3 SITE AND DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

Site Context

3.1 The Site (shown at Figure 1.1) is located to the northwest of the town of Uckfield, within the administrative area of WDC. 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.

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) and SSSI is located approximately 3.5km 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.'*

3.10 The outline element of the Development is defined by a set of parameters that place limits on the quantum, extent and type of development that could come forward under future reserved matters applications. The parameters include the following:

- Land Use and Access Parameter Plan (Figure 3.1);
- Scale Parameter Plan (Figure 3.2); and
- Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan (Figure 3.3).

3.11 Each technical chapter within the ES assesses the detailed drawings for the detailed element (Appendix 3.1) and the parameter plans, and specifically, the parameter envelope that would

lead to the "worst case" effects for that discipline to assess the outline element of the application. This will ensure that any detailed proposals coming forward within future reserved matters applications would not lead to greater (more adverse) effects on the environment than have been assessed at the outline stage.

3.12 Figure 3.4, the Illustrative Masterplan, has been prepared to show one way in which the Development could be delivered.

Land Use

Residential

3.13 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

3.14 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 3.2).

Green Infrastructure

3.15 As shown on Figure 3.3, 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

3.16 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 approximately 18.1ha 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.

3.17 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

3.18 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.

3.19 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 3.1.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access

3.20 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.

3.21 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.

3.22 The proposed pedestrian and cycle access points and connections are shown on Figure 3.1.

Parking

3.23 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

3.24 It is a requirement of the NPPF[ii] that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are used in all major developments, if feasible. The proposed SuDS for the Development seek to deliver long-term mitigation by attenuating and treating surface water runoff from the Development. As outlined in Chapter 8 and the drainage strategy for the Development (refer to Appendix 8.1), the proposed drainage design will be implemented to control the rate of runoff from the Site by means of attenuation and other SuDS methods. A combination of SuDS measures as set out below would be adopted to manage surface water runoff to provide sustainable design.

- Rainwater harvesting;
- Permeable paving;

- Swales; and
- Detention basins (wet and dry).

Lighting

3.25 The lighting scheme for the Development will be designed to take into account the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) (2020) Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light[iii] and BS 5489-1:2013[iv] and BS EN 13201-2:2015[v]. Where required, the design of street lighting will promote safe and secure movement for all users by including street lighting, integrated road safety features and natural surveillance of routes to create safe and accessible neighbourhoods. A Dark Areas Map is shown on Figure 3.5.

Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change

3.26 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.

3.27 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

3.28 The buildings will be energy efficient structurally to meet both national and local requirements. To facilitate this, the individual elements of the buildings (wall, roof, and floor) will be thermally efficient, and the construction will ensure that thermal bridges are minimised through the application of Accredited Construction Details, including insulated lintels, and by ensuring air tightness.

Ventilation and Air Tightness

3.29 It is the intention is that the Development will benefit from natural ventilation through the use of cross ventilation and openable windows. This will enable rapid purges of air and good levels of internal air quality.

Low Carbon Energy Supply

3.30 The Development may include the installation of air source heath pumps (ASHPs) for space and water heating in all properties. The use of ASHPs Would futureproof the residential dwellings resulting in fewer carbon emissions and would align closely with the UKs approach to low carbon energy transition and WDC's carbon neutrality aspirations.

Lighting, Fixtures and Fittings

3.31 Additional energy savings will be made by maximising the efficiency of appliances, lighting, fixtures and fittings. All electric lighting will be energy efficient, and any spot lighting will be provided using dedicated LED fittings. All appliances where installed will be high efficiency, further minimising the use of both electricity and hot water. The residential dwellings will also include taps and shower fixtures and fittings that reduce hot water consumption with low and/or aerated flows. In addition to the internal lighting, all external street lighting will be high efficiency to further minimise lifetime energy use and associated emissions.

Building Energy Performance

3.32 Indicative performance targets for different building elements within the Development, including roof/sloped roof, external walls, party walls, ground floor and glazing/doors have been calculated using good practice specification[vi]. The indicative specifications for the Development exceed the limiting U-values for new fabric elements and air permeability in new dwellings within the current Building Regulations 2013[vii] and also meet or exceed the emerging limiting U-values from the amended Building Regulations from June 2022. Further details are provided in Appendix 5.1 Energy, Waste and Sustainability Statement.

Summary

3.33 As outlined in Appendix 5.1, the Development complies with relevant policies in the Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan[viii] and saved policies of the Wealden Local Plan[ix] 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.

3.34 Further detail is included in Appendix 5.1: Energy, Waste and Sustainability Statement.

References

[i] https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx
[ii] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021). *National Planning Policy Framework*, MHCLG: London.
[iii] Guidance Note 01/20. Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light (2020). Institute of Lighting Professionals.
[iv] British Standards 5489-1:2013 Code of practice for the design of road lighting.
[v] British Standards EN 13201-2:2015 Road Lighting Performance requirements.
[vi] Approved Document L – Conservation of Fuel and Power Volume 1: Dwellings
[vii] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. The Building (Amendment) Regulations 2013
[viii] Wealden District Council (2013) '*Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan'*
[ix] Wealden District Council (1998) '*Adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998'*