

Rother District Council

Local Development Framework

Core Strategy

Landscape Assessment

March 2008

Volume 1

**The Landscape Group
Transport and Environment
East Sussex County Council
St Anne's Crescent
Lewes
East Sussex**

Contents

Volume 1

1. 0 Introduction

2.0 Methodology for assessment

2.1 Existing Guidance

2.2 Methodology for Landscape Character Assessment

2.3 Landscape Quality Evaluation Criteria

2.4 Landscape Value

2.5 Landscape Sensitivity

2.6 Visual sensitivity

2.7 Landscape Capacity

2.8 Character Area Capacity Evaluation

2.9 Potential for Mitigation

2.10 AONBs and Aonb Buffer Zones

2.11 Mapping

2.12 Potential Development Area Comparison

2.13 Comparison between Development Potential in Search Areas.

2.14 Type of Development and relationship to previous studies

3.0 Assessment of Search Areas

3.1 Character assessment of each search area and its setting

3.2 Capacity analysis of character areas

3.3 Comparative analysis of potential development areas

4.0 Conclusions

5.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 The Brief

Appendix 2 Landscape Character Assessment Sheets

Volume 2

V2 – 1 Maps of search areas from the Brief

V2 – 2 Maps and Tables

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Landscape Group of the County Council has been asked by Rother District Council to carry out a landscape assessment of the previously identified search areas for development to the north of Bexhill and west of Hastings.

The District Council issued a brief for this work which is at Appendix 1 to this report and which forms the framework for carrying out the work.

The field work for the project was carried out in February 2008 and has been supplemented with desk top studies and information available to the Planning Authority.

Reference has been made in the brief to previous studies, many of which the Landscape Group has been involved with. The current report does not invalidate those studies but the methodologies for such work have changed since most of those studies. This study is therefore based upon the guidance set out below which comprises the best practice approach to such work and which differs from previous methods of working.

The output from this study is only to assist in the selection of development sites from the search areas provided. It provides some pointers to the nature and spatial planning of the development opportunities but it does not constitute a Development Brief, which should be produced later and based upon much more detailed site studies and evaluation. Those studies should not affect the viability of the sites, as described in here, from a landscape point of view but will consider the detailed disposition of development, its mitigation and spatial planning.

2.0 Methodology for Assessment

2.1 Existing Guidance

There are several sources of guidance relevant to assessing the landscape and visual appraisal of proposed development projects. The primary guidance for assessing the landscape and visual effects of road schemes is provided in DMRB Vol.11, Section 3, Part 5, with additional guidance with respect to appraising the impacts of all transport schemes provided in the Department for Transport's Web-Based Transport Analysis Guidance (WebTAG). This can also be used to inform other types of development and potential impacts.

Further guidance is provided by the *Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA)* published by the Institute of Environmental Assessment and the Landscape Institute (Second Edition 2002). Detailed guidance for undertaking landscape character assessments to inform planning policy and decisions is also provided in the *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* published jointly by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002).

Guidance for assessing and reducing the impact of proposed lighting schemes will be obtained from *Lighting the Countryside: Towards Good Practice*, Office of

The Deputy Prime Minister (2001) and *Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution* published by the Institute of Lighting Engineers (2000).

These various forms of current guidance will be used for the purposes of assessing the development capacity of the areas defined by Rother District Council for landscape assessment.

2.2 Methodology for Landscape Character Assessment

The Assessment involves an appraisal of the landscape character of the search areas identified for potential expansion by Rother District Council as a part of their Local Development Framework Core Strategy. These areas are shown in the brief at appendix 1 and have been interpreted onto the plans in Volume 2.

Desktop and field surveys have been undertaken to identify the character of the defined search areas.

The landscape character of these areas has been assessed according to existing guidance for character assessment. Published assessments are available for Rother District at regional, county and local levels. The assessment has taken in to consideration the existing assessments and identifies the character of the search areas at the local level.

The following strategies have been considered in defining the landscape character of the various search areas:

- The Countryside Agency (1999) – Countryside Character Volume 7: South East & London
- The High Weald; Exploring the Landscape of the AONB, Countryside Commission, 1994.
- East Sussex Trees and Woodland Strategy, (TAWS), East Sussex Woodland Forum 1990.
- East Sussex Landscape Assessment, published on ESCC website February 2008
- Remoteness at the Local Scale, an Application in East Sussex, East Sussex County Council (ESCC), 1997.
- CPRE (Council for the Protection of Rural England) Tranquil Areas Studies 1995 and 2006)

The landscape is a combination of both cultural and physical characteristics and components, which give rise to patterns that are distinctive to particular localities and help to define a sense of place. The landscape is not therefore simply a visual phenomenon but relies upon other influences including topography, land use land management, ecology, and cultural associations.

Landscape character areas are single unique areas in the landscape, which have a particular sense of place. These are discrete areas of an identifiable character reflected by differing vegetation, settlement and field

patterns, cultural associations and other landscape characteristics. These are distinct from landscape types. The two are defined as follows:

- Landscape Character Areas - Unique individual geographical areas. They share general characteristics with other areas but have their own particular identity. Landscape types occur within these.
- Landscape Character Types - Generic types which possess broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern discernable in maps and field survey records. They can occur in different geographical locations.

The identified search areas are those defined by Rother District Council and are understood to be the result of previous work and planning considerations. The character of the identified search areas has been assessed in the context of the East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (ESCC website 2008), which identifies landscape character areas across the county.

