



Land East of Henfield Road, Cowfold

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

April 2026

Land to the east of Henfield Road (A281), Cowfold

Proposed Residential Development

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1. Introduction

This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared on behalf of Landacre Developments in relation to proposals for residential development on land to the east of Henfield Road (A281), Cowfold, West Sussex (Figure 1). The proposals are for: *Outline planning application for approximately 40 residential dwellings, vehicular access, car parking, landscaping, open space and other associated works and infrastructure. All matters reserved except for the main site access.* The application area extends to approximately 2.6 ha.

The Methodology used in preparation of this LVA is included in Appendix 1. The LVA Methodology used is consistent with revised guidance set out in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA)' published by the Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Assessment (GLVIA3 Third edition, 2013) and Technical Guidance Notes issued by the Landscape Institute relevant to the preparation of LVAs.

The purpose of this LVA is to assess fully the anticipated impacts and effects of the proposed development on landscape character and visual amenity and to inform the future design process. This LVA is set out as follows:

Section 2 describes the landscape policy context to the Site;

Section 3 describes the landscape character context for the Site by reference to national and local landscape character assessments;

Section 4 describes the appearance and landscape character of the Site and any constraints informed by a Site visit undertaken on 8th April 2026 and other surveys prepared in support of the application;

Section 5 describes views to and from the Site and includes reference to representative viewpoints;

Section 6 provides an overview of the proposed development and the associated landscape proposals;

Section 7 sets out the assessment of the anticipated impact and effects of the proposed development on landscape character;

Section 8 describes the assessment of the anticipated visual impact and effects of the proposed development;

Section 9 provides a summary of conclusions and findings of the LVA.

For all Figures see Appendix 2.

2. Local Landscape Policy Context

The Site lies within the administrative area of Horsham District Council. The local planning policy context to the Site is described in the Horsham District Planning Framework (November 2015) and the Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031 (made 8th October 2025).

Policies and other guidance relevant within a landscape and visual context are set out below in Sections 2.2-2.4 (policy wording in *italics*).

2.1 **Designations**

The Site carries no landscape, heritage or biodiversity designations:

- The High Weald National Landscape boundary lies over 2 km to the north.
- There are a number of Listed Buildings associated with Cowfold Village. The nearest to the Site are Wood Grange and Bulls House (both Grade II Listed) located to the west of Henfield Road (within 100 metres of the Site) and Eastlands Farmhouse which is located over 300 metres to the east. The Cowfold Conservation Area lies approximately 380 metres to the north.

Assessment of impacts and effects on conservation and wildlife sites and on heritage assets is outside the scope of this LVA. However, where relevant the LVA will consider impacts and effects on the setting of heritage assets, primarily with regard to intervisibility with the proposals.

2.2 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)**

National policy emphasises the need for well-designed places sympathetic to landscape setting:

135. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);[..]

Paragraph 187 emphasises conservation and enhancement of the natural environment:

187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*

2.3 Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (November 2015)

Policy 2 of the HDPF sets the context for strategic development setting an overriding aim *'to maintain the district's unique rural character whilst ensuring that the needs of the community are met through sustainable growth..'*

Policy 4 of the HDPF provides support for the growth of settlements in certain circumstances where it is appropriate to the *scale and function* of the settlement. With particular regard to landscape impacts the policy also requires:

The development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape and townscape character features are maintained and enhanced.

Policy 25 of the HDPF addresses The Natural Environment and Landscape Character.

The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development. The Council will support development proposals which:

- 1. Protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.*
- 2. Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District.*
- 3. Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.*
- 4. Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.*

Policy 26 Countryside Protection states *the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location..*

The policy provides support for the sustainable development of rural areas but requires proposals to *be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location*. The policy also lists key features to be protected, conserved and enhanced as part of proposals:

1. *The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change;*
2. *The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; and*
3. *The landform of the area.*

2.4 Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2031)

The Parish Vision Statement as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to *maintain the village atmosphere and sense of community* and to *keep housing integrated within the village*. Policy 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan deals with green infrastructure in relation to proposed development:

