Land at Downlands Farm, Uckfield

Environmental Impact Assessment

Non-Technical Summary

Prepared on behalf of Gleeson Land

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Gleeson Land (the Applicant), is applying for hybrid planning permission for the demolition of Chicory Cottage and associate outbuildings and the development of up to 424 residential dwellings, the creation of a Strategic Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), along with the provision of open space and associated access, parking, landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks (the 'Development') on land at Downlands Farm, Uckfield (the 'Site'). The Site is located within the administrative area of Wealden District Council (WDC) and extends to approximately 46 hectares (ha). The application boundary is shown on Figure 1.

Environmental Impact Assessment

1.2 An Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared to support the planning application. An ES is the report of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) carried out as required by national law known as the 'EIA Regulations'[1]. EIA is the process by which development proposals deemed likely to have significant environmental effects are appraised. This document is the non-technical summary of the ES and summarises the content and conclusions of the ES.

Environmental Statement Availability

1.3 Paper copies of [redacted]full ES (chapters and figures) and the technical appendices can be purchased at a cost of £150 and £250 respectively. Paper copies of the non-technical summary can be obtained for £15. Copies of the full ES can be obtained on memory stick for £15. All documents are available from:

Environmental Planning Team
Barton Willmore, now Stantec
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Tel: 020 7446 6888
Email: IEPenquiries@bartonwillmore.co.uk

1.4 The ES can be made available for public viewing by appointment at the following WDC address:

[1] SI 2017/571 as amended by SI 2018/695 and SI 2020/505

Wealden District Council
Planning and Building Control
Vicarage Lane
Hailsham, BN27 2AX

Viewings can be arranged by contacting the following:

Tel: 01323 443322
Email: planning@wealden.gov.uk

1.5 Following submission and validation of the planning application, the ES will also be available for public viewing and comment on the WDC website:

https://www.wealden.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/



2.0 EIA METHODOLOGY

2.1 EIA is a formal procedure that must be undertaken for certain types of development, in accordance with the EIA Regulations. EIA is used to assess the likely significant effects of a proposed development on the environment and sets out any mitigation measures which will be factored into the development to reduce particular impacts where necessary. The results are written into an ES which is submitted with the planning application. The ES provides the local planning authority (in this case WDC) with sufficient information about the potential environmental effects of the Development before a decision is made about whether to grant the planning application. Potentially significant effects may arise during the demolition, construction and operational phases of the Development and these phases have been considered as part of the EIA.

2.2 The ES has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations and reference has also been made to currently available good practice guidance on EIA including the Planning Practice Guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities[2].

Scoping

2.3 Scoping involves focusing the content of an ES on issues of significance. It is an important tool for identifying the likely significant effects of a proposed development through its design, construction and completed phases and ensures that appropriate mitigation options are considered where necessary.

2.4 An EIA Scoping Report (Appendix 2.1 of the ES) was submitted to WDC on 13th October 2020 in support of a request for an EIA Scoping Opinion in accordance with Regulation 15 of the EIA Regulations.

2.5 WDC adopted a Scoping Opinion on 30th November 2020 (Appendix 2.2 of the ES). Barton Willmore, now Stantec responded to the Scoping Opinion via email on 1st December 2020 to clarify the topics to be scoped in and out of the ES and a subsequent email response was provided by WDC on 11th December 2020 (Appendix 2.3 of the ES).

2.6 The disciplines scoped into the ES comprise:

[2] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

- Landscape and Visual;
- Biodiversity;
- Water Resources and Flood Risk;
- Cultural Heritage; and
- Land Contamination.

2.7 The Scoping process identified that the Development would not give rise to likely significant effects on the environment with respect to:

- Population and Human Health;
- Transport and Access;
- Air Quality;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Wind Microclimate;
- Daylight, Sunlight & Overshadowing;
- Agricultural Land;
- Lighting;
- Waste;
- Climate Change & Greenhouse Gases; and
- Accidents and Disasters.

EIA Methodology

2.8 The EIA Regulations stipulate that an ES should identify, describe and assess the likely significant effects of a development on the environment during the demolition/ construction and operational phases. The significance of each environmental effect identified is generally determined by two factors:

- The sensitivity, importance or value of the environment (such as people or wildlife); and
- The actual change taking place to the environment (i.e. the size or severity of change taking place).

2.9 Most environmental disciplines classify effects as negligible, adverse or beneficial, where effects are minor, moderate or major. Some disciplines use bespoke criteria based on published guidance. The technical studies have been undertaken in accordance with current best practice. Specific guidance used is referenced within each of the respective ES chapters. The majority of assessments involved consultations with statutory and non-statutory bodies, desk-based research, site inspections and surveys, impact prediction and mitigation.

2.10 The ES includes a description of the current environmental conditions known as the baseline conditions, against which the likely significant environmental effects of the development are assessed. The ES also looks at the future baseline and how, in the absence of the Development, the Site may change.

Consultation Process

2.11 The planning application has involved consultation with WDC, the local community and other stakeholders, including the following statutory consultees:

- Natural England;
- Highways England;
- Historic England;
- Environment Agency;
- ESCC; and
- Southern Water.

Cumulative Effects

2.12 An EIA must assess the potentially significant effects of a development that may arise cumulatively (when combined with) other major development with planning permission or under construction in the local area. Table 2.1 sets out the cumulative schemes which have been identified for the assessment of likely significant cumulative effects on the environment. It is considered appropriate to include major schemes within 2km of the Site that either have planning permission or are in the process of being implemented, as well as major planning applications which have been submitted but not yet determined. The nearby cumulative schemes which have the potential to lead to likely significant effects on the environment are also shown on Figure 2.

