



**LISS FOREST NURSERY, GREATHAM**

**Landscape and Visual Appraisal**

**by**

**Hankinson Duckett Associates**

**for**

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Instructions**

1.1.1 Hankinson Duckett Associates (HDA) was appointed by Cove Construction Ltd to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) to support a full planning application to The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) at on approximately 2.4ha of land at Liss Forest Nursery, Petersfield Road, Greatham, here after referred to as ‘the site’ (*Plan HDA 1*). The proposed development includes 37 dwellings, garages, planting and open space, along with alterations to the existing access onto Petersfield Road, and internal vehicle access. This report assesses the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development as illustrated on the Site Layout in Appendix A, and is an update to the LVA prepared in 2018 for the previous refused application SDNP/18/06111/FUL on the same site.

## **1.2 Methodology**

1.2.1 National landscape guidance uses landscape character as a basis for policy. Natural England has established the current methodology for the character-based approach to landscape assessment (*Ref 1*). This provides a foundation, with adaptation, for use in project-specific landscape assessment. It describes the application of landscape character assessment at different scales: the national/regional scale, local authority scale and local scale. The third edition of the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (*Ref 2*) sets out landscape assessment methodology, which provides the basis for use in project-specific landscape assessment.

1.2.2 The approach to this Landscape and Visual Appraisal is based upon the latest guidance, and upon HDA's extensive practical experience of assessment work. HDA's Methodology for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is set out within Appendix B of this report. An original site survey was carried out in December 2017, which allowed an appreciation of the site and surrounding area during winter with limited leaf cover. A further site survey was carried out in June 2021 which provided an update to the original 2017 survey, and field assessment during summer when leaf cover was approaching its fullest extent.

# **2 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

## **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 The landscape and visual appraisal has regard to the requirements of the development planning process. The planning framework assists in the identification of the issues related to landscape, particularly in relation to landscape designation and policy objectives.

## **2.2 National Planning Policy Framework**

2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (*Ref 3*) sets out the government's planning policy. Relevant paragraphs from the Framework are identified on the following pages.

### Achieving Sustainable Development

2.2.2 Paragraph 8 of the Framework sets out how sustainable development can be achieved, through three overarching objectives:

- a) Economic;
- b) Social; and
- c) Environmental.

2.2.3 The environmental objective, c), seeks *'to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment'*. Paragraph 10 states that *'at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**'*.

### Rights of Way

2.2.4 Paragraph 98 concerns the protection of rights of way and access. Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, *'including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.'*

### Making Effective Use of Land

2.2.5 Section 11 promotes the effective use of land. Paragraph 118 states that:

*Planning policies and decisions should:*

- a) *encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;*
- b) *recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;*
- c) *give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;*
- d) *promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and*
- e) *support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.*

### Achieving Well-Designed Places

2.2.6 Section 12 concerns the achievement of well-designed places. 'The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve' (Paragraph 124). Paragraph 127 states that:

*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);*
- d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

### Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

2.2.7 Section 15 of the Framework relates to 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment'. The means by which this can be achieved are set out within Paragraph 170 and include:

*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;*
- c) *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

## National Park

2.2.8 The site is located within the South Downs National Park. Paragraph 172 of the Framework states that:

*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*

- a) *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) *the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

2.2.9 Section 16 addresses the protection and enjoyment of heritage assets including Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings. Potential effects on the landscape setting to a heritage asset are also addressed. Paragraph 184 states that:

*Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.*

## **2.3 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

2.3.1 The NPPG (Ref 4) supports and informs the Framework and sets out further specific planning guidance. Paragraph 041 from the 'Natural Environment' section (reference ID: 8.041-20190721) is of relevance to this appraisal, as it addresses how development should be approached within National Parks.

## **2.4 Local Policy**

2.4.1 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is the local planning authority for the area. Local policy is contained within the 2014-33 South Downs Local Plan, adopted in July 2019 (Ref 5). The Liss Forest Nursery site is allocated for housing in the South Downs Local Plan (site reference SD71).

2.4.2 Below are Local Plan policies considered to be of particular relevance to this assessment:

#### 2.4.3 Allocation Policy SD71: Land at Petersfield Road, Greatham

- '1. Land at Petersfield Road, Greatham is allocated for the development of 35 to 40 residential dwellings (Class C3 Use) and associated open space. Development for a Class A1 (Shop) unit with a net sales floorspace up to a maximum of 280m<sup>2</sup> with suitable vehicular parking for customers will also be permitted. Planning permission will not be granted for any other uses. Detailed proposals that meet the following site specific development requirements will be permitted:*
- 2. The site specific development requirements are:*

  - a) Development proposals should provide clear transition in form and layout with a reduced build intensity from Petersfield Road east towards the open countryside;*
  - b) Development proposals should conserve and enhance the setting of local heritage assets including the Greatham Conservation Area and Local Listed Buildings and use local building materials to reinforce local distinctiveness (which may include sandstones);*
  - c) Provide suitable mitigation towards the Wealden Heaths SPA, which should be informed by a Project-level HRA;*
  - d) Provide suitable mitigation measures to avoid increases in localised surface water flooding;*
  - e) Demonstrate no significant harm to be caused to groundwater resources;*
  - f) Retain the existing vehicular access and, where identified as necessary to provide safe access and egress, improvements to both the vehicular access and to off-site highways;*
  - g) Provide a publicly accessible off-road pedestrian route from Petersfield Road to the existing PRow to the east of the allocation site;*
  - h) Provision of a significant area of public open space within the site which provides for a transition between the development and the countryside; and*
  - i) Retain and enhance existing mature trees and site boundaries and new site boundaries appropriate to the local landscape.*
- 3. In order for the development to have an overall positive impact on the ability of the natural environment to contribute to ecosystem services, development proposals must address the following:*

  - a) Protect and enhance trees within the site where possible, and where trees are lost, provide at least the equivalent in new tree planting on site. Trees on the site boundary should be retained and new tree planting should be undertaken; and*
  - b) New planting should be suitable for pollinating species.'*

#### 2.4.4 Strategic Policy SD4: Landscape Character

- '1. Development proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and enhance landscape character by demonstrating that:*

  - a) They are informed by landscape character, reflecting the context and type of landscape in which the development is located;*

- b) *The design, layout and scale of proposals conserve and enhance existing landscape and seascape character features which contribute to the distinctive character, pattern and evolution of the landscape;*
- c) *They will safeguard the experiential and amenity qualities of the landscape; and*
- d) *Where planting is considered appropriate, it is consistent with local character, enhances biodiversity, contributes to the delivery of GI and uses native species, unless there are appropriate and justified reasons to select non-native species.'*

2.4.5 Strategic Policy SD5: Design

*'Development proposals will only be permitted where they adopt a landscape-led approach and respect the local character, through sensitive and high-quality design that makes a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the area...'*

2.4.6 Strategic Policy SD6: Safeguarding Views

*'Development proposals will only be permitted where they preserve the visual integrity, identity and scenic quality of the National Park, in particular by conserving and enhancing key views and views of key landmarks within the National Park...'*

2.4.7 Strategic Policy SD7: Relative Tranquillity

*'Development proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and enhance relative tranquillity...'*

2.4.8 Strategic Policy SD45: Green Infrastructure

*1. Development proposals will be permitted where they demonstrate that they:*

- a) *Maintain or enhance GI assets, GI links and the overall GI network; and*
- b) *Provide new GI, or improvements to existing green assets and green linkages, which are integrated into the development design, that meets the needs of communities both within and beyond the site's boundaries...'*

**3 SITE CONTEXT**

**3.1 Location (Plan HDA 1)**

3.1.1 The village of Greatham is located to the west of the A3, a main arterial route between London and the South Coast; the larger settlement of Liss lies around 4km to the south of the village; and small hamlets and farmsteads are located throughout the surrounding countryside.