Policy 2: Green Infrastructure

- i. Development proposals, which seek to conserve or enhance existing Green Infrastructure network will be supported.*
- ii. Proposals that will deliver a net gain in Green Infrastructure will be supported.*
- iii. Proposals that seek to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists through Green Infrastructure linkages will be supported.*
- iv. Development proposals that would result in the loss of existing Green Infrastructure will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that they secure new opportunities that:*
 - a. deliver an overall net gain in Green Infrastructure;*
 - b. incorporate provisions to deliver an equivalent carbon-sink capability in the short term; and*
 - c. deliver a net gain in Biodiversity.*

3. Landscape Character Context

Published Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs) provide a baseline description of the key features and elements which define local landscape character. The National Character Areas (NCA) cover the whole of England and Wales¹. The Site lies within NCA 121 Low Weald. The identified key characteristics of this NCA are set out in Section 3.1.

The Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape 2005 presents a vision for the five National Character Areas which fall within the West Sussex boundary and is also referenced below in Section 3.2. At a county level, landscape character is set out in the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (2003) described in Section 3.3. The West Sussex and Horsham LCAs are now some years old, and it is acknowledged that baseline conditions may have changed in the interim. They nevertheless offer assessment of key characteristics which are relevant to the Site and its location.

An assessment of the Site against the identified Character Areas is included in Section 4.

3.1 **National Character Area 121 Low Weald**

NCA 121 wraps around NCA 122 the High Weald extending east towards Ashford in Kent and south east towards Lewes and Hailsham to the south east. The Site is located in the western part of the NCA near the boundary with NCA 122 High Weald to the north.

Key characteristics are defined as:

- *Broad, low-lying, gently undulating clay vales with outcrops of limestone or sandstone providing local variation.*
- *The underlying geology has provided materials for industries including iron working, brick and glass making, leaving pits, lime kilns and quarries. Many of the resulting exposures are critical to our understanding of the Wealden environment.*
- *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.*

¹ <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/>

- *Frequent north–south routeways and lanes, many originating as drove roads, along which livestock were moved to downland grazing or to forests to feed on acorns.*
- *Small areas of heathland particularly associated with commons such as Ditchling and Chailey. Also significant historic houses often in parkland or other designed landscapes.*
- *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.*
- *Abundance of ponds, some from brick making and quarrying, and hammer and furnace ponds, legacies of the Wealden iron industry.*
- *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.*

3.2 A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape 2005

Cowfold lies within Landscape Character Area LW10 as described in the Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape . Key characteristics of LW10 Eastern Low Weald of relevance to this assessment are:

- *Gently undulating low ridges and clay vales.*
- *Views dominated by the steep downland scarp to the south and the High Weald fringes to the north.*
- *Arable and pastoral rural landscape, a mosaic of small and larger fields, scattered woodlands, shaws and hedgerows with hedgerow trees.*
- *Quieter and more secluded, confined rural landscape to the west, much more development to the east, centred on Burgess Hill.*
- *Biodiversity in woodland, meadowland, ponds and wetland.*
- *Historic village of Cowfold and suburban village development at Partridge Green, Shermanbury and Sayers Common.*
- *Mix of farmsteads and hamlets favouring ridgeline locations, strung out along lanes.*
- *A modest spread of designed landscapes.*
- *Crossed by north-south roads with a rectilinear network of narrow rural lanes.*
- *Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, weatherboarding, Horsham Stone roofing and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.*

Landscape and visual sensitivities include:

- *High level of perceived naturalness and a rural quality in the quieter, rural landscape to the west of the A23 Trunk Road.*
- *Woodland cover and the mosaic of shaws and hedgerows contribute strongly to the essence of the landscape.*
- *Pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.*
- *Parts of the area are highly exposed to views from the downs with a consequently high sensitivity to the impact of new development and the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.*

The overriding aim for future management is to:

Conserve and enhance the quiet, rural qualities of the western part of the area, encourage landscape restoration and woodland management, and ensure that new development is well-integrated within the landscape.

