

LPA Planning Application reference: DC/26/0509

Land To The South of Lynwick Street

Landscape and Visual Statement

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On behalf of Cross Homes (Sussex) Ltd

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Executive Summary

This Landscape and Visual Statement provides a proportionate review of the likely landscape and visual implications of the proposed development of four dwellings on land south of Lynwick Street, Rudgwick.

The Site comprises a small meadow and wetland field enclosed by mature woodland, existing residential development and the garden of the Old Vicarage. It lies within the Low Weald landscape and exhibits a number of characteristics identified within the published landscape assessments. However, it is not located within a national or local landscape designation and is not judged to constitute a valued landscape in terms of paragraph 187(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The assessment identifies that the proposal would result in a localised change to the character of the Site through the introduction of residential development, associated access arrangements, domestic activity and lighting. Whilst this would result in a Moderate Adverse Landscape Effect that is judged to be Significant, the principal landscape framework would be retained, including the mature woodland boundaries, TPO trees and topography that define the Site's existing character.

Public visibility of the Site is limited. Views from Lynwick Street and Public Right of Way RUD/390 are generally screened, filtered and contained by existing vegetation. The majority of visual effects are assessed as Not Significant, with any effects largely restricted to short sections of the adjacent road and footpath. Following the establishment of planting, visual effects would reduce further as the development becomes integrated within the existing landscape framework.

Overall, the proposed development would introduce a degree of landscape change to the Site itself. However, the effects would be localised and contained, the wider character of the Low Weald landscape would remain unchanged, and the principal landscape and arboricultural features that define the Site are capable of being retained. The identified landscape effects

should therefore be weighed alongside other material planning considerations, including housing delivery and the overall planning balance, as part of the decision-making process.

On balance, and having regard solely to landscape and visual matters, it is considered that the Site is capable of accommodating a small-scale residential development of the type illustrated without causing unacceptable harm to the wider landscape resource. Whilst there are risks associated with the loss of part of the existing meadow and wetland character, together with the detailed design of the access, tree protection measures and retention of the woodland framework, these matters appear capable of being addressed through detailed design and supporting technical evidence. It is therefore recommended that the Applicant continues to pursue the proposal through the planning process, recognising that the ultimate determination will depend upon the overall planning balance and consideration of all material planning matters.

I.0 Introduction

- I.1 The Site is located on land to the south of Lynwick Street. It is proposed for the erection of four dwellings with associated access, open space and private gardens. The Site is subject to a Planning in Principle (PiP) application (reference *DMS-FID8273516*). At the time of writing, the Planning Officer has indicated a recommendation for refusal.
- I.2 This brief report has been prepared to provide the Applicant with an initial review of the likely landscape and visual implications of the proposed development.
- I.3 I visited the Site and the principal public viewpoints most likely to experience change on 12 June 2026.
- I.4 The judgements presented have not been derived from a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) or Landscape Appraisal (LVA). Rather, they represent a proportionate professional review of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposal together with a brief consideration of the relevant landscape planning policy context as a result of a walkover survey and an initial desktop review.
- I.5 The findings have been informed by my 37 years' experience as a Chartered Landscape Architect and my experience in preparing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments and Landscape Appraisals for residential development proposals within sensitive landscapes.
- I.6 The work has been undertaken with reference to the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013, by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Institute (GLVIA 3)*; and *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note, Assessing Landscape Value Outside National designations (TGN 02-21)*.

2.0 Existing Site

- 2.1 The Site is located to the north-west of Rudgwick, a village in West Sussex situated approximately 6.5km north-west of Horsham. The Site falls within the administrative areas of West Sussex County Council, Horsham District Council and Rudgwick Parish Council. It is located within the Low Weald countryside and outside, but immediately adjacent to, the built-up area boundary of Rudgwick. The Site is accessed from Lynwick Street, a rural lane that follows the northern boundary of the Site and from which access is currently gained via a field gate. Existing residential properties are located to the west, north and east, all of which are accessed from Lynwick Street.
- 2.2 The Site currently comprises a fallow pastoral field supporting grassland, meadow vegetation and wetland vegetation.
- 2.3 The Site slopes from approximately 62m AOD in the north-east to approximately 56m AOD along the southern boundary.
- 2.4 Public Right of Way RUD/390 (footpath) runs adjacent to the southern boundary. The proposals include a new footpath connection linking the development to this route. Dense boundary vegetation along the southern boundary permits only limited filtered views into the Site from the footpath.
- 2.5 The Site boundaries are described as follows:

Boundary A (north, along Lynwick Street)

The Site is accessed via a field gate access which is a solitary opening (north east part of Site) in the mature trees and dense understorey that predominantly screens and filters views in and out of the Site and towards existing houses. The planting offers a sense of enclosure to the north and includes the following species: Ash, Blackthorn, Oak, and Sycamore.

Boundary B (west)

Fencing is not discernible in dense woodland along the west side of the Site. This planting provides dense visual screening for views in from the west and a sense of enclosure in that direction. The planting includes following species: Ash, Blackthorn, Oak, and Sycamore.

Boundary C (south)

There is no fencing along this southern boundary although there is mature wooded planting and dense understorey with some filtered gaps. Overall the planting along this boundary creates enclosure to the south although there are occasional filtered and partial views for approximately 100m of the PRow RUD/390 as it runs parallel with the southern boundary.

Boundary D (east – abutting the Old Vicarage)

There is a 1.5m high timber post and stock-proof fencing that defines this boundary with occasional trees. Enclosure is formed in this direction by the wooded planting along the east side of the Old Vicarage. The few trees are Poplar, Willow, fruit trees (orchard area).

- 2.6 In terms of landscape heritage, the Site forms part of the historic Wealden field pattern. The Site adjoins the curtilage of the Grade II Listed Building, The Old Vicarage (List Entry No. 1026974) and may therefore contribute to its wider setting, although there is little or no intervisibility between the Site and the listed building itself. There is no Ancient Woodland within or adjoining the Site that would be directly affected by the proposals. The Rudgwick Conservation Area lies approximately 175m to the east but is physically and visually separated from the Site by intervening vegetation, landform and development.
- 2.7 In landscape and ecological terms, the Site comprises areas of wildflower meadow, wetland vegetation, mature woodland, woodland edge and native understorey planting,

together with their associated habitats. The proposed development would principally affect the central meadow and wetland areas of the Site.

- 2.8 In arboricultural terms, six trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are located along the northern boundary. It is unlikely that the proposals would materially affect these trees, although the proposed access arrangement may encroach upon the Root Protection Area (RPA) of the north-eastern tree. Subject to detailed design, this issue could be readily mitigated through an appropriate surface construction.

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 Based on the feasibility block plan (ref: *DA25/2-F-03e*), the proposal would comprise the erection of four residential dwellings located adjacent to the Old Vicarage. The development would be accessed from a new private drive around a central open space that could become a small village green with a pond and communal space. The existing principal landscape structure, including mature trees and woodland belts, would be retained.
- 3.2 The proposed development area is contained within a broadly triangular parcel of land located south of Lynwick Street. The Site is enclosed by mature woodland and tree cover to the west, south and east, with existing residential properties located to the north along Lynwick Street.
- 3.3 The development has been designed to sit within the existing landscape framework, retaining the majority of established vegetation and woodland boundaries that define the character of the Site. The mature tree cover, woodland setting and existing residential context would continue to provide a strong degree of enclosure and integration with the surrounding landscape whilst accommodating a small-scale residential development within the settlement edge.

4.0 Landscape Character

BASELINE

- 4.1 It is judged that the proposals would have an indiscernible influence at national, county and district scales owing to the sizes of their respective study areas and the discrete nature of the proposals. As such this report focusses on the local character, as follows.

Area of Local Landscape Character (ALLC)

ALLC Landscape Value

- 4.2 The ALLC is strongly influenced by its mature woodland setting. Both the local road (Lynwick Street) and the houses that are accessed from it are enclosed by woodland. The site itself is an undulating meadow that falls from north-east to south-west with a mini valley feature running diagonally through the middle.
- 4.3 The internal area of the Site has an open perception up to its wooded boundaries. This central area is covered by native grasses and wildflowers and has a pasture character with a wet corridor following the mini valley diagonally through the middle. The boundaries are enclosed to the north, west and south by mature woodland which includes dense understorey although there are partial, filtered views out to the north and across to properties located on the north side of Lynwick Street. To the east the site adjoins the Old Vicarage garden with a fairly open wire and timber post boundary. There are some trees along the boundary with orchard planting within the Old Vicarage garden so that views are relatively open across the boundary and up to more enclosing woodland seen to the east of the Old Vicarage. The Listed Old Vicarage building could not be seen from the Site during the time of the Site visit.