3.1.2 Greatham has established along Petersfield Road and Longmoor Road. Petersfield Road is the main route through the village, with Longmoor Road a spur to the north-east. Amenities within Greatham include the village pub (Greatham Inn) to the north and the Village Hall, Primary School and Church to the south.

3.1.3 The commercial nursery site lies within the southern half of the village and is contained by settlement on three sides. Petersfield Road forms the site's north-western boundary; the north-eastern boundary abuts the rear gardens of properties at Bakers Field; the south-eastern boundary abuts a Public Right of Way (footpath G10) and an arable field; and the south-western boundary abuts the village primary school. On the opposite side of Petersfield Road is the village hall, play area and recreation ground; two semi-detached houses (1 and 2 Hill View); a small paddock, alongside which is the eastern end of public footpath G9; and Deal Farm which comprises the Grade II listed farmhouse and a number of outbuildings.

### **3.2 Geology**

3.2.1 The site is underlain by sandstone geology of the Folkestone Formation, on the edge of the Lower Greensand group of sedimentary bedrock, and to the north of the chalk which is more typically associated with the South Downs.

### **3.3 Landform and Drainage (Plan HDA 2)**

3.3.1 Greatham village lies on the lower valley sides and valley floor of the River Rother. A tributary stream to the Rother and its associated floodplain creates a distinct break between the southern and northern parts of the village. The southern area sits over a spur of relatively flat, low-lying land between the Rother and the tributary stream. The village also extends northwards on rising ground north of the stream.

3.3.2 There is a distinct rise in level from Petersfield Road up to the site's north-western boundary, which is made up of a steep grassy bank (outside of the site boundary). The level change ranges from one to three metres, and this level difference creates a sense of separation between the site and its frontage with the main road. At the southern end of the boundary, the road meets the existing site access at around 80m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

3.3.3 Landform across the site itself is relatively subtle with a general fall from west to east from a high point of 82m AOD to a low point of 76m AOD. The site comprises three terraced platforms almost perpendicular to the boundary with Petersfield Road. There is a level change of approximately half a metre between the northernmost platform and adjacent rear gardens at Bakers Field.

### **3.4 Local Land Use and Vegetation (Plan HDA 1)**

3.4.1 Surrounding land-uses are predominantly woodland and agriculture, with the majority of fields in arable use. Field boundaries include a mixture of native hedgerows, fence lines and occasional woodland copses.

3.4.2 Adjoining the site to the north-east is an area of semi-detached two storey houses and single storey bungalows located along Bakers Field. To the north-west of the site, on the opposite side of Petersfield Road, land-uses comprise the recreation ground, three dwellings within large plots (1 and 2 Hill View and Deal Farmhouse) and a paddock. Adjacent to the south-west of the site is Greatham Primary School, and opposite the school on the other side of Petersfield Road (from north to south) are two early 20<sup>th</sup> century semi-detached houses, a modern development of four detached, a semi-detached house and Rooks' Farm. The south-eastern edge of the site abuts the countryside, consisting of a large arable field which extends eastwards towards a woodland plantation and the A3 trunk road.

3.4.3 Land use within the site itself includes the nursery owner's bungalow and garden, outbuildings, greenhouses, polytunnels, storage areas and hard standing. There is relatively continuous vegetation along the site boundaries including hedgerow, hedgerow trees and specimen trees in generally good condition.

3.4.4 The southern part of the site comprises the main site access and access track, which runs parallel to the south-western boundary. To the north of the track is the bungalow, two small outbuildings and four greenhouses. The garden is planted with shrubs and trees and bound by a high coniferous hedge on three sides. To the south of the track are two greenhouses and an outbuilding. The central part of the site comprises six large greenhouses. To the north, the site comprises open storage areas and polytunnels. Tarmac, concrete and paved paths run between the greenhouses, polytunnels and storage areas. The bungalow and outbuildings are 5-6m in height to ridge level and the greenhouses 3-4m in height.

3.4.5 In summary, the site's boundary features are as follows:

- The site's boundary with Petersfield Road comprises a clipped 1m high native hedgerow together with specimen trees, including three small Oak trees;
- The boundary with Bakers Field estate is a relatively continuous 2-4m high hedge and hedgerow trees;
- The outer south-eastern boundary comprises a 3m hedge and trees; and
- The site's boundary with the school is marked by mature Oaks, the majority of which are categorised as A (trees of high quality) in the Tree Report which accompanies this application (*Ref 6*). There is a break in the hedgerow and planting at the site's southernmost corner.

### **3.5 Settlement Pattern and Character**

3.5.1 The historic core of Greatham consists of a small group of mainly listed buildings, either side of Petersfield Road and at the junctions with Church Lane, Forest Road and the B3006, which form the Conservation Area to the south of the site. Over time, Greatham has grown mainly northwards on slopes rising gently from a tributary of the River Rother, and now forms a primarily linear settlement along Petersfield Road and Longmoor Road.

However, there are also a number of areas where development has expanded the village beyond the linear built form along the two main roads, with areas of housing located off side roads from Petersfield Road and Longmoor Road. To the north-east of the site, along Bakers Field, there is a small, planned estate of twenty-two semi-detached dwellings, including a number of bungalows, built in the post-war period as council housing. Further north there is a later 20th century planned estate along Todmore, and an area of earlier housing to the south of Benhams Lane at the northern end of the Greatham. At the eastern extent of the village is a row of housing along Wolfmere Lane, parallel to Longmoor Road.

3.5.2 Buildings within the Conservation Area include brick and ironstone elevations, steeply pitched roofs and tall chimneys. More recent development outside the Conservation Area, which constitutes the majority of the village, reflects the historic vernacular to varying degrees, but includes a variety of materials, roof styles, set backs from roads and orientations. Housing is generally in good condition, with a mixture of types and styles, including detached and semi-detached homes, mobile homes (The Oaks), compact groups of mainly detached houses with staggered frontages, and short terraces. There are occasional individual dwellings with large gardens set back from the road, such as opposite the site, but the majority of the village has a high density with dwellings located in close proximity to each other

3.5.3 Boundaries are primarily formed by brick walls and hedges, along with close-board panel fencing, timber post and rail, and occasional picket fencing. Surrounding tree cover, including mature trees along the settlement edge and nearby woodland, and occasional mature trees along roads and within areas of housing, help enclose the village and create a sense of intimacy, particularly during the summer months.