Table 2.1: Cumulative Schemes

Scheme Name & Application Number	Scheme Details	Planning Status	Approximate Distance from the Site
Approved Applications			
Land West of Uckfield, Ridgewood Farm, Uckfield (WD/2015/0209/MEA)	Outline application for a residential-led mixed use urban extension to provide up to 1,000 dwellings, up to a 2-FE primary school and early years facility, retail, community, health, leisure and up to 13,495sqm of employment uses.	Approved 24 March 2016	Approximately 1km south of Site
(WD/2017/1368/MRM)	Reserved matters application for phases 1a & 1b of development at Ridgewood farm	Approved 21	

Scheme Name & Application Number	Scheme Details	Planning Status	Approximate Distance from the Site
Approved Applications			
	(details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) pursuant to planning consent WD/2015/0209/MEA for the erection of 250 no. Dwellings and associated car parking, play areas, hard and soft landscaping, drainage ponds and earthworks.	September 2017	
(WD/2019/1773/MRM)	Reserved matters pursuant to wd/2015/0209/MEA (outline application for redevelopment of land, including demolition of existing building and associated structures, comprising a residential-led mixed use urban extension, engineering works and construction of new buildings and structures to provide residential accommodation (up to 1000 net additional dwellings), up to a two form entry primary school and early years facilities, retail, community, health, leisure and up to 13,495 sq.m. of employment uses together with ancillary and associated development including new and enhanced pedestrian/cycle routes and open spaces, car parking and vehicular access - all matters reserved save for full details submitted for access points at site boundaries and the creation of sangs including demolition of existing buildings, car parking and access on land west of the a22) comprising enabling works for construction of new roundabout involving soil excavation and the creation of two permanent stockpiles (3 & 4).	Approved 20 November 2019	
Land North of Mallard Drive, Uckfield TN22 5JQ (WD2010/2874/FE)	Residential development comprising of 146 dwellings, including affordable housing, open space including children's play areas and an equipped play area, structural landscaping and associated works, with access from Mallard Drive.	Approved 15 March 2011	Approximately 1.7km southeast of Site
(WD/2013/0415/MRM)	Reserved Matters application for application WD/2010/2874/FE for 119 dwellings.	Committee resolution to approve given 14 May 2020	
Land off Eastbourne Road, Uckfield (WD/2020/0410/MA0)	Outline planning application for up to 90 residential dwellings (including up to 35% affordable housing), introduction of structural planting and landscaping, informal public open space and children's play area, surface water flood mitigation, vehicular access point from Eastbourne Road and associated ancillary works.	Approved September 2021	Approximately 2km south of Site
Pending Consideration			
Charlwood Manor, Snatts Road, Uckfield (WD/2020/1650/F)	Demolition of existing buildings and construction of five dwellings with new access provided.	Submitted August 2020	Adjacent to east of Site
Charlwood Manor, Snatts Road, Uckfield	Conversion and extension of the existing care home and the demolition of the existing bungalow and garage building to allow for	Submitted July 2021	Adjacent to east of Site

Scheme Name & Application Number	Scheme Details	Planning Status	Approximate Distance from the Site
Approved Applications			
(WD/2021/1764/MAJ)	the creation of 17 no. dwellings, 6 no. of which are affordable tenure. The creation of a new road access, closure of the existing access and associated works.		
Land at Bird in Eye Farm, south of Bird in Eye Hill, Framfield, TN22 5HA (WD/2021/2198/MAO)	Outline planning application for the erection of up to 290 dwellings, associated landscaping, informal open space and strategic SANG, with access from the B2102.	Submitted August 2021	Approximately 2km southeast of Site



3.0 SITE AND DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

Site Context

3.1 The Site is located to the northwest of the town of Uckfield. The land immediately surrounding the north, west and south of the Site largely comprises a mixture of agricultural land interspersed with areas of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland. The wider area to the north of the Site includes the villages of Maresfield, Cooper's Green and Five Ash Down.

3.2 The A22 Uckfield Bypass is located to the immediate west of the Site. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) (footpath ref. Uckfield 1), abuts part of the north-eastern Site boundary. The PRoW provides access between the A26 to the northwest and Uckfield to the southeast.

Environmental Baseline Conditions

3.3 There are no statutory ecological or landscape designations located on the Site. West Park Uckfield Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 100m to the south of the Site and Buxted Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 800m to the east of the Site. Buxted Park is also a Grade II* Listed Registered Park and Garden. Hempstead Meadows LNR is located approximately 1km east of the Site.

3.4 High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), is located approximately 3km to the north of the Site. Rock Wood SSSI is located approximately 2.5km to the north of the Site and Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA)/Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 3.4km to the north of the Site.

3.5 There are no historical designations located on the Site. The Medieval settlement site at Buxted Park, a Scheduled Monument, is located approximately 1.5km to the east of the Site. The nearest listed buildings to the Site are the Grade II Listed Oast Cottage and Barn at Downlands Farm, located immediately to the east of the Site. The Grade II Listed Buckwood Grange is located approximately 150m to the south of the Site. The Site is not located within a Conservation Area. The nearest Conservation Area to the Site is Maresfield Conservation Area, located approximately 900m to the north of the Site.

3.6 The Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (at a low risk of flooding from rivers). The Site is not located within a Source Protection Zone (i.e. an area where groundwater is vulnerable to contamination).

3.7 Furthermore, the Site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) or an Archaeological Priority Area.

Site Description

3.8 The Site area extends to approximately 46 hectares (ha) and comprises a mixture of woodland and agricultural land. The majority of the woodland on the Site, with the exception of the woodland within the north and southeast, is classed as Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland. The agricultural land is located on the majority of the Site and comprises Grade 3b and Grade 4, which is not considered to be best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land quality. With reference to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) online Magic Map tool[i], the agricultural land on the Site comprises a mixture of Grade 3b and Grade 4, which is not considered to be Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land.

