



**Proof of Evidence of Paul Warren
BA (Hons) DIPLA CMLI**

Landscape Matters

LAND SOUTH OF THE A271 AND
EAST OF THE A22, LOWER
HORSEBRIDGE, HAILSHAM

Appendix B

**Landscape Sensitivity Assessments
SHELAA sites B116-117 and B-119 of
Wealden Landscape Sensitivity
Assessment to Residential and
Employment Development 2023 (Full
document available CD 9.2)**

Appellant: Hertfordshire Holdings
Ltd.

Planning Inspectorate No. Appeal:
APP/C1435/W/23/3335625

Wealden District Council

Application No. WD/2022/3222/MAO

March 2024

Wealden District Council

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Residential and Employment Development

Final report
Prepared by LUC
November 2023



	Retain, protect and enhance the strong vegetated boundary to the western, southern and northern boundaries of the site, to maintain and enhance their contribution to the existing green infrastructure network within the area and visually enclose the site and to provide landscape and ecological benefits. Soften the eastern boundary of the site with new planting that is in character with the locality, using native species where possible. <i>Please also refer to the strategic landscape guidance for the wider Hailsham West assessment unit</i>
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KNIGHTS FARM MAJOR EMPLOYMENT SITE

Landscape sensitivity		
SHELAA site ref.	1039/1310	
Sensitivity rating for small-scale residential	Low to moderate sensitivity	LM
Reasoning	Reasoning This site comprises a relatively large-scale flat field resulting from modern field amalgamation and the flat landform and wooded outer field boundaries result in a semi-enclosed character, which decrease sensitivity. Modern agricultural buildings, and storage within the southern part of the site (Knights Farm) and the nearby petrol services (including hotel) to the east of the site, reduce the sense of rurality and decrease sensitivity. The proximity of the A22 Hailsham Bypass and A267 influences tranquillity, decreasing sensitivity. Key landscape features, including woodland along the site boundaries and some in-field trees, which increases sensitivity, and a public right of way through Knights Farm and along the eastern boundary of the site also increases sensitivity of the site. The characteristics described above result in a similar landscape sensitivity to medium scale residential and commercial/industrial development types.	
Outline landscape mitigation / guidance	Any development on the site(s) should: Be located within those parts of the site where well contained, to minimise visibility from the A22 and nearby properties. Retain, protect and enhance the wooded field boundaries and in-field trees, to maintain and enhance their contribution to the existing coherent green infrastructure network within the area, reinforce the existing field boundaries and visually enclose the sites to reduce any developments influence on the landscape character and to provide ecological benefits. Preserve and enhance public access across the site. <i>Please also refer to the strategic landscape guidance for the wider Hailsham West assessment unit.</i>	

Landscape sensitivity		
SHELAA site ref.	1145/3100	428/3100
Sensitivity rating for small-scale residential	Low to moderate sensitivity	LM
Reasoning	Reasoning	

SHELAA site reference:	1039/1310	940/3090	1155/3000	780/3000
	1079/3100	1145/3100	009/3100	428/3100
Sensitivity analysis How does the landscape sensitivity of these sites relate to the wider assessment unit?	These sites are mostly typical of the Hailsham West assessment unit. As noted for the wider assessment unit, areas between Lower Horsebridge and Hailsham (including Site 780/3000) are considered to be of higher sensitivity than the wider assessment unit due to the role the area plays in providing rural separation between the two settlements. Sites 1145/3100, 1039/1310 and 428/3100 have a lower sensitivity than the wider assessment unit due to existing development on the sites and their proximity to the future settlement edge. The sites are located within pastoral and arable fields and whilst the wider assessment unit has a mixed field pattern, the sites are medium to large in scale and are influenced by modern field amalgamation, decreasing sensitivity. As is typical of the wider assessment unit, landform is low lying and gently slopes down to the River Cuckmere in the south and east of the area. The proximity of these sites to the busy A22, A271, A267 and B2104 influences tranquillity, which is typical of the wider assessment unit and decreases sensitivity. Proximity to Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge influences the experience of dark skies for the wider assessment unit and these sites. As noted for the north of the wider assessment unit, the area provides a scenic backdrop to Lower Horsebridge increasing sensitivity. Mature field boundaries, which are occasionally wooded, and in field trees increase sensitivity for the wider assessment unit and these sites. As noted for the wider assessment unit, separation between Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge, and the settlement boundary features formed by the A22 and the River Cuckmere form sensitive features. Site 780/3100 plays a role in the separation between Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge, increasing sensitivity. The Hellingly Conservation Area is a key sensitivity for the wider assessment unit and is located to the north-east of Site 009/3100, with views towards the Hellingly church tower available from the north-west of the site. Public rights of way within or near the sites are relatively well connected and provide views into the sites, which also increase sensitivity. Most of Site 780/3000 and the eastern edge of 1155/3000 have been scoped out of the assessment due to flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3).			
Key Sensitive Features Would development on the sites affect any of the key sensitivities of the wider assessment unit?	Development on the sites could affect: ■ The strong network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees ■ The rural setting and sense of separation provided in the north to Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge ■ The settlement boundary features formed by the A22 and the River Cuckmere ■ Views from the network of public rights of way, including attractive views towards Hellingly Church and Conservation Area			