### 3.6 Designations (*Plan HDA 1*)

- The site and Greatham sit within the South Downs National Park designated to: Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public. When national parks carry out these purposes, they also have a duty to: Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within national parks.
- Tree Preservation Order (EH948 – 2014) covers five of the Oak trees on the south-western boundary with the school.
- Around 150m south-west of the nearest site boundary is Greatham Conservation Area designated for special architectural and historic interest. There are nine Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area, including the Grade II Listed Rooks' Farmhouse which marks the northern boundary of the Conservation Area.
- Opposite the site, on Petersfield Road, Deal Farmhouse is Grade II Listed.
- There are two public rights of way within close proximity to the site. Public footpath G10 runs along the site's south-eastern boundary, north through Bakers Field to Petersfield Road; and south through the adjacent arable field to Forest Road, which leads back into Greatham. Opposite the site, public footpath G9 extends north-west from Petersfield Road into the countryside, connecting to the wider network of rural

public rights of way.

- Around 500m south-east of the site boundary is the Shipwrights' Way Long Distance Path, which links villages and towns in east Hampshire. The 80km route starts at Alice Holt Forest (12km north of Greatham) and extends across the South Downs to Portsmouth.

## **4 LANDSCAPE BASELINE**

### **4.1 Landscape Character (Plan HDA 3)**

#### National Scale

4.1.1 Natural England divides the country into broad scale National Character Areas. The site sits within National Character Area 120: Wealden Greensands (Ref 7). The key characteristics of this Character Area are summarised below, with a full description included in Appendix C:

- *A long, narrow belt of Greensand, typified by scarp-and-dip slope topography, including outcrops of Upper Greensand, Gault Clay and Lower Greensand. The Greensand forms escarpments separated by a clay vale: the overall undulating and organic landform – particularly in the west – gives a sense of intimacy to the landscape. Leith Hill in Surrey is the highest point in south-east England.*
- *There are extensive areas of ancient mixed woodland of hazel, oak and birch, with some areas having been converted to sweet chestnut coppice in past centuries. These areas reflect the diverse geology, including the distinctive chalk grassland elements within the East Hampshire Hangers Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the wooded commons ('charts') of East Surrey and West Kent, and conifer plantations.*
- *Semi-natural habitats include: remnant lowland heathland, mostly concentrated in West Sussex, Hampshire and West Surrey; the wetlands associated with the River Arun in West Sussex; and unimproved acid grasslands found in commons, parklands, heathland and other areas of unimproved pasture.*
- *Fields are predominantly small or medium, in irregular patterns derived from medieval enclosure. Boundaries are formed by hedgerows and shaws, with character and species reflecting the underlying soils. On the clay, hedgerows are dense and species-rich, with occasional standard oaks. On more acidic soils they generally consist of hawthorn and blackthorn, also with occasional oak trees, and often trimmed low.*
- *Agricultural land comprises a mosaic of mixed farming, with pasture and arable land set within a wooded framework. There is a fruit-growing orchard belt in Kent and also around Selborne in Hampshire.*
- *The rural settlement pattern is a mixture of dispersed farmsteads, hamlets and some nucleated villages. Large houses set within extensive parks and gardens are found throughout the area.*
- *The local built vernacular includes the use of Greensand, ragstone and, in the west, malmstone, bargate stone, plus dark carrstone patterned in the mortar between stones ('galleting') in Surrey, as well as timber-framing and weatherboarding.*
- *There are a range of historic landscape features, including field monuments, old military defences, prehistoric tumuli, iron-age hill forts, Roman forts, the Royal Military Canal, small quarries and relics of the iron industry (including hammer ponds). Sunken lanes cut into the sandstone are a historic and characteristic feature, as are older deer parks and more recent 18th-century parklands.*
- *Surface water is an important feature across the Greensand, with many streams and rivers passing through the NCA: the Western Rother, Wey, Arun, Medway and the Great and East Stour.*

4.1.2 The National Character Area profiles for each area cover a large approximate area, and the extent to which their key characteristics are appropriate to this localised appraisal is limited. However, the site and local landscape exhibit some of the characteristics described above, including extensive woodland and agricultural land comprising mixed pastoral and arable farmland with an irregular field pattern with boundary hedgerows, set within the wooded framework. The key characteristics for Area 120 identifies a rural settlement pattern with a mixture of dispersed farmsteads, hamlets and some nucleated villages. While Greatham is primarily linear in character, it is a small village with a nucleated historic core, and settlement beyond its boundary is limited to small groups of dwellings and farmsteads. The key characteristics for the Character Area also identifies materials of the local built vernacular.

#### County Scale

4.1.3 The Hampshire County Integrated Character Assessment (Ref 8) divides the County into 62 Landscape Character Areas. The site is located within County Character Area 2M: East Hampshire Lowland Mosaic. Key characteristics of Character Area 2M: East Hampshire Lowland Mosaic are described below, with full descriptions found in Appendix D.

- *A low-lying clay vale.*
- *Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay soils, supports mixed farmland, well wooded in the northern half and relatively high proportion of improved grassland particularly in the south.*
- *Drained by numerous small watercourses, many of which are tributary streams of the Rother or Wey.*
- *Relatively lightly wooded landscape, composed of small blocks of ancient woodland, although increasing in extent from south to north.*
- *A landscape with many characteristics of medieval to 17th century origin, such as isolated farmsteads set in irregular and wavy boundary fields, asserts and deer parks.*
- *Rich variety of stone from adjoining Greensand outcrops reflected in the vernacular architecture of Liss and Petersfield.*
- *Presence of scattered pre-1810 hamlets in the southern half but relatively few settlements further the north.*
- *Relatively little 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion of settlements, apart from Petersfield and Liss and little redevelopment of historic cores.*
- *An accessible landscape with a good rights of way network, coupled with accessible woodland to the north, but a comparatively low destination draw for tourists.*
- *The A3 is a major landscape influence, in terms of noise and visual impact where it passes through the southern half of the character area,*
- *Varied tranquility levels across the area the northern half being defined as being more tranquil than the south.*
- *The visual horizons are short and wooded but intervisibility from higher adjoining character areas can be extensive.*
- *A mixture of woodland habitats (including wood pasture) contribute to the area's biodiversity.*

4.1.4 The site and its setting do not exhibit all of these key characteristics, however, the local topography drains to a tributary stream of the Rother and the underlying Greensand geology is reflected in the variety of stone found in the local vernacular. There is a mixture of woodland, which often contributes to shorten visual horizons. The description of an accessible landscape with a good rights of way network and accessible woodland is also applicable to the local area.

#### South Downs National Park

4.1.4 The South Downs National Park Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (*Ref 9*) identifies a number of Landscape Types and Character Areas across the National Park. The site lies within the Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vales Landscape Type (Type L), and specifically in the Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vales Character Area (Area L1).