3.3 Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (2003)

The Site is located within Landscape Character Area J3: Cowfold and Shermanbury Farmlands as described in the Horsham District LCA. The overall character of the LCA is described as:

This gently undulating area of low ridges and valleys lies over the Weald Clay and the southern edge of the Tunbridge Wells sands. It has both small scale intricate field patterns of pasture and some larger scale arable fields. Scattered woodlands, hedgerows and shaws create enclosure and restrict views, although there are some more open areas where hedgerows have been lost. Despite localised visual intrusion from pylons and some urban development on the A283, the area generally has an undeveloped rural character.

Key characteristics are defined as:

- *Gently undulating low ridges and valleys.*
- *Scattered small woodlands.*
- *Small and medium size pasture fields and some larger arable fields.*
- *Mostly small scale intricate landscape. Localised areas with more open character.*
- *Field ponds.*
- *Small farmsteads and cottages dispersed along lanes and tracks.*
- *The historic village of Cowfold and more suburban development at Partridge Green and Shermanbury.*
- *Local building materials of half timber, brick, tile, Horsham stone and weatherboarding.*

- *Landmark of St Hugh's Charterhouse Monastery at Shermanbury.*

Overall Landscape Condition is described as *declining* due largely to loss of hedgerows and shaws, a decline in traditional land management and visual intrusion associated with pylons and development. The LCA is assessed as of moderate sensitivity to change.

4. Baseline Landscape Character Assessment

The Site extents are shown on Figure 1. The local landscape context is shown on Figure 3. This baseline landscape character assessment is informed by a site visit undertaken on 8th April 2026 and by:

- Tree Survey Schedule and Tree Constraints Plan (Ramsay & Co. January 2026)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (AEWC February 2026)

Impacts on wildlife and ecologically designated assets are outside the scope of this LVA but will be referenced as appropriate in a landscape context.

Based on a desk top overview of the site context and designations a 1 kilometre study area was identified for the purposes of this LVA.

4.1 Site Description

The Site is located to the east of Henfield Road on the southern fringes of the village of Cowfold.

A series of illustrative landscape character views (Viewpoints LC1 to LC4) is included at Figure 2, which illustrate the topography of the Site, existing land use, structures and overall character. Key landscape features are also identified on the Representative Viewpoints and Landscape Context Plan (Figure 3).

The Site comprises two small rectangular fields separated by a broad belt of scrub which includes three important mature oaks (T15, T16 and T21 as identified on the Tree Constraints Plan). Both fields are currently grazed by ponies. There are two small timber shelters, one located in each field. The land falls gently from north to south towards the Cowfold Stream. There is a small circular pond located in the eastern field.

The eastern and southern boundaries are defined by areas of blackthorn, hawthorn and ash scrub. The northern boundary to the eastern field is defined by a broader area of scrub which separates the Site from a narrow lane which runs east from Henfield Road and provides access to the neighbouring sewage treatment works and residential dwellings around Eastlands Farm. The northern boundary to the western paddock is partly defined by rear gardens to properties on South Leas. The western boundary is defined by rear gardens to properties on Henfield Road. A number of these have a fairly open aspect as demonstrated by the landscape character views.

The Site is accessed via a field gate from a shared drive from Henfield Road.

The land beyond the Site boundary to the north and west is predominantly residential in character. To the south there is a shallow valley of wet woodland and scrub along the Cowfold Stream. To the east the land is bordered by the sewage treatment works with an area of allotments.

There is no public access to the land. A public footpath (COW 1775) follows the line of the lane to the north east towards Eastlands Farm. There is an extensive public right of way network to the south and east in the areas of more open countryside.

The Site itself comprises two small areas of grazing paddocks. The PEA notes that these comprise poor quality modified grassland. The PEA notes a higher ecological value associated with the boundary scrub and hedges and the individual mature trees.

The Site itself does reflect some aspects of the key characteristics of the LCA of *small and medium size pasture fields with a field pond*. The paddocks comprise low quality pony grazing and the overall character of the Site contrasts strongly with the more characteristic landscape of larger fields bordered by mature hedges and hedgerow trees found to the south and east. The Site is also subject to urbanising influences, in particular the neighbouring residential development on Henfield Road. The combination of the land use, condition and neighbouring land uses give the Site a strong settlement edge character, in contrast to the more open countryside to the south and east. The wooded river valley to the south and the sewage farm and allotment gardens provide strong landscape and visual buffers and provide a clear separation between the Site and the wider countryside.