Description of Development

3.9 The application is for part Outline and part Detailed planning permission (Hybrid planning application). The formal description of the Development is as follows:

> *'Hybrid Planning Application comprising:*
>
> *(1) Outline Application (with all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of up to 424 residential dwellings including affordable housing, the provision of vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access and separate emergency access from the Uckfield Bypass (A22), pedestrian and cycle access from Snatts Road, open spaces including children's play space, sustainable urban drainage systems, associated landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks.*
> *(2) Full Application comprising creation of a Strategic SANG, associated landscaping and car parking, and demolition of existing residential property and other buildings and provision of pedestrian and cycle access from Rocks Road, associated landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks.'*

Land Use

Residential

3.10 The Development will provide up to 424 residential dwellings (Use class C3), and the exact mix of dwellings will be determined at the reserved matters stages. The Development will provide a mix of housing and includes a variety of dwelling types and sizes with a mix of

market, affordable rental and intermediate housing. The Development could provide up to 35% affordable housing. The indicative mix is shown in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Indicative Residential Unit Mix

Type of dwelling	Total Units
1 Bedroom Apartment	102
2 Bedroom Apartment	64
2 Bedroom House	96
3 Bedroom House	113
4 Bedroom House	33
5 Bedroom House	16
Total	**424**

Building Heights and Massing

3.11 The proposed residential use will predominantly be up to 2 storeys, with occasional increase of up to a maximum of 2.5 storeys (up to a maximum of 11.5m above existing ground level) in height at key points within the Development (refer to Figure 3).

Green Infrastructure

3.12 As shown on Figure 4, the Development includes large areas of public open space and recreation. Approximately 28.7 ha of green infrastructure will be provided as part of the Development and will include existing landscape, landscape buffers, landscape planting, public open space, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), pedestrian and cycle routes and sustainable urban drainage systems. The green infrastructure will comprise the following key elements:

- All areas of Ancient Woodland retained and protected with a minimum 15m buffer to Development areas;
- A new woodland park (approximately 21.3 ha) incorporating an area of SANG (approximately 18.1ha).
- Additional areas of landscape planting, natural greenspace and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) outside of the woodland park, on the edges of the Site and used to provide new ecological linkages through the residential areas;
- 1.6 ha of amenity open space in the centre of the Site with potential to incorporate a sports pitch and natural areas of play for young children; and
- 0.9ha of amenity space / community orchard area to the south of Downlands Barn.

SANG

3.13 The proposed SANG, to be applied for in detail, will form part of the Woodland Park (with

other areas of the park, for example Longwood Gill and areas of Shermanreed Wood, being outside the SANG under woodland management) and will comprise circa. 17ha of public open space of a mixture of habitat types. The proposed SANG area will allow residents and other visitors to walk a network of waymarked paths around the surrounding countryside and will be served by two small car-parks, one off Snatts Road and one in the development itself near the A22.

3.14 The SANG will include the following key elements:

- A semi-natural space with visually-sensitive information boards, way-makers and benches;
- A variety of habitats including areas of open (non wooded) grassland, areas of dense woodland, scattered trees and shrubs and trees in grassland;
- A circular walk of 2.3-2.5km which connects to a variety of other routes;
- Signage at access points to outline the layout of the SANG and the routes available to visitors; and
- A key focal point such as a view point, to provide long distance views to the surrounding area.

Access

Vehicular



3.15 Primary vehicle access to the Development will be provided at the south western edge of the Site, via the A22. The proposed access will be in the form of a new roundabout. An emergency vehicle access point will also be provided at the northwest of the Site, via the A22. Both access points are to be created in areas of non-Ancient Woodland.

3.16 Internal vehicle circulation routes will also provide internal vehicle connection through the Site and provide access to the proposed built development areas. The proposed vehicular access points and connections are shown on Figure 5.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access

3.17 Access to the Site for pedestrians and cyclists will be from Snatts Road and Rocks Road to the east of the Site and from A22 to the west of the site. The Development will provide an integrated network of safe footpaths and cycle routes through the Site, and include new connections and enhancing some parts of the existing local walking and cycling network.

3.18 Where footpath and cycle routes pass through Ancient Woodland, specifically as part of the SANG and through Fir Tree Grove, these are applied for in detail to demonstrate how no loss of Ancient Woodland will be achieved.

3.19 The proposed pedestrian and cycle access points and connections are shown on Figure 5.

Parking

3.20 Up to a total of 880 parking spaces will be provided as part of the Development, which will include 85 visitor parking spaces. Parking spaces will be provided across the Site in a mix of private drives, garages, parking courts for the residential apartments and on street parking. The SANG will also include two small car parking areas.

Drainage

3.21 The proposed drainage strategy has been developed to ensure the Development does not flood or create flooding problems elsewhere. The drainage strategy includes:

- Rainwater harvesting;
- Permeable paving;
- Swales; and
- Detention basins (wet and dry).

Energy and Sustainability

3.22 Through careful detailed design and use of appropriate technology, the Development will offer an appropriate and effective response to climate change issues. The Applicant is committed to ensuring building specifications follow government guidance and WDC's objectives, guaranteeing measures are built in to maximise efficiency of the lifespan of each dwelling and that a safe, healthy accessible and attractive environment is delivered for all residents, including the mobility impaired. All such measures will be agreed with WDC at the appropriate time and thereafter regulated through a combination of planning conditions, and planning obligations.

3.23 Consideration has been given to the energy requirements and considerations on offsetting carbon emissions in line with local carbon targets. The Development proposes to reduce the use of energy through design features and energy efficient measures including:

- Energy Efficient Building Envelope – Thermal Elements and Ventilation and Air Tightness;

- Low Carbon Energy Supply;
- Efficient Lighting, Fixtures and Fittings; and
- Exceedance of Building Energy Performance.

