

Land south of Green Road, Wivelsfield Green

Proof of Evidence: Landscape & Visual Matters

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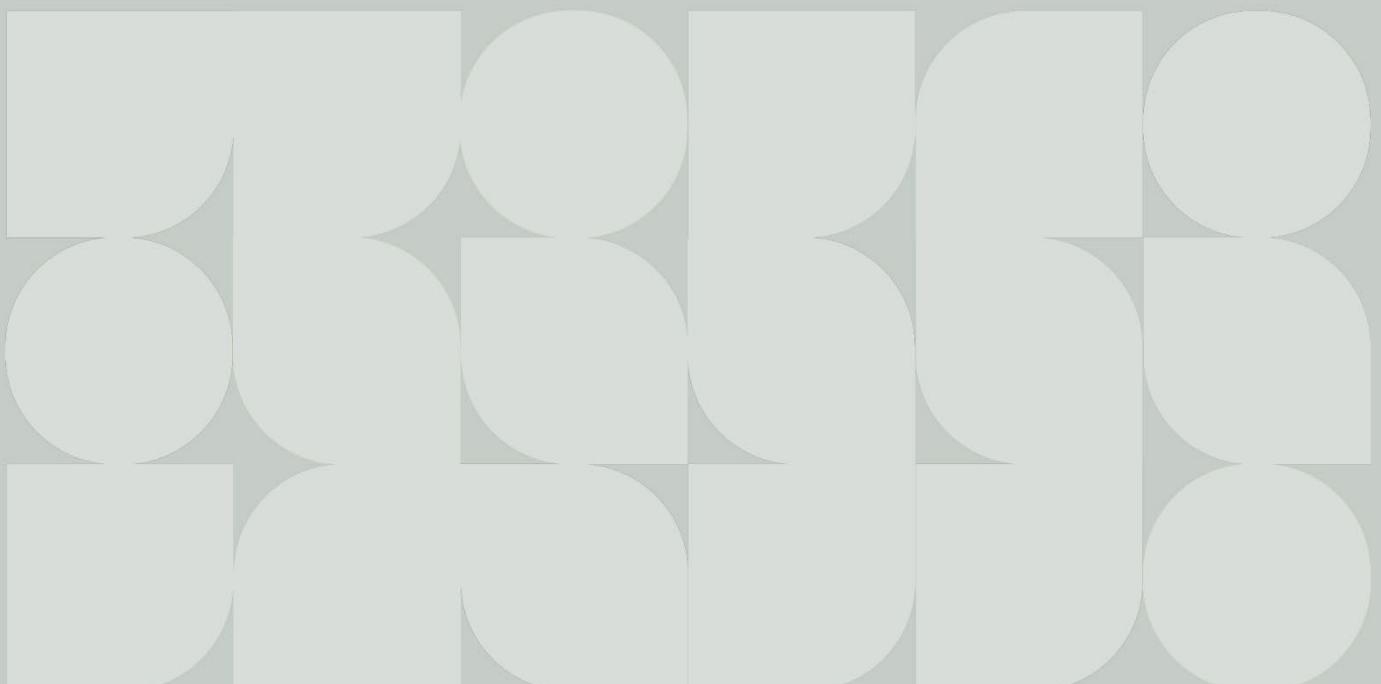
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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION..... 1

2. THE APPEAL SITE 5

3. BACKGROUND TO THE APPEAL14

4. LVIA UPDATE AND CLARIFICATIONS18

5. THE APPEAL PROPOSALS.....26

6. RESPONSE TO LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL MATTERS RAISED.....34

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....48

LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1	Extract from LDC Pre-Application Response (CD-1.1)
Plate 2	Extract from the submitted LVIA, Figure 1 - Site Context (CD-1.7)
Plate 3	Illustration of residential sites at South Road and Ditchling Road
Plate 4	Indicative local landscape context
Plate 5	Extract from Figure 17A of the Lewes District Landscape Character Assessment (CD-15.3)
Plate 6	Extract from the LDC LSA Figure D.56 (CD-15.4, Appendix D, pdf page 6)
Plate 7	Extract from the DFP (CD-2.11) showing Parcel A (refer also to Plates 1 and 2)
Plate 8	Extract from the DFP (CD-2.11) showing Parcel B (refer also to Plates 1 and 2)
Plate 9	Extract from the DFP (CD-2.11) showing Parcel C (refer also to Plates 1 and 2)
Plate 10	Extract from RPS Archaeological DBA – Figure 8: 1897 Ordnance Survey
Plate 11	Extract from RPS Archaeological DBA – Figure 9: 1937 Ordnance Survey
Plate 12	Extract from RPS Archaeological DBA – Figure 10 1954-57 Ordnance Survey
Plate 13	Extract from RPS Archaeological DBA – Figure 10 1954-57 Ordnance Survey

FIGURES

GL2712 F1.1	Viewpoint Location Plan
GL2712 F1.2	Location of Illustrative Photos
GL2712 F2.1	Updated Viewpoints 1 & 2
GL2712 F2.2	Updated Viewpoints 3 & 4
GL2712 F2.3	Updated Viewpoints 5 & 6
GL2712 F2.4	Updated Viewpoints 7 & 8
GL2712 F2.5	Updated Viewpoints 9 & 10
GL2712 F2.6	Updated Viewpoints 11 & 12
GL2712 F2.7	Updated Viewpoints 13 & 14
GL2712 F3.1	Illustrative Views – Sussex Border Path (Slugworth Lane)
GL2712 F3.2	Illustrative Views – Sussex Border Path (Wivelsfield)
GL2712 F3.3	Illustrative Views – Sussex Border Path (West Wood)
GL2712 F4.1	Illustrative Views – Settlement Character (i)
GL2712 F4.2	Illustrative Views – Settlement Character (ii)
GL2712 F4.3	Illustrative Views – Settlement Character (iii)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 1.1.1. My name is James Atkin and I am a Director at G+L Landscape Architects (G+L). Prior to this I briefly ran my own practice (Greyleaf Landscape Planning Limited), before which I spent over twelve years at Pegasus Group, where I held the position of Senior Director and Deputy Head of the Environment service across the wider business. I have a Bachelor of Science Degree in Landscape Design and Plant Science and a Diploma in Landscape Management, both from the University of Sheffield. I am also a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (2005).
- 1.1.2. I have over 25 years professional experience specialising in feasibility, landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA), and expert witness services. I have authored landscape and visual impact appraisals and assessments, based on best practice guidance, both in the UK and in the international context. My experience as an expert witness now extends to over 30 appeals, including preparing and presenting evidence for written representations, hearings and public inquiries; this relates to sites across the UK for a range of sectors.
- 1.1.3. My experience also includes time at multidisciplinary consultancies, including Wardell Armstrong LLP and Atkins Ltd, advising on landscape and visual matters across a range of sectors including power, highways, rail, housing, waste, land reclamation and restoration, mineral extraction, commercial developments and renewable energy. At Pegasus Group my work included residential development, mixed-use schemes, retirement communities, solar installations, commercial development, infrastructure and motorway service areas.
- 1.1.4. At G+L, I continue to provide services in respect of landscape and visual matters, guiding landscape led design principles through the planning process. I adopt an iterative process of LVIA, to ensure that landscape and visual constraints and opportunities are recognised, integrated into master planning principles, and inform appropriate strategies for mitigation.
- 1.1.5. The approach and methodology adopted for the process of landscape and visual impact assessment, including that prepared for the planning application for this appeal site, has been tested and accepted by numerous local planning authorities and Planning Inspector's at appeal.

1.2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1.2.1. This Proof of Evidence addresses landscape and visual matters in respect of land to the south of Green Road, Wivelsfield Green, Haywards Heath (the appeal site).

- 1.2.2. It relates to a decision by Lewes District Council (LDC) to indicate it would have refused permission for an outline planning application for residential development (LPA reference LW/24/0820). The description of development includes for:

"...the erection of up to 150 dwellings, with associated works, parking, landscaping, publicly accessible open space, land for education or community use, with access from Green Road and Eastern Road"

- 1.2.3. I was involved with the appeal site since 2023 in my previous role at Pegasus Group (PG), advising from the outset on the constraints and opportunities related to landscape and visual matters, and the subsequent strategy for landscape and visual mitigation which has been embedded into the Development Framework Plan (and subsequent update) (**CD-1.33** and **CD-2.11**). These early stages included the preparation of a 'Preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal' which essentially documented the process and outcome of the landscape and visual analysis. The document was submitted to LDC as part of the emerging local plan consultation process (**CD-15.10**).
- 1.2.4. The outline application (LPA reference LW/24/0820) was submitted with a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) addressing the proposed development, prepared by PG (referred to hereafter as 'the submitted LVIA') (**CD-1.7**). I prepared the submitted LVIA, including undertaking the site survey and field work photography, baseline analysis and subsequent impact assessment.
- 1.2.5. I was not, however, personally involved in the preparation of the supplementary PG 'technical note' (**CD-2.16**). The technical note addressed minor changes to the proposed development as a consequent of matters relating to flood risk and drainage. The author of the technical note is, nonetheless, an exceptionally competent and experienced professional, who was part of my team whilst I was still at Pegasus Group. I have subsequently reviewed the technical note and am content that my professional view concurs with that of my former colleague.
- 1.2.6. In any event, it is recognised that only the principle of development on the appeal site subject to the parameters proposed, together with the means of access, are to be determined as part of this appeal, and that matters of detailed design to be determined through reserved matters applications (RMA) in the event outline consent is granted
- 1.2.7. On submission of the appeal for non-determination, Taylor Wimpey (the appellant) secured the services of G+L in order that I could return to the project in the capacity of expert witness for the public inquiry. In preparing this evidence, I have revisited the appeal site, the surrounding landscape and all relevant viewpoint locations.

1.3. EVIDENCE STRUCTURE

- 1.3.1. This Proof of Evidence is structured as follows, including this introduction (section 1):

- At section 2, I set out a brief description of the appeal site and the immediate surrounding landscape, which isn't intended to duplicate content of the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**), but is important to provide context directly for this evidence;
- At section 3, I address the background to the appeal and consider the issues raised by Council's Statement of Case in respect of landscape and visual matters, setting out my initial response to these in respect of the appeal proposals;
- At section 4, I have addressed some minor updates and clarifications for the submitted LVIA, bringing some technical matters up to date and addressing further documents included in the Council's evidence base (**CD-1.7**);
- At section 5, I have taken the opportunity to set out a more detailed description of the appeal proposals in relation to the embedded landscape mitigation, which I consider is a direct response to the character and appearance of the landscape, and that helps to avoid or minimise impacts to a level which is acceptable in landscape and visual terms;
- At section 6, I set out a more detailed response to the landscape and visual matters raised, including:
 - Landscape sensitivity, with reference to the published evidence base studies, but also the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**);
 - The current character of Green Road, and extent to which it is rural;
 - Matters related to settlement pattern, including whether the contemporary settlement pattern is linear, the extent to which this is experienced or perceptible, and any particular importance which this carries in terms of landscape character;
 - Any particular impacts and effects on users of the Sussex Borer Path;
 - Consideration of the 'Area of Established Character' (Policy DM34) (notwithstanding that this is a heritage focussed policy);
 - Consideration of the Local Green Space designation where this is relevant to landscape matters (i.e. noting this is a planning policy issue primarily);
 - A brief review of the findings of the PG Technical Note in respect of the potential level changes that may be required for the appeal proposals (
- At section 7, I provide a summary and conclusions.

1.3.2. Principles and good practice for undertaking, and/or applying the principles of, LVIA are set out in the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute of Environmental Management (IEMA) Guidelines for Landscape

and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013) (GLVIA3)¹ (**CD-15.8**). The concepts and procedures set out in this guidance have been adopted where appropriate.

- 1.3.3. In August 2024, the Landscape Institute published new technical guidance in relation to LVIA, the 'Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)' (LI TGN 2024-01)² (**CD-15.9**). This TGN supersedes previous clarifications and guidance in respect of the GLVIA3 and has been taken into account where relevant.
- 1.3.4. My professional judgements, which are presented in this proof of evidence for the forthcoming inquiry (PINS reference 6005671) have been prepared in full accordance with the guidance of my professional institution. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions, irrespective of by whom I am instructed.

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (April 2013), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition

² Landscape Institute, Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 (August 2024), Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3)

2. THE APPEAL SITE

2.1. OVERVIEW

- 2.1.1. In the wider district, Lewes is heavily constrained by landscape designations at the highest level, with approximately 56% of the district falling within the South Downs National Park.
- 2.1.2. As a consequence, opportunities for accommodating new housing in the district without directly affecting these statutorily designated and nationally valued landscapes are notably limited. Outside these designated landscapes, the remaining areas of the district comprise more extensive areas of typical rural countryside, together with transitional landscapes located at the edges of towns and villages. At the interface between countryside and urban areas, there will invariably be a distinction between the character of the landscape and that of the settlements within them.
- 2.1.3. Where greenfield development is required to deliver housing within the district, there will inevitably be some residual landscape and visual effects arising from most, if not all, development sites.
- 2.1.4. The key consideration is therefore whether changes to that interface are extensive or localised, and, in either case, whether mitigation measures can avoid or minimise resulting effects. In respect of the appeal site and proposals, there would be no direct physical impacts beyond the appeal site itself. Consequent changes in landscape character would also be limited, with no perceptible or material changes in character from areas of the landscape around Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green. This includes the landscape context to the north of Green Road, to the east of Wivelsfield (beyond bridleway WIV/30/1), to the west of Wivelsfield (beyond the recreation ground), or south of Purchase Wood and West Wood (or from within these areas of woodland unless on the very northern edge).
- 2.1.5. My evidence will demonstrate that this is a site which can accommodate the proposed residential development, both in the context of the existing landscape character, and through the ability to deliver effective mitigation by way of a well-considered scheme that recognises and responds to the character and appearance of the local landscape.
- 2.1.6. The impacts arising from the appeal proposals would therefore be localised in extent, and experienced only within the appeal site itself, or from locations immediately adjacent to it.
- 2.1.7. A localised impact may still affect a particularly important or valued area of landscape, even if that localised impact is very limited. However, that is not the case for the appeal site. As noted, the appeal site is not subject to any landscape-related designations, nor does it comprise a valued landscape for the purposes of the NPPF (paragraph 187a). The landscape context of Wivelsfield (and Wivelsfield Green) will, as with all local landscapes, hold some local value, but its attributes are otherwise a relatively ordinary reflection of local character.

- 2.1.8. With the appeal proposals in place, and through the careful incorporation of appropriate landscape and visual mitigation, a rural landscape context to the south of Wivelsfield (up to Purchase Wood/West Wood) will be maintained. The landscape and physical separation between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green will also remain, and there will be limited perception of change to the local settlement pattern but that does not equate to harm. Visual impacts on users of the promoted Sussex Border Path are minimal due to screening, and where any changes to the landscape of the appeal site are seen, these are experienced from a section of the route which is already characterised by the existing settlement.
- 2.1.9. Overall, the appeal site does not display any attributes that I consider as particularly out of the ordinary in relation to the surrounding landscape context of Wivelsfield. Furthermore, I consider the impacts and effects are, whilst relatively typical in their nature in respect of the type of development proposed, are limited in scale and extent. Their overall acceptability is, of course, a matter for the wider planning balance which I defer to others.
- 2.1.10. These are my overarching judgements in relation to the appeal proposals, and the remaining sections of my evidence are intended to present relevant information and analysis in support of these.