4.2 Overview Landscape Character and Significance

Table 1: Landscape Receptor Sensitivity

Landscape Character Receptor	Landscape value	Susceptibility to change	Landscape Receptor Sensitivity	Brief description
NCA 121 Low Weald	National	Low	Medium	The Site is partly representative of the landscape of small irregularly shaped fields enclosed by hedgerows with wooded shaws, but is subject to urbanising influences from the neighbouring residential areas.
LW10 Eastern Low Weald	Local	Low	Medium	Whilst the Site does comprise two small paddocks with boundary scrub and trees it does not strongly reflect the character of the wider LCA to the south and east, which has a stronger rural character. The Site itself is predominantly grazing paddocks in poor condition, but with some important boundary features, in particular the mature oaks.
J3: Cowfold and Shermanbury Farmlands	Local	Low	Medium	Whilst the Site does comprise two small paddocks with boundary scrub and trees it does not strongly reflect the character of the wider LCA to the south and east, which has a stronger rural character. The Site itself is predominantly grazing paddocks in poor condition, but with some important boundary features, in particular the mature oaks.
Site features: Landscape pattern; trees and hedgerows, boundaries	Site	Medium	Medium	The Site does reflect to a limited extent the local pattern of small irregular, paddocks enclosed by mature hedgerows. The mature oaks are noted as of particular importance.
Site features: historic and cultural associations	Site	Low	Low	There are no known historic features or cultural associations linked to the Site.
Site features: ecology, land management, land use and land cover	Site	Medium	Low	The PEA notes the boundary scrub and mature trees as the most important ecological features. The main areas of the Site comprise areas of low quality modified grassland currently grazed by ponies.

4.3 Landscape Character Baseline Assessment Summary

The Site lies on the southern fringes of the village of Cowfold. Residential development lies beyond the northern and western boundaries and there is the sewage treatment works to the east. The land to the south forms the shallow valley to the Cowfold Stream. The Site comprises two small paddocks currently grazed by ponies. Boundary vegetation comprises mostly mixed native scrub and includes a few important mature oaks, mainly located in the belt of scrub which separates the two fields. The Site does not strongly reflect key characteristics of the local published landscape character assessments but has more of a settlement edge, urban fringe character.

5. Baseline Visual Assessment

This baseline visual assessment describes the visual amenity and appearance of views to the existing Site by reference to a series of representative viewpoints.

A broad visual envelope or zone of theoretical visibility was identified through a desk top analysis of contour and topographical information.

A ZTV plan was not considered necessary. Following the desk top analysis a site visit was undertaken in order to identify the actual visual envelope and views to the Site as defined by relief, landscape features and also built development.

16 representative viewpoints from publicly accessible locations have been identified. Viewpoints are described in Table 2 and viewpoint locations are shown on the Viewpoint Location Plan in Figure 3. Photographs taken from each of the representative viewpoint locations are included in Figure 4. Photographs were taken on 8th April 2026. The weather was clear and mostly sunny. All images were taken with a 50mm DSLR digital lens. In a number of cases single frames have been combined to provide panoramas to illustrate the Site in the wider context.

No access has been gained to neighbouring properties in the preparation of this LVA.

Table 2: Baseline Visual Assessment

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Baseline Assessment: Visual Receptor Description
1	Near view north along Henfield Road towards the Site access. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21252 22070 Altitude: 16 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 62 m	Low Low	View along an 'A' road on the edge of the village. The road is bordered by a combination of residential and commercial uses. Visual receptor: Residents and road users on residential street.
2	Near view east from Henfield Road at the access point to the Site. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21264 22098 Altitude: 17 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 15 m	Low Low	The Site access is bordered by areas of scrub and planting. On this section Henfield Road is bordered by a mix of residential and commercial uses. Visual receptor: Residents and road users on residential street.
3	Near view south along Henfield Road towards the Site access from opposite the entrance to South Leas. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21282 22139 Altitude: 19 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 170 m	Low Low	View along an 'A' road on the edge of the village. The road is bordered by a combination of residential and commercial uses. Visual receptor: Residents and road users on residential street.
4	Near view east along the lane to the north of the Site which also forms the alignment of Public Footpath COW 1775. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21407 22124 Altitude: 19 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 50 m	Low Low	Enclosed view along the lane, with commercial development to the north and dense vegetation cover the south, which limits views towards the Site. Visual receptor: Mainly users of public right of way on the settlement edge with occasional vehicle users.

