);
- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas are included in policies related to biodiversity and they are required to be considered cumulatively with landscape effects. (Policy NE6)
- Introduction of flood zones 3a, 3b, and Future Zone 3a and requirements for development within these zones regarding flood risk (Policy CC7);
- Policy NE6 Landscape Character includes a list of factors to be considered concerning the landscape impact of development, including cumulative impacts:

2.8 Summary

2.8.1 National and development plan policies expect new development to:

- Protect and enhance valued landscapes;
- Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside;
- Have regard to the setting of settlements and complement the scale and character of the locality;
- Recognise the distinctive character and pattern of development;
- Be sympathetic to the existing local natural, built and historic character; and
- Maintain a strong sense of place; and
- Protect the historic development pattern and key views and vistas within Hellingly Parish and maintain the sense of openness and rural character of the existing setting of the settlement of Lower Horsebridge.

3 Existing Landscape Character: Published Landscape Character Assessments

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The site is considered in national, county and district landscape character assessments. This section addresses the key information in those studies and any strategies or guidance for the management of change within the landscape.

3.1.2 Table 1 below sets out the various studies and identifies the landscape character type (LCT) and landscape character area (LCA) in which the site is located.

3.2 Table 1 - Landscape Character Areas and Types

Assessment	Landscape Character Type (LCT)	Landscape Character Area (LCA)
National Level		
National Character Area (NCA)	n/a	NCA 121: Low Weald
County Level		
The East Sussex County Landscape Assessment, 2016	n/a	LCA 15 Eastern Low Weald
Adjoining (east)	n/a	LCA 35 Urban Area - Hailsham
Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation, 2010	n/a	Informal Fieldscapes - Modern field amalgamation
Adjoining (east)	n/a	Irregular piecemeal enclosure
District/Borough Level		
Landscape Character Assessment for Wealden District, 2022	LCT 3: Wooded clay vale (Low Weald)	LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale

3.3 National Character Area (NCA) (CD 9.9)

3.3.1 The site is located near the eastern edge of NCA 121: Low Weald. This NCA is described as a broad, low-lying clay vale which largely wraps around the northern, western and southern edges of the High Weald NCA in a rough horseshoe shape.²²

3.3.2 Key characteristics of NCA 121: Low Weald include:

- Broad, low-lying, gently undulating clay vales
- A generally pastoral landscape. Land use is predominantly agricultural but with urban influences.
- Field boundaries of hedgerows and shaws enclosing small, irregular fields and linking into small and scattered linear settlements along roadsides or centred on greens or commons. Rural lanes and tracks with wide grass verges and ditches.
- Small towns and villages are scattered among areas of woodland, permanent grassland and hedgerows. Larger 20th-century villages have grown around major transport routes.
- Frequent north-south routeways and lanes, many originating as drove roads, along which livestock were moved to downland grazing or to forests to feed on acorns.
- An intricate mix of woodlands, much of it ancient, shaws, small field copses and tree groups, and lines of riparian trees along watercourses.
- Many small rivers, streams and watercourses with associated wet woodland.
- Abundance of ponds,
- Traditional rural vernacular of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung buildings plus local use of distinctive Horsham slabs as a roofing material. Weatherboard barns are a feature.

²² CD 9.9 National Character Area profile: 121: Low Weald, Page 5

3.4 County Landscape Character - The East Sussex County Landscape Assessment, 2016 (ESCLA)

3.4.1 The site is located on the eastern edge of LCA 15 Eastern Low Weald. This LCA includes developed areas at Welbury Meadows which were not present at the time of writing of the ESCLA. The ESCLA identifies key landscape characteristics for the Eastern Low Weald LCA and from these selects thirteen that are considered to be '*Key Positive Landscape Attributes*'. The key positive attributes listed below are those of particular relevance to the site and surrounding landscape:²³

- A largely pastoral landscape especially on heavy clay soils;
- Evidence of former manor houses, often with medieval origins and remnant moats.
- The winding channel of the upper Cuckmere River and its tributaries;
- Small vernacular churches in hamlets and villages;
- Distinctive vernacular buildings associated with farmsteads
- Scattered remote focal villages and hamlets with characteristic ribbon development along the roads and lanes.'

3.4.2 Under Landscape Evaluation - Current Condition (Table 2) the ESCLA states 'The Cuckmere River channel follows a meandering route across the area. The river and drainage channel management has in places removed water side trees and vegetation. Some farms have intrusive modern buildings and associated clutter. ...The few detracting features are related to scattered modern development spreading along the main road corridors.'²⁴

3.3.6 Past / Current forces for change include:

- 'Increasing levels of traffic throughout the area.
- Development pressures for housing and commerce.
- Loss of trees along river, streams and ditches due to maintenance regimes, agricultural intensification and engineering works.
- Creeping suburbanisation and cumulative changes in the rural landscape, roads and villages which are not in sympathy with local distinctiveness or vernacular architecture.

²³ CD 9.10 The East Sussex County Landscape Assessment, 2015, Eastern Low Weald, Table 1

²⁴ CD 9.10 The East Sussex County Landscape Assessment, 2015, Eastern Low Weald, No page numbers

- Water quality in the Cuckmere catchment and a small area of Nitrite Vulnerable Zone in the south east corner of the area.
- Decline and neglect of Riparian landscapes and farm ponds'²⁵

3.4.3 Future forces for change include:

- 'Settlement growth around the larger villages and adjacent towns, particularly Hailsham, Polegate, Lewes and Ringmer.
- The impact of traffic on rural roads and increasing recreational visitors due to expansion of towns on the edges of the character area, notably Lewes, Hailsham and Polegate.
- Increasing traffic on rural lanes and in villages impacting on tranquillity and on the rural character where passing vehicles cause erosion to banks and verges.

3.4.4 The ESCLA includes a Vision and Strategy for the Eastern Low Weald and lists the landscape changes and adaptations required to meet the strategy. Table 4 begins by setting out the vision for '*A strong landscape structure which can accommodate pressure for change and development without detracting from the historic character. A scattered settlement pattern centred on the established and historic service villages.*'

3.4.5 The ECSLA goes on to promote the following strategies:

1. *Planning for the enhancement of the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas of the Cuckmere Ouse watershed, the Pevensey Cuckmere Valley Link (and others).*
2. *Protect and manage existing habitats and plan for restoration of hedges and riverside vegetation to restore habitat linkages and continuity.*
3. *Consider the potential to plan for multifunctional Green Infrastructure (GI) in this character area, particularly in response to a growing population and new development in the towns and larger villages.*
6. *Ensure that the design and layout of new developments respect the character and form of the landscape and existing settlements.*
9. *Consider appropriate species for new plantings to maintain landscape character and biodiversity but also adaptation to climate change influences²⁶.*

²⁵ CD 9.10 East Sussex County Landscape Assessment, 2015, Eastern Low Weald, no page numbers

²⁶ CD 9.10 East Sussex County Landscape Assessment, 2015, Eastern Low Weald, no page numbers

3.5 Landscape Character Assessment for Wealden District, 2022

- 3.5.1 A new landscape character assessment for WDC was completed in 2022 by LUC, the *Landscape Character Assessment for Wealden District* (LUC Character Assessment). This superseded an earlier assessment (Wealden Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment by Chris Blandford Associates (CBA Character Assessment) which had been undertaken in 2014. The LVA refers to the earlier study but not the current one. The LUC Character Assessment was issued in May 2022 and the LVA was issued in November 2022 and should therefore have used the up-to-date assessment.
- 3.5.2 Within the LUC Character Assessment the site is located within LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale (**MB Figure 9**) which is described as *‘a low-lying landscape, crossed by the narrow river valleys of the Uck and its tributaries in the west and the Cuckmere in the east. The landscape supports a patchwork of arable and pastoral fields, interspersed with areas of woodland, much of ancient origin, and more extensive mixed plantations. Scattered linear settlements and farmsteads are strung along the rural road network. The edge of the LCA is strongly influenced by its proximity to Hailsham and Uckfield.’*²⁷
- 3.5.3 Relevant key characteristics for LCA 3A²⁸ are:
- Gently rolling landscape, dissected by the narrow river valleys of the Uck, Ouse and Cuckmere;
 - A well wooded landscape;
 - Fields are varied in size and origin;
 - The heavy clay soils give rise to a mixed land use of sheep and cattle grazing and arable cultivation;
 - The network of rural roads, lined with clipped hedgerows and mature trees, contrasts with the busy A22;
 - A strong network of public rights of way including the promoted routes of the Vanguard Way and the Wealdway;
 - The woodland, hedgerows and trees result in an enclosed landscape, although the distinctive ridges of the South Downs are visible to the south and south-west;

²⁷ CD 9.1 LUC Character Assessment Page 73

²⁸ CD 9.1 LUC Character Assessment Page 74

- A rural landscape with areas of tranquillity and dark skies, although this decreases with proximity to Hailsham, Uckfield and the A22/A26.

3.5.4 The LUC Character Assessment describes the dispersed medieval settlement pattern as still being evident in LCA 3A, with little change from the 19th century although '*modern additions to the landscape include horticultural nurseries, caravan parks and urban fringe development along the busy A22 and extending from the edge of Hailsham and Uckfield. Light industry and other employment uses have grown up between Lower Dicker and Golden Cross.*'²⁹ Proximity to Hailsham is noted as reducing tranquillity and dark skies.

3.5.5 The LUC Character Assessment lists twelve landscape qualities (features and characteristics) that '*are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide.*'³⁰ Of particular relevance to the landscape in which the site is located are:

- The Cuckmere, Ouse and Uck catchments regulate water quality and water flow and prevent flooding downstream;
- The river valleys provide topographical interest to the landscape, creating a sense of place;
- The public rights of way and open access woodlands provide recreational opportunities and contribute to people's health and mental wellbeing;
- The contrast between the enclosed character created by woodland and hedgerows and long views to the South Downs provides visual interest.