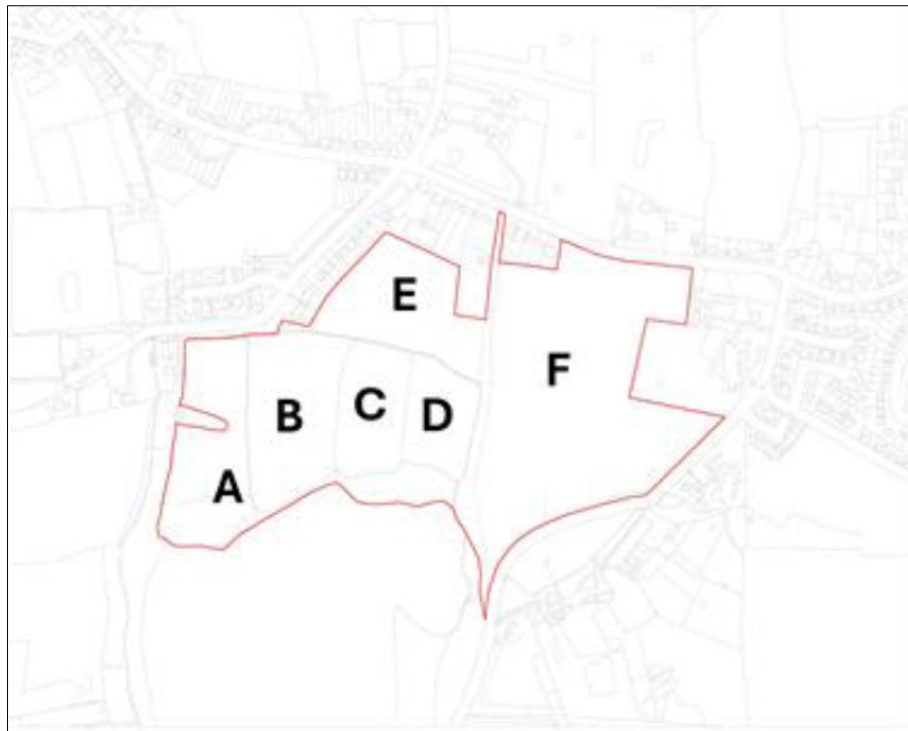
2.2. SITE OVERVIEW

- 2.2.1. The site comprises ca. 21 hectares (ha) of land, situated on the south-east of Wivelsfield. The appeal site is located directly adjacent to the settlement edge, and contiguous with the existing residential dwellings off Green Road and Eastern Road. The appeal site extends south up to the edges of Purchase Wood/West Wood (with the appeal site boundary including a belt of the northern woodland edge), and extends east across toward the settlement edge of Wivelsfield Green (at the local school and to Hundred Acre Lane).
- 2.2.2. Various references refer slightly differently to the location of 'Wivelsfield'. Ordnance Survey mapping (for example, as shown in **Figure 1.1** of my evidence) labels 'Wivelsfield Green' as the consolidated area of settlement that is predominantly located to the east of South Road and Hundred Acre Lane, and 'Wivelsfield' as the area of settlement that is formed around the recreation ground. There is mapping used in the LDC Local Plan, for example 'Inset Map 10' that also references Wivelsfield in this way (**CD-15.1**). Other references, including local responses to the planning application, suggest that Wivelsfield Green East and Wivelsfield Green West are situated either side of the parcel of land that is defined as Local Green Space, as shown on Inset Map 10 (**CD-15.1**), and that 'Wivelsfield' is actually situated further west, beyond the B2112 at the location of St Peter and St John the Baptist Church, off Church Lane.
- 2.2.3. For this evidence, and to maintain consistency with the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**), I will continue to reference the two areas of settlement as Wivelsfield Green (being east of the Local Green Space) and Wivelsfield (west of the Local Green Space). I do acknowledge that the naming and terminology for the settlement areas is important locally, but for the purpose of this evidence, and in respect of landscape character, I think that

the settlement identities are the overriding consideration, particularly in relation to settlement pattern and the distinct, physical separation that exists between these areas.

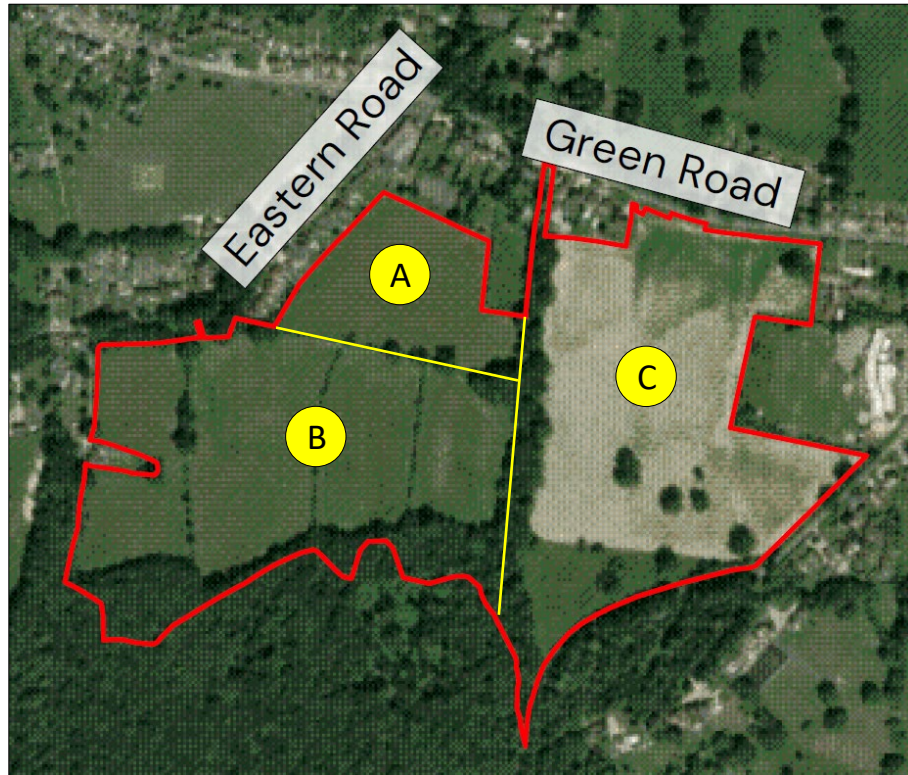
- 2.2.4. Considering the appeal site, the pre-application response from LDC described the appeal site with reference to six areas, labelled A to F (CD-1.1, pdf page 1).

Plate 1: Extract from LDC Pre-Application Response (CD-1.1)



2.2.5. The appeal site can more easily be defined as three distinct areas (refer to **Plate 2**).

Plate 2: Extract from the submitted LVIA, Figure 1 - Site Context (CD-1.7)



- 2.2.6. Firstly, A: This parcel includes proposed residential development. The single field parcel is located immediately adjacent to the settlement edge of Wivelsfield and defined by the existing residential edge off Eastern Road (to the west) and Green Road (to the north); to the east this parcel is defined by a mature tree belt and the alignment of a public right of way (PROW) (bridleway WIV/30/1); to the south this parcel is defined by a mature hedgerow with several mature hedgerow trees set along the alignment of a local drainage ditch/watercourse. Together these create a strong degree of physical and visual enclosure to contain proposed development, but also with the existing residential areas provides a context for residential development (consequently limiting the degree of change as residential built form is not a new feature). This parcel area aligns with Parcel E of the LDC pre-app response (refer to **Plate 1**).
- 2.2.7. Secondly, B: These parcels include proposed residential development. This is the southern part of the appeal site and includes a series of rectangular field parcels, situated between Eastern Road and West Wood to the north and south, and between the Sussex Border Path (public bridleway WSM/28/2) and public bridleway (WIV/30/1) to the west and east. The southern edge of the site includes a narrow belt of West Wood (up to 50m deep in some parts but generally a thinner belt than this). Residential development in these areas can retain the field pattern due to hedgerow retention, and maintain the rural edge by

- maintaining open areas free of development. This area aligns with Parcel's A to D of the LDC pre-app response (refer to **Plate 1**).
- 2.2.8. The third part of the appeal site, C: no residential development is proposed in this area (although the proposed access is, located close to the existing residential dwelling). This eastern part comprises a larger scale area of arable land, irregular in plan form, and situated between the separate settlement areas of Wivelsfield to the west and Wivelsfield Green to the east. This part of the appeal site is defined by Green Lane and Hundred Acre Lane respectively. The eastern boundary of this part of the appeal site directly abuts the settlement edge of Wivelsfield Green which, at this point, is defined by a mixed of lower density residential dwellings and also the existing primary school site (and playing fields). With no residential development proposed in this parcel, physical and visual separation between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green would be maintained. This area aligns with Parcel F of the LDC pre-app response (refer to **Plate 1**)
- 2.2.9. The surrounding landscape context to the appeal site comprises a rolling landscape characterised by small scale hills and ridgelines and watercourses flowing through the associated valleys; woodland is prevalent through the area, and this combines with the topography and mixed agriculture to form a complex and often small-scale mosaic within the landscape.
- 2.2.10. A detailed description of the appeal site is included in the baseline section of the submitted LVIA which accompanied the outline application (**CD-1.7**, Paragraphs 3.28 to 3.61).
- 2.2.11. This includes reference to the physical components of the landscape, the baseline landscape character (with reference to published guidance and drawing on the physical descriptions), and the visual baseline. The presented baseline information describes the individual components of the physical landscape that are present in respect of the appeal site and the wider study area including, for example, reference to landform and topography, settlement pattern and green infrastructure. The description in the submitted LVIA is intended to establish an understanding of the specific landscape baseline, including individual elements and more distinctive features which together inform the understanding and interpretation of landscape character.
- 2.2.12. For the purposes of this appeal, and in respect of paragraph 187(a) of the NPPF (**CD-8.1**), I do not consider that the appeal site (or the areas around Wivelsfield more generally) is a "valued landscape", nor does it benefit from any national or local landscape designations.
- 2.2.13. This is consistent with the opinion of the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Landscape Architect, who in their consultation response to the outline application states that (**CD-3.26**, 2nd page, paragraph 2):

"The site would be unlikely to be considered valued landscape in the context of the NPPF paragraph 180a) [sic]"

- 2.2.14. Whilst considering the matter of valued landscapes, it is worth noting the findings of Inspector's for other similar appeal site's in and around Wivelsfield.
- 2.2.15. These are two residential sites, close to the appeal site, located in Wivelsfield Green and Wivelsfield respectively. Both are in construction currently, both are located directly adjacent to the settlement edge and are situated on agricultural land which forms part of the wider landscape context to the settlements (refer to **Plate 3**). In respect of settlement pattern, both are relevant to the appeal proposals.

Plate 3: Illustration of residential sites at South Road and Ditchling Road



- 2.2.16. To the east of the appeal site, at Wivelsfield Green, for Land at South Road (Application reference LW/25/0527 - Appeal ref, APP/P1425/W/22/3299370) the Inspector notes that (**CD-10.10**, paragraphs 13 and 14):

“13. The site falls within the Natural England National Character Area 121 – Low Weald, and the East Sussex Landscape Character Area 14 – Western Low Weald. The landscape is characterised as being of gently undulating, relatively low lying countryside. Agriculture is largely pastoral because of the heavy clay soils. The area has a patchwork of small, irregular shaped fields bounded by hedges, with scattered tree features including woodland, shaws and hedgerow trees giving the impression that the area is well wooded. Wivelsfield Green is noted as one of the larger 20th century villages which have grown on the main road and rail routes through the area.

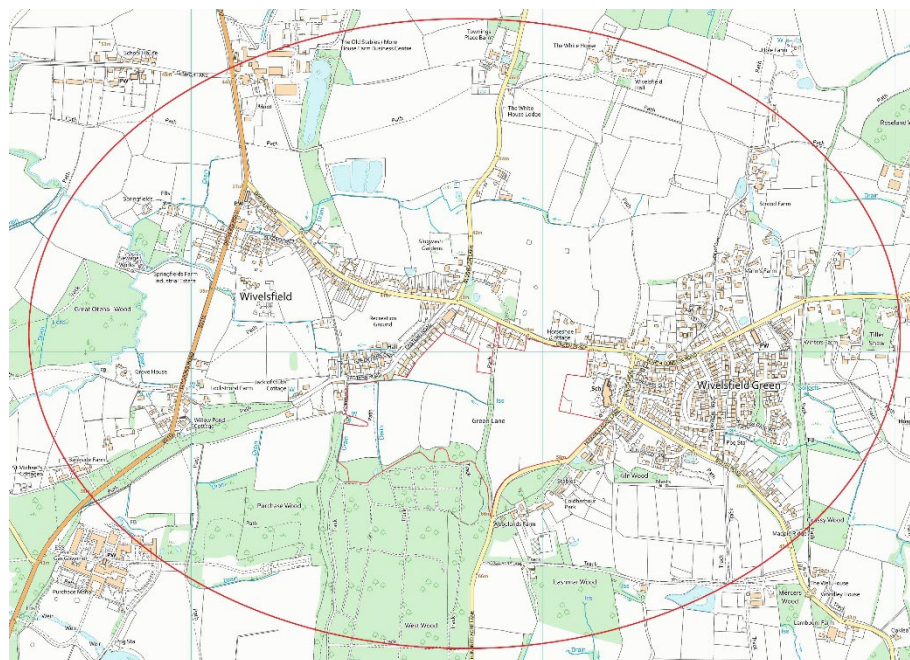
14. Although the Low Weald is not a ‘valued landscape’ in the sense that it is designated for its landscape qualities at a national or regional level, it is largely unspoilt with few intrusive features and no large urban areas. The character area studies referred to above recognise it for its own intrinsic character and beauty.”

"...However, the parties agree that the appeal site does not fall within a valued landscape nor is it covered by any statutory or local designation relating to its landscape quality.

2.2.19. These points indicate that, despite the intrinsic landscape character of the countryside in these areas, neither the landscape of Wivelsfield (and Wivelsfield Green) or the appeal site exhibit anything out of the ordinary to the point that they might be considered valued landscapes in the context of the NPPF. That is not to say they are not without local value, just that there is a graduation and hierarchy to consider.

2.3.1. At various points through the submitted LVIA, and through this evidence, reference is made to ‘the site in its local landscape context’.

Plate 4 – Indicative local landscape context

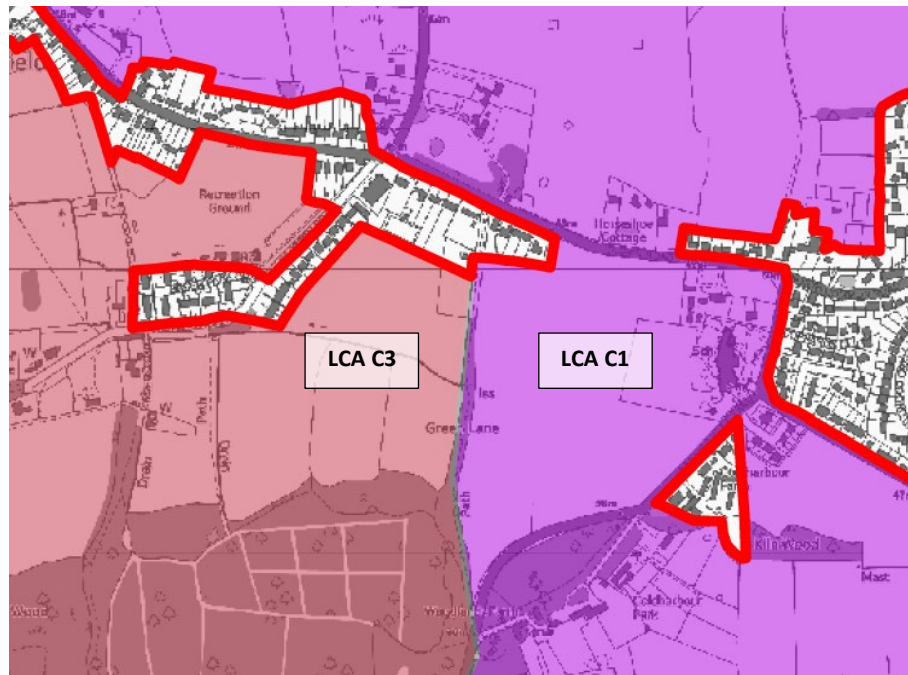


- 2.3.3. The ZTV included in the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**, Figure 5) demonstrates the extent to which the proposed development is theoretically visible or not visible. The 'local landscape context' is an area which I define as being relevant to, or influential on, landscape character at a local level, irrespective as to whether the appeal site or proposed development are visible.
- 2.3.4. Addressing "the appeal site in its local landscape context" ensures that a balanced view is taken between all facets of the locality, irrespective of the boundary between published character areas. This includes the landscape around Wivelsfield Green (in this instance) but also the settlements that are present and the extent to which these influence the local landscape character of the appeal site.
- 2.3.5. This finer level of detail gives a greater understanding of landscape and visual matters over and above those identified in published guidance. This is consistent with the guidance set out in GLVIA3 which states that:
- "Even where there are useful and relevant existing Landscape Character Assessments and historic Landscape Characterisations, it is still likely that it will be necessary to carry out specific and more detailed surveys of the site itself and perhaps its immediate setting or surroundings"*³.
- 2.3.6. The boundaries of the local landscape context are not fixed, as there will be some transition between the local and wider areas, however it gives a useful indication as to the extent of the landscape being considered.
- 2.3.7. The derivation of this area is useful to inform the nature and extent of likely impacts and effects, particularly where landscape and visual effects are considered 'localised' in that they do not extend across a wide area and/or do not extensively affect visual receptors.
- 2.3.8. For LDC, published character guidance⁴ includes reference to various settlements, and describes characteristic settlement patterns, often citing characteristics such as 'residential settlement edges'. However, the published guidance appears to exclude the larger settlement areas from the formal study area (refer to **CD-15.3**, Figure 17A, and also **Plate 5**, below)

³ GLVIA3, page 79, paragraph 5.16

⁴ Lewes Landscape Character Assessment (May 2023), AECOM on behalf of Lewes District Council

Plate 5: Extract from Figure 17A of the Lewes District Landscape Character Assessment (CD-15.3)



- 2.3.9. For the appeal site, this is particularly important, given that the appeal site is effectively split into two based on the boundary of the published character areas of LCA C3 (Ditchling Common) and LCA C1 (Wivelsfield, Newick and Chailey), with Areas A and B in LCA C3, and Area C in LCA C1 (refer to **Plate 5**).