3.24 The Development complies with relevant policies in the Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan and saved policies of the Wealden Local Plan as well as imminent Building Regulation updates in the following ways:

- Homes will be highly energy efficient, adopting a fabric first approach and with specifications above current Building Regulations for insulation detailing. They will be orientated to maximise solar gain where possible;
- There will be no burning of fossil fuels on site, with no natural gas supplied; it is the intention that heating will be via highly efficient air source heat pumps;
- The Development will employ a combination of highly efficient fixtures, fittings and appliances to reduce domestic water use to achieve the 110 l/p/d target;
- Electric vehicle charging points will be provided to every property with on-plot parking in line with emerging policy requirements;
- Construction and operational waste will be managed according to the principles of the Waste Hierarchy with a focus on waste prevention, re-use and recycling;
- Significant areas of open space will be provided, with the existing features of ecological value retained and enhanced with native planting to increase levels of biodiversity;
- Buildings will be designed and specified to adapt to a changed climate: overheating will be managed through good design; the retention of existing trees and additional planting will provide more comfortable microclimates in warmer weather; the landscape design will provide multi-functional benefits, supporting increased biodiversity and enhancing the overall aesthetic.

4.0 ALTERNATIVES & DESIGN EVOLUTION

4.1 The EIA Regulations require an ES to provide: *"description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment".* Alternatives are generally considered to comprise:

- The 'Do Nothing' alternative, where the Development is not progressed;
- Consideration of Alternative Locations or Uses; and
- Consideration of Alternative Designs.

The 'do nothing' Alternative and the Consideration of Alternative Locations and Uses

4.2 Under the 'do nothing scenario', the Site would remain in agricultural use and the beneficial and adverse effects identified in the ES would not occur. The opportunity would be lost to develop a new high quality and sustainable neighbourhood, set within a mature landscaping context with high quality open and recreational spaces. The opportunity to delivery both market and affordable housing, which would help address the housing shortfall in WDC, would also be lost.

4.3 The purpose of the planning application is to develop the Site for residential use therefore the 'do nothing' alternative along with alternative locations and uses were not considered by the Applicant.

Consideration of Alternative Designs

4.4 The Development submitted for approval is the result of a thorough analysis of environmental constraints and opportunities, access issues and market demand. Consultation with WDC and statutory consultees has also been a key influence in design evolution.

4.5 The form of the Development has been influenced by a range of factors, including location, surrounding uses and landscape character, environmental impact assessment and input from WDC, statutory consultees and stakeholders. A Design Rationale and Vision has also been produced for the Development.

4.6 The Design and Access Statement (DAS) which accompanies the planning application sets out

detailed information on the design evolution. As set out in the DAS, the design of the Development has evolved since a previous planning application was submitted for the Site in 2006 (ref: WD/2006/255/MEA), which was taken to appeal following refusal by WDC and subsequently dismissed.

4.7 The proposals now seek to focus development on areas of the Site which are considered least sensitive in landscape, ecological and arboricultural terms, to create a lower density and more sensitively design scheme of up to 424 homes. The proposed access (internal and external) arrangement delivers safe and secure routes through areas of non-Ancient Woodland, in the case of the primary and emergency vehicular access, or through use of no-loss solutions, in the case of the pedestrian and cycle connection to Rocks Road. Appropriate buffers to Ancient Woodland are also provided throughout the Development.

4.8 There has not therefore been a series of alternative designs for the Development but an evolution of the design of the Development. No other alternatives have been considered by the Applicant.



5.0 CONSTRUCTION METHODOLOGY & PHASING

5.1 Planning for demolition and construction is broad at this stage. The assessment of demolition and construction phase environmental effects is based on reasonable assumptions and experience.

5.2 Construction of the Development is anticipated to commence in 2024, subject to gaining planning permission, and span approximately six years. Overall, the construction process is expected to be completed by 2030.

5.3 A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)[3] will be submitted to WDC (and other statutory authorities) prior to the commencement of the works. The preparation of a CEMP is an established method of managing environmental effects resulting from construction works. Compliance with the CEMP will be secured by planning condition. The structure of the CEMP will include the following:

- A table showing the objectives, activities (mitigation/optimisation measures), and responsibilities for the implementation of those activities;
- The broad plan of the work programme including working hours and delivery times;
- Details of prohibited or restricted operations (location, hours etc.);
- Institutional arrangements for its implementation and for environmental monitoring: responsibilities and role of the environmental authorities, participation of stakeholders;
- Contact during normal working hours and emergency details outside working hours;
- Provision for reporting, public liaison, and prior notification of particular construction related activities;
- The mechanism for the public to register complaints and the procedures for responding to such complaints; and
- The details of proposed routes for Heavy Goods Vehicles travelling to and from the Site.

Hours of work

5.4 Working hours on the Site will be agreed with WDC through the CEMP. However, it is likely that the standard hours of work will be adhered to. These are:

- Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm;
- Saturday, 8am to 1pm; and

[3] The purpose of a CEMP is to outline how a construction project will avoid, minimise or mitigate effects on the environment and surrounding area.

- Sunday, Bank Holidays and Public Holidays - no noisy activities on site.

5.5 All work, audible at the Site boundary, outside these hours will be subject to prior agreement of, and/or reasonable notice to WDC as appropriate.



6.0 LANDSCAPE & VISUAL

6.1 An assessment has been undertaken of the likely significant effects of the Development on the environment in respect of Landscape and Visual.

Baseline Conditions

6.2 The baseline for the Site and surrounding area broadly comprises gently sloping country of low ridges and wider valleys covered by an pattern of streams and woods. Tranquillity is reduced by noise from the adjacent A22, reducing with distance, and limited intervisibility to the settlement edge from the eastern area of the Site, which varies across due, primarily, to intervening vegetation.

6.3 The Site is visually very well contained due, primarily, to the surrounding woodland and the well wooded gently undulating nature of the wider context which provides few opportunities for views into the Site beyond the distant elevated tops and facing slopes of the High Weald AONB, which is located to the north of the Site.