3.5.6 Forces for change for LCA 3A include the potential expansion of Hailsham into the LCA which it is considered would reduce the rural character of the landscape. Alternatively, development pressure for housing expanding from the villages within the LCA would dilute the historic dispersed settlement pattern.

²⁹ CD 9.1 LUC Character Assessment Page 78

³⁰ CD 9.1 LUC Character Assessment Page 82 & 83

3.5.7 Landscape Guidelines for LCA 3A include:

- Conserve and manage the streamside woodlands and copses, conserving and restoring riverside vegetation and wetland habitats, to 'slow the flow' and increase biodiversity, in line with the aims of the ... River Cuckmere Habitat Link;
- Conserve the dispersed rural settlement pattern;
- Consider the impact of urban fringe development extending from ... Hailsham on the existing landscape, aiming to preserve the rural character of the LCA. Ensure a sensitive and integrated urban edge.
- Retain and where possible enhance long views to the South Downs ... which form a strong backdrop to the landscape and provide a sense of place in the landscape.

3.6 Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation, 2010 (MB Figure 10)

3.6.1 Most of the site forms a parcel of land identified by HLC Broad Type Fieldscapes, Subtype Informal Enclosure - Modern Field Amalgamation which are characterised by '*50% or more of lost boundaries, creating larger fields than those shown on the historic map sequence. The resulting fields often retain some of the historic characteristics of the enclosure form they originated from. This is often evident from the external boundaries.*' Most of the boundary loss took place in the 20th century.³¹

3.6.2 A small part of the site along the eastern boundary is identified as belonging to the HLC type of the landscape adjoining the site immediately to the east. This is identified as Informal Irregular Piecemeal Enclosure. This is described as fields with straight or wavy boundaries which are formed either of hedgerows or ditches. They are most frequently found in smaller river and stream valleys. Their origin is said to be medieval or earlier.³² To the west, the HLC types vary and include an informal parkland at Boship Farm Hotel and Motorway Services.

³¹ CD 9.11 Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation, Volume IV - Gazetteer of Sussex Typology, Page 38

³² CD 9.11 Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation, Volume IV - Gazetteer of Sussex Typology, Page 12

3.7 Summary

3.7.1 The site is located within NCA 121 Low Weald, a broad, low-lying clay vale, crossed by many small rivers and streams. The East Sussex County Landscape Assessment places the site within LCA 15 Eastern Low Weald (**MB Figure 8**). Key Positive Landscape Attributes of LCA 15 include pastoral land use and the winding channel of the upper Cuckmere River and its tributaries. The vision for LCA 15 is for '*A strong landscape structure which can accommodate pressure for change and development without detracting from the historic character.*'³³ Strategies for LCA 15 include:

- Planning for the enhancement of the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas; and
- Ensuring that the design and layout of new developments respect the character and form of the landscape and existing settlements.

3.7.2 A new landscape character assessment for WDC was completed in 2022 which places the site within LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale (**MB Figure 9**). It is described as a low-lying landscape, crossed by the narrow river valleys of the Cuckmere and its tributaries. The edge of the LCA is strongly influenced by its proximity to Hailsham.³⁴ Landscape qualities within LCA 3A that are particularly valued for their contribution to character and ecosystem services include the topography of the river valleys which creates a sense of place.

3.7.3 Landscape Guidelines for LCA 3A include the conservation of the dispersed rural settlement pattern and considering the impact of development extending from Hailsham in order to preserve the rural character of the LCA and ensure that a sensitive and integrated urban edge is created/maintained.

3.7.4 Within the Sussex HLC (**MB Figure 10**) most of the site is in HLC subtype Modern Field Amalgamation whilst land along the eastern boundaries adjoining the Lower Horsebridge Stream is within Informal Irregular Piecemeal Enclosure.

³³ CD 9.10 East Sussex County Landscape Assessment, 2015, Eastern Low Weald, Table 4

³⁴ CD 9.1 LUC Character Assessment Page 73

4 Existing Landscape Character: Appeal Site and Immediate Context

4.1 Location

- 4.1.1** The site is located at the south eastern end of LCA 3A Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale, in the open countryside. The northern edge of Hailsham lies approx. 275m to the south of the site and the western edge of Lower Horsebridge lies approx. 25m to the east. The site is not adjacent to either of these settlements. The area within the site proposed for built development is in the most north-westerly corner of the site, furthest away from either settlement. It is at least 315m from the edge of the built development in Hailsham and 115m from the western edge of Lower Horsebridge (revised Parameters Plan³⁵).

4.2 Landscape Context

- 4.2.1** The western boundary of the site is formed by the A22. The Grade II listed Boship Farm Hotel with its extensive grounds is located west of the A22. The northern boundary of the site is formed by the A271 and north of the A271 is a small group of properties facing the road. A small field and a small area of woodland separates the group from the Grade II listed Brook House. Much of the woodland lies within the garden of Brook House (**MB Figure 11**).
- 4.2.2** The eastern and southern boundaries of the site are formed by the meandering Lower Horsebridge Stream which runs initially to the south before turning westwards towards the A22. The Lower Horsebridge Stream and its stream valley separate the site from the village of Lower Horsebridge to the east.
- 4.2.3** South of the site and south of the Lower Horsebridge Stream is the River Cuckmere corridor. The River Cuckmere Corridor consists of the River itself, the floodplain in which it is located, tributaries (such as the Lower Horsebridge Stream) and channels. There is no fixed boundary to the River Cuckmere corridor but the extent of the Flood 3 zone is a good indicator. The River Cuckmere corridor is the most distinctive landscape feature in the area. For example, the A271 crosses two separate channels of the Cuckmere between Lower Horsebridge and Hailsham.

³⁵ CD 8.2: TOR-XX-ZZ-DR-A-P011 Rev C

4.2.4 An irregular area of land within the ownership of the Appellant wraps around the southern and eastern sides of the site. It forms part of the land that separates Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge. Its southern boundary is the Cuckmere River, its northern boundary is the edge of Lower Horsebridge, and a line of poplars that mark the edge of playing fields. The land ownership continues eastwards across a ditch and includes a field that extends to the A271. This area is all low lying, most of it is within flood zones 2 and 3, and in February and March 2024 showed evidence of having been recently flooded.

4.2.5 Footpath HEL/12/1 (Fp 12) crosses the ditch but the route appears generally impassable in the winter and there is an earth 'bridge' slightly south from the footpath route which appears to be used by pedestrians.

4.3 Character of Lower Horsebridge Stream

4.3.1 The route of the Lower Horsebridge Stream, a tributary to the River Cuckmere, appears natural however it has been managed to limit the amount of vegetation along its banks. Land on either side of the stream has the same character and forms the stream valley. On the site, this ends at a noticeable change in level which roughly reflects the edge of Flood 2 Zone (**MB Figure 2**). The part of the site intended for development forms a 'plateau' of higher land, rising towards the northeast corner (19m AOD) from the lowest part of the site which is at 15m AOD (**MB Figure 7** and Topographical Survey CD 1.23). In February 2024 a line of debris along the edge of the plateau indicated the 'tide mark' from earlier flooding and in March 2024 water in the stream had reached the top of the banks and overflowed in several places. (MB Viewpoint H)

4.3.2 The land either side of the stream is part of the landscape feature that the stream represents. Although a barrier at ground level the stream is entirely visually permeable with seamless continuity of character on either side. Consequently, the site is open to the adjoining landscape both visually and in terms of character. (e.g. MB Viewpoints G, H and I)

4.4 The Wood

- 4.4.1 The site includes a small area of woodland/copse located within what appears to be a pit. It includes an A category oak, two B category oaks and a B category group of oak as well as willow and field maple. It appears to be subject to inundation when water levels are high. The Figures in MB Appendix 3 are from the Appellant's Heritage desk-based assessment (CD 1.16). For ease of reference, the site has been added to the historic OS maps. They show the wood as being present on the oldest map (1875) where it is located in the corner of a field that has now been amalgamated into a larger field.

4.5 Historic development

- 4.5.1 The OS maps (MB Appendix 3) show that until after the 1950s the site was divided into several smaller fields. There appears to have been a linear field along much of the Lower Horsebridge Stream within the site and the remainder of the site was divided into three irregular fields. The A22 which was completed by 1950s had been started prior to the 2nd World War. It severed the site from the landscape to the west. The land between the Lower Horsebridge Stream, the A22 and the A271 was amalgamated into a single field post 1950 and it is this single field, whose dimensions have been determined by the A22 Bypass and the Lower Horsebridge Stream, that forms the appeal site.

4.6 Relationship to Adjacent Settlements

- 4.6.1 The site is closer to the edge of Lower Horsebridge than it is to Hailsham. Lower Horsebridge is a village separated from Hailsham by the River Cuckmere corridor, which divides into two channels in places. Lower Horsebridge is currently predominately formed by linear development along the three roads that meet at the junction between the A271 and the B2104. However, two recently granted permissions for residential development, (MB Figure 5) one on either side of North Street (B2104), will give the village a more compact character.
- 4.6.2 Both recently permitted developments are located within the village of Lower Horsebridge and on the Lower Horsebridge side of the River Cuckmere corridor. The eastern site (WD/2019/1575/MAO) extends into the edge of the River Cuckmere corridor and includes land within Flood Zones 2 & 3. Development is limited to higher ground closer to North

Street. **MB Figure 5** shows the location of the proposed developments in comparison with the appeal site.