4.1.5 The key characteristics of the Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vales (Area L1) are included below, with the majority having relevance to this assessment. Full characteristics for Area L1 are found in Appendix E:

- *Low lying clay and sandstone 'vale' containing numerous tributary streams and ponds. Contains the wooded course of the upper Rother valley which flows across the sandstone.*
- *Slowly permeable soils support mixed farmland, unimproved neutral grassland and woodland in which thick hedgerows and spreading hedgerow oaks create a lush, wooded character.*
- *Woodlands of ancient origin support characteristic ancient woodland plant species, as well as providing important habitat for a range of breeding bird species and invertebrates.*
- *Thick, high hedgerows, small blocks of scattered woodland and wooded field boundaries (rews) contribute to a sense of intimacy and enclosure.*
- *A medieval landscape of scattered hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin set within irregular fields, some of which retain the original lobate form of medieval assarts, surrounded by woodland.*
- *Medieval market town of Petersfield, a planned settlement, and the modern dormitory development of Liss, which originated as a medieval hamlet, are located on the sandstone, linked by the A3(T) and mainline railway.*
- *Distinctive building materials including sandstone extracted from the local Greensands, red brick formed from local clays, and clay tiles.*
- *Landscape parks (Burton and Bignor Parks) indicate the recreational use made by wealthy landowners of this heavy clay landscape.*
- *Views over this area from surrounding high land including the chalk downs and greensand hills.*

4.1.6 The area to the north of Petersfield Road is also Type L, but specifically the Kingsley/Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vales Character Area (Area L2). 200m from the site boundary to the east of the site lies the Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic Landscape Type (Type M), and more specifically the Woolmer Forest/Weaver's

Down Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic Character Area (Area M3). The key characteristics for Areas L2 and M3 are of limited relevance to the site, but are included in Appendix E and F for reference.

## **4.2 Site Character and Features**

4.2.1 Adjacent to the site, Petersfield Road has a verdant character with grass verges/embankments, hedgerow and trees, with housing, including Deal Farmhouse, 1 and 2 Hill View and 1-4 Fairlands, stepped back from the road where there is a change in level. South and east of the site, boundary hedgerow features have been removed to form a single, arable field.

4.2.2 The site's land-use as a commercial nursery, is distinct from the character of the wider area. Site levels have been modified to create platforms upon which modern outbuildings, greenhouses, polytunnels and storage areas sit. Extensive areas of hardstanding include generally well maintained paths and tracks and low retaining walls. There are no significant landscape features internally within the majority of the site, although the garden of the owner's bungalow is surrounded by a clipped coniferous hedge, and the garden and either side of the entrance drive are well stocked with well maintained ornamental shrubs, albeit mostly non-native.

4.2.3 Site structures and activity within the site prevent a sense of remoteness of tranquillity, but boundary hedgerow and trees, combined with planting around the owner's bungalow and along the site access, contribute to a sense of enclosure. Boundary hedges form a continuation of the local hedgerow network along field boundaries, helping to soften built form in views towards the site, and partially assimilate the site into the wider landscape. The mature Oak trees give the site's south-western boundary a densely wooded character.

## **4.3 Landscape Sensitivity**

4.3.1 The key landscape receptors that are likely to be affected by the proposed development are as follows:

- The site;
- Boundary trees and hedgerow; and
- The surrounding landscape – three regional/district scale character areas have the potential to be affected by the proposed development.

4.3.2 All identified landscape receptors are located within the South Downs National Park, within which the landscape value of key receptors would be high; however, there are variations between the various landscape receptor groups in the study area with differences, at a local scale, in tranquillity, landscape condition, scenic quality and representativeness.

4.3.3 The susceptibility to the proposed development would also vary between receptors. In landscape terms, susceptibility is *'the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation'* (GLVIA Page 158), (Ref 2). Landscape receptors within the wider landscape are likely to be less susceptible to the changes brought about by a development than the rural landscapes immediately adjacent to the site.

4.3.4 The site is currently used as a commercial nursery with greenhouses, polytunnels and storage areas, hardstanding and terraced platforms. The only variation in this dominant land use is the owner's bungalow and garden, with tree and shrub planting, the majority of which is non-native. There is also low shrub planting between the main access track and the site's south-western boundary. The site is therefore judged to have low landscape value. Internally, the site has few landscape features which would be difficult to substitute or recreate and is considered to have low susceptibility to change. Overall, therefore, the sensitivity of the site has been assessed as low.

4.3.5 Boundary features relate to the wider pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees which provide containment. Most notably, the mature Oak trees on the site's south-western boundary, are particularly characteristic of the wider landscape. The majority of these native features are mature, intact and in good condition, and contribute to the recognised character of the local area and are therefore considered to be high value. Boundary features, in particular the large mature trees would be difficult to replace in the short term, and so are considered to have high susceptibility. There is some non-native planting associated with the bungalow including a coniferous hedge which has a lower value and susceptibility. Overall, the sensitivity of boundary features has been assessed as high.

4.3.6 The surrounding rural landscape lies within the National Park and is characteristic of this part of the designated landscape. The immediate landscape setting, south and east of the site, has a less intact landscape character, comprising an arable field, the A3 trunk road and woodland plantation. However, given the national recognised importance of the National Park, and its rural character, the surrounding landscape is considered to have high value. The rural landscape pattern and structure would be difficult to recreate and has high susceptibility to change, and overall, the surrounding landscape has been assessed as high sensitivity.

4.3.7 The following table summarises the sensitivity of landscape receptors considered within this assessment:

<b>Landscape Receptor</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Susceptibility</b>	<b>Sensitivity</b>
The proposed development site	Low	Low	Low
Boundary features	High	High	High

Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
The surrounding landscape	High	High	High

## 5 VISUAL BASELINE

### 5.1 Methodology

5.1.1 The visual baseline serves to establish the type of Visual Receptor (VR) that may be affected by the proposed development, the extent and character of existing views, the contribution that the site makes to each view/local visual amenity and the susceptibility to change in views. This in part correlates with the degree to which the site is visible from a VR.

5.1.2 A visual appraisal of the site was undertaken from public roads and footpaths. Views were assessed based on 1) existing visibility 2) views after development. Views of the proposed development were estimated by visualising the scale and form of the proposed dwellings, and associated tree planting. Views from properties could not be assessed from the houses themselves; in most cases, the likely extent of the view could be adequately estimated from adjacent roads or paths. Views from some properties were identified using a reverse view, i.e., an assessment of the extent to which a property was visible in views from within the site looking outwards.

5.1.3 The visual appraisal is based on a grading of degrees of visibility. There is, in any visual appraisal, a continuity of degrees of visibility from not visible to fully open in the view. To indicate the degree of visibility of the site from selected locations, that continuum has been divided into four categories, as follows:

- **None:** no view (no part of the site or proposed development is discernible);
- **Glimpse:** only a minor area of the site or proposed development is discernible and/or the view is transient or at such a distance that it is difficult to perceive in the wider view, or sequence of views;
- **Partial:** the site or proposed development forms a relatively small proportion of a wider view. There are open views of part of the site or proposed development such that it is easily visible as part of the wider view;
- **Open:** there are open views of the site or proposed development such that it forms a substantial part (is a dominant element) of the overall view and affects its overall character and visual amenity; or the site or proposed development is the dominant feature of the view, to which other elements become subordinate and where the site/proposed development significantly affects or changes the character of the view.

5.1.4 A visual appraisal was carried out in December 2017, during winter with the least amount of leaf cover. A further appraisal was carried out in June 2021 to update the 2017 appraisal and enable an appreciation of the site during summer when leaf cover was approaching its fullest extent. The visual appraisal set out below is based primarily on 'worst case' winter views, but takes into account where views of the site are reduced in summer months when

vegetation is in leaf. The differentiation between public and private views is made to highlight that private views are likely to be experienced by individual residents, whereas public views are likely to relate to those receptors engaged in the enjoyment of the landscape for its own sake, and thus may be given more weight.