Landscape Receptors.

- 4.4 The Site and ALLC is comprised of the following Landscape Receptors.

Topography

Highest to the north east side falling away to the south west with a mini valley running diagonally across the middle of the site towards the stream to the west.

Landform

Undulating with mini valley across site.

Land Use

Field / pasture field.

Land Cover

Unimproved grassland and flowers.

Vegetation

Mature native woodland boundaries to N, W, S and E beyond Old Vicarage garden.

Water

Mini valley dry but may carry winter flow / stream through site to west. There is a stream, running beyond and along the western boundary.

Settlement / Local Roads

Ribbon settlement pattern houses along Lynwick Street, a rural tree-lined road. Houses are set back, detached, low density and have limited suburbanising effect. Housing plots are located to the west, north and east of the Site.

Openness

There is limited openness beyond the Site's internal area although there are views in to the garden of the Old Vicarage. Generally openness is restricted by the wooded planting in close proximity and in all directions.

Lighting

There is lighting from Lynwick Street, including cars, spill from houses and there are street light columns.

Tranquility

Tranquility is judged to be Moderate, birdsong can be heard although there are also aircraft and occasional car noises.

Remoteness

Remoteness is judged to be Moderate, as there is perception of rural countryside.

- 4.5 The landscape value is strongly influenced by: the positive landscape receptors; and the landscape detractors; and its manifests some of the published Landscape Assessment Key Characteristics at the district scale, described below to inform the Landscape Value.

Positive Landscape Receptors

- 4.6 Positive Landscape Receptors that inform the Site are listed as follows:
- Discrete location;
 - Strong physical and visual enclosure defined by the wooded boundaries in all directions;
 - Part of historic Wealden field pattern;
 - Undulating topography across fallow meadow pasture with a mini valley running diagonally through the Site;
 - Bird song;
 - Moderate perception of remoteness and tranquillity.

Landscape Detractors

4.7 Landscape Detractors that inform the Site are listed as follows:

- Flight path;
- Occasional vehicles on Lynwick Street;
- Local residential areas with suburbanising features: gardens, lighting, drives, vehicles; and
-
- Street lighting and power/electric cables along Lynwick Street.
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Published Landscape Assessments

4.8 The Site is located within the following published Landscape Assessments, where the Site and ALLC manifest their 'Key Characteristics,' they are described as follows:

National Character Area (NCA) 121 Low Weald;

Key Characteristics:

- *“Broad, low-lying, gently undulating clay vales with outcrops of limestone or sandstone providing local variation.*
- *A generally pastoral landscape with arable farming associated with lighter soils on higher ground and areas of fruit cultivation in Kent. Land use is predominantly agricultural but with urban influences, particularly around Gatwick, Horley and Crawley.*
- *Field boundaries of hedgerows and shaws (remnant strips of cleared woodland) enclosing small, irregular fields and linking into small and scattered linear settlements along roadsides or centred on greens or commons. Rural lanes and tracks with wide grass verges and ditches.*

- *Small towns and villages are scattered among areas of woodland, permanent grassland and hedgerows on the heavy clay soils where larger 20th-century villages have grown around major transport routes.*
- *The Low Weald boasts an intricate mix of woodlands, much of it ancient, including extensive broadleaved oak over hazel and hornbeam coppice, shaws, small field copses and tree groups, and lines of riparian trees along watercourses. Veteran trees are a feature of hedgerows and in fields.*
- *Many small rivers, streams and watercourses with associated watermeadows and wet woodland.*
- *Traditional rural vernacular of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung buildings plus local use of distinctive Horsham slabs as a roofing material. Weatherboard barns are a feature. Oast houses occur in the east and use of flint is notable in the south towards the South Downs.”*

WSCC Landscape Assessment Landscape Character Area (LCA) LW4 Low Weald Hills;