- 4.6.3 The appeal site is not adjacent to either Hailsham or Lower Horsebridge but instead it is separated from them by the River Cuckmere corridor and Lower Horsebridge Stream and their associated flood zones. The closest development to the site is the single row of properties along the A271 and development at the Boship roundabout such as the petrol station and the Travel Lodge.
- 4.6.4 Hailsham has expanded significantly to the north over the last 15 years following the grant of permission for Welbury Meadows. Housing on the northern edge of Hailsham is visible from the site and from the A271. The River Cuckmere corridor now functions as a strong barrier to further northward extension. In addition, the presence of the River Cuckmere corridor and its associated flood zones has resulted in a wide band of natural vegetation between the river and the built edge of Hailsham. It runs along the northern edge of the new development and then extends to the south west between two areas of built form. This has resulted in a very attractive and effective northern edge to the settlement. Housing on the new northern edge of Hailsham is visible, especially in winter, but it is filtered by natural vegetation.
- 4.7 Public Open Space on the Northern Edge of Hailsham**
- 4.7.1 The new edge of Hailsham is a good example of a successful transition between the built form and the wider landscape, as experienced from the wider landscape. It represents the kind of '*sensitive and integrated urban edge*³⁶' recommended in the Landscape Guidelines for LCA 3A.
- 4.7.2 The current edge is also a good example of that transition as experienced from the new development. Close to the development are some more managed areas of public open space (POS) which gradually give way to more natural areas of POS. These natural areas, previously wet pasture, are waterlogged in places and are perceived as part of the River Cuckmere corridor. The River itself marks the northern edge of these areas of POS and is a valued and attractive landscape feature. Its meanders and the riverine vegetation along

³⁶ CD 9.1 LUC Character Assessment Page 85

the river banks, including mature trees, emphasises the natural qualities of the POS - a strong contrast to the effect that a hedge/fence /linear woodland would have.

4.7.3 The permeable character of the edge of the POS that sits beyond the northern edge of the built development means that the site is widely visible from the POS. Views across the site vary and MB Viewpoints D and E show two of these views. They include some of the elements that are visible from different parts of the POS:

- The field within which the site is located;
- The wood within the site;
- Vegetation within the River Cuckmere corridor;
- The edge of Lower Horsebridge;
- Brook House seen in an almost entirely rural setting;
- Development along the A271 and at the Boship roundabout; and
- Traffic on the A271.

4.7.4 Views out from the POS are attractive and rural in character despite the presence of some built features. Built features such as the petrol station at the Boship roundabout are clearly associated with the highways infrastructure and do not suggest a settlement. The open undeveloped character of the appeal site, the line of the Lower Horsebridge Stream which is marked by a change in vegetation, and the wood are integral to the sense that beyond the River Cuckmere there is open countryside.

4.7.5 The continuation of the River Cuckmere corridor to the west is marked by a treed horizon but is not visible from the POS. The main detractor to the perceptual qualities of the POS is traffic noise from the A22 which increases towards the western edge although traffic on the A22 is not visible. Views of development around the Boship roundabout and traffic on the A271 are also detractors but they are at some distance.

4.8 River Cuckmere Corridor

4.8.1 The section of the River Cuckmere corridor which lies to the south east of the site is part of a much more extensive landscape feature that runs generally from the north east to the south west. It runs between Hellingly and Lower Horsebridge and between Lower Horsebridge and Hailsham. It is crossed by the A22 and, just west of the A22, the Lower Horsebridge Stream joins it. From there it meanders south and west and passes through the South Downs National Park (SDNP) before reaching the sea at Cuckmere Haven. The section of the River Cuckmere corridor that which lies to the south east of the site is accessible due to the POS at the northern edge of Hailsham. Other parts of the River Cuckmere corridor in the vicinity of the site (the area shown on **MB Figure 2**) are less accessible. Consequently, it is a part of the River Cuckmere corridor which can be appreciated by the public.

4.8.2 The River Cuckmere is identified in all the landscape character documents cited in the previous section as an important landscape and ecological feature. E.g.:

- The winding channel of the upper Cuckmere River and its tributaries is listed as a 'Key Positive Landscape Attributes' for LCA 15 Eastern Low Weald;
- One of the strategies for LCA 15 is the enhancement of the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas of the Cuckmere Ouse watershed, the Pevensey Cuckmere Valley Link;
- The river valley of the Cuckmere provides topographical interest to the landscape, creating a sense of place as well as regulating water quality and water flow and preventing flooding.³⁷

4.8.3 Part of the value of the River Cuckmere corridor derives from the fact that the river hasn't been straightened or canalised and that tributaries (such as the Lower Horsebridge Stream) and channels (such as the one to the south of the A271) are still evident, giving topographical interest and a sense of place. The Sussex Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) are defined by the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership which is developing a vision for delivering the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) through a focus on Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.³⁸ **MB Figure 4** shows the location of the River Cuckmere Habitat Link which is one of the BOAs. The River Cuckmere Habitat Link includes land on either side of

³⁷ CD 9.1 LUC Character Assessment Page 82 & 83

³⁸ The Sussex Biodiversity Opportunity Areas MB Appendix 4

the Lower Horsebridge Stream as well as along the River Cuckmere and includes land within the site.

- 4.8.4 Detractors to the River Cuckmere corridor are noise and visible traffic from main roads that cross it and from development that encloses the river on both sides such as on the A271 on the edge of Hailsham.

4.9 Summary

- 4.9.1 The site is located more than 275m north of the edge of Hailsham and 25m west of Lower Horsebridge. Proposed built development within the site is even further from the existing settlements. The A22 lies to the west of the site and the A271 to the north. The eastern and southern boundaries are formed by the meandering course of the Lower Horsebridge Stream, a tributary to the River Cuckmere. There is a seamless continuity of character on either side of the stream. A small copse within the site reflects historic field boundaries.
- 4.9.2 The area for development within the site is separated from Hailsham by the River Cuckmere corridor and from Lower Horsebridge by the Lower Horsebridge Stream, along with their associated flood zones. The new edge of Hailsham has created a successful transition between the built form and the wider landscape. It forms a sensitive and integrated urban edge which is appreciated from the wider landscape and enjoyed as a recreational resource as POS. The site is widely visible from this POS.
- 4.9.3 The River Cuckmere corridor is an important landscape and ecological feature identified at all levels of the landscape assessments. Part of its value is derived from the fact that the river has not been straightened or canalised and that tributaries, such as the Lower Horsebridge Stream and channels are still evident, giving topographical interest and a sense of place.

5 Landscape Value

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 GLVIA3 recommends that the value of a landscape is identified at the baseline stage. The sensitivity of a landscape is judged at the assessment stage as a combination of the value of the landscape and its susceptibility. Landscape susceptibility is development-specific and is only assessed once the potential impacts of a development are known. Landscape value is inherent.
- 5.1.2 Whilst it is agreed that the site as a whole does not form part of a valued landscape for the purposes NPPF Para 180, the adjacent River Cuckmere Corridor is considered to be a valued landscape. It extends into the site but also extends well beyond the site. It is important that the features of importance/ value within the landscape in which the site is located are identified. The assessment of landscape effects must consider how these features are impacted by the development.
- 5.1.3 In 2021 the Landscape Institute issued a Technical Guidance Note (TGN 2/21) about *Assessing landscape value outside national designations*³⁹. It is the preferred methodology for identifying the special landscape qualities in the landscape that includes the site. TGN 2/21 builds on the assessment of value as set out in GLVIA3 Box 5.1 and supersedes that assessment.

³⁹ I was one of the authors of the TGN 2/21

5.2 Landscape Value Assessment

5.2.1 I have undertaken the following assessment based on the factors and indicators identified in Table 1⁴⁰ of TGN 02/21.

5.2.2 In my assessment, I use the phrase ‘the site and its immediate landscape’ to describe the area whose value I am assessing. This includes those parts of the wider landscape to which the site contributes, or which make a contribution to the site. It is this immediate landscape that development on the site has the potential to affect. In this case, the immediate landscape includes the River Cuckmere corridor and the valley of the Lower Horsebridge Stream lies both within the site and within the River Cuckmere corridor. There is inevitably some overlap. As the River Cuckmere corridor has been assessed separately care has been taken not to ‘double count’ the value.

5.2.3 I have undertaken the following assessment based on the factors and indicators identified in Table 1 of TGN 02/21⁴¹.

Table 2: Assessment of Landscape Value - the site and immediate context

Factor	Definition	Landscape Qualities	Value
Natural heritage	<i>Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.</i>	The western and southern boundaries of the site are formed by the Lower Horsebridge Stream whose meandering character contributes positively to the landscape. The ‘valley’ of the Lower Horsebridge Stream is formed of River Gravel Deposits (similar to the valley of the River Cuckmere corridor) rather than the more widespread alluvium. (Bedrock and superficial geology in LUC Character Assessment). The River Cuckmere Habitat Link BAO lies partly within the site and within the immediate landscape.	Medium/High

⁴⁰ Table 1 includes all the factors previously covered by GLVIA Box 5.1.

⁴¹ Table 1 in TGN 2/21 includes all the factors previously covered by GLVIA Box 5.1.

Factor	Definition	Landscape Qualities	Value
Cultural heritage	<i>Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape.</i>	The site lies within the setting of two Grade II listed buildings, formerly farmhouses. It also forms the landscape setting for Lower Horsebridge. The course of the Lower Horsebridge Stream and the River Cuckmere have remained constant for at least 150 years (OS 1875, MB Appendix 3). Within the site field amalgamation has taken place since the 1950s	Medium
Landscape condition	<i>Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure.</i>	There has been a loss of historic field boundaries on the site as a result of the field amalgamation. The site remains in agricultural use and the copse within the site has been retained.	Medium
Associations	<i>Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.</i>	No known associations.	
Distinctiveness	<i>Landscape that has a strong sense of identity.</i>	The Lower Horsebridge Stream is a distinctive element. It forms part of the winding channel of the upper Cuckmere River and its tributaries which is a Key Positive Landscape Attribute of LCA 15 Eastern Low Weald. Parts of the site closest to the A roads are not distinctive.	Medium

Factor	Definition	Landscape Qualities	Value
Recreational	<i>Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.</i>	There is no public access to the site, but Footpath HEL/12/1 runs immediately to the east and the Wealdway, a promoted long distance route runs to the east and south east. Public Open Space (POS) along the River Cuckmere corridor beyond the northern edge of the town has recreational value.	Medium
Perceptual (Scenic)	<i>Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.</i>	The scenic value of the site is harmed by the A22 and the A271 and by development associated with the Boship Roundabout. Views towards the River Cuckmere corridor and the ridge of the SDNP add interest.	Medium
Perceptual (Wildness & tranquillity)	<i>Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies.</i>	The perceptual qualities of the site are harmed by noise from the A22 and the A271 and by views of traffic mostly on the A271.	Medium/low
Functional	<i>Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.</i>	The site forms the rural backdrop to the River Cuckmere corridor.	Medium/high

5.2.4 Overall, the value of the immediate landscape in which the site is located is medium. It is not considered to be a valued landscape for the purposes of the NPPF however it does contain landscape qualities that are valued, such as the Lower Horsebridge Stream which has been identified as a positive landscape attribute, and the role the site plays as a backdrop to the River Cuckmere corridor.