Construction and Operation

6.4 The landscape and visual mitigation strategy will be a fully-integrated component of the Development and will broadly comprise:

- Retention, or minimisation of changes to characteristic landscape features and habitats across the Site including:
  - Topography and hydrology:
  - Landscape fabric and habitats: and
  - Historic and cultural landscape character.

6.5 Measures to minimise impacts on views to the Development and the landscape character of the Site context include:

- Protection of the visually enclosed nature of the Site through the retention and protection of woodland at the Site periphery;
- Provision for planting substantial tree species along the contours within the residential area of the Development, to break up the roof scape and visually integrate this area with adjacent well treed settlement edge and woodland in middle- and long-distance views;
- Set back of Development from adjacent residential properties beyond areas of public

open space;

- Limiting development across more elevated slopes to 2 storeys with development elsewhere limited to 2.5 storeys; and
- The use of muted building materials and finishes to maximise visual integration in middle- and long-distance views.

6.6 Significant adverse effects during the construction phase would be limited to effects on the landscape character of the residential development area of the Site itself, on the landscape character and key landscape fabric of Chicory Cottage and grounds and on visual receptors that are located adjacent to, and have views into, the residential development area of the Site where construction activities (i.e. the movement and activity of construction vehicles and operations) will be most intense. These include the Barn at Downlands Farm (Grade II listed), Gormanstone and adjacent property and Five properties north and south of Gormanstone.

6.7 However, the level of the effects during construction would be short term in duration, and local and would be limited by the implementation of the CEMP, which will be secured via planning condition.

6.8 During operation, there would be a significant adverse effect on the landscape character of the residential development area of the Site itself, while significant adverse visual effects would be limited to residents at Gormanstone and adjacent property which are located adjacent to, and have uninterrupted views into, the residential development area of the Site.

6.9 The scale of change and the proximity of the Development mean that even when proposed planting in the Development has matured, there is likely to be a perception of the change of use of the Site that will result in a high level of change. A significant level of effect on the visual amenity of properties in close proximity to a green field site is not surprising and would result from the changes necessary to convert any greenfield site to residential development. However, the visual amenity of these properties has been considered and the proposed set back of the Development will moderate the level of effect and protect the privacy of residents.

Cumulative Effects

6.10 Based upon the distribution of landscape and visual receptors for the Development, and the likely extent of landscape and visual effects, there will be no significant cumulative effects as a result of the Development and cumulative sites.

7.0 BIODIVERSITY

7.1 An assessment has been undertaken of the likely significant effects of the Development on the environment in respect of Biodiversity.

Baseline Conditions

7.2 As stated above, there are no statutory ecological designations located on the Site. The nearest statutory designation is West Park (Uckfield) LNR, located approximately 100m to the south of the Site. Ashdown Forest SPA/SAC, is located approximately 3.4km to the north of the Site. Lake Wood LWS (non-statutory) is located adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site.

7.3 The Site has a large proportion of woodland, including some Ancient Woodland, although the areas proposed for Development are dominated by species-poor semi-improved grassland, not considered to be of ecological importance, together with other habitats including young woodland, tall ruderal vegetation, and scrub. Habitats which are considered to be of importance at the local level or above comprise woodland, an area of species-rich grassland, hedgerows and tree lines, ponds and watercourses. Surveys of protected species have found that the Site is of local importance for foraging and commuting bats, Dormouse, Great Crested Newts and reptiles, [redacted].

Construction

7.4 The construction of the Development would result in some minor adverse effects on Lake Wood LWS (due to dust deposition, surface run-off of contaminants or silt), as well as on faunal species including Foraging and Commuting Bats, Dormouse, Birds, Great Crested Newt and reptiles.

7.5 However, the implementation of mitigation measures during construction, including construction safeguards provided under the CEMP (such as the use of tree protection fencing, dampening down of potential sources of dust and appropriate storage of any chemicals at the Site), sensitive lighting design and construction safeguards with regards to faunal species, (such as a translocation exercise and new habitat creation in regard to Great Crested Newt), would result in all residual effects being negligible.

Completed Development

7.6 During operation there would be some minor adverse effects on Ashdown Forest SPA/SAC (Recreational Disturbance), Ancient Woodland – Direct Deterioration (loss of woodland flora at boardwalk location), Moderately Species-rich Grassland off Snatts Road, and Great Crested Newt and minor to moderate adverse effects on foraging and Commuting bats and Dormouse.

7.7 However, mitigation for recreational disturbance effects on Ashdown Forest SPA/ SAC will be provided in the form of a bespoke SANG which forms part of the Development and contributions to Strategic access, Management and Monitoring (SAMM). Further mitigation measures are also proposed, including proposed woodland management for the surrounding woodland areas, and a lighting strategy has been put in place to provide a network of dark corridors for wildlife.

7.8 A range of additional enhancement measures have also been identified to provide gains in biodiversity across the Site, including significant habitat creation within the SANG area and within new green corridors and existing woodland buffer zones. Other enhancements will provide new nesting and shelter opportunities for a range of faunal species.

7.9 Following mitigation, it is considered that the Development would result in an overall gain in the existing ecological interest supported by the Site, with no adverse residual adverse effects. There would be moderate beneficial effects in terms of other woodland and Moderately Species-rich Grassland off Snatts Road, and minor beneficial effects in respect of native hedgerows and tree lines, ponds, Dormouse, Great Crested Newt and Reptiles.

Cumulative Effects

7.10 All construction and operational effects have been mitigated for each of the identified cumulative schemes and the Development. The residual effects in each case are expected to be negligible and therefore no cumulative effects have been identified during construction and operation.

8.0 WATER RESOURCES AND FLOOD RISK

8.1 An assessment has been undertaken of the likely significant effects of the Development on the environment in respect of Water Resources and Flood Risk.