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Baseline Assessment: Visual Receptor Description
5	Near view west along the lane to the north of the Site which also forms the alignment of Public Footpath COW 1775. OS Grid Ref: TQ 28990 23230 Altitude: 19m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 48 m	Low Low	Enclosed view along the lane, with residential development to the north and dense vegetation cover the south, which limits views towards the Site. Visual receptor: Mainly users of public right of way on the settlement edge with occasional vehicle users.
6	Near view west towards the Site from Public Footpath COW 1777 in the vicinity of Eastlands Farm. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21790 22023 Altitude: 16 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 280 m	Medium Medium	Open view west across grazing land towards the Site. The view has a strong rural character. Residential development on the settlement edge is not visible in this view. Trees and woodland screen views to the Site. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way in a non-designated landscape.
7	Near distance view north west from the junction between Public Footpaths COW 1777 and COW1780. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21745 21690 Altitude: 15 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 400 m	Medium Medium	Open view north west across farmland towards the Site. The view has a strong rural character. Residential development on the settlement edge is not visible in this view. Trees and woodland screen views to the Site. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way in a non-designated landscape.
8	Near distance view north from Public Footpath COW1780. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21565 21711 Altitude: 16 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 250 m	Medium Medium	Open view north across farmland towards the Site. The view has a predominantly rural character. Residential development on the settlement edge beyond the Site is visible in this view. Trees and woodland largely screen views to the Site. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way in a non-designated landscape.

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Baseline Assessment: Visual Receptor Description
9	Near distance view north and west from Public Footpath COW 1780. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21519 21710 Altitude: 16 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 250 m	Medium Medium	This view demonstrates that for much of its length Public Footpath COW 1780 is bordered by a tall managed hedge which largely prevents views north towards Cowfold and the Site. Visual Receptor: Users of Public Right of Way in a non-designated landscape.
10	Near distance view north from Public Footpath COW1780. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21359 21712 Altitude: 16 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 220 m	Medium Medium	Open view north across farmland towards the Site. The view has a predominantly rural character. Residential development on the settlement edge is screened in this view. Trees and woodland screen views to the Site. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way in a non-designated landscape.
11	Near distance view north from Public Footpath COW 1778. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21316 21607 Altitude: 16 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 340 m	Medium Medium	Open view north across farmland towards the Site. The view has a strong rural character. Residential development on the settlement edge is screened in this view. Trees and woodland screen views to the Site. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way in a non-designated landscape.
12	Middle distance view north from Public Footpath COW 1778. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21322 21424 Altitude: 17 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 520 m	Medium Medium	Open view north across farmland towards the Site. The view has a strong rural character. Residential development on the settlement edge is screened in this view. Trees and woodland screen views to the Site. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way in a non-designated landscape.
13	Near distance view north east from Public Footpath COW1778. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21226 21757 Altitude: 16 m AOD Distance to Site boundary 240 m	Medium Medium	View north across paddocks towards the settlement edge and the Site. The view includes building son the settlement edge and the paddocks have more of a domestic character. Residential development on the settlement edge is visible in this view. Trees and woodland screen views to the Site. Visual receptor: Users of Public Right of Way in a non-designated landscape.

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Baseline Assessment: Visual Receptor Description
14	Near distance view north along Henfield Road towards the settlement edge. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21198 21947 Altitude: 15 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 116 m	Medium Low	View north towards the settlement edge. The entrance to the Site is just visible in this view seen in the context of residential and commercial development on Henfield Road. Visual receptor: Users of busy 'A' Road in a semi rural location.
15	Near distance view south from Acorn Avenue OS Grid Ref: TQ 21421 22273 Altitude: 25 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 200 m	Low Low	View south towards the Site from Acorn Avenue. Typical view of local residential street. Houses prevent views towards the Site. Visual receptor: Residents and road users on residential street.
16	Near distance view south west from small open space south of Acorn Avenue OS Grid Ref: TQ 21546 22172 Altitude: 22 m AOD Distance to Site boundary: 125 m	Low Medium	Enclosed view south from a small public open space associated with Acorn Avenue. Trees and scrub restrict views towards the Site. Visual receptor: Users of public open space.