Table 3: Assessment of Landscape Value - the River Cuckmere corridor

Factor	Definition	Landscape Qualities	Value
Natural heritage	<i>Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.</i>	The River Cuckmere is a landscape with clear evidence of ecological and physiographic interest. The River Cuckmere corridor is formed of River Gravel Deposits rather than the more widespread alluvium. (Bedrock and superficial geology in LUC Character Assessment) The River Cuckmere Habitat Link BAO is centred on the River Cuckmere corridor. The South East Rivers Trust are currently developing a Storymap to showcase the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels catchment which includes the section of the river at Hailsham. The River Cuckmere corridor is included within the Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board's Biodiversity Action Plan.	High
Cultural heritage	<i>Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape.</i>	The River Cuckmere corridor shows evidence of time depth in the survival of field patterns that have been lost in some of the surrounding landscape. The River Cuckmere corridor provides a setting for some listed buildings associated with the River.	Medium

Factor	Definition	Landscape Qualities	Value
Landscape condition	<i>Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure.</i>	Close to the site the meandering river and its marshy vegetated landscape to the south are in good condition. The northern bank is more denuded. Beyond the immediate site location, the River Cuckmere corridor is in good condition.	High/ Medium
Associations	<i>Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.</i>	None known	
Distinctiveness	<i>Landscape that has a strong sense of identity.</i>	The River Cuckmere corridor where it is adjacent to the site is distinctive both when viewed from the northern edge of Hailsham and when viewed from the wider landscape. This distinctiveness strengthens west of the A22 and north of the A271.	High
Recreational	<i>Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.</i>	The Public Open Space (POS) between the River Cuckmere and the northern edge of the town has strong recreational value which is in part dependent on the distinctive character of the River Cuckmere corridor.	High/ Medium
Perceptual (Scenic)	<i>Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.</i>	The scenic value of the River Cuckmere corridor is good with few detractors.	High/ Medium

Factor	Definition	Landscape Qualities	Value
Perceptual (Wildness & tranquillity)	<i>Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies.</i>	The perceptual qualities of the River Cuckmere corridor are strong although noise from the A22 is harmful to the parts of the corridor closest to it.	High/ Medium
Functional	<i>Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.</i>	The River Cuckmere and its corridor of meandering streams and channels performs a valuable role in the healthy functioning of the landscape. There is clear evidence of its role within the flood plain	High

5.2.5 Overall, the value of the River Cuckmere corridor, which includes land immediately to the south of the site, is **high**. It is considered to be a valued landscape for the purposes of the NPPF.

5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1 The value of the immediate landscape in which the part of the site proposed for built form is located is assessed as medium and it is not considered to be a valued landscape for the purposes of the NPPF. However, part of the site, the Lower Horsebridge Stream, is located with the River Cuckmere corridor which is considered to be a valued landscape for the purposes of the NPPF. This is because of its ecological and physiographic interest, its distinctiveness, and the clear role that it plays in the healthy functioning of the landscape.

6 Other Assessments

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The landscape in which the site is located has been considered in two recent assessments:

- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Residential and Employment Development 2023 (Sensitivity Study) (LUC) (CD 9.2).
- Wealden District Council Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, February 2024 (SHELAA) (CD 6.8)

6.1.2 The site has also been considered in two older studies that included an assessment of landscape sensitivity:

- Wealden Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment, 2014 (CBA Character Assessment) (CD 9.12)
- South Wealden Growth Area Landscape and Ecology Studies (The Landscape Partnership) (TLP Study) (CD 9.13)

6.1.3 The LVA makes reference to both these documents (Paragraphs 1.21 to 1.38) and so for completeness, I have included a quick summary of the conclusions of the superseded assessments towards the end of this section.

6.2 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Residential and Employment Development, 2023 (CD 9.2)

6.2.1 Within the Sensitivity Assessment the site is located within Hailsham West Assessment unit (Figure A.62 Location of Hailsham West assessment unit). This is a large assessment unit which extends along the whole of the western side of Hailsham (west of the A22) as well as to the north of Hailsham. It includes land to the north and west of Lower Horsebridge as well as land between Lower Horsebridge and the urban edge of Hailsham.

6.2.2 Flood Zone 3 which is located within the eastern and southern parts of the site is considered an absolute constraint to development. **MB Figure 9** shows the location of the part of the Hailsham West assessment unit located close to the site.

6.2.3 The Table on Pages A-100 & 101 assesses the Hailsham West assessment unit against a range of assessment criteria. Commentary relevant to the location of the site include:

- Landform - gently rolling landscape lowers sensitivity.
- River corridors are lined by woodland and form part of the Pevensey and Cuckmere Valley Link and River Cuckmere Habitat Link (**MB Figure 4**). They indicate areas of higher sensitivity.
- Modern field amalgamations have lower sensitivity.
- Historic features, including Grade II listed buildings within Lower Horsebridge, indicate areas of higher sensitivity.
- The northern settlement edge of Hailsham is relatively well integrated with the fringing landscape by hedgerows and trees. The River Cuckmere provides a strong boundary feature. Moderate sensitivity.
- Approved development in Lower Horsebridge will result in lower sensitivity.
- In the north, the landscape currently provides separation between Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge which results in higher sensitivity.
- The strong network of PRoW including the Wealdway indicated moderate sensitivity.
- In the north, there are views across farmland to the riparian woodland along the River Cuckmere which results in areas of higher sensitivity.

6.2.4 Key landscape sensitivities include:

- The narrow river valleys of the Cuckmere and tributaries.
- The rural setting the assessment unit provides to Hailsham.
- The rural setting and sense of separation provided in the north to Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge.
- Occasional long-distance views of the South Downs National Park.

6.2.5 The overall sensitivity assessment is that the Hailsham West assessment unit has **moderate-high** sensitivity to the scale of development proposed (medium scale residential). Moderate high sensitivity is defined as:

‘Landscape and visual characteristics/ values of the assessment unit are susceptible to change. The assessment unit may be able to accommodate the

relevant type of development but only in limited areas or limited amounts without adverse change or significant effects.’⁴²

- 6.2.6 The summary of overall landscape sensitivity identifies the ‘*narrow river valleys of the Cuckmere and its tributaries*’ as one of the landscape features that increase sensitivity. Areas where there are no strong landscape features defining the edge of Hailsham have lower sensitivity. The River Cuckmere is identified as a strong boundary feature.
- 6.2.7 Variations in landscape sensitivity identifies two features that result in higher sensitivity (i.e. higher than moderate-high). Both are relevant to the site:
- The River Cuckmere valley is an important landscape feature, and has a high degree of remoteness and tranquillity, and therefore a higher sensitivity to development.
 - The land between Lower Horsebridge and Hailsham in the north is more sensitive to development, as development here could cause coalescence of the two settlements.
- 6.2.8 Although the section of the River Cuckmere valley closest to the site is not as remote or tranquil as other sections of the River it does still have a degree of tranquillity which is not present elsewhere.
- 6.2.9 Relevant strategic landscape guidance includes the following:
- Protect and enhance the narrow valley of the River Cuckmere, maintaining the floodplain as grazing land;
 - Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Pevensey and Cuckmere Valley Link, River Cuckmere Habitat Link ... where possible, including woodland and wetland creation;
 - Where possible, preserve the rural setting and separation between Lower Horsebridge ... and Hailsham; and
 - Ensure development does not affect the occasional long-distance views to the South Downs National Park.

⁴² CD 9.2 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Residential and Employment Development 2023 Table 2.3: Overall landscape sensitivity, Page 12

6.3 Wealden District Council Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, February 2024 (SHELAA) (CD 6.8)

6.3.1 The WDC SHELAA has been produced in support of the draft Wealden Local Plan Regulation 18 document as a comprehensive study of the availability, suitability, and achievability of land to meet the identified need for different development uses over the time period of the new Local Plan up to 2040.⁴³

6.3.2 The appeal site forms part of a wider parcel of land under the reference 780/3100 Land east of A22 and south of A271, Lower Horsebridge. It comprises the land between the River Cuckmere and the southern edge of Lower Horsebridge as it stretches between the A22 to the west and the A271 to the east (**MB Figure 6**). The site has been assessed as unsuitable for the following reasons:

- The site's role in the separation between Hailsham, Lower Horsebridge and Upper Horsebridge while being part of the River Cuckmere corridor;
- Most of the site is in Flood Risk Zones 2 or 3 which preclude development in such areas; and
- The 2023 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment considers the site of moderate to high sensitivity to residential development.⁴⁴

6.3.3 The SHELAA refers to the application which is the subject of this appeal and notes that it has been refused.

⁴³ CD 6.8 Wealden District Council SHEELA, Page 3

⁴⁴ CD 6.8 Wealden District Council SHEELA, Page 381

6.4 Superseded Studies

6.4.1 Within the 2014 CBA Assessment (CD 9.12) the site is considered within a section described as the setting of Hailsham and is located within Setting Area 9. The CBA Assessment concluded:

*'Landscape Setting Area 9 is considered to have Low Landscape Capacity as a result of its High Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value. This area has a strong landscape structure of mature hedgerows and trees and strong historic continuity, resulting from the ancient field pattern. Valuable landscape features include mature hedgerows and trees. The gently meandering corridor of the River Cuckmere, which is lined with patchwork of predominantly pastoral, ancient fields is considered to have High Landscape Sensitivity.'*⁴⁵ (Emphasis added)

6.4.2 The TLP Study (CD 9.13) was commissioned to inform an earlier draft local plan which has since been withdrawn. The site considered has the same reference and extent as the 2024 SHLELAA site (Site 780/3100). The TLP Study makes similar comments to the 2014 CBA study with regard to the importance of the River Cuckmere corridor which is described as *'an important swathe of undeveloped land which separates the village of Lower Horsebridge from the urban area of Upper Horsebridge and Hailsham.'*⁴⁶ Site 780/3100 is described as having a strong pastoral character despite the proximity of the urban area.⁴⁷ The River Cuckmere corridor is identified as a distinctive characteristic and the Lower Horsebridge Stream is identified as a key feature. Overall, site 780/3100 is considered to have high landscape value and moderate-low capacity for residential development.⁴⁸

6.4.3 The TLP Study does suggest that the north western corner of the site could accommodate development which is described as having the potential to be being *'a continuation to the settlement pattern of Lower Dicker along the A271 and relate to the existing concentration of development around the A22/A271 roundabout junction.'*⁴⁹ In the following section I set out why I consider that development in this part of Site 780/3100 would not be read as a continuation to the settlement pattern of Lower Dicker.

⁴⁵ CD 9.12 Wealden Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment 2014, Page 126

⁴⁶ CD 9.13 The South Wealden Growth Area Landscape and Ecology Studies Page 665

⁴⁷ CD 9.13 The South Wealden Growth Area Landscape and Ecology Studies Page 665

⁴⁸ CD 9.13 The South Wealden Growth Area Landscape and Ecology Studies Page 667

⁴⁹ CD 9.13 The South Wealden Growth Area Landscape and Ecology Studies Page 668

6.5 Summary

- 6.5.1 The site is located within the Hailsham West assessment unit which the most recent sensitivity study undertaken in 2023 has identified as having **moderate-high** sensitivity to the scale of development proposed. In addition, the proposed development would engage two of the factors within the Hailsham West assessment unit that indicated high sensitivity. These are the River Cuckmere corridor and a potential change in the relationship between Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge.
- 6.5.2 The 2024 SHELAA considered a larger site which included the appeal site and concluded that it was unsuitable for residential development.

7 Landscape Effects of the Proposals

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The landscape effects of the proposals are the result of:

- The detached nature of the site;
- The presence of flood zones 2 and 3 within the site that exacerbate that detachment and the density of the area proposed for built development;
- The noise mitigation measures that have necessitated a design along the A271 and the Boship Roundabout that are unduly urban in character and uncharacteristic of surrounding settlement;
- Harm to the Hailsham settlement edge.
- The unenclosed character of three of the site boundaries;
- Sandwiching the River Cuckmere corridor between two areas of development;
- Loss of a connection between the River Cuckmere corridor and the wider landscape.

7.2 The detached nature of the Site / Area of development

7.2.1 As described in Section 4 above the site is not connected to either the settlement of Hailsham or Lower Horsebridge. It is not clear from the LVA or from the Appellant's SoC which of the settlement the development is envisaged to belong to. The site is closer to Lower Horsebridge but there is a clear separation between the development and Lower Horsebridge which has been increased in the latest revised Parameters Plan.

7.2.2 The 2017 TLP Study considered that the site might be seen as forming 'a continuation to the settlement pattern of Lower Dicker along the A271 and relate to the existing concentration of development around the A22/A271 roundabout junction.' The character of Lower Dicker is set out in Section 2 of the HNP Retention of the Separate Character and Identity of the Four Main Settlements. It is identified as 'a dispersed linear settlement.'⁵⁰ The HNP goes on to explain that 'Because it does not follow the nucleated pattern of most

⁵⁰ CD 5.4 Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan Paragraph 150

settlements within the District any appreciation of its present form requires an understanding of this local history.⁵¹ Paragraphs 152-158 set out the historical origins of the village and Policy LD1 includes that new development should clearly demonstrate 'How it protects the historic pattern of development clusters of built form.' The appeal proposals clearly do not reflect the historic linear character of Lower Dicker.

- 7.2.3 The LVA relies on the conclusions of the 2017 TLP Study. Noting that the less sensitive area identified in that Study '*equates to the proposed development area*'⁵² and goes on to conclude that:

*'Overall, the 2017 assessment contains some important positive indications that there is capacity for development in the less sensitive western corner of the site and with a sensitive and well-targeted landscape strategy to address the landscape and visual issues and provide landscape enhancements.'*⁵³

- 7.2.4 The LVA does not mention that the 2017 TLP Study concluded that this area was less sensitive based on the idea that it would form a continuation to the settlement pattern of Lower Dicker. The appeal proposals would clearly not form a continuation of the linear settlement pattern of Lower Dicker development and would be as detached from Lower Dicker as they are from Lower Horsebridge and Hailsham.

- 7.2.5 As all the documents stress, the River Cuckmere corridor is an effective means of separating Hailsham from Lower Horsebridge. It would also separate the proposed development from Hailsham and consequently, the proposed development would not function as an extension to Hailsham but as a separate detached housing estate in the countryside.

- 7.2.6 The isolation from Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge is exacerbated by the presence of flood zones 2 and 3 within the site. The flood zones constrain the area available for built development and associated infrastructure which as a result is squashed into the corner of the site furthest from the existing settlements. Instead of being connected to the settlements the development faces two busy A roads without even any settlement on the opposite side of the A roads.

⁵¹ CD 5.4 Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan Paragraph 152

⁵² CD 1.14 LVA Paragraph 1.34

⁵³ CD 1.14 LVA Paragraph 1.38

7.3 Design Responses to Flood and Noise Constraints

- 7.3.1 As described above the design response to the flood zone constraints has squashed the built development within site into the north western corner of the site. In the latest Parameters Plan, TOR-XX-ZZ-DR-A-P011 Rev. C, the area for development is further constrained. As explained in the Appellant's SoC in response to *'the Council's heritage reason for refusal a further amendment has been made to remove all built development southeast of Brook House / east of the proposed access road.'*⁵⁴ The revised Illustrative Masterplan TOR-XX-ZZ-DR-A-P010 Rev C removes these dwellings without making any other changes so it is not clear how the shortfall will be addressed although the parameters plan indicates that more than half of the site will consist of dwellings 2.5-3 storeys in height and making all these dwellings 3 storeys might be one means of increasing the density to achieve the required number of dwellings.
- 7.3.2 There is no open space 'within' the built area which is limited to roads, houses and gardens. This is presumably a response to the need to keep all built development outside the flood zones.
- 7.3.3 The Illustrative Masterplan shows an almost continuous facade of 2.5-3 storey blocks lining the edge of the Boship roundabout and the A271. Although the Illustrative Masterplan is indicative it is assumed that this almost continuous façade up to 12m in height is a response to the Noise Assessment (CD 1.22) which recommends *'The use of continuous buildings adjacent to the surrounding road network should be considered to maximise acoustic screening to other areas of the site which do not front onto the A37. If this is not practicable, reducing gaps between dwellings should be considered.'*⁵⁵ The reference to the A37 is clearly a mistake but it is not clear whether the Noise Assessment is referring to the A22 or the A271. The A22 is the large noisier road but the almost continuous facade of 2.5-3 storey blocks on the Illustrative Masterplan appears to be primarily along the A271.
- 7.3.4 The Illustrative Masterplan shows apartment style blocks along both the main access road and the parallel road at the A271 ends. It is not clear if these blocks are a response to the noise constraints or a means of achieving higher densities.

⁵⁴ CD 13.4 Appellant's SoC paragraph 3.9

⁵⁵ CD 1.22 Noise Impact Assessment, Page 21

7.3.5 The use of 2.5-3 storey blocks with almost continuous facades may reduce noise from the roads to an acceptable level but it is entirely unsuited to this rural location and uncharacteristic of the existing style of buildings or the existing settlement pattern. It is in stark contrast to the existing northern edge of Hailsham, the western edge of Lower Horsebridge, linear development within Lower Dicker or the sporadic, dispersed development along the A271.

7.4 Harm to the Settlement Edges

7.4.1 As described in Section 4 above the existing northern edge of Hailsham, although relatively new is effective and attractive. Natural vegetation within the flood zones 2 and 3, which has developed on former wet pasture, filters views of the development and provides an attractive structure for the POS which is a valued recreational resource for residents of Hailsham. Along with the site it forms an important swathe of undeveloped land on the northern edge of Hailsham. Although this wider area contains some linear development (along the A271) and highway-related development (at the Boship roundabout) they are clearly development within a wider rural landscape and not part of a settlement.

7.4.2 The proposed development would harm this effective transition from town to countryside. From the current northern edge of Hailsham it would be evident that there was a substantial residential development located to the north. It would not be clear whether this was meant to be part of Hailsham or a separate settlement.

7.4.3 From the surrounding roads, in particular from the Boship roundabout and the A271, I consider that it is unlikely to be clear whether this is now the edge of Hailsham or Lower Horsebridge or no settlement at all. From here the River Cuckmere corridor would no longer have a visual role to play in providing the settlement edge. This will be exacerbated by the road widening and the loss of the hedgerow along the southern edge of the A271. The current low clipped hedge is entirely rural in character and allows views across the site towards the River Cuckmere corridor and beyond that filtered views of the existing sympathetic northern edge of Hailsham which consist of 2 and 2.5 storey houses.

