

STOPHAM ROAD, PULBOROUGH

LANDSCAPE TECHNICAL NOTE

Prepared on behalf of

Stonewater

STW1725ltn



Placing development well

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Landscape Technical Note	
Project:	Stopham Road, Pulborough
Status:	Final
Date:	January 2026
Author:	JPF
File Reference	STW1725ltn
Revision	-

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1.1 This Landscape Technical Note has been prepared to support a Section 73 application relating to the approved affordable housing scheme at Stopham Road, Pulborough. The application seeks to vary the timing of conditions and associated planning obligations so that the residential element of the scheme may be occupied ahead of the delivery of the approved station car park. The car park remains part of the consented development but currently has no confirmed delivery date due to a lack of operational demand.

1.1.2 A key concern cited in the original officer recommendation for refusal of DC/16/0728 related to alleged harm to rural character and to the setting of the South Downs National Park (SDNP). This note reassesses those issues in light of:

- The established landscape baseline
- The approved residential scheme
- The continued inclusion of the station car park within the proposals
- The current planning context, dealt with elsewhere in submissions

1.1.3 The assessment concludes that:

- The residential site forms part of a semi-urban settlement edge rather than an intact rural landscape.
- The car park land lies within the defined built-up area and therefore does not introduce development into open countryside.
- Intervisibility with the SDNP is extremely limited, and the site does not contribute to the SDNP's special qualities.
- The combined landscape and visual effects of the residential scheme and the car park remain modest and contained.
- Effects on rural character are minor and localised.
- Effects on the setting of the SDNP are negligible.

1.1.4 On this basis, the landscape and visual effects of the proposals do not amount to significant harm. In the context of the current planning balance — particularly the absence of a five-year housing land supply — the benefits of the scheme continue to outweigh the identified harms

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This Landscape Technical Note has been prepared to accompany Stonewater's Section 73 application relating to the approved affordable housing scheme at Allotment Gardens, Stopham Road, Pulborough.
- 2.1.2 The application seeks to vary the timing of conditions and planning obligations so that the residential dwellings may be occupied prior to the delivery of the approved station car park. The car park remains part of the consented development but does not currently have a confirmed delivery date due to a lack of operational demand.
- 2.1.3 This note addresses landscape and visual matters relevant to the Section 73 application, with particular reference to the concerns raised in the original officer recommendation for DC/16/0728 regarding rural character and the setting of the South Downs National Park (SDNP).
- 2.1.4 The scheme has been amended through subsequent permissions (DC/21/1535 and DC/22/0661), and a further s106 variation to secure 100% affordable housing has received a resolution to grant. The previous permission has been implemented and therefore remains extant. The approved development and its associated landscape effects can proceed irrespective of this Section 73 variation, and the assessment should be understood in that context.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1.1 This technical note reviews the landscape and visual context of the site and its relationship with the SDNP, considers the baseline and subsequent amendments and evaluates whether the removal of the station car park and associated access works alter the landscape effects considered in previous application.
- 3.1.2 This is not a landscape and visual appraisal; rather, it is a targeted technical note addressing a specific concern. It considers the degree of change to rural character using GLVIA3-aligned terminology and provides professional judgement on whether the scheme gives rise to material harm to the setting of the SDNP or the wider rural landscape.

4.0 Baseline Landscape Context

Effects on Landscape

4.1.1 The approved development introduces residential built form on land already influenced by settlement-edge characteristics. The car park introduces hard surfacing and associated infrastructure, but this is located within the built-up area and therefore does not extend development into open countryside.

4.1.2 The magnitude of change is:

- Residential site: low, due to its transitional baseline character and containment.
- Car park site: very low, due to its location within the built-up area and its association with existing transport infrastructure.

4.1.3 Overall, effects on rural character are minor and localised

Relationship with the South Downs National Park

4.1.4 The SDNP lies to the south and west, with its closest point approximately 60 metres from the southern boundary of the residential site.

4.1.5 Key observations:

- The site does not form part of the SDNP's landscape character or contribute to its special qualities.
- Intervisibility is extremely limited due to intervening vegetation, topography, and built form.
- The site does not feature in any recognised view corridor or approach to the SDNP.
- The car park land, being within the built-up area, has no functional or perceptual relationship with the SDNP.

4.1.6 The site does not contribute to tranquillity, remoteness, scenic quality, or the settlement pattern that underpin the SDNP's designation.

Landscape Character

4.1.7 At county and district level, the area is characterised by:

- Low ridges and shallow valleys
- Mixed farmland
- Small to medium-sized fields with variable hedgerow structure
- Localised horticultural and small-scale industrial uses
- Settlement edges that already exert a perceptual influence

4.1.8 The residential site's semi-urban characteristics reduce its susceptibility to change. The car park site, being within the built-up area, has very low susceptibility to development of this nature.