3. BACKGROUND TO THE APPEAL

3.1. INTRODUCTION

3.1.1. The background to the appeal proposal and planning application is set out in the main planning evidence of Mr Steven Brown (Woolf Bond Planning), on behalf of the appellant (**CD-9.1**).

3.1.2. This section provides a brief overview of the background relevant to landscape and visual matters.

3.2. LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

3.2.1. As noted, landscape and visual matters were considered from the outset of the project, with the input by Pegasus Group required to consider landscape and visual constraints for the purpose of guiding masterplanning principles. This process guided both the spatial extent of the development, and also the internet landscape mitigation strategy to be incorporated into the masterplan.

3.2.2. This process was supported by a 'Preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal, submitted to LDC in respect of the emerging local plan consultation process.

3.3. PRE-APPLICATION STAGE

3.3.1. Following the initial stages on the project, and including reference to the landscape approach, Woolf Bond submitted a request pre-application advice in respect of a potential forthcoming planning application. The pre-application process included a meeting on-site with the case officer and the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Landscape Architect. Subsequent on-line meetings were held, including with the ESCC Landscape Architect, to introduce the proposed development, discuss the landscape and visual constraints and opportunities, and highlight the landscape-led approach that was being adopted in response to these.

3.3.2. The pre-application response (**CD-1.1**) set out various considerations, including on landscape and visual matters and particularly in respect of concerns over the impact on character of the surrounding landscape and the village itself (including reference to settlement pattern). The conclusion of the response (**CD-1.1**, Page 17, second para).

3.3.3. The pre-application response included reference to 'further comments from the ESCC Landscape Architect', however further clarification confirmed that this text was retained from a draft in error and that the ESCC Landscape Architect's input had been included in the pre-app response.

3.3.4. Notwithstanding the detail of the pre-app response, further conformation was sought and received in respect of agreement for the proposed locations of viewpoints to be considered in the forthcoming LVIA. The viewpoint locations (latterly shown on Figure 5 of the submitted LVIA, **CD-1.7**) were agreed as part of the overall pre-application discussion.

3.4. PLANNING APPLICATION

- 3.4.1. The planning application was submitted in December 2024, and included the detailed LVIA prepared by PG (CD-1.7).
- 3.4.2. During the determination period, a consultation response was received from the ESCC Landscape Architect (CD-3.26), however despite this being dated 28.01.2025, the document was not issued to the applicant team until August 2025. In the consultation response, the ESCC Landscape Architect states that 'The site would be unlikely to be considered valued landscape in the context of the NPPF' (CD-3.26, second page, paragraph 2).
- 3.4.3. The ESCC Landscape Architect's judgement as to whether the appeal site would be considered a 'valued landscape' (in relation to the NPPF), is consistent with the same authors opinions and judgments for nearby planning applications in Wivelsfield Green/Wivelsfield.
- 3.4.4. This includes Land at South Road, Wivelsfield (application reference LW/21/0754), where the ESCC Landscape Architect states that the site, and immediate surrounds, would not be considered a valued landscape (CD-15.6, second page, paragraph 2), and also for Land to the east of Ditchling Road (application reference LW/21/0729), where they state that, notwithstanding there being valued landscape features on that site (for example mature trees, hedgerows, open pasture), that the 'site and immediate surroundings would not be considered valued landscape in the context of the NPPF' (CD-15.7, second page, paragraph 2.1).
- 3.4.5. In response to the ESCC Landscape Architect consultation response, PG prepared a technical note to address some clarifications, but also a rebuttal of several points raised (CD-2.9).
- 3.4.6. Also, during the determination period, the proposed development was subject to some minor amendments in response to matters related to flood risk and drainage. Relevant to landscape and visual matters, these included raising levels on some parts of the site by between 0.3m and 0.5m, changes to the location and size of attenuation in parts of the site, and consequent relocation of the proposed play area. These changes were addressed by a short technical note, prepared by PG (CD-2.16). I consider this matter in later sections of my evidence.
- 3.4.7. An appeal was submitted for non-determination in February 2026. Prior to LDC setting out their statement of case, LDC have sought further consultation on landscape matters, the Council appointing an external consultant to comment on the application.
- 3.4.8. This work was undertaken by Terra Firma, who are commissioned as independent advisors to the Council across several projects/application sites. Terra Firma produced an additional consultation note in respect of the application, setting out various criticisms of the submitted LVIA and concerns over landscape and visual impact (CD-3.29).

3.4.9. Despite the report being dated 11.02.2026, the report was not received by the appellant team until 28.04.2026. The consultation response does not raise matters in relation to valued landscapes. Where relevant, the various points raised in the Terra Firma note are addressed in later sections of my evidence.

3.5. PUTATIVE REASON FOR REFUSAL

3.5.1. LDC's Statement of Case raises matters of character and appearance, setting out their consideration of the harms that the appeal scheme would give rise to, including (CD-4.2, page 5, paragraph 16):

'Harm to the landscape character and countryside setting'.

3.5.2. Further detail in the LDC SoC states that the Appellant's LVIA accepts that the appeal scheme will give rise to adverse landscape effects, the Council suggesting that at least some have the potential to be 'major adverse' and subsequently quoting the ESCC Landscape Architects consultation response that (CD-3.26, page 7, paragraph 25):

"The proposed development would be of a scale which would significantly detract from the character and scale of the village. The rural setting of the village would be lost to an extensive suburban extension."

3.5.3. These impacts and effects are set out in the submitted LVIA and, as noted, at a site level would be typical of all development sites in the district, including those allocated. My position is that the level of impact, ability to mitigate and limited extent of these, mean that they are acceptable in landscape and visual terms.

3.5.4. Turning to the detail of the consultation response from the ESCC Landscape Architect, the objection and recommendation for refusal broadly raises the following main concerns (CD-3.26, first page, recommendation for refusal):

- development would be of a scale of which would significantly detract from the character and scale of the village;
- rural character of the site would be lost to an extensive suburban extension;
- development would extend much deeper into the countryside and away from the built up area than recent permissions; and
- enclosed nature of the site should not be considered a reason for development as there would be adverse effects on local countryside views and the edge of the village.

3.5.5. Unfortunately I have seen no evidence to support these judgements, and I disagree strongly with the assertions. The scale of the appeal proposals will not be discernible from the surrounding landscape, and really will only be interpreted from the appeal site, or locations immediately adjacent to it. Neither the scale of the existing settlement nor the appeal proposals are apparent from locations to the north, west or west

of Wivelsfield, with the only perception being largely related to areas immediately south of the appeal site, up to the woodland areas. All development sites will change the character at a site level, it is how this can be assimilate into the landscape context which is more pertinent – irrespective of this, it remains possible to retain some rural context to the emerging settlement, with the appeal proposals in place, The landscape strategy for the appeal proposals achieve this and consequently the appeal proposals can be successfully assimilated. Furthermore, the enclosed nature of the appeal site is entirely relevant to considering its capacity and how this enclosure contributes to ability to accommodate residential development without undue impacts on the landscape and visual baseline.

3.5.6. Submissions from Wivelsfield Parish Council (WPC), along with comments from third parties also raise issues in respect of landscape and visual matters, including (in summary):

- changes to the settlement edge, and that development would ‘visually merge the settlement southwards’;
- References the various landscape and visual effects;
- Suggestions that the later design changes and potential raise in levels have not been assessed in the LVIA (noting that WPC may not have had sight of the PG Technical Note (**CD-2.16**) which addresses these matters);
- Local concerns over ‘significant negative impact on the local area’ and particularly the natural environment. Other concerns on loss of green space an overall ‘character of the area’;
- That the proposed development fails to recognise character and beauty of the countryside or protect valued landscapes or public rights of way (in the context of the NPPF);
- Some references to non-specific ‘long views’ and also some references to impacts on private views;
- Reference to National Character areas and the ESCC landscape character assessment;
- One suggestion that the proposal lacks an appraisal of the impact in the immediate landscape (note that it is not clear if this respondent has seen the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**) given that the report does specifically address the site in its local landscape context); and
- Issues raised in respect of the physical and visual impacts on the PROW network.

3.5.7. Together, these are addressed in the following sections of my evidence.

4. LVIA UPDATE AND CLARIFICATIONS

4.1.1. This section of my evidence sets out a brief review of relevant considerations in respect of updates and clarifications to the submitted LVIA.

4.2. ZTV UPDATE

4.2.1. A 'zone of theoretical visibility' diagram was prepared as part of the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**, Figure 5). This shows the potential visibility from the landscape surrounding the appeal site, and accounting for some screening by existing built form and green infrastructure. During the determination period for the application, the ZTV was updated to reflect the minor changes to the masterplan. These were comprehensively addressed in the PG Technical Note (**CD-2.16**). The updated ZTV did not introduce any new areas of potential visibility (and associated receptors) that needed to be considered.

4.3. VIEWPOINT UPDATES

4.3.1. I originally visited the appeal site (and surrounding area) in 2023 as part of the initial appraisal process, and latterly in winter 2024 to capture the LVIA photography and representative viewpoints (with a further visit and site walkover with the LDC and ESCC representatives).

4.3.2. The number and locations of the representative viewpoints included in the submitted LVIA were agreed with the ESCC Landscape Officer via the pre-application process, as referenced in the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**, pdf page 8, paragraph 2.14).

4.3.3. Given the passage of time since the LVIA photography was captured (slightly over two years), I have visited the appeal site and re-taken the representative viewpoints. For ease of reference I have reproduced the viewpoint location plan as part of my evidence (refer to **Figure 1.1**), with the updated representative viewpoints also included (refer to **Figures 2.1 to 2.7**).

4.3.4. Viewpoint location 4 is currently not accessible due to the Cala Homes site being in construction (application reference LW/21/0729). At Wivelsfield Green, the Elivia Homes site has been implemented. Together, these residential developments represent the most substantial change in the local landscape context to the appeal site. I have included an alternative viewpoint as 'viewpoint 4', from the elevated position to west of Wivelsfield (refer to **Figure 2.2**, Viewpoint 4). The original location, and alternative location of Viewpoint 4 are shown on **Figure 2.1**.

4.3.5. In addition to the updated representative viewpoints, for this proof of evidence I have taken a series of photographs to support particular parts of my evidence. The locations of these photographs are shown on **Figure 1.2**, with the series of photographs included as **Figures 3.1 to 3.3** and **Figures 4.1 to 4.3**.

4.4. LDC EVIDENCE BASE

LDC Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, 2023

- 4.4.1. The submitted LVIA makes reference to the LDC Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Study (LDC LSA) (**CD-15.4**), noting that the study concluded the western parts of the appeal site (LDC LSA study Parcel E) to be of 'medium sensitivity' for small to medium scale residential development (**CD-1.7**, pdf page 29, paragraph 3.67). The submitted LVIA did not reference the LDC LSA conclusion for Parcel E of 'medium to high' sensitivity to 'large scale residential development' (and small-scale commercial development), however I accept this conclusion of the study is also relevant to the discussion of sensitivity for the appeal site. Whilst this was omitted from the submitted LVIA in error, as I explain in the following sections, this strategic level study of landscape sensitivity does not preclude the requirement for a specific assessment of sensitivity to be undertaken as part of the LVIA process, and consequently does not affect the findings of the submitted LVIA.
- 4.4.2. The LDC LSA also determines the eastern part of the appeal site (LDC LSA study Parcel F) to be of 'very high sensitivity' for large scale residential (and small scale commercial) development (**CD-15.4**, page 343).
- 4.4.3. Despite its findings, it is important to note that the LDC LSA is a strategic evidence base study is a separate and distinct judgement to that of the submitted LVIA. The latter draws its own objective judgements on landscape sensitivity based on the landscape baseline, and in response to the type of development proposed, i.e. the conclusion of the published study is not a direct component part of the judgements for the LVIA and it is entirely reasonable that there is variation between the respective judgements and conclusions.
- 4.4.4. This approach is consistent with best practice guidance, including GLVIA3, which states that (**CD-15.8**, page 79, paragraph 5.16):

"Even where there are useful and relevant existing Landscape Character Assessments and historic landscape characterisations, it is still likely that it will be necessary to carry out specific and more detailed surveys of the site itself and perhaps its immediate setting or surroundings. This provides the opportunity to record the specific characteristics of this more limited area, but also to analyse to what extent the site and its immediate surroundings conform to or are different from the wider Landscape Character Assessments that exist, and to pick up other characteristics that may be important in considering the effects of the proposal."

- 4.4.5. Further guidance on the matter is set out in Technical Guidance Note LI TGN-2024-01, which states that (**CD-15.9**, page 6 first row):

“As stated in GLVIA3, at paragraph 5.41, existing landscape sensitivity studies provide useful background information, but do not provide a substitute for the assessment of the susceptibility of the receptors as part of LVIA...”

4.4.6. The TGN goes on to recognise that (**CD-15.9**, page 4, section 7(2)):

“2. Understanding the difference between landscape sensitivity assessment (LSA) and landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA). LSA is carried out for the purposes of strategic spatial planning, and LVIA assesses the effects of the specific development proposals. Both are important, at different stages of the process. LVIA should also help local communities understand the likely effects of specific proposals.

4.4.7. Essentially, the published LDC LSA can inform (and has informed) the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**), however when undertaking LVIA, the assessment of landscape sensitivity should be based on the site, and the proposed development, being considered, rather than the generic principles of development which a strategic sensitivity assessment would typically relate to.

4.4.8. To give some brief examples why I consider this to be relevant, I will address the LDC LSA ‘ZTVs’ (including assessment parameters), and also some of the judgements set out in the subsequent overall scoring.

4.4.9. The LDC LSA assesses the appeal site separately as Parcels WG E and WG F, aligned to the appeal site Areas A and B, and Area C, respectively (refer to **Plate 2**).

4.4.10. In terms of the ZTV, these are based on development areas in the entire footprint of both parcels, at a maximum proposed development height of 12m (**CD-15.4**, Appendix D, Figure D.55 and D.56).

4.4.11. The LDC LSA references assessment parameters of both 7.5m two-storey heights and 12m for three-storey heights for ‘large scale residential development’ (3 storey height), with an assessment parameter of 7.5m (two-storey height) for medium or small-scale residential development (**CD-15.4**, page 13). The LDC LSA includes development in Parcel F (refer to **Plate 6**).

Plate 6: Extract from the LDC LSA Figure D.56 (CD-15.4, Appendix D, pdf page 6)



- 4.4.12. As noted in the submitted DAS, the appeal proposals are for predominantly two-storey development, with up to 10% of two and a half storey dwellings, used for 'feature buildings' (at specific locations) (**CD-1.6**, page 50). The development envelope for the appeal proposals omits any residential built form from the LDC LSA Parcel F; for LDC LSA Parcel E, the development envelope does not fill the entire footprint, as it includes area for mitigation.
- 4.4.13. For the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**), the assessment process addresses the whole site, and for the appeal proposals, no residential development has been included in the landscape between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green (i.e. LDC LSA Parcel F), as a consequence of the assessment process recognising the potential for coalescence of the two areas of settlement.
- 4.4.14. In respect of scoring, taking the western parcel of the LDC LSA, WG E, this scores the overall sensitivity as 57/90 for small-scale and medium scale residential, and 60/90 for large-scale residential (and small scale employment) (**CD-15.4**, page 337). This shows a very fine margin between sensitivity of this parcel to either small-scale residential development, and a large-scale residential or small-scale commercial development.
- 4.4.15. If considering the appeal site specifically, I would disagree with some of the judgements in respect of LDC LSA Parcel E, for example:
- For landscape sensitivity (land cover), the study scores the parcel as 5/5 based on the presence of ancient woodland (**CD-15.4**, page 333) despite this being limited in its extent to the southern edge of the parcel. In landscape terms, there is some appreciation and sense of this being ancient woodland

from within the woodland area. However, from locations outside of the woodland, the character and appearance of the ancient woodland is much like any other tree belt or woodland edge, and there's no real appreciation of its ancient woodland status based on its appearance alone. This score could be dropped to 3 or 4, based on the methodology criteria (**CD-15.4**, page 379);

- For landscape value, a score of 4/5 is set for designations (**CD-15.4**, page 334) again based on the presence of ancient woodland, despite this only being present along the very southern edge of the parcel, and not extensively across or within it. It would be reasonable to drop this score to 3, or even 2, based on the methodology criteria (**CD-15.4**, page 380);
- Also for landscape value, a score of 4/5 is given for perception, referencing the South Downs National Park which, although it's boundary is to the south-west, is physically and visual separated, and there is little or no perception of the designated landscape from the parcel. This score could be dropped to 3 or 4 based on the criteria in the methodology (**CD-15.4**, page 381).