Key Characteristics:

- *“Undulating, low and densely wooded ridges running mostly east-west. Distinct escarpment to the north of Horsham and low escarpment at Rowhook.*
- *Blocks and strips of interconnecting woodland, including a large number of blocks of ancient woodland. Western area characterised by woodland of some size.*
- *Mostly rural character with intricate patchwork of small to medium size pasture fields with a combination of sinuous and straight boundaries. Larger, more open, field patterns in the east.*
- *Strong pattern of shaws and hedgerows enclosing fields with mature single oaks in hedgerows and fields.*
- *Network of narrow lanes, sometimes sunken, cross the area with strong definition north-south. Many of them are former droveways for cattle, pigs and sheep.*
- *Steep, secretive wooded gills.*
- *Hidden hammer ponds near Roman Woods with characteristic narrow form.*

- *Includes the main tributaries of Arun; North River and Boldings Brook which meander through mostly narrow valleys with undulating valley sides, dissecting area north to south.*
- *Dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farms, cottages, hamlets and linear villages.*
- *Linear ridgetop villages such as Rudgwick and Rusper are set on higher ground. Farm cottages dispersed along lanes. Rusper forms a particularly attractive area with a traditional core. Some suburban development on village edges.*
- *Strong historic vernacular of sandstone, half timber and plaster/brick, tile hanging and weatherboarding. Rich collection of timber frame buildings in Rudgwick and surrounding area. Local landmark of Rudgwick Church spire.”*

Horsham District Council, Landscape Character Assessment 2003, Landscape Character Type (LCT) Wooded Ridges, Landscape Character Area (LCA) II Rowhook and Rudgwick Wooded Ridge.

Key Characteristics:

- *Undulating ridges. Low escarpment at Rowhook.*
- *Densely wooded character.*
- *Steep sided ghylls, with hidden hammer ponds near Roman Wood.*
- *Secluded small to medium size pasture fields with sinuous and straight boundaries.*
- *Ridgetop villages and hamlets*
- *Rich collection of timber frame buildings in Rudgwick and surrounding area.*
- *Local landmark of Rudgwick Church spire.*
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4.9 Whilst the ALLC has positive landscape receptors and manifests some of the characteristics identified within the published landscape assessments, it is not judged to constitute a valued landscape in terms of paragraph 187(a) of the NPPF. This judgement is based upon the absence of any recognised landscape designation together with the influence of adjacent residential development, traffic, lighting and other suburbanising features which limit the scenic quality, perceptual qualities, rarity and relative naturalness of the landscape.

- 4.10 Having regard to the factors set out above, the Landscape Value of the ALLC is judged to be Medium.

ALLC Landscape Susceptibility

- 4.11 The proposal would introduce residential development into the existing meadow area and would result in the loss of part of the existing grassland habitat together with the introduction of built form, domestic lighting, vehicle movements and associated residential influences. However, the principal landscape structure would be retained, including the mature woodland boundaries, tree cover and strong visual enclosure that currently define the character of the Site. The development would be viewed in the context of existing residential properties located to the west, north and east and would not materially alter the wider wooded character of the ALLC. **For these reasons, the Landscape Susceptibility of the ALLC to the proposed form of development is judged to be Medium.**

ALLC Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.12 By combining Medium Landscape Value with Medium Landscape Susceptibility, the resulting **Landscape Sensitivity of the ALLC is judged to be Medium.**
- 4.13 This assessment has been based upon the illustrative feasibility layout and assumes the retention of the principal landscape framework, including the mature woodland boundaries, TPO trees, wet corridor and areas of open space shown. The Site's ability to accommodate development is intrinsically linked to the retention of these features, which provide the enclosure, landscape structure and character described above. Any future Technical Details Consent application would need to demonstrate that these key landscape components are retained and appropriately protected.