## **5.2 Site Visibility (Plan HDA 4 and HDA 5)**

5.2.1 The site is generally well contained by intervening settlement and landscape features. There are local views of the site from the adjacent road, footpath and properties.

5.2.2 The public have views of the site from the following visual receptor locations:

- A 50m stretch of Footpath G9 from Petersfield Road, between 2 Hill View and Deal Farm on the opposite side of the road along the north-west edge of the site;
- A short stretch of Footpath G4 around 1km north of the nearest site boundary;
- Two short stretches of Footpath S37 between Firsplat Copse and Todmore, about 500m north of the nearest site boundary;
- Footpath G10 between Bakers Field and Forest Road, including 175m adjacent to the south-east site boundary and a further 470m between the southern corner of the site and Forest Road further south;
- Petersfield Road between Todmore (approximately 350m to the north of the site) and Greatham Primary School (adjacent to the south-west site boundary);
- Greatham Village Hall opposite the site to the west; and
- Greatham Primary School adjacent to the south of the site.

5.2.3 **Footpath G9 (Photographs 1 and 2)** There are partial and glimpsed views from a 50m stretch of this footpath at its eastern end. In these views, a portion of the site's north-western boundary can be seen. The extent of view is curtailed by the boundaries of adjacent properties at 2 Hill View and Deal Farm. Views comprise the grassy embankment that lies between the site and Petersfield Road, the low boundary hedge and the gable ends of greenhouses within the site. Intervening trees, including large mature trees along the western side of Petersfield Road reduce the extent of view in the summer months when the trees are in leaf. Beyond Deal Farm, intervening hedgerow, trees and built development screen any further views of the site.

5.2.4 **Footpath G4** In these distant views (1km from the site) there are glimpses of sunlight reflecting from greenhouses within the site. The site forms a very small part of the wider panorama and is difficult to perceive. The view is seen within the context of other areas of built development within Greatham, which also forms a relatively small part of the wider panorama. Tree cover in full leaf screens views of the site from footpath G4 during the summer months.

5.2.5 **Footpath S37** In general, intervening vegetation and landform blocks views of the site from this footpath. In distant views from a short stretch of footpath adjacent to Firsplat Copse

(500m from the site) sunlight reflecting from the greenhouses is glimpsed beyond field boundary trees. These intervening trees screen views of the site in the summer months when they are in leaf. There is also a view (*Photograph 3*) from a short stretch of path approaching the modern housing estate at Todmore (400m from the site). In this view the tops of the greenhouses can be glimpsed through a break in vegetation, and modern housing at Todmore is also evident.

- 5.2.6 **Footpath G10** There are partial and glimpsed views of the site from this adjacent footpath. Approaching from the north through Bakers Field and immediately adjacent to the site, a hedgerow on the south-east boundary generally contains views. In views from the south, where there is a break in the hedgerow (*Photograph 4*), the southernmost structures within the site, including greenhouses are clearly visible. Site structures remain visible from footpath G10 during summer, but to a reduced degree.
- 5.2.7 **Shipwright's Way (Bridleway G11)** (*Photograph 5*) In views from this long-distance path, coniferous and broadleaf woodland prevents any intervisibility with the site all year round.
- 5.2.8 **Petersfield Road** (*Photographs 6, 7 and 8*) Approaching from the north, around 500m from the site, there are glimpses of greenhouses, seen beyond intervening development and vegetation. The site forms a relatively small part of the wider view and is difficult to perceive. In the summer, when trees are in leaf, the site is difficult to perceive within the surrounding tree cover. At around 200m from the site, the grassy embankment and boundary hedgerow comes into view. Approaching from the south, there are glimpsed views of the grassy embankment and boundary vegetation from a short (50m) stretch of the road, but further to the south, the site is entirely screened by intervening vegetation and buildings. Adjacent to the site, the grassy embankment, boundary hedge and upper parts of the greenhouses are visible giving rise to partial views from Petersfield Road as opposed to open ones. The bungalow is entirely screened by coniferous hedgerow and garden trees. Views into the site from the access track are framed by vegetation on both sides.
- 5.2.9 **Greatham Village Hall** (*Photograph 9*) It is estimated that there are glimpses of the site from side windows, and there are glimpses of the site from within the adjacent car park. These views are of a relatively small portion of the site in which the site access, boundary trees and vegetation can also be seen. In these views, buildings within the site are entirely obscured.
- 5.2.10 **Greatham Primary School** Glimpsed views into the site are possible from the school and school grounds. These views are difficult to perceive, as they are almost entirely obscured by boundary fencing, trees and shrubs.

- 5.2.11 Visual receptor locations from which private residents have views of the site are as follows:
- The rear of 21 and 22 Todmore, 300m to the north of the nearest site boundary;
  - The side of Rose Cottage, Petersfield Road, 275m to the north;
  - Two properties at Innisfallen at the corner of Petersfield Road and Longmoor Road, 275m to the north;
  - The rear of 1-7 and 9-14 Bakers Field adjacent to the site;
  - Goleigh Farmhouse, 600m to the south of the nearest site boundary;
  - 1-4 Fairlawns on Petersfield Road, 50-75m to the south-west;
  - 1-2 Oak Cottages on Petersfield Road, 25m to the south-west;
  - 1-2 Hill View on Petersfield Road opposite the site; and
  - Deal Farmhouse on Petersfield Road opposite the site.
- 5.2.12 **Todmore, Rose Cottage and Innisfallen** In distant views from properties to the north, glimpses of the site, would be seen beyond intervening settlement and vegetation. In these views, the site forms a relatively small part of the wider panorama, and is barely discernible during the summer months when trees are in full leaf.
- 5.2.13 **Bakers Field** In views from adjacent properties, from rear windows and gardens, there are views of the site. Adjacent properties sit at around half a metre lower than the site, where the landform has been modified. In general, views from these adjacent properties are likely to comprise the boundary hedgerow from ground floor windows, and views over this hedgerow of the wider site from upper floor windows. Open views are likely from the upper floor windows of 1-2 Bakers Field and glimpsed views from the upper floor windows of 3-6 Bakers Field. There are also likely to be glimpses of the site from the upper floor windows of number 7, and glimpses of the site from bungalows 9-14 Bakers Field, seen through gaps between adjacent housing.
- 5.2.14 **Goleigh Farmhouse** In distant views, the site's south-eastern boundary would be seen beyond field boundary trees and hedgerow. There are likely to be glimpses of the site boundary hedgerow, and where there is a break in the hedgerow, of the southernmost greenhouse. The extent of site visible in the distance is reduced in summer when trees are in full leaf.
- 5.2.15 **Fairlawns and Oak Cottages** In views from these properties, there are likely to be oblique glimpses of the site from upper floor windows. The site's westernmost boundaries, comprising the site access, trees and hedgerow would be visible during winter, but to a lesser extent during the summer months.
- 5.2.16 **1 and 2 Hill View and Deal Farmhouse** (*Photographs 10 and 11*) From within the site, there are views over Petersfield Road to Hill View and Deal Farmhouse. In views from

these properties, boundary hedgerow and greenhouses are seen. These views are adjudged to be partial from ground floor windows and open from upper floor windows.