7.4.4 The development will also harm the character of the existing settlement edge of Lower Horsebridge. Currently, there is a clear end to the village, along the edge proposed as the settlement boundary in the emerging local plan. There is no development south of the A271 which provides an open countryside setting to the village. From the A271 there are

views to the north of a sloping open field between the edge of the village and Brook House which has still retained its rural character. This field is the location of an application for the development of a sports hub facility (resolved to approve by Planning Committee South on 25 January 2024) and will in future contain a pedestrian link to the sports fields (MB Figure 5). Although the small buildings associated with the playing fields will not be visible lighting columns will be and this development will have a slight urbanising influence on this edge of Lower Horsebridge.

7.4.5 The edge of Hailsham is visible from the A271 on the western edge of Lower Horsebridge, but filtered by vegetation and seen at some distance. In contrast, the appeal proposals would be much closer and there would be little sense of leaving Lower Horsebridge before arriving at the edge of the development. It is unlikely to be clear whether arriving in Hailsham or just another part of Lower Horsebridge.

7.4.6 Two recent planning permissions have been granted in Lower Horsebridge which are shown on MB Figure 5. They will clearly read as part of Lower Horsebridge.

7.4.7 As described above the edge of the new development would be formed by an almost continuous facade of 2.5-3 storey blocks lining the edge of the Boship roundabout and the A271. Development on this site will inevitably have an urbanising effect, but this wall of buildings, along with the significant road widening, the 3m wide footway and the loss of the hedgerow, will significantly exacerbate the urbanising effect of residential development. It will result in a harsh and abrupt interface with the wider landscape.

7.5 Lack of Enclosure

7.5.1 The LVA (CD 1.14) refers to '*the effective enclosure of the site*' (paragraph 1.120) and this is repeated in the Appellant's Case (SoC) which appears to rely on what it describes as '*the limited extent of visibility of the site*' (paragraph 4.22). This is not an accurate description. As set out in section 4 above there is no enclosure on the eastern and southern boundaries of the site and the low clipped hedge along the A271 which allows clear views across the site is, in any case, to be removed for the development. The effect on visual receptors is considered in the following section of this report but the lack of enclosure on three sides of the site also has landscape implications.

- 7.5.2 The lack of enclosure along the Lower Horsebridge Stream is part of the character of the steam valley where landscape character flows seamlessly across the stream. This is also part of the character of the River Cuckmere corridor. The continuity of character either side of the Lower Horsebridge Stream is evident from all the MB Viewpoints in my Appendix 1 except from MB Vp J. The red shading used to show the location of the site highlights how difficult it is currently to identify where the site begins. This continuity of landscape character would be disrupted by the proposed development.
- 7.5.3 The area of development within the site is entirely open to the River Cuckmere corridor. Consequently, development will be clearly visible from the River Cuckmere corridor (E.g. MB Vps D & E) changing the setting of the River Cuckmere corridor and perceptions of it both from within the corridor and from outside.
- 7.6 Harm to the River Cuckmere Corridor**
- 7.6.1 Currently the section of the River Cuckmere corridor south of the site is constrained by development to the south, the northern edge of Hailsham but unconstrained immediately to the north where the pastoral character of the site is supportive of the character of the River Cuckmere corridor. The A271, the Boship roundabout and Sporadic development along the A271 do constrain the River Cuckmere corridor but at a distance. Brook House is a positive contribution to the rural character of the wider landscape.
- 7.6.2 The development would enclose this part of the River Cuckmere corridor, sandwiching the corridor between the existing development on the northern edge of Hailsham and the proposed development. The north western corner of the site is at 19m AOD with the River Cuckmere corridor at 15m AOD. 3 Storey, continuous façade development will block any sense of the River Cuckmere corridor being connected to the wider landscape. There will still be some views through the eastern part of the site, but these will also be framed by development on both sides - the appeal proposals to the west and the existing edge of Lower Horsebridge to the east. The openness of this section of the River Cuckmere corridor and its connections to the wider landscape will be significantly diminished.

7.7 Landscape Sensitivity - the Site and Immediate Landscape

7.7.1 The sensitivity of the site is a combination of the **susceptibility** of the site (and the surrounding landscape) to the development proposed and the **value** placed on the site and the surrounding landscape.

7.7.2 The susceptibility to change of a landscape is its ability 'to accommodate proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies'.⁵⁶ GLVIA3 makes clear that the assessment of susceptibility 'should not be recorded as part of the landscape baseline but should be considered a part of the assessment of effects.'⁵⁷

7.7.3 The susceptibility of the site within its immediate landscape to the proposed development is due to:

- The lack of connections with existing settlements;
- The uncharacteristic nature of the built form along the A271 and around the Boship roundabout;
- The lack of enclosure, especially along the Lower Horsebridge Stream.

7.7.4 The development is not consistent with landscape guidance for this area including:

- The vision for the Eastern Low Weald of a scattered settlement pattern centred on the established and historic service villages;
- That the design and layout of new developments in the Eastern Low Weald respects the character and form of the landscape and existing settlements;
- Conserving the dispersed rural settlement pattern of LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale;
- Ensuring a sensitive and integrated urban edge for any extension of Hailsham within LCA 3A;
- Protecting and enhancing the narrow valley of the River Cuckmere within the Hailsham West Assessment unit; and
- Preserving the rural setting and separation between Lower Horsebridge and Hailsham within the Hailsham West Assessment unit.

⁵⁶ CD 9.4 GLVIA3 Page 88, Paragraph 5.40

⁵⁷ CD 9.4 GLVIA3 Page 89, Paragraph 5.42

- 7.7.5 I consider that the site within its immediate landscape has **medium/high** susceptibility to the development proposed. Taking into account the **medium** value of the landscape in which the site is located and **medium/high** susceptibility to the development proposed, I consider that the sensitivity of the site to the proposed development is **medium/high**.
- 7.7.6 Due to the factors identified above I consider the magnitude of change to be **medium/high** and the nature of the change adverse. The overall effect on the site and its immediate landscape would be **moderate/major adverse**. The harm derives largely from the lack of connection to the existing settlements and this would not change after 15 years assuming the successful establishment of the proposed planting.
- 7.8 **Landscape Sensitivity - the River Cuckmere Corridor**
- 7.8.1 The susceptibility of the River Cuckmere corridor to the proposed development is due to:
- The loss of current connections to the wider landscape
 - Being sandwiched between two areas of development
- 7.8.2 I consider that the River Cuckmere corridor has **medium/high** susceptibility to the development proposed. With the **high** value of the River Cuckmere corridor and the **medium/high** susceptibility of the site to the development proposed, I consider that the sensitivity of this section of the River Cuckmere corridor to the proposed development is **high**.
- 7.8.3 Due to the factors identified above I consider the magnitude of change to be **medium/low** and the nature of the change adverse. The overall effect on this section of the River Cuckmere corridor, would be **moderate adverse**. The loss of connection to the wider landscape and the enclosure by development would not change after 15 years. The establishment of planting within the Lower Horsebridge Stream valley would have some beneficial effects on the River Cuckmere corridor but the effect of being sandwiched between two areas of built development would not be mitigated and the effect after 15 years would remain **moderate adverse**.
- 7.8.4 The LVA does not acknowledge the important role that the undeveloped nature of the site plays in the character of the River Cuckmere corridor. Consequently, the LVA does not recognise the harm that the development would do to the character of this section of the River Cuckmere corridor.

7.9 Summary

7.9.1 The landscape effects of the proposals are the result of:

- The detached nature of the site;
- The presence of flood zones 2 and 3 within the site that exacerbate both detachment and density;
- Noise constraints that result in particularly uncharacteristic development;
- Harm to the Hailsham settlement edge;
- The unenclosed character of three of the site boundaries;
- Sandwiching the River Cuckmere corridor between two area of development;
- Loss of a connection between the River Cuckmere corridor and the wider landscape.

7.9.2 The proposed development would not belong to Hailsham, Lower Horsebridge or Lower Dicker. It would appear as an isolated block of development in the countryside, separated from the first two settlements by the River Cuckmere corridor. The appeal proposals would harm the existing edges of both settlements by placing substantial residential development in the rural landscape that currently forms part of the setting of the settlements.

7.9.3 An almost continuous facade of 2.5-3 storey blocks which would line the edge of the Boship roundabout and the A271 would be entirely unsuited to this rural location, and uncharacteristic of the existing settlement pattern. The lack of enclosure on the eastern and southern boundaries means development within the site will be clearly visible from the River Cuckmere corridor which would become sandwiched between two areas of built development. This would diminish the sense of openness and connectivity to the wider landscape.

7.9.4 The immediate landscape in which the site is located has **medium** value and **medium/high** susceptibility to the development proposed and I consider that the sensitivity of the site to the proposed development is **medium/high**. The magnitude of change is **medium/high** adverse and the overall effect on the site and its immediate landscape, would be **moderate/major adverse**. Proposed planting would not mitigate the harm.

- 7.9.5 The River Cuckmere corridor has **high** value and **medium/high** susceptibility to the development proposed and I consider that the sensitivity of the site to the proposed development is **high**. The magnitude of change is **medium/low adverse** and the overall effect on the River Cuckmere corridor would be **moderate adverse**. The proposed planting would not mitigate the harm.

8 Effects on Visual Amenity

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Visual changes that result in changes to the local landscape character have been described in the section above and where possible I have tried not to repeat the assessments. This section is concerned with the visual receptors that will experience those changes. Visual effects are a result of the sensitivity of visual receptors to the proposed development and the magnitude of changes to existing views.

8.1.2 GLVIA3 provides guidance on the relative sensitivity of different visual receptors (Page 113-114). In summary, the most sensitive receptors are:

- Residents at home;
- People engaged in outdoor activities whose attention is focused on the landscape and views; and
- Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views are an important part to the experience.