IMPACT AND EFFECTS FOR THE ALLC

- 4.14 **During construction**, the Site would experience temporary disturbance associated with site clearance, earthworks, construction traffic, plant, machinery and the erection of the proposed dwellings and associated infrastructure. These activities would temporarily alter the character of the Site and introduce construction-related activity into an otherwise relatively tranquil landscape. However, the effects would be localised, short-term and reversible. Given the contained nature of the Site and the retention of the surrounding woodland framework, the Magnitude of Landscape Impact during construction is judged to be Medium. When combined with the Medium Landscape Sensitivity of the ALLC, this results in a **Moderate Adverse Landscape Effect** which is considered Significant.
- 4.15 **At completion**, the proposals would introduce built form, domestic activity, lighting, access infrastructure and private gardens into the existing meadow landscape. The development would result in the loss of part of the existing meadow and wetland character and would introduce suburbanising influences into the Site. However, the principal landscape structure, including the mature woodland boundaries, TPO trees, topography and wet corridor, would be retained. The Site would remain physically and visually enclosed by woodland and would continue to be experienced in the context of existing residential development located to the west, north and east. The Magnitude of Landscape Impact at completion is therefore judged to be Medium. When combined with Medium Landscape Sensitivity, this results in a **Moderate Adverse Landscape Effect which is considered Significant**.
- 4.16 Following the **establishment of landscape planting**, anticipated to be approximately 15 years after completion, the development would become increasingly integrated within the existing landscape framework. However, the change from undeveloped meadow to residential development would remain permanent and the associated built form, access arrangements, domestic activity and lighting would continue to influence the character of the Site. Consequently, the Magnitude of Landscape Impact is judged to reduce to Low to Medium long term. When combined with the Medium

Landscape Sensitivity of the ALLC, this results in a **Minor to Moderate Adverse Landscape Effect which is considered on the cusp of Significant and Not Significant.**

- 4.17 Notwithstanding the above, it is recognised that residential development would inevitably result in some degree of landscape change. In this instance, the effect would be localised and contained by the existing woodland framework and surrounding pattern of residential development. The wider character of the published landscape character areas, including National Character Area 121 Low Weald, the West Sussex Landscape Character Area LW4 Low Weald Hills and the Horsham District Landscape Character Area 11 Rowhook and Rudgwick Wooded Ridge, would remain unchanged. Consequently, whilst the landscape effect is judged to be Moderate Adverse and Significant (reducing to Minor to Moderate/cusp of Significant and Not Significant Long Term), this does not necessarily indicate that the development is unacceptable in planning terms. Rather, the identified landscape harm should be weighed by the decision maker against the benefits of the proposal and other material planning considerations, including housing delivery, the efficient use of land and the overall planning balance.

5.0 Views

BASELINE

- 5.1 The Site is enclosed and the Zone of Theoretical Visibility is likely to be contained within the wooded boundaries. As such there are few public views and these are partial and filtered. Public Views are split into two groups as follows:

Views from Lynwick Street

Generally views from Lynwick Street are screened. Any views are limited to the length of the Site's northern boundary and for cars, their passengers and potentially any local people who may walk along the Street (although there is no designated footway). The most open view is across the field gate where there is a limited view in owing to the encroaching boundary vegetation and the sloping topography. The views are contained, partial, filtered and near distance. **For the reasons given above the Visual Value of these views is judged to be Low to Medium. The Visual Susceptibility is judged to be Medium** as the new proposals would be fairly indiscernible (although slightly more open at the entrance for visual receptors as they fleetingly pass by). **As such the Visual Sensitivity is judged to be Low to Medium.**

Views from PRow RUD/390

Generally views from PRow RUD/390 are also screened. Views in are limited to a short length (approximately 100m) where there are rare gaps in the generally dense planting that runs along the southern boundary. As with Lynwick Street the views are contained, partial, filtered and near distance and they would be experienced by walkers enjoying a wooded part of the Low Weald. The views are contained, partial, filtered and near distance. **For the reasons given above the Visual Value of these views is judged to be Medium. The Visual Susceptibility is judged to be Medium** as the new proposals would be fairly indiscernible. **As such the Visual Sensitivity is judged to be Medium.**

- 5.2 It is not possible to judge the likely change to existing houses. Upper floors of two or three existing houses can be partially seen from the Site although views back in are likely to be as described above for 'Views from Lynwick Street.' For the reasons given above the **Visual Value of these views is judged to be Low to Medium. The Visual Susceptibility is judged to be Medium** as the new proposals would be fairly indiscernible (although slightly more open at the entrance for visual receptors as they fleetingly pass by). As such the **Visual Sensitivity is judged to be Low to Medium.**