### **5.3 Summary of Existing Site Visibility**

5.3.1 Public views of the site are generally limited to adjacent stretches of road and footpath, in which existing urbanising features are also apparent. Views from private residents are primarily seen from adjacent properties where greenhouses within the site can be seen.

5.3.2 Viewpoint locations with no views of the site (at any time of the year), where the visibility of the site would not conceivably change as a result of the proposed development, have not been taken forward for assessment within this report.

### **5.4 Visual Sensitivity**

5.4.1 The visual sensitivity of a particular viewpoint location is assessed as a combination of viewer susceptibility and the value attached to the view. The type of activity that a person – or visual receptor (VR) is engaged in affects susceptibility, as does the experience of the viewer at a particular location and the extent to which the viewer can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on the character and extent of the view.

5.4.2 Due to the location of the site within the National Park, the value attached to views assessed would generally be high, however the baseline condition of the site itself is not reflective of the National Park designation, due to its current use as a commercial nursery.

5.4.3 **Rights of Way:** The most sensitive visual receptors to changes within a view are people whose activities are likely to be focussed on the landscape. These include users of public rights of way, which include Footpath G10 and Footpath G9 adjacent to the site. Glimpsed and partial views of the site from Footpath G9 are seen beyond Petersfield Road. Glimpsed and partial views of the site from Footpath G10 are seen over an open arable field, from which the A3 trunk road is also evident. The public rights of way are considered to have high value, particularly given their location within the National Park. Public footpaths are used by walkers on routes through the designated landscape whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the view, although views from footpaths increasing include the existing settlement edge, partially filtered by tree cover as they approach Greatham, meaning the overall susceptibility to a change in the view is considered to be medium-high overall. The sensitivity of visual receptors from both of these viewpoints has therefore been assessed as high.

5.4.4 **Petersfield Road:** There are partial and glimpsed views of the site from Petersfield Road, seen by motorists and pedestrians. This is an attractive stretch of road which is

characteristic of the village, and likely to be appreciated locally, and therefore views from along the road are judged to have medium value. Views are seen by motorists and pedestrians whose attention may only be partially focused on the scenic quality of the view, and are therefore considered to have medium susceptibility to a change in the view. Overall, the sensitivity of visual receptors has therefore been assessed as medium.

5.4.5 **Properties:** Local residents with open views from the primary living space of their property are accepted to be highly susceptible to changes within the view; these include some properties at Bakers Field, 1 and 2 Hill View and Deal Farm.

5.4.6 Paragraph 6.17 of GLVIA states that:

*‘In some cases, it may also be appropriate to consider private viewpoints, mainly from residential properties.’*

5.4.7 In March 2019, The Landscape Institute published technical guidance on Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA). Residential visual amenity is defined within the document as:

*‘The overall quality, experience and nature of views and outlook available to occupants of residential properties, including views from gardens and domestic curtilage. It represents the visual component of Residential Amenity.’*

5.4.8 Paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6 of the RVAA document state that:

*‘1.5 Changes in views and visual amenity are considered in the planning process. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely known that, no one has ‘a right to a view.’ This includes situations where a residential property’s outlook / visual amenity is judged to be ‘significantly’ affected by a proposed development, a matter which has been confirmed in a number of appeal / public inquiry decisions.*

*1.6 It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before.’*

5.4.9 The following table sets out the sensitivity of visual receptor groups considered within this assessment:

Visual Receptor/Viewpoint Location	Sensitivity
Users of Footpath G9	High
Users of Footpath G4	Low
Users of Footpath S37	Low
Users of Footpath G10	High
Users of Petersfield Road	Medium
Users of Greatham Village Hall	Low
Users of Greatham Primary School	Low

## **6 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

### **6.1 Description of the Proposals**

6.1.1 This section briefly describes the proposed development, as a basis for the assessment. The existing commercial nursery, including the bungalow and all structures within the site, would be replaced by 37 two-storey homes, open space and planting. The site layout reflects the character of the site and its setting whilst responding to the site challenges and opportunities. The lowest density of housing would be along the south-eastern edge of the site, which when combined with proposed open space and planting along the edge of the proposed development, provides a transition from settlement to the rural countryside.

6.1.2 The scheme includes modifications to the existing vehicular access from Petersfield Road and a new pedestrian access, which would allow a permissive path across the southern end of the site to connect public footpath G10 to Petersfield Road for ease of connection into the eastern end of public footpath G9.

6.1.3 The conifer hedge and mostly non-native planting associated with the existing bungalow and access drive would be removed, but the majority of existing trees, including some mature trees within the bungalow's garden near the site entrance, and boundary hedgerows would be retained and where appropriate supplemented with new planting. Internal boundary treatments would include hedges and brick walls in keeping with the historic character of Greatham, but would be varied with timber fencing to reflect the variety of existing boundaries in the local area. Building roofs, renders, sizes, orientation, set backs and spacing would be varied to reflect the character of Greatham.

### **6.2 Response to Site Challenges and Opportunities**

6.2.1 From an initial assessment of the baseline survey (*Plan HDA 6*), a number of challenges and opportunities were identified, these include:

- Opportunities to set development back from Petersfield Road to mitigate the effects of level change, reflect existing settlement pattern and consider the setting to Deal Farmhouse;
- Establish a landscape buffer to the development edge to maintain and enhance the setting to Greatham;
- Set back built form from site's southern corner where the existing greenhouse is visible in views to the south;
- Provide a footpath link through the site between existing Footpath G10 and the Village Hall, children's play area and recreation ground;
- Retain important trees and hedgerow;
- Supplement existing planting with native tree and hedgerow planting where appropriate; and
- Incorporate SuDS features within proposed areas of open space.

### **6.3 Landscape Strategy (Plan HDA 7)**

6.3.1 The landscape proposals for the site are based on HDA's assessment of the landscape character of the surrounding area, and of the visual effects of the proposals.

6.3.2 The broad objectives of the scheme design and landscape proposals are to:

- Provide a softer settlement edge and gradual transition to the adjoining rural countryside.
- Set development back from the southern corner and south-eastern edge creating open space with tree planting, amenity grass and opportunities for informal natural play and seating;
- Set development back from Petersfield Road, retain native specimen tree planting and existing hedgerow along the site's frontage;
- Soften views from adjacent properties at Bakers Field through the retention and enhancement of boundary hedgerow and additional planting;
- Retention of the mature Oaks on the south-western boundary, establish additional native tree planting, woodland understorey planting and boundary hedgerow planting to reflect local landscape characteristics;
- Create an entrance space with opportunities to replace existing coniferous hedgerow with native hedgerow and trees; and
- Establish green corridors and pockets of open space within the development area large enough for larger tree species to be established.