4.4.16. These are just examples, and it is not my intention to unpick the published sensitivity study, but rather to highlight the necessity of adopting the approaches set out in GLVIA3, that the published assessment cannot be taken as read, and that a further detailed assessment based specifically on a site and proposed development is required, as has been completed for the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**).

4.4.17. On that basis I am content that the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**) adopts an approach that is appropriate, that it is right to consider the published evidence base as part of the assessment process, but that, on balance, the specific and more detailed assessment of sensitivity set out in the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**) is both reasonable and robust in relation to the entirety of the appeal site.

Lewes District Green and Blue Infrastructure Study, May 2024

4.4.18. The submitted LVIA makes reference to green infrastructure in terms of the physical landscape components, landscape character and to policies of the Local Plan that are relevant to green infrastructure. However, the submitted LVIA did not specifically make reference to the LDC evidence base documents on blue/green infrastructure.

4.4.19. The Lewes District Green and Blue Infrastructure Study reports on the 'Green and Blue Infrastructure' (GBI), providing a district wide analysis for Lewes District, outside the South Downs National Park (SDNP).

4.4.20. The study addresses various strategic principles for GBI; Part 2 of the study (Section 6) addresses 'Principle 1 - Nature-rich and beautiful places' and considers GBI under a sub-section 'Contributing to Landscape Character and Distinctiveness'.

4.4.21. The study refers to the defined LCA's from the Lewes District LCA and proceeds to set out GBI management guidelines intended to preserve and/or restore natural beauty, biodiversity, and historical significance, taking account of the evolving forces of change in the landscape.

- 4.4.22. For the relevant LCA, the Western Low Weald (Landscape Character Area C), the GBI study recognises various points in relation to the settlement pattern across the area, including (**CD-13.13**, paragraph 6.43 and 6.44).

“...medium-scale, irregular fields. In the northern part of the character area, the landscape is generally enclosed, marked by small, nucleated settlements and winding road networks of ancient droving origin.

6.44 - In the southern part of the Character Area near Plumpton, Cooksbridge and Ringmer, the settlement pattern is more characterised by two-storey residential development in a linear and ribbon arrangement adjacent to the road networks. There are also several smaller concentrated areas of residential development and commercial and industrial development interspersed in the agricultural landscape, including farmsteads.

- 4.4.23. The study notes that most of the character area maintains a rural and tranquil character due to its land use and dense vegetation, but sets out the principle that overhead transmission lines urbanise the north of the area, while transport routes have a localised detracting influence due to noise and traffic (**CD-13.13**, paragraphs 6.45 and 6.46).

- 4.4.24. Forces for change identified in the study are defined as (**CD-13.13**, page 39):

- increased agricultural pressure leading to hedgerow degradation and watercourse runoff;
- expanding settlements, larger development in farmsteads, and linear development along road networks with urbanising effects;
- improved PRow networks with increased recreational pressures; and
- challenges posed by climate change, including extreme weather events and pressure for renewable development.

- 4.4.25. In response to these, the study sets out various GBI Management Guidelines. Those relevant to the appeal site, and which I consider the appeal proposals can deliver (either in full, or in part) include (**CD-13.13**, page 39 and 40):

- Retain and enhance the GBI network within the broader High Weald National Landscape and SDNP's ecosystems;
- Preserve the rural character away from development and roads. Plant new woodlands to improve screening and reduce disturbance from roads and overhead lines;
- Maintain semi-enclosed character with available views onto surrounding higher ground;
- Conserve and enhance recreational access, particularly along watercourses;

- Protect and retain existing vegetation, especially ancient woodland;
- Implement new developments within a robust landscape framework; and
- Retain and aim to restore historic patterns of field enclosures and settlement, particularly where lost to amalgamation.

4.4.26. The study includes a separate and more detailed settlement appraisal of GBI for Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green GBI, intended to provide a picture of the existing GBI in and around the settlement boundary, and highlighting opportunities for improvement. The settlement appraisal reiterates several of the overarching district wide findings. The settlement appraisal refers to the Lewes Landscape Character Assessment, noting that Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green fall into the 'Western Low Weald' character area C, and setting out forces for change and GBI guidelines as follows (**CD-13.13**, page 9, section 6):

"The forces for change relevant to GBI at a settlement scale are:

PRoW networks improved by local volunteers with increased recreational pressures; and

Challenges posed by climate change, including extreme weather events and pressure for renewable development.

As described in the district wide GBI study, the relevant GBI management guidelines set out in the LCA are:

Preserve the rural character away from development and roads. Plant new woodlands to improve screening and reduce disturbance from roads and overhead lines;

Maintain semi-enclosed character with available views onto surrounding higher ground;

Encourage local natural flood management initiatives;

Protect and retain existing vegetation, especially ancient woodland; and

Implement new developments within a robust landscape framework.

4.4.27. In the context of discussing 'Principle 2: Active and healthy places', the settlement appraisal study also states that (**CD-13.13**, Page 11):

"As a service village, Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green have a good network of footpaths and bridleways. However, there are no off-road PRoWs directly connecting Wivelsfield hamlet and the Green Road recreation ground with Wivelsfield Green village. The only route goes north from Hundred Acre Lane, southeast of Wivelsfield Green."

4.4.28. The following section of my evidence looks at the appeal proposals and considers the detail and purpose of the landscape mitigations strategy. It is clear that several of the issues raised in respect of GBI are positively addressed by the approach taken to landscape and visual mitigation as part of the proposals.

5. THE APPEAL PROPOSALS

5.1.1. In this section of my evidence, I review the appeal proposals, particularly in regard to the landscape led approach and the strategy for landscape mitigation that has been embedded in the masterplan in response to landscape and visual matters.

5.2. BACKGROUND

5.2.1. The NPPF (paragraph 187 (d)) sets out the requirements to 'recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'. Policy DM27 (Landscape Design) of the LDC Local Plan requires 'landscape schemes' for development proposals to (amongst other things):

- reflect, conserve or enhance the character and distinctiveness of the local landscape;
- integrate the development into its surroundings;
- retain and incorporate existing healthy mature trees and hedgerows (providing appropriate replacements where necessary); and
- take opportunities to connect the development site to the existing green infrastructure network.

5.2.2. 'Recognising' aspects of the landscape is achieved through the application of LVIA as a process. Properly applied, LVIA is an iterative tool. It can help inform and guide the design of development in response to the landscape and visual baseline.

5.2.3. This process has been applied with the appeal proposals, including the early inputs of landscape and visual matters and subsequent influence on the masterplanning principles. Consequently, whilst accepting some inevitable impacts and effects, I consider the appeal proposals to be successful in response to the policy requirements, as they have been led by reference to the physical landscape elements and features of the appeal site, and by the characteristics of the area, and by key views.

5.2.4. To demonstrate this further, the following section of my evidence sets out more detail on how landscape and visual matters have influenced the appeal proposals.

5.3. LANDSCAPE LED APPROACH

5.3.1. For the appeal site, I was involved with the project at the early stages in my previous role at Pegasus Group. This included early appraisal, analysis and feedback on the approach to the masterplan.

5.3.2. The approach is set out in full in Section 4 of the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**, pdf pages 34 to 40) (and on Figures 7, Landscape and Visual Analysis, Figure 8, Landscape Strategy, and Figure 9, Illustrative Landscape Masterplan – pdf pages 124-126).

- 5.3.3. When considering landscape and visual effects, it is important to recognise that the landscape mitigation is embedded within the masterplan, and forms an inherent part of the proposed development.
- 5.3.4. As noted in the submitted LVIA, in the context of the overall need for greenfield development, a degree of landscape and/or visual impact is an inevitable consequence for most, if not all, sites. In relation to landscape and visual matters, for appropriate sites to come forward it is necessary to consider those sites where such impacts are minimised and where mitigation can be successfully incorporated that can minimise residual impacts. This is particularly relevant given the constraint on the district in respect of the South Downs National Park landscape designation.
- 5.3.5. Notwithstanding the outline nature of the proposals, I consider the appeal proposals to be a positive response that appropriately recognises the landscape and visual context of Wivelsfield, and that mitigation will be effective in terms of avoiding and/or minimising potential effects.

5.4. APPROACH TO THE APPEAL PROPOSALS

- 5.4.1. In terms of the proposed development, the submitted LVIA describes the appeal site in three parts (**CD-1.7**, pdf page 6, paragraphs 1.7 to 1.10). These include:
- An enclosed parcel, west of bridleway WIV/30/1 and north of Eastern Road, and contained to the north and west by existing residential development;
 - An enclosed parcel comprised of several smaller scale fields, west of bridleway WIV/30/1 and south of Eastern Road, and contained by the existing settlement as well as mature trees and woodland; and
 - A larger scale parcel, east of bridleway WIV/30/1, a larger agricultural area of land between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green.
- 5.4.2. Aside from the proposed access off Green Road, development proposals are restricted to the western part of the appeal site, areas which are both physically and visually contained by the existing settlement edge of Wivelsfield, by topography, and by the framework of mature trees and woodland.
- 5.4.3. However, it is important to note that the appeal proposals are not restricted to just the western parts of the appeal site, and that the application boundary includes the eastern area as well.
- 5.4.4. The assessment of landscape and visual effects must take a balanced judgement considering both the area proposed for residential development, as well as the landscape enhancements proposed for the eastern part of the appeal site. Whilst the various positive or negative influences of the proposed development can be considered on balance during the assessment process, overall judgements of the proposed development should not be disaggregated.

Western parcel (A) – north of Eastern Road (refer also to Plate 1, LDC Parcel E)

- 5.4.5. This part of the appeal site is strongly contained both physically and visually. Residential development contains the appeal site to the north and west and the residential built form is influential on its character (as well as the immediate landscape context). Consequently, notwithstanding the direct, physical change to the agricultural field parcel that is within the appeal site, the appeal proposals will not introduce a new element (i.e. housing) into the landscape context; residential dwellings and the settlement character is an existing landscape component, and the appeal proposals will be consistent with this. This limits the degree of change.

Plate 7: Extract from the DFP (CD-2.11) showing Parcel A (refer also to Plates 1 and 2)



- 5.4.6. Appendix 3 of the Lewes District Council Land Availability Assessment (LAA) includes reference to Parcel 29WV, which broadly aligns with this part of the appeal site. The LAA includes a brief summary appraisal of landscape sensitivity which includes reference to potential capacity and mitigation (**CD-13.5**, pdf page 430).
- 5.4.7. The summary appraisal of landscape sensitivity includes feedback from the ESCC Landscape Architect, stating that ‘...the enclosed nature of this area and close relationship with the built-up area would provide some opportunity for potential development’.

- 5.4.8. For this parcel, the LAA states a site area of 2.1ha and assumes a density for development of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) (which should equate to 63 dwellings) (noting the applied dph is different to the assumptions of the LDC LSA, which address parameters of up to 40dph, **CD-15.4**, page 13).
- 5.4.9. Despite this, it assumes an indicative residential capacity of 47 dwellings, suggesting that the LAA has moderated the assumed capacity to account for inclusion of mitigation (landscape buffers etc).
- 5.4.10. On review of the appeal proposals, the DFP (and subsequent update) (**CD-1.33** and **CD-2.11**) shows the extent of the potential development envelope, with the landscape mitigation in place (i.e. with the various open spaces, attenuation and relevant buffers).
- 5.4.11. Interestingly. The LAA summary appraisal of landscape sensitivity does state that:

“Development should be focused on the northern and eastern parts of the parcel (which the site falls within) due to its stronger relationship with the linear settlement. Development typologies should be reflective of the character of Wivelsfield and follow the route of Eastern Road, such that it is consistent with the linear settlement pattern of Wivelsfield.”

- 5.4.12. Settlement pattern has been raised in respect of the proposed development and I address this separately in later sections of my evidence. However, at this stage I would note that I consider that residential built form in this parcel (and the appeal proposals generally) can be delivered whilst conserving the perceived ‘linear’ settlement pattern of Wivelsfield and that the appeal proposals will only alter settlement pattern when considered artificially in ‘plan form’, and not when experienced in and around the local landscape context.
- 5.4.13. Returning to mitigation, and considering the inherent landscape strategy for this part of the appeal site, the following landscape approaches have been adopted for this parcel:
- The landform presents a natural low point to the south-west corner of the parcel, presenting a functional location for SUDs from which the development envelop is consequently omitted from – the associated green space is extended away from the core purpose of SUDs to accommodate additional public open space and green infrastructure. The location here ties in with the pattern of green infrastructure, and connections (green links) to the adjacent parcel to the south;
 - The southern boundary to this parcel comprises a mature belt of trees, with associated drainage/stream, and this is retained to ensure the existing blue/green infrastructure network is retained and also to ensure that the scale and pattern of the landscape is referenced. This corridor also presents a linear green space within the development, which is consistent with the current character of parts of Eastern Road; and
 - In the eastern part of this parcel, where the access road enters the western part of the appeal site, the area has been retained as open s free from other development proposals. This is intended to act as an

open, attractive green space and to create a gateway of open space on arrival in this part of the development.

Western parcel (B) – south of Eastern Road (refer also to Plate 1, LDC Parcel's A to D)

5.4.14. This part of the appeal site is strongly contained landform, and green infrastructure, with the existing settlement edge defined by Green Road. There are views to the existing settlement edge and residential built form., albeit these are lightly screened by existing trees and tree belts. Notwithstanding the screening, the settlement is apparent from the area and influential on the local character. The degree of change is still limited, although the settlement edge is not as strongly defined or as prominent as it is in relation to the northern parcel.

Plate 8: Extract from the DFP (CD-2.11) showing Parcel B (refer also to Plates 1 and 2)



5.4.15. In terms of landscape mitigation for this parcel:

- The southern limit of development has been set by reference to the existing wayside dwellings south of Eastern Road (on the western edge of the appeal site). This is consistent with the change in character from the settlement edge and the wooded landscape context south of this point (as discussed in later sections of my evidence, in reference to the Sussex Border Path);
- The southern limit of development also considers landform, which continues to rise to the south, and consequently built form has been omitted from the highest parts of the appeal site, to ensure that it is either not visible or less prominent from the surrounding landscape. This also retained, albeit at a smaller scale, the landscape pattern and pastoral context between the settlement edge and the ancient woodland;

- Proposals for new native hedgerow planting are included to define the southern edge of the development parcel. This can incorporate additional landscape planting, such as hedgerow trees. Notwithstanding the benefit of the habitat creation, this will also provide a softer green edge to the appeal proposals, adding screening and reflecting the existing context of the settlement which is similarly defined by residential built form sitting beyond the tree belts along Eastern Road;
- The open space between the development parcels and the ancient woodland is greater than the required 15m buffer, and these areas can be subject to appropriate landscape treatments which respect and enhance the ancient woodland – including:
 - Open Space/Wildflower Meadows – treatment and enhancement of these areas to create wildflower meadows or habitat appropriate to ecological feedback and achieving BNG; and
 - Ecotone Planting - providing a planted edge to the ancient woodland to enhance the structure and diversity of the woodland along its edge. This has biodiversity benefits, but can also provide a planted physical boundary to prevent more extensive access to the woodland (i.e. used to focus access into and along the existing PROW and avoids or limits additional recreational pressure on the ancient woodland generally).
 - Later detailed design stages for this area can make appropriate species selection with reference to the Ancient Woodland Inventory for Lewes District which includes an appendix for Ancient woodland vascular plant ‘indicator species’ in the South East.
- Existing rights of way across this part of the appeal site are accommodated in the layout, and are included within green inks and green corridors, reinforcing the approach to blue/green infrastructure;
- Design changes during the determination period have resulted in the relocation of the proposed play area into this part of the appeal site, however there is sufficient space across this part of the appeal site that an appropriate, naturalistic play area can be designed and implemented. This would not preclude any additional landscape planting that would be intended to act as screening to the residential edge (as noted above).