8.1.3 The least sensitive receptors are:

- People engaged in outdoor sports or activities which do not depend on an appreciation of views; and
- People at their place of work (although this can vary).

8.1.4 The sensitivity of road users varies. People on busy or main routes are considered to have medium or low sensitivity, whilst users of rural roads or scenic routes will have medium or even high sensitivity.

8.1.5 Visual receptors are people and the Council considers that there is a significant number of people whose visual amenity would be harmed by the proposed development. Visual receptors who would be affected by this development are:

- Users of the Fp 12 - High Sensitivity.
- Users of the Welbury Meadows POS - High Sensitivity
- Users of the A271 -Medium Sensitivity
- Users of the A22 - Low Sensitivity

- Users of the Boship roundabout - Low Sensitivity
- Wider footpath network - Users of Fp ARL/3/1 and Fp HEL/14 & Fp HEL/15 (FP 14 and 15) - High Sensitivity

8.2 Users of Fp 12 - High Sensitivity - MB Viewpoints H, F and G

8.2.1 Fp 12 leads west from the A271 near the north-eastern corner of where Lower Horsebridge Stream separates the footpath from the appeal site. The path then follows the southern settlement edge of Lower Horsebridge and runs across a field before it joins the A271 on the edge of Hailsham. While there is restricted visibility to the north of the path due to the boundary vegetation, views south, east and west are relatively open and feature the pastoral fields adjoining the site, the vegetation along the A22 and the River Cuckmere and partial views of the settlement edge of Hailsham. The dispersed built form at Boship Roundabout along with its lighting columns is also visible. Brook House features as a solitary property against a backdrop of mature vegetation on the A271.

8.2.2 There are direct views over the site from Fp 12. Views from the eastern part of the path (MB Vp F and G) see the site framed by the poplars on the edge of the Lower Horsebridge sports fields and vegetation along the A22 and the Cuckmere. Lower Horsebridge Stream does not provide a visual barrier between the site and the adjoining fields which appear as one parcel of open pastoral landscape. In wet seasons the stream rises out of its banks and forms a prominent water feature on the edge of the site.

8.2.3 There will be a significant change to visual amenity compared to the existing situation. There would be clear views of the proposed development and it would appear intrusive as a detached estate of houses that would diminish the appreciation of the rural setting of Lower Horsebridge and Brook House. The magnitude of change would be **high**, and the effect would be **major adverse**. When the proposed planting within the site has established views of the developed will be filtered but the intrusive nature of the development would remain as would the loss of the sense of open countryside. The magnitude of change would be **moderate**, and the effect would be **moderate/major adverse**.

8.3 Users of the Welbury Meadows POS - High Sensitivity MB Viewpoints D and E

- 8.3.1 The POS at the northern edge of Hailsham stretches between the developed areas of Welbury Meadows and the River Cuckmere. The POS is a system of areas of rough grassland, native scrub, and young tree planting with a network of footpaths. Some low-lying areas are subject to flooding in wet weather, restricting access. There are currently views from the POS across the River Cuckmere and the landscape between the river, the A22, A271 and Lower Horsebridge.
- 8.3.2 The Lower Horsebridge Stream does not form a visible barrier between the site and the surrounding fields which appear as one continuous landscape. The photograph for MB Vp D was taken during a wet season when the flooded areas were visible on the eastern edge of the site.
- 8.3.3 The proposed development would be clearly visible, and it would obscure views of Brook House. It would be closer than the houses on the edge of Lower Horsebridge and lessen the appreciation of the rural setting of the village. The sense of being on the edge of the open countryside would be lost. In addition, the isolated character of the development would be apparent. There would be **high** magnitude of change and **major adverse effect** on completion. After 15 years when the proposed planting has matured views will be filtered but the loss of the sense of open countryside would not lessen. The magnitude of change would be **moderate**, and the effect would be **moderate/major** adverse.

8.4 Users of the A271 - Medium Sensitivity - MB Viewpoints I, J, and K.

- 8.4.1 Users of the A271 include motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. The carriageway will be widened to accommodate an extra lane for turning and traffic separation islands with a 3m wide shared pedestrian/cycle path along the southern side of the carriageway (Site Access Layout, CD 2.11). The road widening will result in the almost complete removal of the existing hedge. A new hedge with trees is proposed as per the Illustrative Masterplan (CD 8.1) but it will be set behind a substantial verge to accommodate the required visibility splay. Two small fragments of hedgerow are shown as retained on the Site Access Layout but they would have lost their integrity.
- 8.4.2 The character of the A271 between Boship Roundabout and Lower Horsebridge will change substantially for all groups of receptors travelling in both directions. The road widening

and loss of hedgerow would result in a loss of the rural character of this part of the A271. There would be clear views of the proposed development. Built form would replace the open field that provides a sense of separation between the village and the Boship Roundabout. The proposed almost continuous façade of 2.5-3 storey houses would be at odds with the character of the dispersed built form around the roundabout. The magnitude of change would be **high** with **major/moderate adverse effect**. After 15 years the magnitude of change would be **medium** and the effect **moderate** adverse.

8.5 Users of the A22 - Low Sensitivity

8.5.1 Users of the dual carriageway currently travel at speed and have their views heavily filtered by the mature vegetation on both sides of the A22. They would experience fleeting views which would be filtered by the vegetation along the road. There would be **low** magnitude of change and **minor adverse effect** on completion and after 15 years.

8.6 Users of the Boship roundabout - Low Sensitivity

8.6.1 MB Viewpoints B and C. Users of the roundabout currently overlook the open field within the site with due to the low hedge on the western side of the roundabout. There are some views of development along the A271 and in Lower Horsebridge which are filtered by vegetation. The proposed development would be clearly visible as it would largely block the views over the open field. It would appear incongruous as the proposed houses would be different in character to the existing built form around the roundabout. There would be a **medium** magnitude of change and **moderate/minor effect** on completion and after 15 years.

8.7 Wider footpath network - Users of Fp ARL/3/1 and Fp HEL/14 & Fp HEL/15 (FP 14 and 15) - High Sensitivity

- 8.7.1 The LVA (CD 1.14) identifies views from the Wield Way (FP ARL/3/1) section between Hailsham and Michelham Priory (LVA Vps 7, 8 and 9) which feature fields enclosed by mature vegetation. Table 1.2 of the LVA states that *'some limited sections of the path have views towards the site with the A22 roadside site boundary vegetation and light columns at Boship roundabout perceptible.'*⁵⁸ Annotated photographs for LVA Vp 7 and 8 show a glimpsed view of the upper part of the telecom mast within the site which is discernible among the vegetation. The summary for the visual effects from these locations on page 31 states that *'The distance and layers of intervening vegetation, mean that the development would be difficult to perceive in most of the identified theoretical views and so have no influence on the character of the view. In one view the proposed development would be perceptible but would not be a prominent element of the view. Overall, the magnitude of change in views from the PROWs, is assessed as small to negligible adverse.'*
- 8.7.2 I agree that although the roofs of some buildings may be visible the effects will be negligible.
- 8.7.3 Users of Fp 14 and 15 experience views of the properties on the edge of Lower Dicker and some filtered views of the roadside services and lighting columns at Boship Roundabout. (MB Vp A). Some upper stories of the development will be visible above the existing buildings and vegetation, but they will be perceived in connection with the existing built form. The magnitude of change will be **low** and the effect **minor adverse**.

⁵⁸ CD 1.14 LVA, Page

8.8 LVA Assessment

- 8.8.1 The LVA in paragraph 1.124 concludes that ‘existing views often include elements of the existing developments and major roads that form part of the landscape in the local area so that in many cases, the proposed development would not be immediately noticeable or be at odds with the character of the wider views.’ As described above I consider that the development would be immediately noticeable from three sides of the site and that it would be at considerable variance with both the existing character of the landscape and the existing settlement character.

8.9 Summary

- 8.9.1 Development on the appeal site would be widely visible from the PRoW to the east, the POS to the south and the A271 to the north. It would appear as an isolated block of development unrelated to existing settlements. The effect on visual amenity would include **major adverse** effects from the PRoW and the POS.

9 Compliance with Landscape Related Planning Policies

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 This section assesses the proposals in the context of the relevant landscape related planning policies. It considers the proposals against the policies as drafted. It does not consider the weight to be attributed to the policies, or inconsistency with the policies. This is addressed in the evidence of Claire Turner.

9.2 Development Plan Policies

- 9.2.1 The development is not consistent with development plan policies because:
- It does not maintain the existing settlement pattern (EN2)
 - It does not conserve the setting of Hailsham or Lower Horsebridge, both settlements within the Low Weald (EN8).
 - It results in the loss of a significant length of hedgerow (EN14)
 - It does not respect the character of adjoining development and harms local distinctiveness (EN27).
 - It does not maintain landscape character (WCS 13).
 - It does not protect the rural character of the neighbourhood plan area (HNP objective) or the historic development pattern of Lower Horsebridge (LHB1).
 - It erodes the sense of openness and rural character of the existing setting of Lower Horsebridge (LHB1).
 - It does not respect the local character, identity and distinctiveness of Lower Horsebridge (LHB2)
 - It would include dwellings of more than 2 storeys (LHB2).

9.3 National Policies

9.3.1 The development would not be consistent with policies in the NPPF because it would:

- Not protect or enhance the natural, built or historic environment (Paragraph 8c);
- Not be sympathetic to local circumstances and does not reflect the character, of the local area (Paragraph 9);
- Not enhance Public Rights of Way (PRoW) (Paragraph 104);
- Not be sympathetic to local character or history, or the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. The 3 storey almost continuous façade along the A271 has the potential to be visually unattractive (Paragraph 135b);
- Harm the strong sense of place associated with the River Cuckmere corridor (Paragraph 135d);
- Not protect or enhance the valued landscape of the River Cuckmere corridor (Paragraph 180a);
- Harm the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (Paragraph 180b).