Baseline Conditions

8.2 The EA Flood Map for Planning shows that the Site is located within Flood Zone 1, denoting a low risk of flooding from rivers or the Site.

8.3 There are several Ordinary Watercourses located within the Site, which connect into the Shortbridge Stream to the west of the Site, via culverts beneath the A22. These include the Budlett's Wood brook, Longwood Gill and Shermanreed Wood brooks and Southern brook.

8.4 Shallow groundwater was encountered beneath the Site, limited to areas outside of the developable area. Groundwater levels beneath the developable area were typically recorded at depths of greater than 1.9m AOD and the risk of groundwater flooding is therefore considered to be low.

8.5 The risk of flooding from tidal, sewer, and artificial sources has also been assessed and found to be low.

Construction

8.6 The likely significant effects of flood risk from tidal/fluvial, pluvial, and artificial sources during construction would be negligible.

8.7 Construction could lead to local and temporary adverse effects of minor significance with regards to groundwater flooding as there could be some seepage into excavations and earthworks. If required, the proposed mitigation measures would include limited dewatering and disposal, using standard techniques such as sumps and pumps. Following mitigation, the residual effects would be negligible.

8.8 Construction could lead to local and temporary adverse effects of minor significance with regards to surface water drainage and hydrology of the receiving environment as discharge rates may not be controlled and flow paths could be diverted. In addition, if traditional construction methods would be used for the drainage outfalls into the woodland brooks, this could lead to damage of the Ancient Woodland, resulting in a local and permanent adverse

effect of major to moderate significance. However, mitigation measures would include the CEMP to set out temporary measures to control surface water runoff from the Site, and the use of SuDS, which will minimise the time in which the discharge into the watercourses would be altered. The resulting residual effects would be negligible.

8.9 Construction could lead to local and temporary adverse effects of minor significance on foul water capacity, due to the production of wastewater from sanitary facilities, sediment-laden water from excavations, washing down, and wheel washing facilities. The mitigation measures would include the CEMP, which would set out measures to manage the foul water generated during construction separately, therefore not impacting upon the Southern Water network. The residual effects would therefore be negligible.

Completed Development

8.10 During the operational phase, the likely significant effects of tidal/fluvial, pluvial, groundwater, and artificial sources would be negligible.

8.11 The likely significant effects on surface water drainage and hydrology of the receiving environment could lead to local and permanent adverse effects of major to moderate significance, due to the potential to change the surface water drainage regime at the Site and thus altering the hydrology within the Ancient Woodland watercourses and increasing flood risk off-site. However, mitigation measures would comprise the surface water drainage strategy, which mimics the existing drainage regime on-site by restricting surface water runoff to the greenfield runoff rate and discharging into the watercourses via existing inflow locations. In addition, the strategy incorporates a range of SuDS features to ensure the water quality discharged into the watercourses is appropriate, as well as providing biodiversity and amenity benefits. The drainage strategy demonstrates how there would be no material change to the hydrology within the Ancient Woodlands and the woodland brooks and the residual effects would therefore be negligible.

8.12 The likely significant effect on foul water capacity during operation would be negligible due to Southern Water's legal obligation to provide a connection and necessary upgrades/reinforcements to the existing public infrastructure if required.

Cumulative Effects

8.13 The cumulative effect of the Development and other nearby identified schemes has been assessed as negligible both during construction and operation.

9.0 CULTURAL HERITAGE

9.1 An assessment has been undertaken of the likely significant effects of the Development on the environment in respect of Cultural Heritage.

Baseline Conditions

9.2 A baseline assessment, in the form of desk-based assessment, a Site walkover and investigative fieldwork (geophysical survey) has identified potentially sensitive cultural heritage receptors (heritage assets) within the Site and its wider zone of influence. While the Site contains no designated heritage assets, the Grade II listed Barn at Downlands Farm, the Grade II listed Oast Cottage and the Maresfield Conservation Area; which lie beyond the Site, are considered to be potentially sensitive heritage assets.

9.3 The Site does not contain any known non-designated assets or archaeological deposits and there is considered to be only the potential for hitherto unidentified remains of no greater than low sensitivity to survive within the Site.

Construction

9.4 The construction phase of the Development has the potential for adverse effects on hitherto unidentified archaeological features or deposits likely to result from direct truncation and/or removal of remains during groundworks. This would result in substantial or total destruction of archaeological remains considered a large magnitude of change to assets of no greater than low sensitivity which, if left unmitigated, will result in a minor adverse effect (not significant).

9.5 Proposed mitigation will comprise the completion of further archaeological investigation and recording, secured by a suitably worded planning condition and implemented by the Applicant in advance of construction. Following mitigation, the residual significance of effect is assessed as neutral.

Completed Development

9.6 It is considered that the operational phase of the Development, would result in an adverse effect on the significance of the Maresfield Conservation Area by introducing modern built form into an identified important view from within the designated area.

9.7 This will potentially result in a negligible change to this receptor of medium sensitivity,

resulting in a negligible adverse effect. Mitigation has already been incorporated into the design of the Development to limit the effects of the operational phase on this receptor, through the provision of landscape planting to reduce the visibility of built form in the medium term. Therefore, no further mitigation is required in this respect and the residual significance of effect is assessed as neutral.

9.8 No residual adverse effects have been identified on any of the surrounding designated heritage assets (the Grade II listed Barn at Downlands Farm and the Grade II listed Oast Cottage) in the wider area as a result of the operation of the Development.

Cumulative Effects

9.9 Only a single negligible adverse effect is identified to a single designated heritage asset, Maresfield Conservation Area, as a result of the operational phase of the Development. No significant cumulative effects on the Marefield Conservation Area are considered likely to arise in combination with any other committed developments under consideration. This is because there are anticipated to be no effects on the Maresfield Conservation Area arising from the other committed developments under consideration.

9.10 Effects on non-designated heritage assets resulting from the Development are confined to the Site and therefore are not susceptible to cumulative change resulting from other schemes.