Eastern parcel (C)– south of Green Road (refer also to Plate 1, LDC Parcel F)

- 5.4.16. The eastern part of the appeal site, east of bridleway WIV 30/1, comprises an agricultural area between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green, to the west and east respectively.
- 5.4.17. The western edge of the area is defined by the strong linear green infrastructure that is present along the route of the bridleway, however several properties off Green Road are prominent, and form a clear indicator of the settlement threshold at this point. To the east of the parcel, Wivelsfield Primary school is prominent, and an indicator of the settlement edge at this point. Although they are located adjacent to the

school site, the existing dwellings off Green Road on this edge are less prominent, partly given they comprise the lower-level buildings of Green Park Farm.

Plate 9: Extract from the DFP (CD-2.11) showing Parcel C (refer also to Plates 1 and 2)



- 5.4.18. It is also worth noting that, whilst the appeal site presents an agricultural context on the southern side of Green Road (including the hedgerow/roadside field boundary), the northern side of Green Road reflects a slightly more suburban character due to the presence of several residential accesses and driveways, including gate pillars, sections of close board fencing, and laurel hedging.
- 5.4.19. The eastern parcel of the appeal site forms part of the Local Green Space, designated in the Wivelsfield Neighbourhood Plan. In respect of 'built elements', development proposals in this part of the appeal site

are limited to the access road, which has kept tight to the existing settlement edge and will not split/encroach on the space between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green.

5.4.20. The access road will be subject to hedgerow and tree planting using native species to ensure it is integrated into the landscape context, avoiding more suburban treatments as might be typical of residential developments. The defining vegetation to the proposed access will also tie in with proposals to reinstate the alignment of historic field boundaries. Close to the access road, illustrative landscape proposals include for a community orchard, other landscape planting and an informal seating area (close to the war memorial).

5.4.21. The illustrative landscape proposals for the eastern parcel are not, per se, mitigation in response to potential impacts in the same way that mitigation has responded to potential development in the western parts of the appeal site. In the eastern part of the appeal site, landscape proposals form a series of interventions, based on the existing open character of the landscape, aiming to retain and enhance this part of the landscape.

5.4.22. Overall, this part of the appeal site will form an extensive area of informal and naturalistic open space, maintaining openness between the separate settlement areas of Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green.

5.4.23. These proposals include:

- Reinstatement of historic field pattern, based on the alignment of boundaries prior to intensification, and using native species hedgerows with hedgerow trees;
- Inclusion of several field ponds, a landscape element which is indicated on historic mapping for the area – new field ponds can be introduced which have an ecological focus, rather than delivering attenuation;
- Various landscape treatments, including wildflower meadow, scrub and tree planting;
- Various routes for public access (in an area otherwise lacking in access routes) – this will also provide routes between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green, that are off the alignment of Green Road.

5.4.24. This area also includes a small pocket of land (0.5ha) retained for either Wivelsfield Primary School or as use for community open space. This reserved area is located directly adjacent to the existing school grounds, and will be retained as amenity grassland and bordered by appropriate landscape proposals (with such as native hedgerows and woodland scrub planting).

5.5. FURTHER APPRAISAL AND ANALYSIS

Having considered the positive approach to the design of the appeal proposals in respect of landscape and visual matters, the following sections address various issues raised in relation to potential impacts and effects.

6. RESPONSE TO LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL MATTERS RAISED

6.1.1. This section sets out a brief overview of the conclusions of the submitted LVIA, with some specific reference to key areas raised by LDC and other parties.

6.1.2. This initially sets out an overview the conclusions of the submitted LVIA< but proceed to address specific matters in relation to the character of Green Road, the settlement pattern of Wivelsfield, visual effects on receptors in the Sussex Border Path and also impacts on the 'Area of Established Character' (Policy DM34).

6.2. LVIA CONCLUSIONS

6.2.1. The application was submitted with a detailed LVIA (prepared by PG), addressing the proposed development (**CD-1.7**) (the submitted LVIA).

6.2.2. The approach and methodology used for the submitted LVIA is comprehensive and is prepared with reference to best practice guidance. In my previous role at PG, the methodology was applied for many LVIA's and has been found sound by various authorities and Inspectors. There is no new or recent guidance to apply since the LVIA was prepared and the approach remains robust.

6.2.3. There is a clear link between the analysis in the submitted LVIA of the landscape and visual baseline, considerations of potential direct impacts on physical elements and features, and the consequent indirect impacts on landscape character and visual receptors. In respect of landscape impacts, the methodology is clear in its criteria for drawing judgements in relation to, for example, magnitude of landscape impacts where the criteria used are clearly and objectively defined in relation to the various levels of magnitude, including reference to size and scale of change, nature of change, the geographical extent, and the duration.

6.2.4. Furthermore, and as noted in previous sections of my evidence, the assessment of landscape and visual effects has taken a balanced judgement considering all parts of the appeal site, the different aspects of the appeal proposals, and the inherent landscape mitigation. This includes consideration of both the area proposed for residential development, as well as the landscape enhancements proposed for the eastern part of the appeal site. Whilst the various positive or negative influences of the proposed development can be considered on balance during the assessment process, overall judgements of the proposed development should not be disaggregated and are taken as a whole.

6.2.5. The submitted LVIA concluded that, the appeal site has capacity to hold a residentially led masterplan, noting landscape and visual constraints to this, but that these can be addressed through an appropriately considered masterplan that responds to such issues (**CD-1.7**, pdf page 74, paragraph 7.24). The Development Framework Plan (and subsequent update) (**CD-1.33** and **CD-2.11**) subject of the planning application and this appeal, consequently incorporates a landscape mitigation strategy which will avoid, reduce or remedy adverse impacts overall.

6.2.6. On review of the appeal proposals (including the amended Development Framework Plan) and the previous submitted LVIA, I see nothing that causes me to revisit the case on landscape and visual matters, and that the appeal site remains a good opportunity for the type of development proposed.

6.3. CHARACTER OF GREEN ROAD

1.1 The following section should be read alongside the relevant illustrative photographs for reference (refer to **Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3**).

6.3.1. Green Road connects Ditchling Road (the B2112) in the west, passing along the northern edge of Wivelsfield, and across the junction of Eastern Road and Slugworth Lane, defining the northern edge of the agricultural land which is defined as a Local Green Space, before entering the western edge of Wivelsfield Green at its junction with North Common Road and South Road (North Common Road then entering the settlement area of Wivelsfield Green).

6.3.2. Various comments refer to Green Road as having a rural character, being a rural green corridor, and with an inference of 'stillness and tranquillity'.

6.3.3. Whilst I accept that the current agricultural field to the south of the route (i.e. the eastern part of the appeal site), presents a rural outlook along a short section of the road, it is important to take a balanced view of the actual context of the route. I do not accept that Green Road benefits from any degree of stillness or tranquillity.

6.3.4. From the junction with Ditchling Road, the route is characterised by the ribbon development on the south side of the road, predominantly residential dwellings but also with a car showroom/forecourt, adding to a more suburban character (**Figures 4.1 and 4.2**, Views M to Q).

6.3.5. Sections of the route are then flanked to the north and south by residential dwellings, before the south side of the road opens out to the recreation ground; this greenspace presenting a central focal area for Wivelsfield and with the route of Green Road afforded views across it to the residential edges at Eastern Avenue and off Green Park Corner. The route then meets the road junction of Eastern Road and Slugworth Lane, which is framed on its south-eastern corner by the more substantial built form of the corner terrace of residential dwellings. This section of the route is not rural in its character (**Figure 2.4**, Viewpoint 7).

6.3.6. Moving east, within Wivelsfield Green, the route is flanked to the north by a series of semi-detached and detached dwellings, with the more open curtilage of Green Park Farm to the south, Whilst this section of the route is characterised by the lower density of residential dwellings and the farm, it is still experienced as part of the settlement edge, and I do not consider it to be rural in its character (refer to **Figure 4.1**, View N).

- 6.3.7. Considering the central section of the route, between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green, the agricultural fields to the south present a rural outlook for the road, but the route itself is characterised by several features which detract from a rural character, and present something that is more closely aligned to the settlement fringes. These include various access gated driveways to the properties on the northern side of the road, the prominent and more modern residential dwellings on the eastern edge of Wivelsfield and also sections of close board fencing and laurel hedging. The section of the route also includes a footway on its southern side (refer to **Figure 2.5**, Viewpoint 9 and then **Figure 4.1**, View P and **Figure 4.3**, Views U, V and W).
- 6.3.8. In contrast, and to help appreciate the character of a rural route in the local area, Slugworth Lane is characterised by continuous native species hedgerows, set along a winding route with frequent mature hedgerow trees; no formal footways are present; views are afforded to adjacent areas of agricultural land and there is little perception of the settlement edge (refer to **Figure 3.1**, Views A to D).
- 6.3.9. In summary, the open outlook to the south from Green Road, where it passes between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green, has a role in the appreciation of the separation between these two parts of the settlement, however this should not be misinterpreted as conveying a rural character.
- 6.4. MATTERS OF SETTLEMENT PATTERN
- 6.4.1. The Council's SoC (**CD-4.2**) draws on the ESCC Landscape Architects consultation response, which recommends refusal and refers to the proposed development being of a scale which would significantly detract from the character and scale of the village.
- 6.4.2. The ESCC Landscape Architect consultation response (**CD-3.26**, pdf page 2, paragraph 5) includes more detailed points related to settlement pattern noting that, for Wivelsfield Green, this is linear and has developed as ribbon development, along Green Road and Eastern Road, and highlighting that the LDC Landscape Sensitivity Study states that development in the village should be sympathetic to the character.
- 6.4.3. An initial response to these matters was set out in the technical Briefing Note and L&V Rebuttal, prepared by PG (**CD-2.9**).
- 6.4.4. This section of my evidence considers the settlement pattern in more detail, the extent to which this is apposite characteristic that merits preservation and, irrespective of this, whether the perceived linear character would prevail with the appeal proposals in place (which I consider it would).
- 6.4.5. The Lewes District Council and South Downs National Park Rural Settlement Study includes a sub-section on Wivelsfield Green (**CD-15.5**, pages 108-111). The mapping showing the settlement boundaries labelled as Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green, to the west and east respectively, but the text does suggest that 'Wivelsfield' is the earlier settlement located at the parish church.
- 6.4.6. In describing Wivelsfield Green, the study notes that (**CD-15.5**, page 108, paragraph 24.3):

“Wivelsfield Green lies to the East of the B2112 and is a relatively modern settlement. Development has taken place in two almost separate areas and there is a wedge of open and undeveloped land that separates the east and west parts of the village...”

6.4.7. The study goes on to state that (**CD-15.5**, page 111, paragraph 24.19):

“Much of the existing settlement pattern of Wivelsfield Green is fragmented and dispersed, created with the gradual merging of two discrete areas of development. The western part of the village is predominantly linear in form transitory in character and largely centred around the recreation ground, while the eastern side has developed with the infilling of land between two roads and feels more central due to the built form and the location of many of the villages facilities.”

6.4.8. Reference to the historic map progression illustrated in the RPS Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (DBA) (submitted with the application) (**CD-1.16**, Figures 5 to 13, pdf pages 24 to 33) illustrates the ‘gradual merging’ of fragmented and dispersed areas and how this has formed the contemporary settlement pattern.

6.4.9. I have included some extracts from the DBA, below, by way of illustration., but essentially these demonstrate how the settlement pattern of Wivelsfield has grown incidentally along the routes as a series of wayside dwellings and infill, with:

- No, or few dwellings present along Green Road in the 1800’s (refer to **Plate 10**) (**CD-1.16**, pdf page 28, Figure 8 - 1897 Ordnance Survey);
- Settlement pattern along Eastern Road and Green Road initially appears to have been established up to 1937 (refer to **Plate 11**) (**CD-1.16**, pdf page 29, Figure 9 - 1937 Ordnance Survey);
- Infill of dwellings appears along Green Road between the mid 1900's (refer to **Plate 12**) (**CD-1.16**, pdf page 30, Figure 10 - 1954-57 Ordnance Survey); and
- Depth of the settlement pattern is added off Eastern Road (Green Park Road) in the mid-late 1900's (refer to **Plate 13**) (**CD-1.16**, pdf page 31, Figure 11 - 1954-57 Ordnance Survey).

Plate 10: Extract from RPS Archaeological DBA – Figure 8: 1897 Ordnance Survey

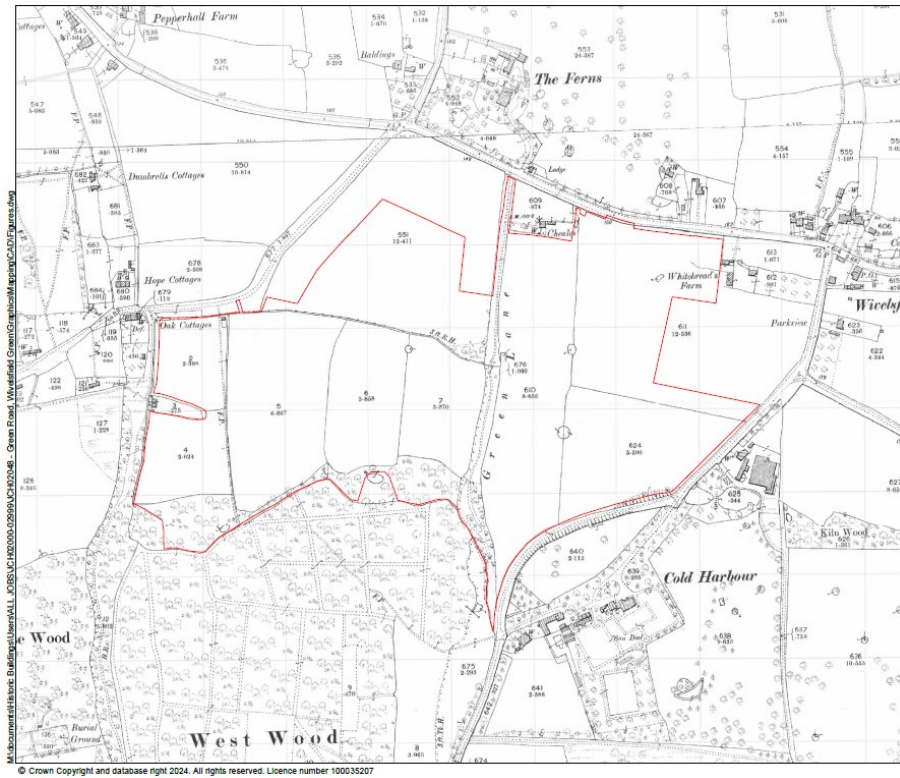


Plate 11: Extract from RPS Archaeological DBA – Figure 9: 1937 Ordnance Survey

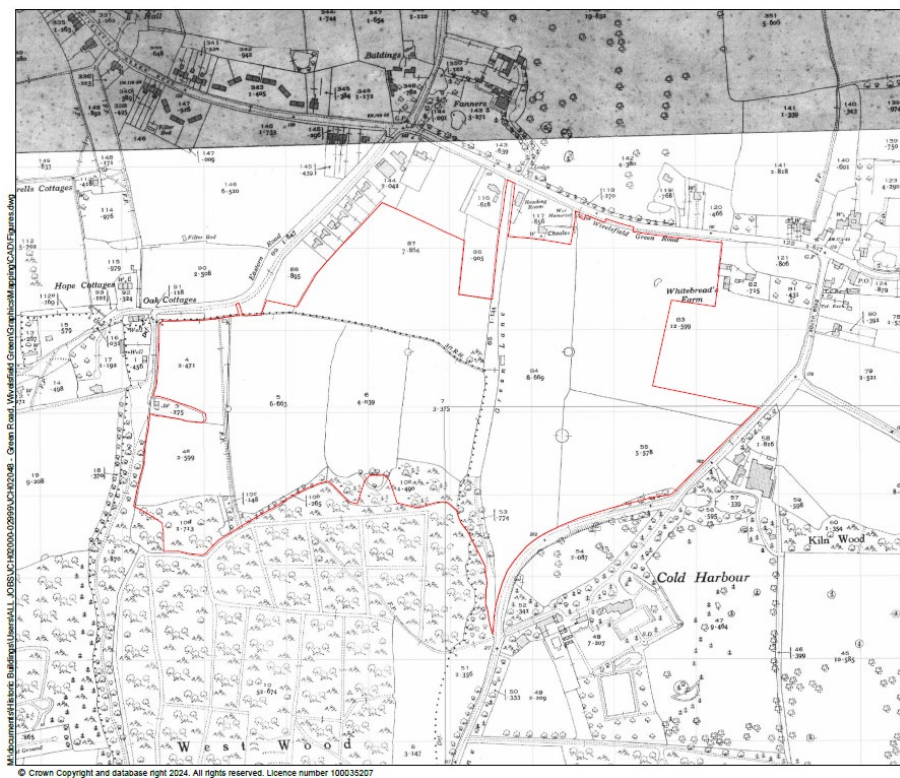


Plate 12: Extract from RPS Archaeological DBA – Figure 10 1954-57 Ordnance Survey