5.1 Visual Baseline Assessment Summary

The baseline visual assessment demonstrates that the Site benefits from a high level of visual enclosure. There is dense mature vegetation cover on all boundaries with the exception of the western boundary which is bordered by residential properties on Henfield Road. Even near views from the lane and Public Footpath 1775 to the north are largely obscured by trees and scrub (see Viewpoints 4 and 5). There are more open views towards the settlement edge from the surrounding countryside to the south and east, but trees, woodlands and hedgerows limit views to the Site itself (see Viewpoints 6 to 13). Existing residential development on Acorn Avenue and Henfield Road is occasionally glimpsed in these views (see Viewpoint 8) but in the main these are views with a strong rural character. The Site is not visible in these views. Existing residential development and vegetation prevent views from the surrounding residential streets and the open space south of Acorn Avenue (see Viewpoints 1 to 3 and 14 to 16).

6.0 Proposed Residential Development

This is an outline application with all matters reserved except access. An Illustrative Layout has been provided to demonstrate how 40 dwellings could be accommodated on the Site, retaining the important landscape and biodiversity features (principally the mature oak trees and the boundary scrub) (see Figure 5). This layout incorporates an informal public open space in the north eastern part of the site and water attenuation features and open space in the lower southern areas of the Site. This area on the southern fringes would provide a strong landscape buffer between the residential areas and the Cowfold Stream Valley and offers the potential for landscape and biodiversity enhancements. Similarly the scrub belt between the two fields incorporating the mature oaks is retained, again offering the potential for landscape and biodiversity enhancements. The layout shows an indicative street scene incorporating street trees, verges and planting. The emphasis of any future planting strategy would be to provide a framework of native tree and shrub planting with areas of meadow and amenity grass in the informal open spaces with a combination of native and ornamental species in the amenity/streetscape areas within the residential development.

The proposed landscape infrastructure would seek to:

- Retain and enhance boundary vegetation where necessary with a mix of native trees and scrub creating landscape buffers and wildlife corridors;
- Open spaces to be of a semi natural character encouraging natural play and quiet recreation;
- Amenity landscape planting to combine street tree and underplanting of a mix of low growing native and ornamental shrubs throughout the proposed residential area;
- Sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) with a swale/water attenuation features on the southern boundary to also provide wetland habitat.

7.0 Landscape Character Impact Assessment

This section of the LVA assesses the anticipated impacts and effects of the proposed development against the landscape receptors described in the LVA Methodology. The overall assessment of effects is in accordance with Table 3 of the LVA Methodology.

7.1 Landscape Character Areas

7.1.1 *NCA 121 Low Weald*

In terms of geographical extents the proposals would only affect a very small part of the NCA. The baseline assessment concludes that the existing character, use and appearance of the Site does not strongly reflect key characteristics of the NCA. Residential development would enable the retention of the important mature trees and boundary features which most strongly reflect the character of the wider National Landscape.

The overall magnitude of change is assessed as Very Low.
Significance of Landscape Effect: Negligible.

7.1.2 *Landscape Character Area LW10 Eastern Low Weald*

In terms of geographical extents the proposals would only affect a relatively small part of LW 10, with very localised effects on a location on the settlement edge. The baseline assessment concludes that the existing character, use and appearance of the Site does not strongly reflect key characteristics of the LCA. Residential development would enable the retention of the important boundary features and mature oak trees which most strongly reflect the character of the LCA.

The overall magnitude of change is assessed as Very Low.
Significance of Landscape Effect: Negligible.

7.1.3 *Landscape Character Area J3 Cowfold and Shermanbury Farmlands*

In terms of geographical extents the proposals would only affect a relatively small part of LW 10, with very localised effects on a location on the settlement edge. The baseline assessment concludes that the existing character, use and appearance of the Site does not strongly reflect key characteristics of the LCA. Residential development would enable the retention of the important boundary features and mature oak trees which most strongly reflect the character of the LCA.