9.11 As such, neither the construction nor operation of the Development is expected to result in any cumulative effects on Cultural Heritage in combination with the other committed developments under consideration.

10.0 LAND CONTAMINATION

9.12 An assessment has been undertaken of the likely significant effects of the Development on the environment in respect of Land Contamination.

Baseline Conditions

9.13 The Site has been subject to a geo-environmental desk study and intrusive ground investigation in order to determine the extent of any soil contamination risks at the Site. The desk study identified a number of localised contamination sources. On-site sources comprised a small shallow area of registered landfill and an area of former chicken sheds and Off-site sources included two nearby petrol filling stations / garages and an off-site tank associated with a farm. The subsequent intrusive ground investigation confirmed a general lack of contamination from all of the potential sources. However, uncertainties remain about the area of former chicken sheds, which is subject to further ongoing investigation.

Construction

9.14 The extent of any potential environmental effects from the construction works would be limited. There's the potential for construction workers to come into direct contact with possible localised contamination resulting in a minor adverse effect on health, dust generation impacting nearby residents resulting in a moderate to minor adverse effect on health and spills of small quantities of fuels / oils resulting in a moderate to minor adverse effect on the environment.

9.15 Prior to the construction works, further ground investigation will be undertaken at the Site in order to establish the extent of any contamination risks in the area of former chicken sheds. Based on the investigation completed to date, extensive remedial measures are unlikely to be required, but there could be localised contamination in the form of asbestos fragments in the soils. If discovered, these would be removed from Site prior to construction under controlled conditions to prevent the generation of any hazardous dusts.

9.16 During construction of the Development, the presence of contaminated soils will be considered within health and safety plans. Measures to protect the health and safety of workers on the Site will include use of appropriate personal protective equipment, education and good hygiene procedures.

9.17 The generation of dusts and odours from possible localised contaminated soils during

construction will be addressed by the CEMP which will outline the measures to prevent dust generation during the Development i.e. damping down stockpiles, reducing areas of excavations. This will also outline mitigation measures to prevent spills of fuels / other chemicals during the construction process.

9.18 Following the implementation of mitigation measures, the residual effects during construction are considered to be negligible.

Completed Development

9.19 Once the Development is operational, the Site will consist of an area of residential houses together with a large area of managed SANG comprising landscaped open space. Assuming all of the construction phase mitigation measures are completed, there will be no requirement for any operational phase mitigation measures in relation to the ground conditions. The residual effects would be negligible as new residents will not be exposed to localised contamination and new building materials and services will not be impacted by contaminated soils. Minor beneficial effects have been identified to users of the open space (SANG) as the Development will result in an improvement in relation to the (current) baseline conditions.

Cumulative Effects

9.20 The cumulative effect of the Development and other nearby identified schemes has been assessed as negligible both during construction and operation. Given the nature of the sites, the schemes are very unlikely to have any large scale contaminated land issues to address.

11.0 SUMMARY

11.1 In summary the Development will result in the following significant beneficial residual effects:

- Biodiversity effects during operation:
  - Moderately Species-rich Grassland (off Snatts Road), Moderate Beneficial; and
  - Other Woodland, Moderate Beneficial.

11.2 The technical assessments identified that the Development will result in the following significant adverse residual effects:

- Landscape and Visual effects during construction:
  - Landscape Character of the Site itself – residential area – landscape character and Chicory Cottage and grounds – landscape character and key landscape fabric, Major Adverse;
  - Visual Receptors (Residents) - The Barn at Downlands Farm (Grade II listed), Moderate Adverse, Gormanstone and adjacent property, Substantial Adverse, and Five properties north and south of Gormanstone, Moderate Adverse;
- Landscape and Visual effects during operation:
  - The Site itself – residential area – landscape character, Major Adverse; and
  - Gormanstone and adjacent property, Major Adverse.