Site 780/3000 includes appeal site

Landscape sensitivity		
SHELAA site ref.	780/3000	
Sensitivity rating for small-scale residential	Moderate to higher sensitivity	MH
Reasoning	Reasoning	
	The role the area plays in the separation between the settlements of Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge increases sensitivity above the wider assessment unit. Areas of deciduous woodland, including a clump of	

	in field trees in the west and riparian woodland along the undulating course of the River Cuckmere, increase sensitivity. The site also forms part of the wider River Cuckmere corridor. The public right of way, which crosses the east of the site, the relatively open views into the site (afforded beyond low hedgerows along the A271) and occasional glimpsed views between intervening vegetation (afforded from the A22) also increase the site's sensitivity to development. Relatively open views south across the north-west of the site are afforded from the Brook House Grade II listed building, located approximately 20m to the north-west of the site. Areas in south and centre of the site have been scoped out of the assessment due to flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3). Site 780/3000 is located within a relatively flat area influenced by modern field amalgamation which, together with the influence of electricity infrastructure in the north of the site, reduces the sense of rurality, decreases sensitivity. The characteristics described above result in a higher landscape sensitivity to medium scale residential or commercial/industrial development types.
Outline landscape mitigation / guidance	Any development on the site(s) should: Avoid development in the south of the site given the rural context this part of the site provides to the settlements of Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge. Enhance roadside woodland and hedgerows to minimise visibility into the site from the A22 and A271. Retain, protect and enhance all vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, the clump of mature trees in the west of the site and other scattered trees, and hedgerows, to maintain and enhance their contribution to the existing coherent green infrastructure network within the area and visually enclose the site, particularly to minimise the influence of development in views from Lower Horsebridge and Hailsham, and to provide landscape and ecological benefits. Avoid the sensitive riparian corridor of the River Cuckmere, which falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Enhance and retain public access providing interconnectivity with the network of public rights of way passing through the wider countryside. <i>Please also refer to the strategic landscape guidance for the wider Hailsham West assessment unit.</i>

Landscape sensitivity			
SHELAA site ref.	009/3100	1079/3100	1155/3000
Sensitivity rating for small-scale residential	Moderate sensitivity		M
Reasoning	Reasoning The large-scale fields are in agricultural use with mature field boundaries. The relatively large scale and influence of modern field amalgamation, proximity to the busy A267 and B2104, which reduces the sense of rural tranquillity and the flat to very gently undulating topography decrease the sites' sensitivity to development. The sites are generally visually contained by mature wooded field boundaries which reduces sensitivity, although Site 1155/3000 is more open along the boundary, with the A267 to the north and west. Whilst there are no recorded historic assets within the sites, three Grade II listed buildings lie in close proximity to the north-eastern (Lobdens) and south-eastern (Busbridge House and Croft Cottage) boundaries of Site 1079/3100 and to the east of Site 009/3100 lies the moated, Grade I listed Manor House, Horselunges Manor. The settings of these historic buildings could be impacted by new development and increases sensitivity. Sites 009/3100 and 1079/3100 are located near the Hellingly Conservation Area boundary. However Site 009/3100 is well contained by woodland with limited intervisibility with the Conservation Area. Views towards Hellingly Church are afforded from Site 1079/3100, although the site		