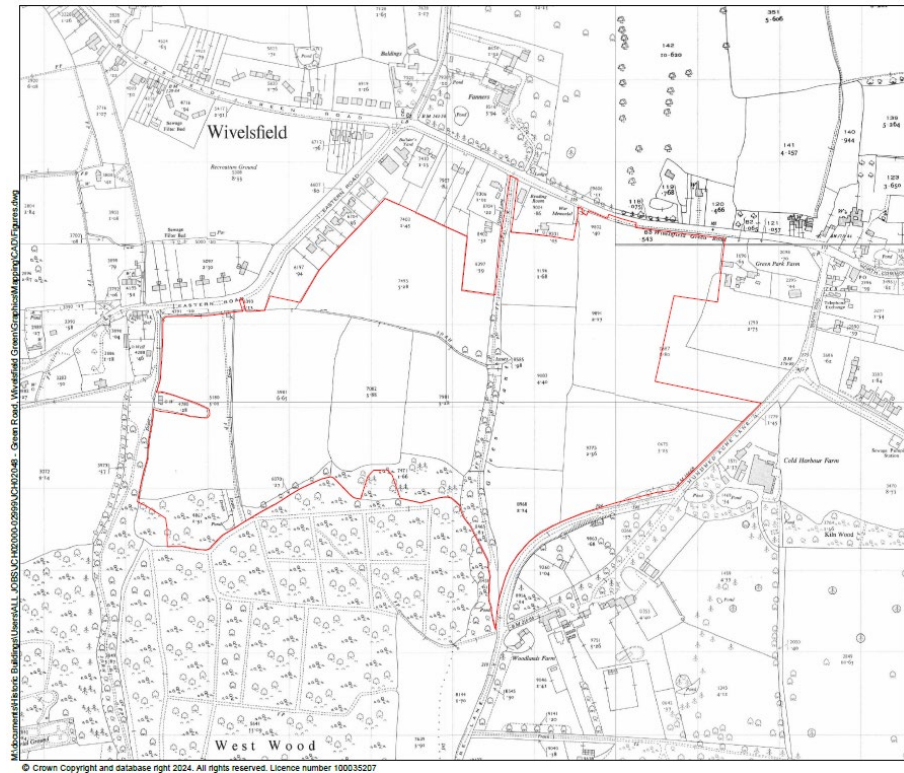
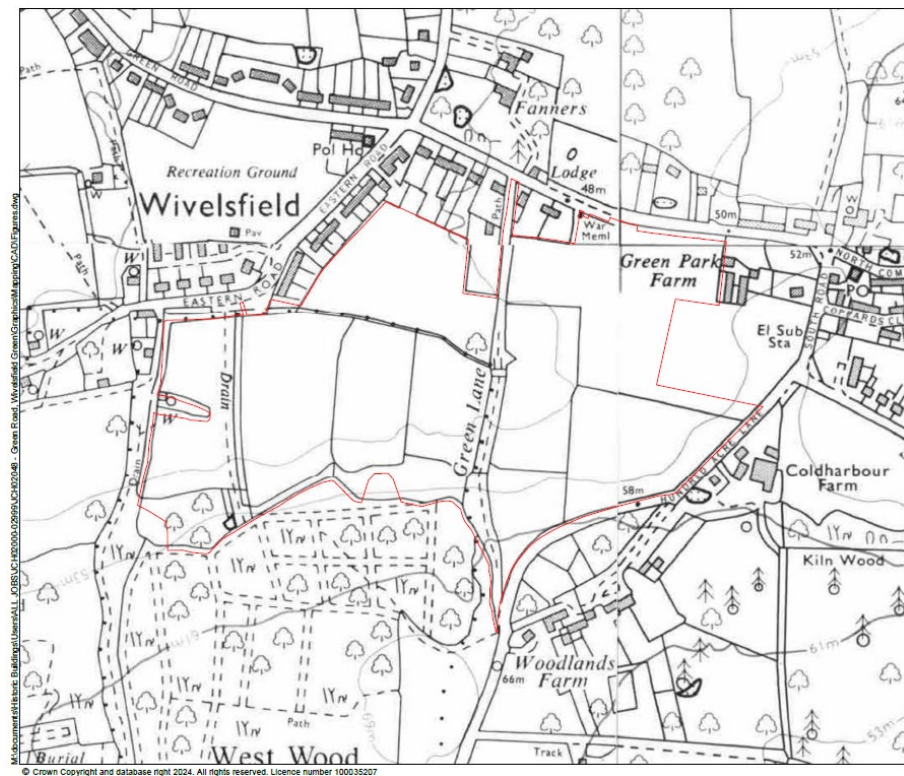


Plate 13: Extract from RPS Archaeological DBA – Figure 10 1954-57 Ordnance Survey



- 6.4.10. For Wivelsfield, this illustrates the incremental build-up of the wayside and linear development, primarily along Green Road between Ditchling Road, up to Eastern Road, with dwellings subsequently extending south along Eastern Road. Later development of the Green Park Corner Estate adds depth off Eastern Road and Blackmores adds depth off Green Road.
- 6.4.11. The Cala development site (currently in construction) will add further depth to the south of Green Road.
- 6.4.12. Compare this to Wivelsfield Green, where the linear routes of North Common Road, Hundred Acre Lane and Downsview Drive might have been initially considered as linear development but have since been infilled with residential development in the pockets between these. These infill areas consolidate the settlement pattern of Wivelsfield Green overall, but do not undermine the sense of the linear nature of the settlement areas when travelling along, for example, North Common Road.
- 6.4.13. Considering this context, the key points in respect of the settlement pattern of Wivelsfield are:
- How the contemporary settlement pattern has grown from the fragmented and dispersed pattern, including that the linear parts of this are an incidental consequence of this incremental development along the road network through the area;
 - That the focal area of the recreation ground for Wivelsfield is an important factor for that part of the settlement, with pockets of development (both linear and at depth) surrounding the green space; and
 - That the overriding consideration in terms of settlement pattern as a component of landscape character, is not the linear aspect, but is the importance of maintaining the physical and perceived separation and distinction between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green (or Wivelsfield Green East and West if one prefers).
- 6.4.14. The linear character of the settlement appears to be defined on the basis of the residential areas along Green Road (between Ditchling Road and Eastern Road) and along Eastern Road itself.
- 6.4.15. The experience of the linearity is restricted to the routes themselves. Outside of this there is little perception or understanding of the linear nature, aside from looking at these areas 'in plan form'. Having visited the area as part of the LVIA process, on the ground, whether this be from the local roads or the rights of way network, there is little understanding of the suggested linearity.
- 6.4.16. For example, there are no elevated vantage points where views are afforded across the landscape and which see the overall linear pattern in context, nor are there any particular channelled 'vistas' which look along a particular street scene or through the village 'end to end'.
- 6.4.17. Within the settlement, there are other small scale areas of depth which detract from the experience of linearity on the ground, including the junction of Green Road with Slugwash Lane and Eastern Road, the break in the route that overlooks the recreation ground, with the perception of Green Park Corner beyond

(adding to depth despite lack of built form on the recreation ground) and also smaller off-shoots such as Blackmore's further west, and Tanners Field to the north of Green Road (refer to **Figure 4.2**, Views Q to T).

6.4.18. Cala Homes adds considerable depth 'in plan form', however there is little perception of any added depth experienced 'on the ground', bar some incidentally and very restricted views. This is an appropriate point to consider the findings of the Inspector for the Cala Homes appeal (PINS reference APP/P1425/W/22/3305946) (**CD-10.8**).

6.4.19. In relation to settlement pattern, the Inspector found that (**CD-10.8**, paragraph 17):

"Wivelsfield Green west has a generally linear character, albeit the area around and encompassing the 'Blackmores' development of 16 homes represents an existing area of development at depth. The appeal proposal would significantly extend the amount of development at depth in this part of the village, albeit the linear development along Green Road would be maintained. When experiencing Wivelsfield Green west from Green Road, the appeal proposal's siting would not adversely alter the perception of a linear character to this part of the village due to intermittent views. The presence of additional development at depth would not be harmful as a matter of principle and whilst the overall footprint of the appeal proposal would represent a considerable increase in the existing footprint of this part of the village, there was no clear evidence presented as to how this would itself be harmful."

6.4.20. Having had the opportunity to revisit the appeal site (and surrounding area), I have observed that, in its current state, there is limited intervisibility between the Cala Homes site and either Green Road and Eastern Road, with just intermittent views to the rooflines of new dwellings seen occasional between existing residential built form of the village.

6.4.21. From the car park to the village hall, there are clear views across the playing field to several established residential dwellings, also integrated with the mature tree and woodland belt (refer to **Figure 4.2**, View S) Currently, there are filtered views to the Cala site, seen as incidental rooftops between the existing dwellings, but the change in the view itself, does not reveal the depth of that development from its eastern edge right up to Ditchling Road.

6.4.22. I expect the appeal proposals will be similarly integrated into the settlement pattern and to the landscape context, not least due to the limited visibility into the appeal site from Green Road itself, but also across different parts of the landscape due to the existing topography and particularly the strong framework of trees and woodland which contribute to the green infrastructure network.

6.4.23. As with parts of Wivelsfield Green and the Cala site, the appeal proposals will add depth to certain parts of the settlement. These are apparent 'in plan form' when considering mapping of the area, but this will not translate to a clear interpretation of this change 'on the ground'.

6.4.24. Settlement pattern is just one of several components which contribute to landscape character (for example, topography and green infrastructure being other relevant physical attributes of the landscape) and these all need to be balanced in consideration of landscape effects.

6.4.25. As noted in earlier sections of my evidence, the judgment for landscape effects in the submitted LVIA of 'moderate adverse' (and subsequent reduction to 'minor to moderate adverse' accounting for mitigation) is a balanced judgement for the appeal proposals and the appeal site, which together include the undeveloped eastern part of the appeal site which will be subject to various landscape enhancements, and not just the developed western parts of the appeal site.

6.5. IMPACTS ON THE SUSSEX BORDER PATH

6.5.1. The Sussex Border Path is a promoted route, which follows routes broadly aligned to the Sussex borders with Hampshire, Surrey and Kent and extending to ca. 220km overall⁵.

6.5.2. The main route is broadly aligned east to west (from Rye to Thorney Island) passing through extensive tracts of countryside but also through towns and villages, including East Grinstead and Crawley Down. The transition between countryside and settlement is an established part of its character.

6.5.3. The section of the route through Wivelsfield is part of an additional leg, connecting with the main route at East Grinstead, down to the coast at Southwick (west of Brighton).

6.5.4. In the context of Wivelsfield, the route can be broadly described in three parts. **Figures 3.1 to 3.3** (Views A to L) are included to illustrate the nature of the different sections of the route.

6.5.5. Approaching from the north, the route follows several public footpaths through the landscape adjacent to Wilderness Wood and Strood Wood, before joining Slugworth Lane. Slugworth Lane is a rural route, and there is little perception of Wivelsfield until close to the settlement edge, adjacent to the properties of 'The Pump House' and 'Baldings Barn'. At this point the highways junction with Green Road and more substantial built form of the settlement is more predominant, and consequently is more influential on the character of the route (**Figure 3.1**, Views A to D).

6.5.6. From the south, the Sussex Border Path approaches Wivelsfield along the bridleway through West Wood. The route passes the western edge of the appeal site, however at this point is separated by a combination of dense hedgerow and tree belts. Again, there is little perception of the settlement edge of Wivelsfield until in relatively close proximity, but this is at a point that is adjacent to the appeal site, where there are views of the wayside dwellings to the south of Eastern Road, and to the more central parts of the settlement off Eastern Road (**Figure 3.3**, Views I to L).

⁵ https://ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=Sussex+Border+Path

- 6.5.7. Between the northern and southern approaches, the route of the Sussex Border Path passes through the settlement and is characterised as such. The route follows Eastern Road along this section and consequently is subject to the influence of various existing residential dwellings, the village hall, and the recreation ground. The section to the south of Green Park Corner passes alongside the existing residential built form but is more contained by the existing green infrastructure along this edge of the settlement. This presents some variation in terms of containment by built form or by vegetation on the route as it passes through Wivelsfield, but overall, the character of the route is influenced by the settlement context, and in contrast to the more rural approach from the north, and wooded approach from the south (**Figure 3.2**, Views E to H).
- 6.5.8. The route is referenced in various parts of the submitted LVIA, but notably in respect of the baseline of the appeal site in its local landscape context, (**CD-1.7**, pdf page 17, paragraph 3.41), recreational access described in character guidance (**CD-1.7**, last bullet point, pdf page 23, paragraph 3.56, and pdf page 26, paragraph 3.58, 6th bullet), and, consideration of landscape and visual constraints and opportunities (**CD-1.7**, pdf page 36, paragraph para 4.14, penultimate bullet point and Figure 5, PROW ZTV and Viewpoint Locations and Figure 7, Landscape and Visual Analysis). Viewpoint 7 of the submitted LVIA is taken from Eastern Road, which forms part of the route for the Sussex Border Path as it passes through Wivelsfield (refer to **Figure 2.7**, Updated Viewpoint 7).
- 6.5.9. Overall, visibility along the Sussex Border Path toward the appeal site is considered to be very limited. Approaching from the north, this is due to the various screening elements, including mature trees and vegetation on the northern edge of the settlement (particularly around the grounds of the property 'Fanners'), and from the south, this is due to the extensive tree and woodland cover of West Wood. Screening is also present along the route as it passes through the settlement, with residential built form and existing vegetation screening views from much of the route within the settlement area.
- 6.5.10. Consequently, in terms of viewpoint locations selected as representative viewpoints for the purpose of the visual assessment in the submitted LVIA, those were preferred from other rights of way across the appeal site or in the local landscape context (for example, Viewpoints 8 or 11) as these represent a worst case scenario in terms of potential for visual impacts and effects, and from high sensitivity visual receptors.
- 6.5.11. Overall, given the scale and context of the Sussex Border Path as a whole, that the transition between countryside and settlement is part of its inherent character, and that views to the appeal proposals from the route will be limited (and also experienced in the context of the existing settlement), I do not consider the effects on the character of the route of the Sussex Border Path, or on the views for users of the route, to be significant overall.

6.6. AREA OF ESTABLISHED CHARACTER (LDC LOCAL PLAN POLICY DM34)

6.6.1. Policy DM34 'Areas of Established Character' sits under the 'Historic Environment' section in the adopted Local Plan. The policy was addressed in the summary of the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**, pdf page 12).

6.6.2. The Local Plan sets out the policy context to Areas of Established Character and Policy DM34 stating that (**CD-7.2**, page 111, paragraph 4.113):

"The district includes a number of well-established residential areas that make a valuable contribution to the distinctive character of the towns or villages in which they are located. These areas do not possess the necessary architectural or historic interest to merit designation as Conservation Areas. However, it is considered that all have a special character and quality that is worthy of retention and therefore warrant particular consideration when planning applications are being determined."

6.6.3. As acknowledged in the submitted LVIA, a defined Area of Established Character relates to several dwellings along a short section of Green Road, extending east from Wivelsfield. The boundary of the appeal site overlaps with the policy area in two places: along the route of bridleway WIV/30/1 where this passes between the residential dwellings to join Green Road; and, where the policy boundary includes a narrow strip of the agricultural field to the south of the war memorial and immediately east of the last dwelling on the settlement edge ('De Hoops').

6.6.4. The bridleway is characterised by the boundary treatments of the adjacent residential properties which, at this point, includes both established and relatively new laurel hedge planting (refer to **Figure 4.3**, View X).

6.6.5. The policy states that (my emphasis added):

"Development within Areas of Established Character, as defined on the Policies Map, will be permitted where it reflects the existing character of the area in terms of the gaps between buildings, building height, building size, site coverage, set-back from the street, boundary treatments, mature trees, hedges and grass verges."

6.6.6. Any direct impacts arising from the proposed development to areas 'within' the policy boundary, will be limited to any potential changes to the public bridleway (i.e. surface improvements, although there is no suggestion that this is a requirement) and the landscape treatments to the eastern parcel of the appeal site (grassland variations).