IMPACT AND EFFECTS FOR VIEWS

Views from Lynwick Street

Construction

- 5.3 During construction, users of Lynwick Street would experience temporary views of construction activity, including plant, vehicles, materials and the creation of the new access. These views would be limited to the Site entrance and short sections of the northern boundary where filtered views are currently available. The existing woodland and vegetation would continue to screen the majority of the Site. The Magnitude of Visual Impact is therefore judged to be Medium. By cross-referencing a Medium Magnitude of Visual Impact with a Low to Medium Visual Sensitivity, the resulting Visual Effect is judged to be Minor to Moderate Adverse and Not Significant.

Completion

- 5.4 At completion, visual receptors on Lynwick Street would experience glimpsed views of the new access, drive, dwellings and associated domestic features. However, the retained woodland boundaries, mature trees and enclosed character of the Site would substantially contain views. The proposals would be seen within the context of the existing ribbon development pattern along Lynwick Street. The Magnitude of Visual Impact is judged to be Medium. By cross-referencing Medium Magnitude with Low to

Medium Visual Sensitivity, the resulting Visual Effect is judged to be Minor to Moderate Adverse and Not Significant.

Year 15 (Planting Establishment)

- 5.5 Following establishment of the proposed planting and maturation of retained vegetation, the development would become increasingly integrated within the existing landscape framework. Views would largely be limited to the access point and occasional filtered glimpses through vegetation. The Magnitude of Visual Impact is judged to reduce to Low. By cross-referencing Low Magnitude with Low to Medium Visual Sensitivity, the resulting Visual Effect is judged to be Minor Adverse and Not Significant.

Views from PRow RUD/390

Construction

- 5.6 During construction, walkers using PRow RUD/390 would experience temporary glimpsed views of construction activity through occasional gaps in the southern boundary vegetation. The majority of the Site would remain screened by existing woodland and understorey planting. The Magnitude of Visual Impact is judged to be Medium. By cross-referencing Medium Magnitude with Medium Visual Sensitivity, the resulting Visual Effect is judged to be Moderate Adverse and Significant.

Completion

- 5.7 At completion, walkers would experience partial and filtered views of elements of the development through the existing boundary vegetation. The development would be viewed against a backdrop of existing trees and woodland and would generally remain visually contained within the Site. The Magnitude of Visual Impact is judged to be Medium. By cross-referencing Medium Magnitude with Medium Visual Sensitivity, the resulting Visual Effect is judged to be Moderate Adverse and Significant.

Year 15 (Planting Establishment)

- 5.8 Following planting establishment, the retained and proposed vegetation would further filter and screen views from the PRow. Whilst some glimpsed views of roofs and upper building elements may remain visible, the development would appear integrated within the wooded landscape setting. The Magnitude of Visual Impact is judged to reduce to Low. By cross-referencing Low Magnitude with Medium Visual Sensitivity, the resulting Visual Effect is judged to be Minor Adverse and Not Significant.

Views from Existing Residential Properties

Construction

- 5.9 Residents of the nearest properties may experience temporary views of construction activity, including plant, vehicles and construction operations. However, views would generally be filtered by existing vegetation and would be experienced within the context of an established residential area. The Magnitude of Visual Impact is judged to be Medium. By cross-referencing Medium Magnitude with Low to Medium Visual Sensitivity, the resulting Visual Effect is judged to be Minor to Moderate Adverse and Not Significant.

Completion

- 5.10 At completion, residents of the nearest dwellings would experience changes to existing views through the introduction of new residential buildings, gardens, vehicles, lighting and associated domestic features. However, the proposals would be viewed within the context of existing residential development surrounding the Site to the north, east and west. The retained woodland boundaries would continue to provide substantial enclosure and screening. The Magnitude of Visual Impact is judged to be Medium. By cross-referencing Medium Magnitude with Low to Medium Visual Sensitivity, the resulting Visual Effect is judged to be Minor to Moderate Adverse and Not Significant.