5.0 Visual Baseline and Visibility

- 5.1.1 A review of the site's visual envelope confirms that visibility is highly localised, largely confined to receptors along Stopham Road and the immediate vicinity of the railway.
- 5.1.2 The railway embankment, existing vegetation, and surrounding built form substantively restrict medium- and long-distance views.
- 5.1.3 The site does not feature in any key views associated with the SDNP.
- 5.1.4 This establishes a baseline in which the site has limited visual influence beyond its immediate surroundings.

6.0 Consideration of Effects

Effects on Landscape Character

6.1.1 The approved development introduces residential built form on land already influenced by settlement-edge characteristics. The car park introduces hard surfacing and associated infrastructure, but this is located within the built-up area and therefore does not extend development into open countryside.

6.1.2 The magnitude of change is:

- Residential site: low, due to its transitional baseline character and containment.
- Car park site: very low, due to its location within the built-up area and its association with existing transport infrastructure.

6.1.3 Overall, effects on rural character are minor and localised.

Effects on the Setting of the South Downs National Park

6.1.4 Given the extremely limited intervisibility with the SDNP, the absence of any contribution to the SDNP's special qualities, the containment of both the residential and car park sites, the built-up area baseline context of the car park the effect on the SDNP's setting is assessed as negligible

7.0 Response to Previous Landscape Consultation Comments

7.1.1 The 2016 officer recommendation cited concerns relating to urbanisation, loss of rural character, and harm to the setting of the South Downs National Park, including reference to external lighting. These matters are addressed below in light of the established baseline and the approved, implemented scheme.

7.1.2 Previous consultee responses to application DC/16/0728 raised concerns regarding alleged harm to rural character and to the setting of the SDNP. These points have been reviewed in light of the established baseline, the approved scheme, and the continued inclusion of the station car park within the consented development. The key matters are addressed in this section.

Alleged encroachment into open countryside

7.1.3 Consultees previously suggested that the development would extend built form into open countryside. This is not supported by the current baseline:

7.1.4 The residential site occupies land with clear settlement-edge characteristics, influenced by adjacent housing, the railway, and localised urbanising features.

7.1.5 The car park land lies within the defined built-up area boundary and therefore cannot reasonably be described as countryside.

7.1.6 No part of the proposals introduces development into an intact rural landscape.

7.1.7 On this basis, the assertion of countryside encroachment is not supported by the evidence.

Alleged harm to rural character

7.1.8 Earlier comments referred to urbanising effects and loss of rural character. The updated assessment confirms that the residential site already exhibits a transitional, semi-urban character, reducing its susceptibility to change.

7.1.9 The car park site exhibits minimal susceptibility to change, as it is both physically and perceptually integrated with established transport infrastructure.

7.1.10 The magnitude of change arising from both elements is low to very low, resulting in limited, localised effects that do not materially alter the wider landscape character.

7.1.11 The previously alleged level of harm is therefore overstated.

Alleged harm to the setting of the South Downs National Park

7.1.12 Consultees raised concerns regarding effects on the SDNP's setting. A review of the baseline and the approved scheme demonstrates that:

- Intervisibility with the SDNP is extremely limited, restricted by topography, vegetation, and built form.
- The site does not contribute to any recognised view, approach, or experiential quality associated with the SDNP.
- The site does not form part of the landscape character areas or special qualities that underpin the SDNP designation.

- The car park land, being within the built-up area, has no functional or perceptual relationship with the SDNP.

7.1.13 Accordingly, effects on the SDNP's setting are properly assessed as negligible.

Summary

7.1.14 The previous consultee concerns were based on an interpretation of the baseline that is not supported by the established evidence or by the approved scheme. When assessed against the current context, the proposals give rise to no significant landscape or visual harm, and the earlier concerns do not provide a defensible basis for resisting the Section 73 application.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1.1 The landscape and visual considerations relevant to this Section 73 application point toward a clear conclusion. The residential site forms part of a semi-urban settlement edge, and the car park site lies within the built-up area. Neither site functions as an intact rural landscape, and both are visually and physically contained.
- 8.1.2 The combined landscape and visual effects of the proposals remain modest and contained, with minor and localised effects on rural character and negligible effects on the setting of the South Downs National Park.
- 8.1.3 The approved development gives rise to minor, localised landscape and visual effects. The relationship with the SDNP is extremely limited, and effects on its setting are negligible.
- 8.1.4 While the car park currently lacks a confirmed delivery date, it remains part of the approved development and has been assessed accordingly. Its landscape and visual effects are modest and do not materially alter the overall conclusions.
- 8.1.5 In the context of the current planning balance — particularly the absence of a five-year housing land supply — the modest harms identified are clearly outweighed by the benefits of delivering 100% affordable housing and making efficient use of a sustainable, well-contained site.
- 8.1.6 The previous consultee concerns were based on an interpretation of the baseline that is not supported by the established evidence or by the approved scheme. When assessed against the current context, the proposals give rise to no significant landscape or visual harm.
- 8.1.7 There is no defensible landscape basis on which to resist the Section 73 application.



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