The overall magnitude of change is assessed as Very Low
Significance of Landscape Effect: Negligible.

7.2 Site Features

7.2.1 Landscape pattern; trees and hedgerows, boundaries

The proposed development would be set within the existing site features and landscape pattern. There would be limited removal of scrub to create the links between the two land parcels but the Illustrative Layout demonstrates that important landscape features would be protected and retained. Landscape proposals should strengthen the landscape pattern with the enhancement of the retained scrub and trees and boundary woodland edges.

The overall magnitude of change is assessed as Very Low.
Significance of Landscape Effect: Negligible.

7.2.2 Cultural and historical associations

There are no known cultural and historical associations linked to the Site and there are no neighbouring features which would be affected by the proposals.

The overall magnitude of change is assessed as Neutral.
Significance of Landscape Effect: Neutral.

7.2.3 Ecology, land management, land use and land cover

The majority of the Site comprises the open grassland of low ecological value. Residential development as proposed would result in the loss of these two small paddocks although over time it is considered that the landscape setting to the residential development would contribute to the character of the views, biodiversity and integrate the development into the local landscape. An initial minor adverse effect is concluded but as the landscape setting to the development matures this would reduce to negligible.

The overall magnitude of change is assessed as Low.
Significance of Landscape Effect: Minor adverse.

7.3 Landscape Character: Overview of Impacts and Effects

This assessment concludes that the existing Site does not strongly reflect key characteristics of the wider countryside as described in the published Landscape Character Assessments. The character and appearance of the Site is also influenced by neighbouring residential developments.

The proposed development would change the land use of the Site from the existing grazing paddocks to residential with associated landscape infrastructure. The Feasibility Site Layout demonstrates how the key landscape features of the Site, principally the mature trees and boundary vegetation, could be retained and incorporated in the development of the Site.

This assessment concludes that the overall effects on landscape character would be predominantly negligible with a short term minor adverse effect as a consequence of the change of use from grazing land to residential. There is potential to enhance the retained landscape features through further planting and management and to create an important local amenity with areas of informal open space within the surrounding landscape infrastructure to the development.

8.0 Visual Impact Assessment

Table 3 below provides an assessment of the visual impact of the proposed development from the representative viewpoints described in the baseline visual assessment in Section 5.

Table 3: Visual Impact Assessment

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Description and Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects Year 1	Visual Effects Year 10
1	Near view north along Henfield Road towards the Site access.	Low Low	There would be a minor change to the character and appearance of this view as a result of the creation of the Site access. Magnitude of Change: Low	Minor adverse	Negligible
2	Near view east from Henfield Road at the access point to the Site.	Low Low	There would be a minor change to the character and appearance of this view as a result of the creation of the Site access. Magnitude of Change: Low	Minor adverse	Negligible
3	Near view south along Henfield Road towards the Site access from opposite the entrance to South Leas.	Low Low	There would be a minor change to the character and appearance of this view as a result of the creation of the Site access. Magnitude of Change: Low	Minor adverse	Negligible
4	Near view east along the lane to the north of the Site which also forms the alignment of Public Footpath COW 1775.	Low Low	The proposed residential development may be glimpsed through the vegetation cover in winter, but would be largely screened in views from the lane and Public Footpath COW 1775. Magnitude of Change: Very Low	Negligible	Negligible