Year 15 (Planting Establishment)

- 5.11 Following planting establishment, the development would become increasingly integrated within the existing landscape framework. Retained woodland and proposed planting would further filter views between properties and the development. The Magnitude of Visual Impact is judged to reduce to Low. By cross-referencing Low Magnitude with Low to Medium Visual Sensitivity, the resulting Visual Effect is judged to be Minor Adverse and Not Significant.
- 5.12 The assessment has been undertaken during June 2026 when deciduous vegetation was in leaf. During the winter months, when leaf cover is reduced, there may be a marginal increase in the visibility of the Site from limited public and private viewpoints. However, the Site is strongly enclosed by mature woodland, understorey vegetation and surrounding residential development. Consequently, seasonal variation in vegetation cover is not judged to materially alter the landscape effects identified within this assessment.

6.0 Landscape Planning Review of Recommended Reason for Refusal 2

- 6.1 The second reason for refusal states that the Site forms part of a sensitive and undeveloped rural landscape containing mature trees, protected trees and woodland features of high amenity and landscape value and that the proposal would fail to adequately conserve important arboricultural features whilst harming the character and appearance of the countryside.
- 6.2 The Site is currently undeveloped and contributes to local landscape character through its meadow, wetland and woodland setting. However, it does not comprise an isolated area of open countryside. The Site is enclosed by existing residential development to the north, east and west and forms a contained parcel of land adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Rudgwick. The surrounding pattern of development along Lynwick Street is characterised by detached residential properties within generous plots set within a strong woodland framework.
- 6.3 The principal landscape characteristics of the Site are derived from the mature woodland boundaries, tree cover, enclosed character and undulating landform. These features are not dependent upon the Site remaining entirely undeveloped. The illustrative layout demonstrates that the woodland boundaries, principal tree cover, wet corridor and open space can be retained as the defining landscape structure of the Site.
- 6.4 The refusal reason places considerable emphasis on mature, protected and veteran trees. Whilst these features are important landscape assets, there is no evidence before this assessment to indicate that the proposed development could not be accommodated whilst retaining and protecting the principal arboricultural features. The feasibility layout has been prepared around the existing tree structure and there is no indication that the loss of protected or veteran trees would be required in order to implement the development.
- 6.5 The Site is subject to arboricultural constraints, particularly in relation to access design and the protection of root systems. However, such constraints are common to many

development sites and do not necessarily prevent development from taking place. The existing access position, retention of woodland boundaries and scope for specialist engineering solutions within Root Protection Areas indicate that these matters are capable of being addressed through detailed design at the Technical Details Consent stage.

- 6.6 The Site contains woodland and tree features that contribute positively to local amenity and landscape character. These features also provide the principal visual containment that restricts visibility of the Site from surrounding public viewpoints. Subject to their retention and long-term management, the proposals would not undermine the wooded character that defines this part of Lynwick Street and the wider landscape character area.
- 6.7 The proposal would inevitably alter the character of the Site itself through the introduction of residential development. This report identifies a Moderate Adverse Significant landscape effect upon the Site and its immediate landscape character area. However, the effects would be localised and contained. The proposal would not materially alter the character of the wider Low Weald landscape, the West Sussex Landscape Character Area LW4 Low Weald Hills or the Horsham Landscape Character Area II Rowhook and Rudgwick Wooded Ridge.
- 6.8 In terms of local character, the proposal would continue the established pattern of detached residential development that currently fronts Lynwick Street. The development would occupy a contained gap between existing residential plots and would be experienced within an existing residential context rather than as an isolated intrusion into open countryside.
- 6.9 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment whilst recognising the need to support sustainable development. Based upon the information available and the illustrative layout reviewed, it is considered that the proposal is capable of retaining the principal landscape and arboricultural features that define the Site, responding positively to local character and integrating with the

existing settlement pattern. Consequently, whilst landscape effects would arise, it is not considered that the proposal would necessarily conflict with the landscape objectives of Policies 25 (Character), 32 (Quality of development) and 33 (Development Principles) of the Horsham District Planning Framework, November 2015 Policies RNP7 (Architectural Style) and RNP9 (Street Scene) of the Rudgwick Neighbourhood Plan or the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.0 Conclusions