## **7 PREDICTED EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

### **7.1 Introduction**

7.1.1 The potential effects of the proposed development are assessed below, at year 0, when the potential effects are at their greatest and at year 10, following the establishment of the mitigation strategy. In order to assess the potential effects of the proposals, certain assumptions have been made about the height of the proposed building, the size of trees specified and the growth rates of any proposed vegetation. These assumptions are:

- Proposed houses would be a maximum of two storeys high, to reflect existing housing in the village with an assumed maximum height of 9m from finished floor level to the ridge of the rooftop.
- Existing trees and vegetation have an assumed growth rate of 0.35m per year, however it is assumed that the mature trees within the site would not have additional growth and that existing hedgerow would be maintained at its existing height.
- New planting is assumed to have no growth in the first year after planting, and 0.35m per year thereafter. Actual growth rates will depend on environmental conditions and tree species. It is likely that the proposed trees would have grown higher than have been assumed for this assessment.
- The majority of trees planted within the proposed development would be planted as a mixture of feathered trees (1.5 – 1.75m high) and select standards (3-3.5m). The feathered trees would include native trees within hedgerows/tree belts, which establish better when planted at a young stage (e.g., Beech and Oak). After 10 years of growth, it is assumed that feathered trees would have reached approximately 4.5-5m high, and that the select standard trees would have reached a minimum height of 6-6.5m.
- Hedgerow and native shrub planting would be introduced as bareroot whips, approximately 0.4 - 0.8m high (depending on species). Hedgerow heights after 10

years of growth have been assumed to be 2.5-3m unless maintained at a lower height.

7.1.2 The magnitude of change is a judgement on the size or scale of effect and is combined with the landscape or visual sensitivity to give a judgement on the significance of effects resulting from the proposed development.

## 7.2 Predicted Landscape Effects

7.2.1 The most noticeable landscape effects would be located within the site at construction, when existing structures would be removed, construction of new dwellings would be ongoing and the proposed planting would be immature and of limited screening effect. There would be loss of existing low value internal landscape features, but within a localised area and with the potential to be recreated over time. The magnitude of change is therefore judged to be medium adverse, resulting in a temporary minor adverse effect.

7.2.2 At completion, the built form within the site would change from a commercial nursery to housing interspersed with open space and green infrastructure, which is a more typical village land-use. High quality boundary features would be retained and protected through the course of the development.

7.2.3 10 years post completion, the proposed landscape scheme would have established. The existing and proposed planting would help contain the site and respond to the rural setting. Within the site, open space and tree planting would result in an overall increase in characteristic features and elements which contribute to the green infrastructure of the site and local landscape. This is considered to be a medium beneficial magnitude of change, and overall a minor beneficial effect after 10 years.

7.2.3 The table below summarises the predicted effects on landscape receptors.

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Construction		10 Years Post Completion	
		Magnitude of Change	Effects	Magnitude of Change	Effects
The proposed development site	Low	Medium adverse	Minor adverse	Medium beneficial	Minor beneficial
Boundary features	High	Very low adverse	Negligible	Very low beneficial	Negligible

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Construction		10 Years Post Completion	
		Magnitude of Change	Effects	Magnitude of Change	Effects
The surrounding landscape	High	Very Low adverse	Negligible	Very Low beneficial	Negligible

### 7.3 Predicted Visual Effects

7.3.1 **Footpath G9** From this visual receptor, glimpsed and partial views of the greenhouses will be replaced by glimpsed and partial views of houses. The existing greenhouses are around 3 metres from the western boundary hedgerow, whereas it is proposed that the new housing will be set back by 20-30 metres. The housing will be seen behind the existing retained hedgerow, existing trees and new tree planting. At construction, the magnitude of change has been assessed as low adverse, thus the significance of effect has been assessed as minor adverse. 10 years post completion, once new tree planting has established and the housing has been assimilated into the landscape, the effect on this visual receptor has been assessed as negligible.

7.3.2 **Footpath G4 and S37** From these visual receptors, changes in views will be very difficult to perceive. Views of light reflecting from the tops of greenhouses will be replaced by rooftops of new houses and planting, mainly during the winter months. In these views, the proposals are likely to be less visible than the existing reflective greenhouses and the overall effect is considered negligible.

7.3.3 **Footpath G10** Immediately adjacent to the site boundary, planting will be retained and changes to the baseline view will be difficult to perceive. The break in the hedgerow at the southern corner will be gapped up with new planting. Existing greenhouses and structures are within 1m of the site's outer edge, whereas new housing will sit 12-30m off the site boundaries, behind open space and tree planting including a 'destination space' at the southern corner. Views of the greenhouse at the site's southern corner will be replaced by development seen beyond the hedgerow, open space and tree planting, which, upon maturity, will significantly soften views. During construction, there would be views of construction activity set back from the site boundary, but this would be countered by the removal of greenhouses previously seen at close range within the view. The visual effects have therefore been assessed as moderate adverse at the time of construction. Once new planting has established, there will be a negligible effect.

7.3.4 **Petersfield Road** Motorists and pedestrians, glimpsed and partial views of the greenhouses will be replaced by glimpsed and partial views of houses, set further back from the site boundary. The existing bungalow and boundary conifer hedge shall be

removed to form a landscaped entrance space, with the existing native hedge extended to the site access. The entrance space will include the retention of higher quality trees and new native tree planting. Although set back from the road, the housing is likely to be more visually prominent than the existing greenhouses in some views; these views will decrease and soften as new tree planting establishes. At construction, the visual effect has been considered to be moderate adverse, reducing to minor adverse 10 years post completion.

- 7.3.5 **Greatham Village Hall** Existing views of the site access and boundary vegetation will be replaced by the access together with housing set behind the new entrance space. The effect of this change in views, of a relatively small portion of the site, has been assessed as negligible.
- 7.3.6 **Greatham Primary School** In glimpsed views from the school, new housing will be set back from the school boundary. The boundary Oak trees will be retained and supplemented with new planting. The overall effect will be negligible.
- 7.3.7 **Todmore, Rose Cottage and Innisfallen** From these private dwellings, distant changes in their views will be difficult to perceive, particularly during the summer months when trees and in full leaf. Once established, the housing and planting is likely to be more less visible than the existing reflective greenhouses.
- 7.3.8 **1-7 Bakers Field** Views into the site from adjacent properties will be of the proposed housing, existing hedgerow and tree planting. The existing hedgerow and tree planting shall be maintained within a 2m landscape buffer. Back to back distance between dwellings will be a minimum of 25m. Upon completion, the housing will be more visually prominent than existing views into the site, although, as planting matures, these views will be softened. In views from other properties at Bakers Field, new homes will be seen beyond adjacent housing.
- 7.3.9 **Goleigh Farmhouse** In these distant views, the existing greenhouse on the site's southern corner will be replaced by open space and planting, which will soften views of the new housing.
- 7.3.10 **Fairlawns and Oak Cottages** In these oblique glimpses of the site, changes in view would be difficult to perceive and the effect would be negligible.
- 7.3.11 **1 and 2 Hill View and Deal Farmhouse** In these views, from properties opposite the site, views of existing greenhouses will be replaced by housing set back from the site boundary. Although set back from the road, the housing is likely to be more visually prominent. Upon completion, these views will be softened as new planting establishes.