6.6.7. Notwithstanding the ability to control such matters through detailed design, in respect of landscape matters (noting this appears to be a policy more closely related to heritage), I cannot see that any aspect of these proposals would be of detriment to the Area of Established Character.

6.7. LOCAL GREEN SPACE

- 6.7.1. The eastern half of the appeal site is designated as “Local Green Space” in the Wivelsfield Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) (CD-7.4). No residential built form is proposed within the LGS however the proposed vehicle access road would run through the north-western corner of the LGS, close to the existing eastern edge of Wivelsfield.
- 6.7.2. The case in respect of the Local Greenspace Designation is a planning matter, and the reasons for that designation of the LGS are set out at paragraphs 5.33 – 5.39 of the WNP (CD-7.4). However, there is inevitably some overlap with landscape and visual matters given the relationship to the physical landscape attributes and character of the area.
- 6.7.3. In discussing the LGS policy, the WNP notes that this is an area of agricultural land which (CD-7.4, page 56, paragraph 5.35):
- provides a break in the ribbon development;
 - has an acknowledged 'beauty and tranquillity';
 - is an important landscape feature providing the primary school pupils with a sense of rural values; and
 - that there are long views from the school and roads over this area giving a unique sense of space and a sense of tranquillity and beauty.
- 6.7.4. However, the WNP Inspectors Report (which considered various LGS designation proposals) set out a different perspective in respect of the land south of Green Road, stating that (CD-13.3, page 24, paragraph 5.49) (my emphasis added):

“None of the comments in the Rural Settlement Study 2013 lead me to conclude that there are overriding special qualities in relation to historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife that would warrant designation of these sites as LGS. However, Site i has a demonstrably special quality to the local community to the extent as explained to me at the Hearing that it creates a visually sensitive gap between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green thereby enhancing the distinctiveness of the two settlements and is therefore of particular local significance. It offers an attractive outlook due to the fold in the landscape, appreciated in the Regulation 14 comments by East Sussex County Council in supporting this designation. A stewardship scheme is in place for the effective management of this land as LGS in the future.”

- 6.7.5. This suggests that the LGS has a function in relation to the physical and visual break between the settlements, and that in landscape and visual terms, it is the views across the area that are important to the LGS. This would be consistent with the fact that it is a relatively ordinary piece of landscape otherwise, that

any potential tranquillity undermined by the proximity to Green Road and that there is no formal public access to facilitate recreational activity (noting also there is no 'relative' tranquillity away from the road as the landscape is not accessible for recreation).

- 6.7.6. Given that the appeal proposals in this area are limited to the highways access (which includes an appropriate proposal for landscape mitigation alongside it) and other various landscape enhancements, I do not consider that the above attributes would result in a material impact on views across the LGS, specifically views from the primary school, from elevated positions at Hundred Acre Lane, or any views that might experience a reduction in the settlement gap between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green.

6.8. AMENDMENTS TO THE MASTERPLAN

- 6.8.1. As noted in earlier sections of my evidence, during the determination period, the proposed development was subject to some minor amendments in response to matters related to flood risk and drainage.
- 6.8.2. This included raising levels on some parts of the appeal site by between 0.3m and 0.5m, changes to the location and size of attenuation in parts of the appeal site, and consequent relocation of the proposed play area.
- 6.8.3. These changes were addressed by a short technical note, prepared by PG (**CD-2.16**).
- 6.8.4. Notwithstanding the outline nature of the application, this change in level would not materially affect the judgements set out in the submitted LVIA in respect of landscape and visual effects. The development envelope (i.e. proposed areas of built form) remains broadly similar, and the embedded landscape strategy which provides mitigation for the appeal proposals will be maintained.
- 6.8.5. Assuming that there is a direct correlation between the raised ground level and a raise in building height (i.e. 0.5m maximum), and that a detailed design solution via engineering or architecture cannot resolve the height parameters at a lower level than the 0.5m increase, there would be a slight increase in the overall height of proposed residential built form. As noted in the DAS, the appeal proposals are for predominantly two-storey development, with up to 10% of two and a half storey dwellings, used for 'feature buildings' (at specific locations) (**CD-1.6**, page 50).
- 6.8.6. I would expect these to equate to heights of ca. 9m or 10.5m. The ZTV for the submitted LVIA (**CD-1.7**, Figure 5) assumed a height of 9m, but as this was produced at an early stage of the assessment process, it will not have factored in screening by proposed mitigation. The ZTV does assume screening from existing features of 8m for built form, and 15m for green infrastructure, noting that even the green infrastructure assumed as screening is conservative, and does not represent all screening present (**CD-1.7**, pdf page 34, paragraph 3.81 and Plate 4). Note also that the woodland cover plotted for the ZTVs presented in the LDC LSA is assumed to be 10m in height (for example, **CD-15.4**, Appendix D, pdf page 6, Figure D.56).

- 6.8.7. Reference to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (**CD-1.29**), shows a range of heights for existing vegetation which will provide screening, many of which are above the assumed 15m height adopted for the ZTV in the submitted LVIA (and considerably higher than the assumptions of the LDC LSA).
- 6.8.8. For example, 'Group 1' on the western boundary of the southern part of the site reaches a maximum height of 17m, W1 (the edge of the ancient woodland to the south) is recorded with an average height of 20m, individual trees on the woodland edge include two Oaks (T57 and T58) at 19m and 21m respectively and also mature cherries (T59 and T60) at 16.5m (for details refer to **CD-1.29**, Tree Constraints Plan Sheet 4/6 pdf page 22, and Tree Schedule, starting at pdf page 28).
- 6.8.9. Reference to the heights of existing green infrastructure (proposed for retention) clearly demonstrates that a height increase of 0.5m or less can be accommodated on the site, without any material change in the potential visibility of the proposed development.
- 6.8.10. Where screening is not an issue, for example from viewpoints directly adjacent to the appeal site with clear views, the magnitude of change is, in my opinion, from the change in land use, from the current agricultural fields to that of the appeal proposal. This is the cause of the impact and again, a change of 0.5m or less will not materially alter this.
- 6.8.11. There is the issue of the local play area being moved to the southern edge of the development area. However, with good detailed design I am confident that a naturalistic play area can be design along this edge which is not unduly prominent in the landscape and that can still accommodate an appropriate level of screen planting. That is, if the reserved matters layout cannot find a mechanism to incorporate this into the main parts of the layout.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1. OVERVIEW

7.1.1. My name is James Atkin and I am a Director at G+L Landscape Architects (G+L). Prior to this I briefly ran my own practice (Greyleaf Landscape Planning Limited), before which I spent over twelve years at Pegasus Group, where I held the position of Senior Director and Deputy Head of the Environment service across the wider business. I have a Bachelor of Science Degree in Landscape Design and Plant Science and a Diploma in Landscape Management, both from the University of Sheffield. I am also a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (2005). I have over 25 years professional experience specialising in feasibility, landscape and visual impact assessment, and expert witness services.

7.2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

7.2.1. This Proof of Evidence addresses landscape and visual matters in respect of land to the south of Green Road, Wivelsfield Green, Haywards Heath (the appeal site).

7.2.2. It relates to a decision by Lewes District Council (LDC) to indicate it would have refused permission for an outline planning application for residential development of up to 150 dwellings, with associated works, parking, landscaping, publicly accessible open space, land for education or community use, with access from Green Road and Eastern Road (LPA reference LW/24/0820).

7.2.3. Principles and good practice for undertaking, and/or applying the principles of, LVIA are set out in the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute of Environmental Management (IEMA) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013) (GLVIA3)⁶, and further informed by 'Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)' (LI TGN 2024-01). The concepts and procedures set out in this guidance have been adopted where appropriate.

7.2.4. My professional judgements, which are presented in this proof of evidence for the forthcoming inquiry (PINS reference 6005671) have been prepared in full accordance with the guidance of my professional institution. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions, irrespective of by whom I am instructed.

7.3. THE APPEAL SITE

7.3.1. In the wider district, Lewes is heavily constrained by landscape designations at the highest level, with approximately 56% of the district falling within the South Downs National Park.

⁶ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (April 2013), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition

- 7.3.2. As a consequence, opportunities for accommodating new housing in the district without directly affecting these statutorily designated and nationally valued landscapes are notably limited. Outside these designated landscapes, the remaining areas of the district comprise more extensive areas of typical rural countryside, together with transitional landscapes located at the edges of towns and villages. At the interface between countryside and urban areas, there will invariably be a distinction between the character of the landscape and that of the settlements within them.
- 7.3.3. Where greenfield development is required to deliver housing within the district, there will inevitably be some residual landscape and visual effects arising from most, if not all, development sites.
- 7.3.4. The appeal site comprises ca. 21 hectares (ha) of land, located on the south-east of Wivelsfield, immediately adjacent to the existing residential edge off Green Road and Eastern Road, extending south up to (and including a belt of) West Wood and extending east across the to the settlement edge of Wivelsfield Green. The site can be broadly described as three parts.
- 7.3.5. Firstly, the single field parcel located immediately adjacent to the settlement edge of Wivelsfield and defined by the existing residential edge off Eastern Road (to the west) and Green Road (to the north); to the east this parcel is defined by a mature tree belt and the alignment of a public right of way (PROW) (bridleway WIV/30/1); to the south this parcel is defined by a mature hedgerow with several mature hedgerow trees set along the alignment of a local drainage ditch/watercourse.
- 7.3.6. Secondly, the southern part of the site includes a series of rectangular field parcels, situated between Eastern Road and West Wood to the north and south, and between the Sussex Border Path (public bridleway WSM/28/2) and public bridleway (WIV/30/1) to the west and east. The southern edge of the site includes a narrow belt of West Wood (up to 50m deep in some parts but generally a thinner belt than this).
- 7.3.7. The third part of the site, the eastern part, comprises a larger scale area of arable land, irregular in plan form, and situated between the separate settlement areas of Wivelsfield to the west and Wivelsfield Green to the east. This part of the site is defined by Green Lane and Hundred Acre Lane respectively. The eastern boundary of this part of the site directly abuts the settlement edge of Wivelsfield Green which, at this point, is defined by a mixed of lower density residential dwellings and also the existing primary school site (and playing fields).
- 7.3.8. The wider surrounding landscape context to the site comprises a rolling landscape characterised by small scale hills and ridgelines and watercourses flowing through the associated valleys; woodland is prevalent through the area and this combines with the topography and mixed agriculture to form a complex and often small-scale mosaic within the landscape.

7.4. BACKGROUND TO THE APPEAL

7.4.1. The planning application was submitted in December 2024, and included the detailed LVIA prepared by PG (CD-1.7, with a subsequent appeal for non-determination submitted in February 2026.

7.4.2. During the determination period, a consultation response was received from the ESCC Landscape Architect (CD-3.26), however despite this being dated 28.01.2025, the document was not issued to the applicant team until August 2025. In the consultation response, the ESCC Landscape Architect states that 'The site would be unlikely to be considered valued landscape in the context of the NPPF'. The consultation response recommended refusal, stating that:

"The proposed development would be of a scale which would significantly detract from the character and scale of the village. The rural setting of the village would be lost to an extensive suburban extension. The development would extend much deeper into the countryside and away from the built up area than recent permissions. The enclosed nature of the site should not be considered a reason for development as there would be adverse effects on local countryside views and the edge of the village."

7.4.3. Prior to LDC setting out their statement of case, LDC have sought further consultation on landscape matters, the Council appointing an external consultant to comment on the application. This work was undertaken by Terra Firma, who are commissioned as independent advisors to the Council across several projects/application sites.

7.4.4. Terra Firma produced an additional consultation note in respect of the application, setting out various criticisms of the submitted LVIA and concerns over landscape and visual impact (CD-3.29). The consultation response does not raise matters in relation to valued landscapes. Where relevant, I address various points raised in later sections of my evidence.

7.4.5. LDC's Statement of Case raises matters of character and appearance, setting out their consideration of the harms that the appeal scheme would give rise to, including (CD-4.2, page 5, paragraph 16):

'Harm to the landscape character and countryside setting'.

7.4.6. With further detail in the SoC stating that the Appellant's LVIA accepts that the appeal scheme will give rise to adverse landscape effects, the Council suggesting that at least some have the potential to be 'major adverse' and subsequently quoting part of the ESCC Landscape Architects consultation response and recommendation for refusal. This evidence addresses the matters raised, in addition to relevant overarching matters raised by third parties.

7.5. THE APPEAL PROPOSALS

- 7.5.1. Both the submitted LVIA and this evidence demonstrate the positive approach taken the landscape and visual matters as part of the proposed development. The LVIA has been used as an iterative tool to inform the design process.
- 7.5.2. This includes early input to the design of the masterplan, based on landscape and visual constraints. What has emerged is a masterplan that is substantially influenced by the existing landscape elements and features of the appeal site and its local context, proposals that recognise the intrinsic character of the area, and that respond positively to these matters.
- 7.5.3. That isn't to say that there are no impacts and effects arising from the proposed development, as any required greenfield development in the district will inevitably have some form of landscape and visual effects. What is important is the approach has taken the opportunity to include a comprehensive scheme of mitigation which has either avoided impacts where possible or minimised the impacts and effects overall.
- 7.5.4. It is also important to note the constrain on the district as a whole of the South Downs National Park, which represents over half of the district area. Consequently, the locations where new housing can be accommodated without directly affecting these statutory designated and nationally valued areas of landscape are notably limited in the district.

7.6. RESPONSE TO LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL MATTERS RAISED

- 7.6.1. Various matters have been raised in relation to landscape and visual effects.
- 7.6.2. The submitted LVIA concluded that visual effects were not considered to be significant overall given the overall visibility of the site, the number of locations where the significance of effects were judged to be lower, and the overall physical and visual containment of the developed parts of the appeal site, including the prominence of the existing residential edge in some parts. As with landscape effects, this level of impact and effect reflect an inevitable consequence of green field development, particularly where receptors are situated directly adjacent to a site, as is the case for all sites that are next to the edges of settlement areas.
- 7.6.3. The submitted LVIA concluded that, the appeal site has capacity to hold a residentially led masterplan, noting landscape and visual constraints to this, but that these can be addressed through an appropriately considered masterplan that responds to such issues (**CD-1.7**, pdf page 74, paragraph 7.24). The Development Framework Plan (DFP) subject of the planning application and this appeal (**CD-1.33**), consequently incorporates a landscape mitigation strategy which will avoid, reduce or remedy adverse impacts overall.
- 7.6.4. On review of the appeal proposals (including the amended DFP) and the previous submitted LVIA, I see nothing that causes me to revisit the case on landscape and visual matters, and that the appeal site remains a good opportunity for the type of development proposed, as considered in the submitted LVIA.