9.4 Conclusion

9.4.1 The proposed development would not be consistent with local or national policies that expect development to respect local natural built and historic character in order to maintain a strong sense of place. Rather than recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the River Cuckmere corridor the proposed development would harm this valued landscape.

10 Summary and Conclusions

This Summary forms my Summary Proof.

10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 My evidence addresses the first reason for the refusal of planning permission by WDC for 124 no. residential dwellings and associated infrastructure on land south of the A271 and east of the A22, Lower Horsebridge, Hailsham.

10.2 Landscape Related Planning Policy

- 10.2.1 National and development plan policies expect new development to:
- Protect and enhance valued landscapes;
 - Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside;
 - Have regard to the setting of settlements and complement the scale and character of the locality;
 - Recognise the distinctive character and pattern of development;
 - Be sympathetic to the existing local natural, built and historic character;
 - Maintain a strong sense of place; and
 - Protect the historic development pattern and key views and vistas within Hellingly Parish and maintain the sense of openness and rural character of the existing setting of the settlement of Lower Horsebridge.

10.3 Existing Landscape: Published Landscape Character Assessments (MB Figures 8, 9 and 10)

- 10.3.1 The site is located within NCA 121 Low Weald, a broad, low-lying clay vale, crossed by many small rivers and streams. The East Sussex County Landscape Assessment places the site within LCA 15 Eastern Low Weald (**MB Figure 8**). Key Positive Landscape Attributes of LCA 15 include pastoral landuse and the winding channel of the upper Cuckmere River and its tributaries. The vision for LCA 15 is for '*A strong landscape structure which can*

*accommodate pressure for change and development without detracting from the historic character.*⁵⁹ Strategies for LCA 15 include:

- Planning for the enhancement of the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- Ensuring that the design and layout of new developments respect the character and from of the landscape and existing settlements.

10.3.2 A new landscape character assessment for WDC was completed in 2022 which places the site within LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale (**MB Figure 9**) which is described as a low-lying landscape, crossed by the narrow river valleys of the Cuckmere and its tributaries. The edge of the LCA is strongly influenced by its proximity to Hailsham.⁶⁰ Landscape qualities within LCA 3A that are particularly valued for their contribution to character and ecosystem services include the topography of the river valleys which creates a sense from place.

10.3.3 Landscape Guidelines for LCA 3A include the conservation of the dispersed rural settlement pattern and considering the impact of development extending from Hailsham in order to preserve the rural character of the LCA and ensure that a sensitive and integrated urban edge is created/maintained.

10.3.4 Within the Susses HLC (**MB Figure 10**) most of the site is located in HLC subtype Modern Field Amalgamation whilst land along the eastern and southern boundaries adjoining the Lower Horsebridge Stream is within Informal Irregular Piecemeal Enclosure.

10.4 Existing Landscape Character: Appeal Site and Immediate Context

10.4.1 The site is located more than 275m north of the edge of Hailsham and 25m west of Lower Horsebridge. Proposed built development within the site is even further from the existing settlements. The A22 lies to the west of the site and the A271 to the north. The eastern and southern boundaries are formed by the meandering course of the Lower Horsebridge Stream, a tributary to the River Cuckmere. There is a seamless continuity of character either side of the stream. A small copse within the site reflects historic field boundaries.

10.4.2 The area for development within the site is separated from Hailsham by the River Cuckmere corridor and from Lower Horsebridge by the Lower Horsebridge Stream, along

⁵⁹ CD 9.10 East Sussex County Landscape Assessment, 2015, Eastern Low Weald, Table 4

⁶⁰ CD 9.1 LUC Character Assessment Page 73

with their associated flood zones. The new edge of Hailsham has created a successful transition between the built form and the wider landscape. It forms a sensitive and integrated urban edge which is appreciated from the wider landscape and enjoyed as a recreational resource as POS. The site is widely visible from this POS.

- 10.4.3 The River Cuckmere corridor is an important landscape and ecological feature identified at all levels of the landscape assessments. Part of its value is derived from the fact that the river hasn't been straightened or canalised and that tributaries and channels are still evident, giving topographical interest and a sense of place.

10.5 Landscape Value

- 10.5.1 The value of the immediate landscape in which the part of the site proposed for built form is located is assessed as medium and it is not considered to be a valued landscape for the purposes of the NPPF. However, part of the site, the Lower Horsebridge Stream, is located with the River Cuckmere corridor which is considered to be a valued landscape for the purposes of the NPPF. This is because of its ecological and physiographic interest, its distinctiveness, and the clear role that it plays in the healthy functioning of the landscape.

10.6 Other Studies

- 10.6.1 The site is located within the Hailsham West assessment unit which the most recent sensitivity study undertaken in 2023⁶¹ has identified as having moderate-high sensitivity to the scale of development proposed. In addition, the proposed development would engage two of the factors within the Hailsham West assessment unit that indicated high sensitivity. These are the River Cuckmere corridor and a potential change in the relationship between Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge.
- 10.6.2 The 2024 SHELAA considered a larger site which included the appeal site and concluded that it was unsuitable for residential development.

⁶¹ CD 9.2 Landscape-Sensitivity Assessment Residential and Employment Development 2023

10.7 Landscape Effects

10.7.1 The landscape effects of the proposals are the result of:

- The detached nature of the site;
- The presence of flood zones 2 and 3 within the site that exacerbate both detachment and density;
- Noise constraints that result in particularly uncharacteristic development;
- Harm to the Hailsham settlement edge;
- The unenclosed character of three of the site boundaries;
- Sandwiching the River Cuckmere corridor between two area of development;
- Loss of a connection between the River Cuckmere corridor and the wider landscape.

10.7.2 The proposed development would not belong to Hailsham, Lower Horsebridge or Lower Dicker. It would appear as an isolated block of development in the countryside, separated from the first two settlements by the River Cuckmere corridor. The appeal proposals would harm the existing edges of both settlements by placing substantial residential development in the rural landscape that currently forms part of the setting of the settlements.

10.7.3 An almost continuous facade of 2.5-3 storey blocks which would line the edge of the Boship roundabout and the A271 would be entirely unsuited to this rural location, and uncharacteristic of the existing settlement pattern. The lack of enclosure on the eastern and southern boundaries means development within the site will be clearly visible from the River Cuckmere corridor which would become sandwiched between two areas of built development. This would diminish the sense of openness and connectivity to the wider landscape.

10.7.4 The immediate landscape in which the site is located has **medium** value and **medium/high** susceptibility to the development proposed and I consider that the sensitivity of the site to the proposed development is **medium/high**. The magnitude of change is medium/high adverse and the overall effect on the site and its immediate landscape, would be **moderate/major adverse**. Proposed planting would not mitigate the harm.

10.7.5 The River Cuckmere corridor has **high** value and **medium/high** susceptibility to the development proposed and I consider that the sensitivity of the site to the proposed development is **high**. The magnitude of change is medium/low adverse and the overall effect on the River Cuckmere corridor would be **moderate adverse**. The proposed planting would not mitigate the harm.

10.8 Visual Effects

10.8.1 Development on the appeal site would be widely visible from the PRoW to the east, the POS to the south and the A271 to the north. It would appear as an isolated block of development unrelated to existing settlements. The effect on visual amenity would include major adverse effects from the PRoW and the POS.

10.9 Compliance with Landscape Related Planning Policies

10.9.1 The proposed development would not be consistent with local or national policies that expect development to respect local natural built and historic character in order to maintain a strong sense of place. Rather than recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the River Cuckmere corridor the proposed development would harm this valued landscape.

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

GLVIA	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, published jointly by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013.
Indirect effects*	Effects that result indirectly from the proposed project as a consequence of the direct effects, often occurring away from the site, or as a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway. They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects.
Key Landscape* Characteristics	Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.
Landscape character*	A distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, landuse and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.
Landscape designations	Areas protected by law or through planning policies for reason of their landscape qualities e.g. National Parks, AONB and Local Landscape Designations.
Landscape effects	Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right. Change in the elements, characteristics, character, and qualities of the landscape as a result of development.
Landscape elements	A component part of the landscape, such as trees, hedges, buildings and ponds.
Landscape features	Prominent eye-catching elements, e.g. tree clumps, wooded hill tops, and church towers/spires.
Landscape quality (or condition)*	Based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.
Landscape qualities	Term used to describe the aesthetic or perceptual and intangible characteristics of the landscape such as scenic quality, tranquillity, sense of wildness or remoteness. Cultural and artistic references may also be described here.
Landscape value*	The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a wide variety of reasons.
LCA	Landscape Character Area – single unique areas that are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type.
LCT	Landscape Character Type – distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature may occur in different areas in different parts of the country.
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
Magnitude*	A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect. The extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.
Mitigation	Measures including any process, activity, or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse environmental impact or effects of a development.
NCA	National Character Areas. Landscape character areas as defined for the whole of England.
Photomontage*	A visualisation which superimposes an image of a proposed development upon a photograph or series of photographs.
Receptor	Physical or perceptual landscape resource, special interest, viewer group or individuals that may be affected by a proposal.
Scale Indicators*	Landscape elements and features of a known or recognisable scale such as houses, trees and vehicles that may be compared to other objects where the scale of height is less familiar, to indicate their true scale.
Sense of Place (genius loci)*	The essential character and spirit of an area: genius loci literally means ‘spirit of the place’.

Sensitivity*	A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor.
Tranquillity*	A state of calm and quietude associated with peace, considered to be a significant asset of landscape.
Type or Nature of Effect	Whether an effect is direct or indirect, temporary or permanent, positive (beneficial), neutral or negative (adverse) or cumulative.
Visual amenity*	The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings which provide an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working and recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.
Visual effect*	Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.
Visualisation*	A computer stimulation, photomontage, or other technique illustrating the predicted appearance of a development.

Note: Descriptions marked with an asterisk are identical to those provided in the Third Edition Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment glossary or text.



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