7.3.12 The following table summarises the predicted effects of the proposed development on visual receptor groups considered within this assessment:

Visual Receptor/ Viewpoint Location	Sensitivity	Construction		10 Years Post Completion	
		Magnitude of Change	Effects	Magnitude of Change	Effects
Users of Footpath G9	High	Low adverse	Minor adverse	Very Low beneficial	Negligible
Users of Footpath G4	Low	Very Low beneficial	Negligible	Very Low beneficial	Negligible
Users of Footpath S37	Low	Very Low beneficial	Negligible	Very Low beneficial	Negligible
Users of Footpath G10	High	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse	Very Low beneficial	Negligible
Users of Petersfield Road	Medium	Medium adverse	Moderate adverse	Low adverse	Minor adverse
Users of Greatham Village Hall	Low	Low adverse	Negligible	Low adverse	Negligible
Users of Greatham Primary School	Low	Low beneficial	Negligible	Low beneficial	Negligible

## 8 REVIEW OF RELEVANT POLICY

### 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This section addresses the planning policy context relevant to the site and whether the proposals are contrary to those policies. Of particular relevance to the landscape aspects of policy pertaining to these proposals is the importance placed upon new development being in keeping with the existing landscape character of the area and the effects on the amenity of visual receptors.

### 8.2 National Planning Policy Framework

8.2.1 This appraisal demonstrates that the proposals would conform to the Framework, including ensuring they are ‘*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting*’ (paragraph 127 of the Framework). The proposed

development would *'conserve and enhance the natural environment'* (paragraph 170 of the Framework) and would help *'conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty in the National Park'* (paragraph 172).

8.2.2 By creating a pedestrian route through the site, the proposed development would create a link between public footpath G10 and Petersfield Road with a nearby connection to public footpath G9, thereby enhancing the rights of way network in keeping with paragraph 98 of the Framework.

### **8.3 Local Policy**

8.3.1 The proposals would be consistent with policies contained within the submission draft South Downs Local Plan that relate to landscape character and the effects on the amenity of visual receptors.

8.3.2 Allocation Policy SD71: Land at Petersfield Road, Greatham

- The proposals provide a clear transition from Petersfield Road to the open countryside, with the lowest density of housing towards the south-eastern edge of the site. Provision of development offsets and public open space, including a 'destination space' within the site's southern corner, retention and enhancement of boundary trees and hedgerow would create a soft settlement edge and a gradual transition to the rural countryside.
- The proposals consider the setting to local listed buildings and the Conservation Area. The development will be set-back from the site boundary with new tree planting to reflect the local vernacular and the setting to Deal Farmhouse. There is no intervisibility between the site and the Conservation Area.
- A new publicly accessible off-road pedestrian route shall be provided from Petersfield Road and Footpath G10 to the east.
- Public open space would be provided, which includes an 'entrance space' at the main site access, green corridors and a 'pocket park' placed centrally within the scheme and a 'destination space' within the site's southern corner.
- Mature boundary trees and hedgerow shall be retained and enhanced with native planting. Where lower quality non-native trees or hedgerow need to be removed, these will be replaced by native species. Overall, there will be a net gain of trees and hedgerow across the site.

8.3.3 Policy SD4: Landscape Character

- This assessment demonstrates that the proposals have been informed by landscape character; reflecting the pattern, context and type of landscape in which the development is located.
- The design, layout and scale of proposals conserve and enhance existing landscape features, which include mature Oak trees on the site's south-western boundary.
- The proposals safeguard the experiential and amenity qualities of the landscape; and
- Planting shall be consistent with local character, enhance biodiversity, contribute to the delivery of Green Infrastructure and use native species.

8.3.4 Policy SD5: Design

- The scheme has followed a landscape-led approach informed by the site's constraints

and opportunities and is in keeping with the existing settlement pattern.

- Proposed boundary treatments, materials and the design and positioning of buildings, reflect both the historic vernacular of Greatham and the variety in the character of the village as a whole.
- Overall, the scheme will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, through provision of new open space, native tree and hedgerow planting and the removal of buildings in the site's southern corner, which are visually prominent, allowing the settlement boundary to be 'rounded off'.

#### 8.3.5 Policy SD6: Safeguarding Views

This previously developed site is well contained in views from the wider landscape. In distant views, where the site is difficult to perceive, the overall change of replacing reflective greenhouses with traditional houses and planting will be beneficial. In views from adjacent footpaths, the overall development footprint will be reduced, with housing set-back behind planting with an overall positive effect once established. The proposals will not affect key views and views of key landmarks within the National Park.

#### 8.3.6 Policy SD7: Relative Tranquillity

The existing commercial nursery site sits alongside Petersfield Road and 500m from the busy A3 trunk road. The proposed scheme will have a negligible effect upon the relative tranquillity of the area.

#### 8.3.7 Strategic Policy SD45: Green Infrastructure

The proposals demonstrate that the scheme will:

- Maintain and enhance GI assets, GI links and the overall GI network; and
- Provide new GI and improvements to existing green assets and green linkages, integrated into the development design that meets the needs of communities both within and beyond the site's boundaries. This includes new public open space, green links, planting and a new footpath link.

## 9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 The potential landscape and visual effects associated with the redevelopment of Liss Forest Nursery, would primarily be localised though permanent, and given the limited public viewpoints into the site, there is little potential that the proposals would significantly impact upon people.

9.2 By replacing greenhouses with housing more in keeping with the local landscape character, the settlement pattern and the character of Greatham, than the current land use, the site and surrounding landscape has the capacity to accept the type of development proposed. The layout of the site and the landscape strategy would result in a sensitive transition from development to rural countryside, with a soft settlement edge. Upon maturity, the proposals to replace the existing nursery with housing, open space and green infrastructure have

been assessed to have a minor beneficial landscape effect on the site, and would help conserve the landscape of the National Park, in line with policy.

- 9.3 The predicted visual effects from the majority of visual receptors are considered to be negligible. In views from Petersfield Road, the proposals are likely to lead to a minor adverse impact because the housing is likely to be more visually prominent, in some views. In views from Footpath G10, to the south of the site, proposals to replace a visually prominent structure with open space and planting, will soften views of development. Other minor visual impacts will be limited to private dwellings and there will be no change to the extent that the site is visible from the wider landscape.

## 10 REFERENCES

- 1 Natural England (October 2014), '*An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*'
- 2 The Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, (2013), "*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*" (third edition)
- 3 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (February 2019), '*National Planning Policy Framework*'
- 4 Department for Communities and Local Government (updated May 2021) '*National Planning Practice Guidance*'
- 5 South Downs National Park Authority (July 2019) '*South Downs Local Plan 2014-33*'
- 6 ACD Environmental for Cove Homes (September 2017) '*Liss Forest Nursery Tree Report*'
- 7 Natural England (July 2013) '*National Character Area Profile: 120 Wealden Greensand*'
- 8 Hampshire County Council (May 2012) '*Integrated Character Assessment*'
- 9 South Downs National Park (December 2005, updated 2020) '*South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (Updated) Technical Report*'

## HDA Document Control and Quality Assurance Record

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**APPENDIX A**

**Site Layout**

**APPENDIX B**

**HDA Methodology for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**

**APPENDIX C**

**National Character Area 120: Wealden Greensands**

**Appendix D:**

**County Character Area 2M: East Hampshire Lowland Mosaic**

**APPENDIX E**

**SDNP Integrated Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Type L**

**APPENDIX F**

**SDNP Integrated Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Type M**