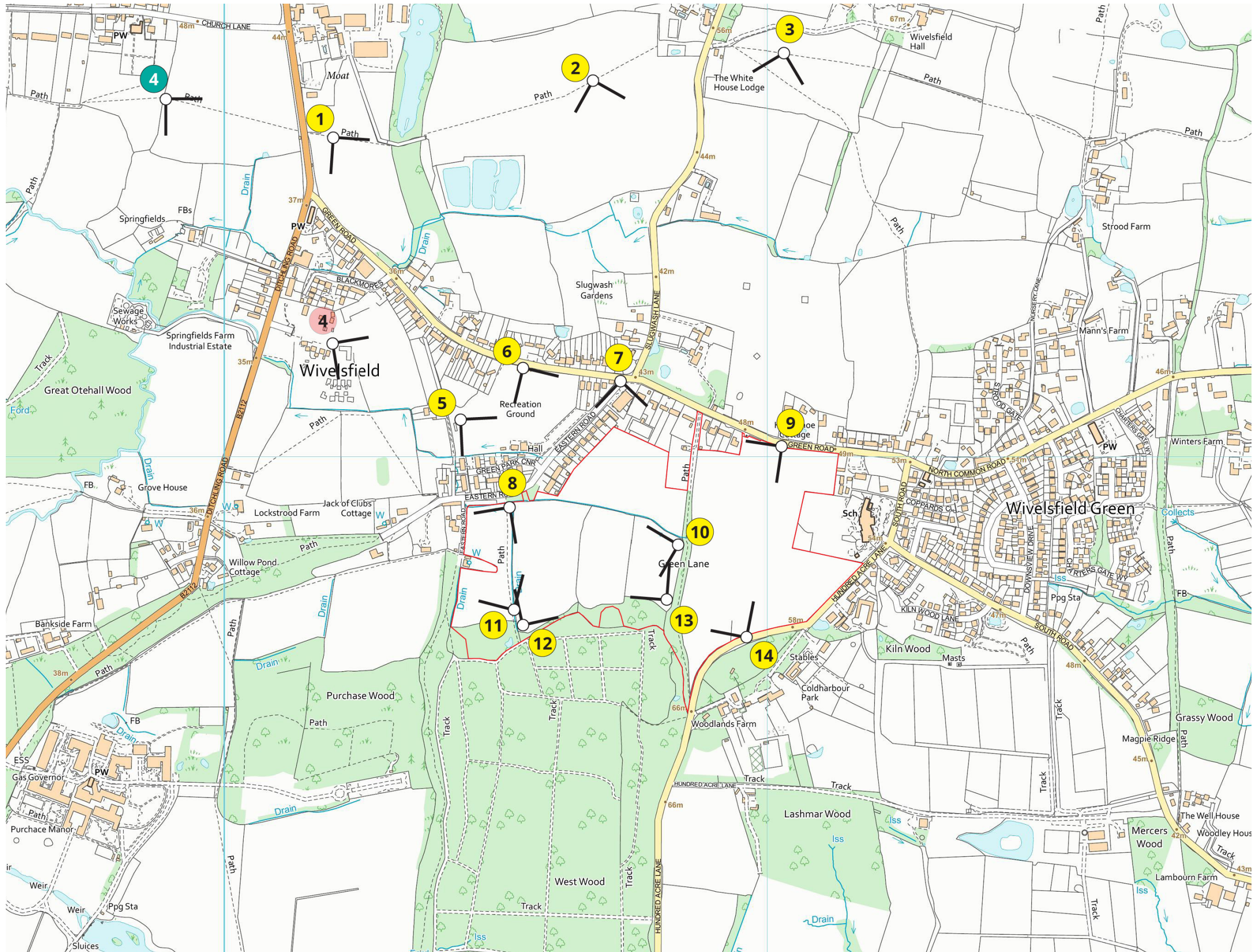
- 7.6.5. In respect of the character of Green Road, this is predominantly a route through the settlement area of Wivelsfield and connecting to Wivelsfield Green. Whilst a section of the route, adjacent to the eastern part of the appeal site, currently has an outlook to the adjacent agricultural land, in itself the route is not inherently 'rural', it contains various features which are reflective of the character of the nearby settlement areas, and it is in contrast to the more rural road network around Wivelsfield, such as Slugworth Lane.
- 7.6.6. The settlement pattern of Wivelsfield has some linearity along Green Road and Eastern Road, however there is depth in the existing settlement off Blackmores and Green Park Corner. The Cala Homes site (in construction) has added to the depth of the settlement, but (as supported by the Inspector for that appeal) the perception of the depth is not influential, and the linear character of Green Road is maintained. The appeal proposals will be similarly contained by the existing settlement and green infrastructure, and the perception of depth will not be apparent from Green Road or Eastern Road. Considering settlement pattern in 'plan form' is not a credible basis for judgments on changes to the character of an area. Furthermore, more pertinent is the importance of maintaining the physical and perceived separation between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green (or Wivelsfield Green west and east); the appeal site will maintain this separation and provides landscape enhancements to the agricultural field parcel which is subject to the Local Green Space designation (including provision of new pedestrian and cycle routes through the LGS, and off and away from the route of Green Lane itself.
- 7.6.7. The Sussex Border Path passes through the area. In relation to the appeal site, the route of the Sussex Border Path sits inherently within the settlement area. The rural approaches of the promoted route to Wivelsfield from the north and south would not be impact by the appeal proposals. For a section of the route, there may be some limited visual impacts, heavily screened by vegetation, but this change occurs in relation to part of the promoted route where the general experience relates to the character of the settlement, rather than a wider landscape experience.
- 7.6.8. An Area of Established Character (Policy DM34) sits to the north of the western parcel of the appeal site overlapping with two narrow strips of land included in the appeal site boundary. Notwithstanding the heritage focus of this policy, and potential changes 'within' the Area of Established character would not be of detriment to it.

7.7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.7.1. There will inevitably be some residual landscape and visual effects arising from most, if not all, development sites where greenfield development is required to deliver housing.
- 7.7.2. Where located adjacent to a settlement edge, the key consideration is therefore whether changes to the interface between landscape and settlement are extensive or localised, and, in either case, whether mitigation measures can avoid or minimise resulting effects.

- 7.7.3. In respect of the appeal site and proposals, there would be no direct physical impacts beyond the appeal site itself. Consequent changes in landscape character would also be limited, with no perceptible or material changes in character from areas of the landscape around Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green. This includes the landscape context to the north of Green Road, to the east of Wivelsfield (beyond bridleway WIV/30/1), to the west of Wivelsfield (beyond the recreation ground), or south of Purchase Wood and West Wood (or from within these areas of woodland unless on the very northern edge).
- 7.7.4. My evidence demonstrates that the appeal site can accommodate the appeal proposals, both in the context of the existing landscape character, and through the ability to deliver effective mitigation by way of a well-considered scheme that recognises and responds to the character and appearance of the local landscape.
- 7.7.5. With the appeal proposals in place, and through the careful incorporation of appropriate landscape and visual mitigation, a rural landscape context to the south of Wivelsfield (up to Purchase Wood/West Wood) will be maintained. The landscape and physical separation between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green will also remain, and there will be limited perception of change to the local settlement pattern (but that this does not equate to harm). Visual impacts on users of the promoted Sussex Border Path are minimal due to screening, and where any changes to the landscape of the appeal site are seen, these are experienced from a section of the route which is already characterised by the existing settlement.
- 7.7.6. The appeal site does not display any attributes that I consider as particularly out of the ordinary in relation to the surrounding landscape context of Wivelsfield. Furthermore, I consider the impacts and effects are, whilst relatively typical in their nature in respect of the type of development proposed, limited in scale and extent.
- 7.7.7. Furthermore, the appeal proposals can come forward whilst maintaining the linear settlement pattern of Wivelsfield where this is considered important, but more pertinent, will maintain the distinction and separation between the two settlement areas of Wivelsfield.

FIGURES



- Key**
- Appeal site boundary
 - Viewpoint location
 - Viewpoint 4 - omitted
 - Viewpoint 4 - alternative



Viewpoint 1: View looking south-east towards the appeal site, from public footpath (WIV/4/1), just east of the B2112.



Viewpoint 2: View looking south towards the appeal site from public footpath (WIV/4/1), just south of Townings Place.



Viewpoint 3. View looking south-east towards the appeal site from public footpath (WIV/4/1), just east of the B2112.



Viewpoint 4(R). View looking south-east towards the appeal site from public footpath (WIV/4/2), west of the B2112. This view replaces VP4 of the submitted LVIA, which is not accessible due to the construction of the 'Cala Homes site' (nb. the appeal site is not visible).



Viewpoint 5. View looking south-east towards the appeal site from Wivelsfield Recreation Ground.



Viewpoint 6. View looking south-east towards the appeal site from Green Road.



Viewpoint 7. View looking south towards the appeal site from Eastern Road.



Viewpoint 8. View looking south-west towards the western area of the appeal site, from public footpath (WS/1/1).



Viewpoint 9. View looking south-west into the appeal site from Green Road.



Viewpoint 10. View looking west from the bridleway (WIV/30/1) within the appeal site.



Viewpoint 11. View looking north from within the appeal site on public footpath (WS/1/1).



Viewpoint 12. View looking north-east from within the appeal site, just off the route of the public footpath (WS/1/1).



Viewpoint 13. View looking north-west from within the appeal site, just off bridleway (WIV/30/1).



Viewpoint 14. View looking north-west from the south-eastern boundary of the appeal site, off Hundred Acre Lane.



A. View along a rural section of Slugwash Lane, just south of The White House Lodge.



B. View along a rural section of Slugwash Lane, just south of the dwellings 'Eleven Acres' and 'Wayside'.



C. View along Slugwash Lane, with the highways signage the only indication of the imminent arrival at the settlement edge.



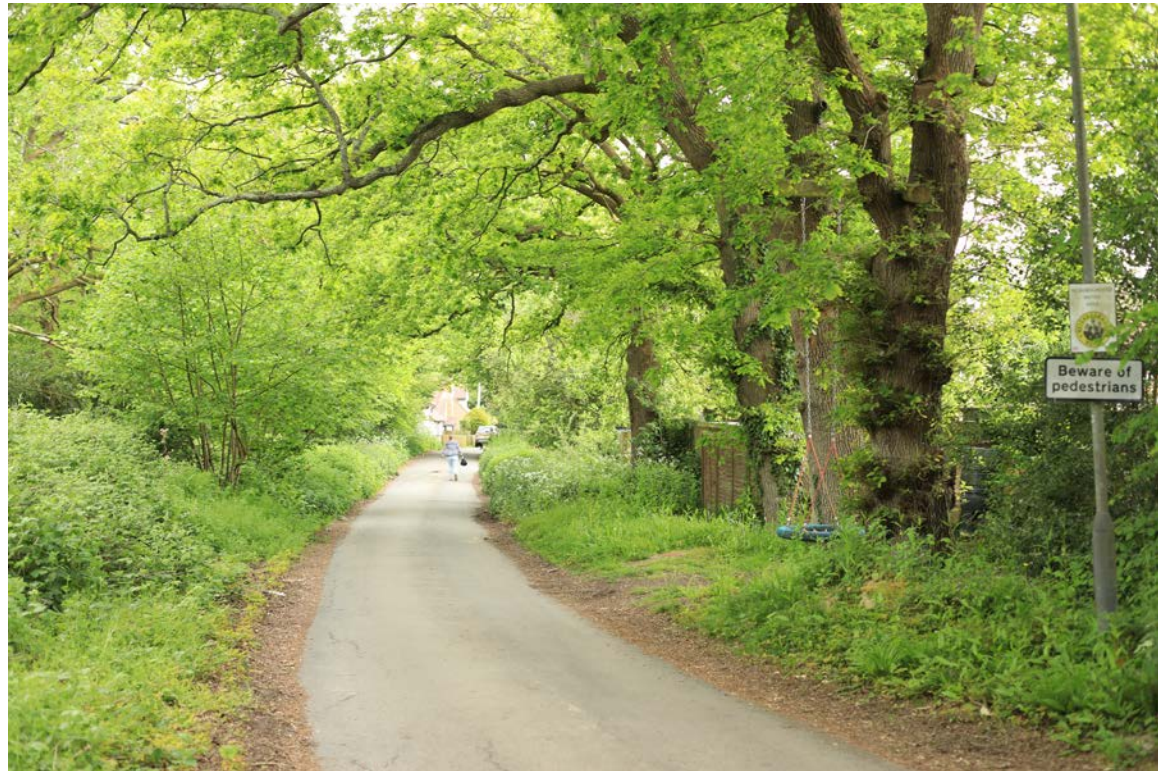
D. View along Slugwash Lane to the junction with Green Road, and the clear backdrop of residential built form in the view.



E. View from Eastern Road along the route of the Sussex Border Path through the settlement.



F. Further from the Green Road junction, Eastern Road retains the character of residential frontage and amenity space.



G. Green infrastructure is influential along the route through the settlement area; there remains an appreciation of the settlement edge and dwellings off Green Park Corner.



H. Still within the influence of Green Park Corner (including parking bays), views to wayside dwellings indicate a transition for the character of the route.



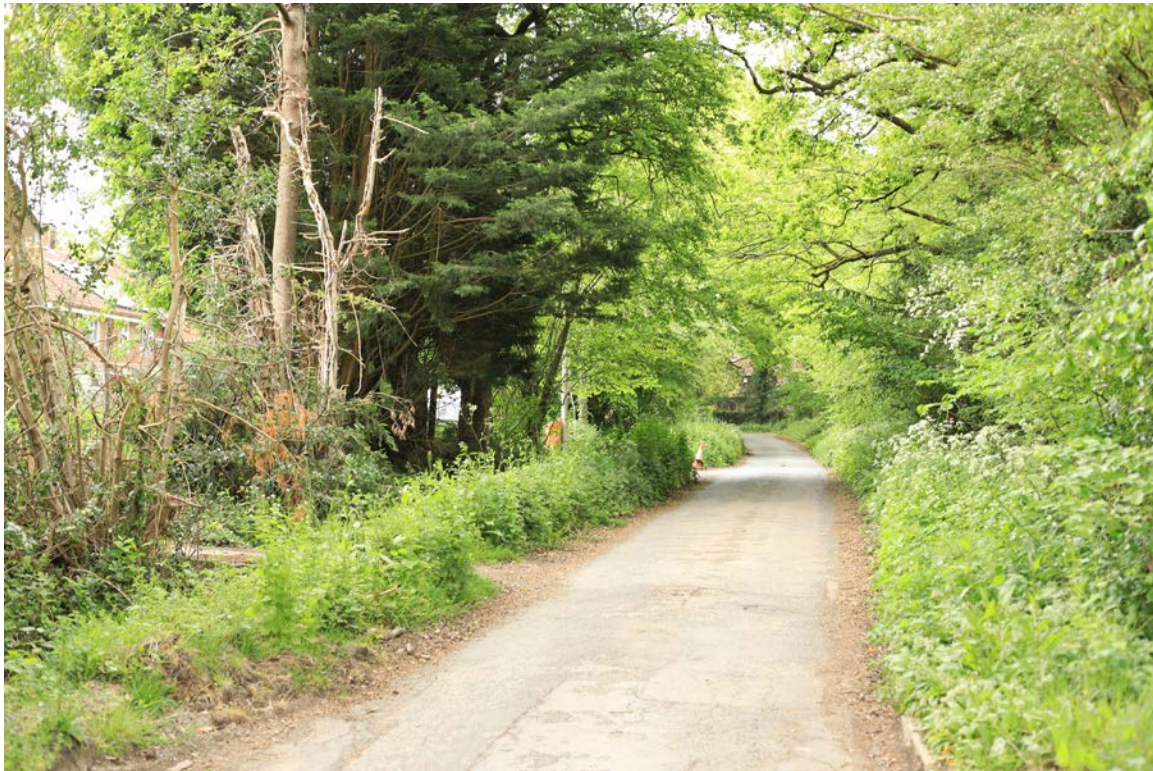
I. Moving north along the Sussex Border Path through Purchase Wood/West Wood, and views to the settlement are restricted.



J. Emerging from the woodland, and wayside dwellings on the settlement fringe are immediately apparent.



K. Moving on to Eastern Road and the transition to the settlement edge is increasingly apparent, albeit this part defined by the green infrastructure corridor along Eastern Road.



L. Moving north along the route, and the influence of Green Park Corner (including parking bays), is influential prior to reaching the section of Eastern Road which reflects a more concentrated, residential and amenity character.



M. Entering 'Wivelsfield Green' on Green Road from the west, the settlement pattern is defined by the mixed built form situated to the south of the road, contributing to some sense of linearity.



N. Within Wivelsfield, any linear character is derived solely from the route of Green Road, with little perception as to the presence or absence of any depth - it is relatively common as a route through a mixed suburban village area.



O. The junction between Green Road, Eastern Road and Slugwash Lane acts as a focal point before continuing to the eastern edge of Wivelsfield, indicating some sense of arrival/departure from this point (particular given the access route to the village hall).



P. Green Road between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green retains a rural outlook to the south, but in itself is not particularly rural, especially in the context of other routes around the settlement.



Q. From Green Road, across the forecourt of the local car sales business, the 'Cala Homes site' will be visible, will increase prominence of built form (from a short section of the route), but won't necessarily convey the depth of the site.



S. Views of the 'Cala Homes site' across the recreation ground from the village hall/car park do not materially add to the perception of depth of the settlement pattern, particularly given that any linearity is not strongly defined here.



R. From this location on Green Road, there is a clear combination of dwellings on Green Road, dwellings on Blackmores, and the added depth of the 'Cala Homes site' - together this vista reflects added depth of the settlement pattern.



T. From parts of Eastern Road, views between existing dwellings will see the northern parcel of the appeal proposals - some depth will be apparent, but in a comparable way to the existing areas of Blackmores and Green Park Corner.



U. The eastern threshold of Wivelsfield is defined by timber boundary fencing and early to late 20th century dwellings.



V. Between Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green, access points to various properties are frequent, with some characterised by more suburban boundary treatments.



W. Approaching the Green Road/Slugwash Lane junction, the route is fronted by several residential property boundary treatments.



X. Within the Policy DM34 'Area of Established Character', bridleway WIV/30/1 is bordered by property boundaries and laurel hedges, before it passes through the mature tree corridor to the south (which is outside the policy boundary).

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