Landscape Character

- 7.1 The Site forms a small, contained parcel of land located on the southern side of Lynwick Street and enclosed by mature woodland, existing residential development and the garden of the Old Vicarage. The character of the Site is principally derived from its woodland setting, enclosed nature, undulating landform, meadow vegetation and wet corridor that traverses the Site.
- 7.2 The assessment concludes that the proposal would have an indiscernible influence upon landscape character at national, county and district scales. The effects would be limited to the Site and its immediate Area of Local Landscape Character (ALLC).
- 7.3 The ALLC exhibits a number of positive landscape characteristics and reflects several of the key characteristics identified within the published landscape assessments. However, having regard to the influence of adjacent residential development, Lynwick Street, lighting and other suburbanising influences, the landscape is not judged to constitute a valued landscape in terms of paragraph 187(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.4 The proposal would introduce built form, domestic activity, lighting and associated residential influences into the existing meadow landscape. This would result in a permanent change to the Site itself. However, the principal landscape framework would remain intact, including the mature woodland boundaries, TPO trees, topography and wet corridor that currently define the character of the Site and provide visual containment.
- 7.5 Landscape Sensitivity has been assessed as Medium. The Magnitude of Landscape Impact is judged to be Medium during construction and at completion, reducing following planting establishment as the development becomes increasingly integrated within the retained woodland framework. This results in a Moderate Adverse Landscape Effect

which is considered Significant (reducing to Minor to Moderate/cusp of Significant and Not Significant Long Term). Whilst these effects judgements are significant (cusp of, in the long term) in landscape assessment methodology, it would be localised, contained and restricted principally to the Site itself and its immediate surroundings.

Views

- 7.6 Public visibility of the Site is limited by the existing woodland framework. Views from Lynwick Street are generally filtered and fleeting, whilst views from Public Right of Way RUD/390 are restricted to occasional gaps in the southern boundary vegetation. Existing residential properties experience a similar degree of enclosure. The majority of visual effects are assessed as Minor Adverse or Minor to Moderate Adverse and Not Significant, reducing further following the establishment of planting and the maturation of retained vegetation.

Trees

- 7.7 In arboricultural terms, the Site contains important trees and woodland features that make a positive contribution to local character and amenity. Based upon the information available, there is no evidence that the principal woodland framework, protected trees or veteran tree interests could not be retained and protected through detailed design and appropriate construction techniques. The feasibility layout demonstrates that development could be accommodated whilst retaining the key landscape structure that defines the Site.

Overall

- 7.8 The proposal would therefore result in a degree of landscape harm through the loss of part of the existing meadow and wetland character and the introduction of residential development. However, the effects would be contained within a Site that is already enclosed by existing residential development and woodland planting. The wider character of National Character Area 121 Low Weald, West Sussex Landscape

Character Area LW4 Low Weald Hills and Horsham Landscape Character Area II
Rowhook and Rudgwick Wooded Ridge would remain unchanged.

- 7.9 It is considered that the Site is capable of accommodating a small-scale residential development of the type illustrated without causing unacceptable harm to the wider landscape resource. The identified landscape effects are localised and contained and should be weighed by the decision maker against the benefits of the proposal and other material planning considerations as part of the overall planning balance.

8.0 Final Recommendation

- 8.1 From a landscape and visual perspective, it is my opinion that the Site is capable of accommodating a small-scale residential development of the type illustrated without causing unacceptable harm to the wider landscape resource. The principal risk to the proposal relates to the permanent loss of part of the existing meadow and wetland character and the resulting Moderate Adverse Significant landscape effect identified within this report, reducing to Minor to Moderate Adverse (on the cusp of Significant and Not Significant) following planting establishment. There is also a degree of risk associated with the detailed treatment of the access, protection of trees and root protection areas, and the retention of the woodland framework, all of which would require careful design and supporting technical evidence at the Technical Details Consent stage. Notwithstanding these matters, the Site benefits from a high degree of physical and visual enclosure, limited public visibility and the presence of an existing residential context. Whilst the proposal would give rise to a Moderate Adverse Significant landscape effect at the local level (reducing to Minor to Moderate/cusp of Significant and Not Significant Long Term), it is my professional opinion that the identified effects are not of such magnitude or extent as to justify refusal on landscape grounds alone. The ultimate acceptability of the proposal would, however, depend upon the decision maker's assessment of all material planning considerations and the overall planning balance.