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Description and Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects Year 1	Visual Effects Year 10
5	Near view west along the lane to the north of the Site which also forms the alignment of Public Footpath COW 1775.	Low Low	The proposed residential development may be glimpsed through the vegetation cover in winter, but would be largely screened in views from the lane and Public Footpath COW 1775. Magnitude of Change: Very Low	Negligible	Negligible
6	Near view west towards the Site from Public Footpath COW 1777 in the vicinity of Eastlands Farm.	Medium Medium	The proposed development would not be visible in this view. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
7	Near distance view north west from the junction between Public Footpaths COW 1777 and COW1780.	Medium Medium	The proposed development would not be visible in this view. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
8	Near distance view north from Public Footpath COW1780.	Medium Medium	It is anticipated that the roofscape and upper elements of the development would be partially visible in this view, seen above the existing vegetation and in the context of the existing residential development on the settlement edge. Magnitude of Change: Low	Minor adverse	Negligible
9	Near distance view north and west from Public Footpath COW 1780.	Medium Medium	There would be very occasional glimpsed views through the hedgeline towards the proposed development and settlement edge. As in Viewpoint 8 the proposed development would always be perceived in the context of the existing settlement edge. Magnitude of Change: Very Low	Negligible	Neutral
10	Near distance view north from Public Footpath COW1780.	Medium Medium	The proposed development would not be visible in this view. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

Viewpoint	Location	Value Sensitivity	Description and Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects Year 1	Visual Effects Year 10
11	Near distance view north from Public Footpath COW 1778.	Medium Medium	The proposed development would not be visible in this view. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
12	Middle distance view north from Public Footpath COW 1778.	Medium Medium	The proposed development would not be visible in this view. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
13	Near distance view north east from Public Footpath COW1778. OS Grid Ref: TQ 21226 21757	Medium Medium	The proposed development would not be visible in this view. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
14	Near distance view north along Henfield Road towards the settlement edge.	Medium Low	The proposed development would not be visible in this view. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
15	Near distance view south from Acorn Avenue	Low Low	The proposed development would not be visible in this view. Magnitude of Change: Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
16	Near distance view south from small open space south of Acorn Avenue	Low Medium	There could be glimpsed views of the proposed development through the vegetation cover in winter. Magnitude of Change: Very Low	Negligible	Negligible

8.1 Visual Amenity: Overview of Impacts and Effects

Overall the Site benefits from a very high level of visual enclosure. There is only one short section of Footpath COW 1780 to the south from which it is anticipated glimpsed views of the development could be gained, but in all of these views the proposed development would be substantially screened by existing vegetation and would be seen in the context of existing residential development on the settlement edge, so there would be very limited change to the character and appearance of the existing views.

There would be a change to the views from the rear of the neighbouring properties on Henfield Road.

9.0 Conclusions

This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) describes the anticipated impacts and effects on landscape character and visual amenity associated with the proposed residential development on the land to the east of Henfield Road, Cowfold.

This LVA concludes that the Site reflects limited key characteristics described in the published NCA for the Low Weald and the local LCAs describing the Eastern Low Weald (LW 10) and the Cowfold and Shermanbury Farmlands (J3) as described in the West Sussex and Horsham Landscape Character Assessments. The Site reflects the character of small irregular fields, enclosed by mature vegetation within a gently undulating landscape. The character of the Site is, however, also influenced by neighbouring residential development on Henfield Road and South Leas, giving more of a settlement edge character as opposed to a rural character.

The most important features from a landscape, ecological and arboricultural perspective are the boundary hedges and trees, in particular the mature oaks in the central parts of the Site. The Illustrative Layout demonstrates how these could be retained within a residential development of 40 dwellings, maintaining the strong sense of enclosure to the Site. There would be potential to enhance and extend these features incorporating areas of informal open space and water attenuation, with a strong environmental buffer on the southern site boundary to the Cowfold Stream.

This assessment concludes that there would be predominantly negligible localised effects on landscape character as a result of the change in use from the existing field to residential development, with effects on all receptors reducing to negligible or potentially beneficial over time as the landscape setting to the development matures. The important boundary features and the woodland in the south western parts of the Site would be largely retained and enhanced through further planting and management, creating a strong landscape setting to the development.

With regard to visual amenity, the Site benefits from a high level of visual enclosure. Potential views are restricted to glimpsed or partial near views through boundary vegetation from a short section of the lane and Footpath COW1775 to the north and from a short section of Footpath COW 1780 to the south. In all cases these would be glimpsed or partial views through hedge and tree cover at worst and it is anticipated that the Site would be almost entirely screened in summer months.

There would be no effects on the setting to the High Weald National Landscape as a consequence of the proposed development.

Land to the east of Henfield Road, Cowfold
Landscape and Visual Appraisal
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