FIGURE 1:
SITE LOCATION PLAN

N

Site

DOWNLANDS FARM, UCKFIELD

Drawing

Site location plan

Scale

1:5000@A2

Date

30.05.22

Drawing ref 1309.**01**

0 50 100 150 200 250m

KEY

Site boundary

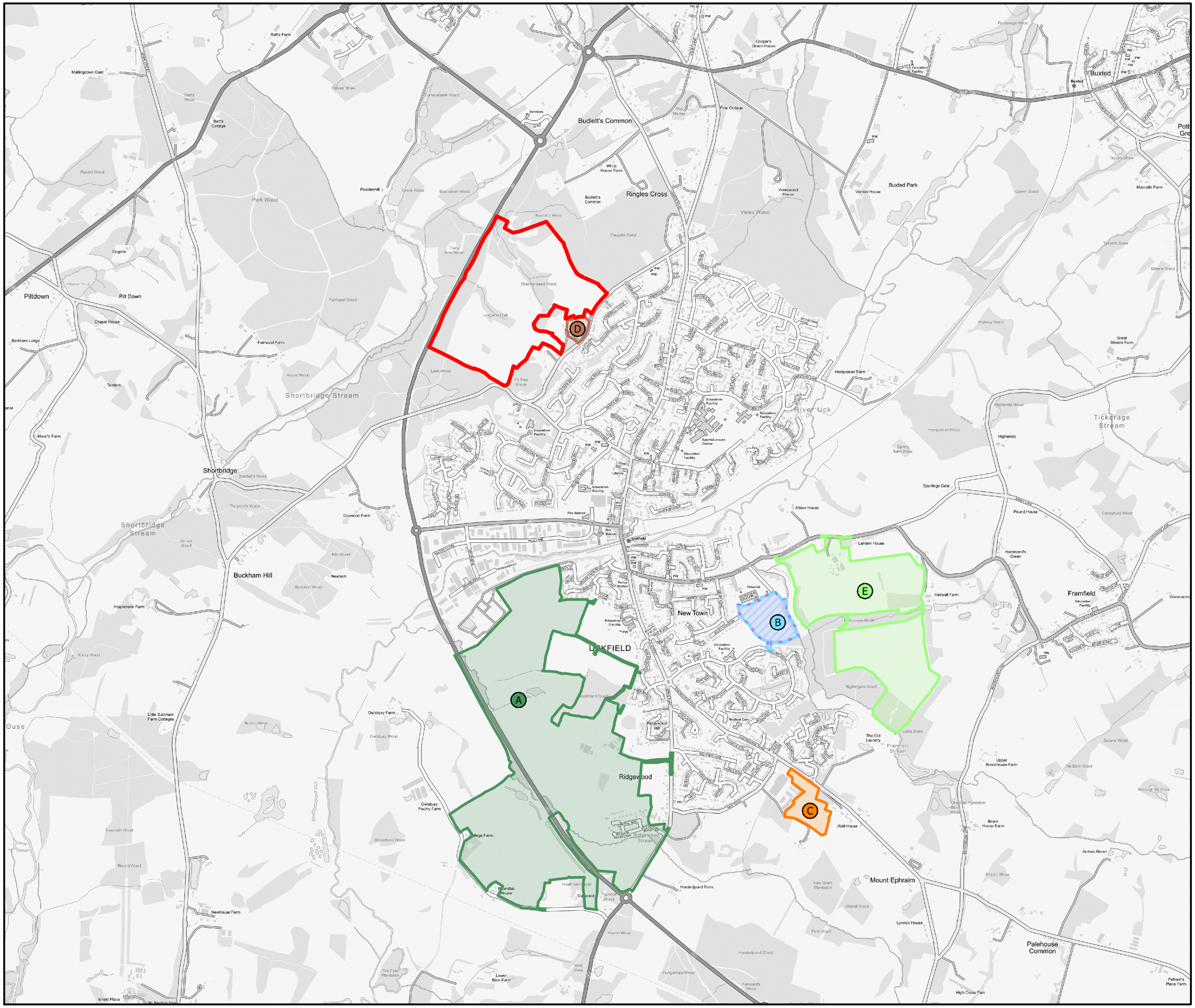
Other land within applicants control

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FIGURE 2:
CUMULATIVE SCHEMES PLAN



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The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision	Date	Drn	Ckd
-	-	-	-

N

LEGEND

Site Boundary

Approved Schemes

A — Land West of Uckfield - Site SD1
(Ref: WD/2015/0209/MEA)

B — Land North of Mallard Drive, Uckfield TN22 5JQ
(Ref: WD/2013/0415/MRM)

C — Land Off Eastbourne Road
(Ref: WD/2020/0410/MAO)

Pending Consideration

D — Charlwood Manor
(Ref: WD/2020/1650/F)
(Ref: WD/2021/1764/MAJ)

E — Land at Bird in Eye Farm
(Ref: WD/2021/2198/MAO)

FIGURE 2.1

Project
Downlands Farm, Uckfield

Drawing Title
Cumulative Schemes Plan

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
13.12.2021	1:20,000 @A3	GS	NP

Project No	Drawing No	Revision
29565	LN-E-01	C

0 200 400 600 800 1000m

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J:\29000\29565 - Downlands Farm, Uckfield\A4 - Drawings & Registers\EIA\29565 LN-E-01 Cumulative Schemes Plan.dwg - A3

FIGURE 3:
SCALE PARAMETER PLAN

Site

DOWNLANDS FARM, UCKFIELD

Drawing

PARAMETER PLAN
Scale

Scale
1:2000@A1

Date
30.05.22

Drawing ref 1309.**05**

KEY

- Site boundary
- 2 storeys with a maximum of 10% of buildings up to 2.5 storeys
- 2 storeys with a maximum of 2.5% of buildings up to 2.5 storeys

Maxmium building height 11.5m above existing ground level

N

A22

SNATTS ROAD

CLAREMONT RISE

LOT LANE

CAMBRIDGE

SNATTS ROAD

CHERITON RISE

HUNTERS WAY

SNATTS ROAD

HUNTERS WAY

ROOKS ROAD

0 20 40 60 80 100m

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FIGURE 4:
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PARAMETER PLAN

N

A22

A27

SNATTS ROAD

CLAREMONT RISE

LOT LANE

CAUSEWAY

MOUNT HOPE

HUNTERS WAY

RICKS ROAD

0 20 40 60 80 100m

Site

DOWNLANDS FARM, UCKFIELD

Drawing

PARAMETER PLAN
Green Infrastructure

Scale

1:2000@A1

Date

30.05.22

Drawing ref 1309.**04**

KEY

- Site boundary
- Amenity open space
- Natural greenspace
- Boundary of SANG
- Protective fencing to Lake Woods boundary to prevent informal access

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FIGURE 5:
LAND USE AND ACCESS PARAMETER PLAN

Site

DOWNLANDS FARM, UCKFIELD

Drawing

PARAMETER PLAN
Land use and access

Scale

1:2000@A1

Date

30.05.22

Drawing ref 1309.**03**

KEY

- Site boundary
- Development area including C3 residential uses, roads, parking, open space, Sustainable Urban Drainage System and landscaping and associated infrastructure **(Up to 15.1 ha)**
- Green Infrastructure including existing landscape, landscape buffers, landscape planting, public open space, SANGS, pedestrian and cycle routes and sustainable urban drainage systems and associated infrastructure
- Proposed vehicular access
- Emergency access
- Proposed cycle / pedestrian access

N

A22

A22

SNATTS ROAD

CLAREMONT RISE

LOT LANE

CAUSEWAY

SNATTS ROAD

DOWNLANDS RISE

SNATTS ROAD

HUNTERS WAY

HUNTERS WAY

ROCKS ROAD

0 20 40 60 80 100m

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