Field surveys have been carried out to identify the landscape character for the identified search areas. The areas are subdivided into smaller character areas; these are mapped and shown on the maps in Volume 2. The individual character of these areas is described using the customised field survey sheets contained within Appendix 2. These include a typical representative view of the area.

In some cases there are no defined boundaries to the outer limit of the character areas. This indicates that character extends beyond the study area limit and the character is contiguous with the surrounding countryside.

Other factors which have been considered as part of the landscape character assessment are local cultural considerations and sense of place. The survey sheets provide the opportunity to record both the objective elements within the landscape in question and the subjective impressions of the viewer. A representative photograph has been taken for each character area and an assessment made as to the quality, value and sensitivity to the change of the character area in question. This will include an assessment of visual sensitivity. This is in accordance with the guidance provided in the GLVIA publication (2002).

The site assessment has considered the potential for mitigating change within the character areas and whether mitigation features would be out of character. For example, mounding may be inappropriate in a flat landscape and extensive woodland or tree planting may be out of keeping in an open landscape.

An assessment has also been made of the current condition or quality of the landscape and requirements for management of the land and

associated features. The assessment has drawn on the management needs identified in existing assessments and management plans.

The information obtained from the field survey exercise has been supplemented by a desk top study to map existing designations relating to historical, archaeological, biodiversity or other cultural interest. Supporting strategies will also be reviewed together with existing landscape character assessments at national, regional and local level in order to inform the landscape assessment.

Having drawn together the baseline information this has then been used to describe the character of the landscape. Landscape character assessment is concerned primarily with landscape character, rather than with landscape quality or value. These factors are considered relevant where assessment is being used to inform environmental impact assessments. Subsequently, each landscape character area will be evaluated in relation to quality, value and sensitivity to change in accordance with the criteria contained in the following guidance and tables.

2.3 Landscape Quality Evaluation Criteria

Quality has been defined in accordance with The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Volume 11, Section 3, Part 5 and further refined using GLVIA (2002). Quality of the Landscape is defined according to 5 point scale as indicated in Table 1. Parkland would be noted separately as advised in DMRB. Areas of particular quality may not always coincide with character areas. The quality of each character area has been assessed in accordance with these criteria.

Table 1 Landscape Quality Evaluation Criteria

Quality Classification	Evaluation Criteria
Exceptional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich, distinctive, unique or outstanding natural landscape character • Strong landscape structure, characteristics, patterns and unified combination of landform and land cover; • Good condition – appropriate management for land use and land cover; • Distinct features worthy of conservation; • Unique sense of place; • No detracting features; • Strong sense of tranquillity reflected in extensive ‘Most Tranquil Areas’ and, • Areas of exceptional remoteness, possibly some wilderness

Quality Classification	Evaluation Criteria
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very attractive, semi-natural or farmed landscape with strongly distinctive or unusual features; • Strong landscape structure, characteristic patterns and balanced combination of landform and land cover; • Appropriate management for land use and land cover but potentially scope to improve; • Distinct features worthy of conservation; • Strong sense of place; • Occasional detracting features; • Sense of tranquillity, smaller zones of Most Tranquil Areas; and, • Areas of remoteness and possible exceptional remoteness.
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive semi-natural or farmed landscape with some distinctive features; • Recognisable landscape structure, characteristic patterns and combinations of landform and land cover are still evident; • Scope to improve management for land use and land cover; • Frequent features worthy of conservation; • Sense of place; • Some detracting features; • No 'most tranquil areas'; and, • Possible areas of remoteness, rarely exceptional remoteness
Ordinary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonplace landscape with limited distinctiveness; • Distinguishable landscape structure, characteristic patterns of landform and land cover often masked by land use; • Scope to improve management for land use and land cover; • Some features worthy of conservation; • Frequent detracting features; • No relatively tranquil areas; and, • No areas of remote landscape.

Quality Classification	Evaluation Criteria
Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dull landscape which has lost most of its natural features; • Weak or degraded landscape structure, characteristic patterns of landform and land cover are often masked by land use; • Mixed land use evident; • Lack of management and intervention has resulted in degradation; • Frequent dominant detracting features; • Disturbed or derelict land requires treatment; • Least tranquil areas; and, • No areas of remote landscape

Sources:

Modification of criteria contained in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2002) and DMRB Vol. 11.

Remote areas are determined according to Remoteness at the Local Scale (ESCC 1997)

Tranquil areas are determined according to Tranquil Areas South East Region (CPRE 2005,)

2.4 Landscape Value

East Sussex has a rich resource of valued landscapes. The importance of its landscapes is recognized in national terms in that two thirds of the county is designated as AONB. This includes the Sussex Downs and the High Weald.

The remainder of the county although not containing nationally designated landscapes consists almost entirely of varied, attractive and valued landscape and many areas are the subject of nature conservation designations.

The assessment has appraised landscape value of each character area using a set of indicators, this is done by assessing:

The importance of characteristic features;

- Why and who they are important to;
- Their relationship in overall landscape patterns; and,
- Relative value at the local, county, regional or national scale.

A landscape may be valued by different users for a variety of reasons recognizing perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquility, remoteness, special cultural associations, other conservation or specialist interest.

The Landscape Value Criteria are detailed in Table 2.

Source:

Modification of criteria contained in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2002)

Table 2 Landscape Value Criteria

Value	Typical Criteria	Typical Scale	Typical Examples/Features
Very High	Very attractive and rare Exceptional landscape quality	International or National	World Heritage Site, National Park, AONB or key elements/features within them. Areas of exceptional remoteness (ESCC) Relatively most tranquil area (CPRE) Accessible wildlife areas of international or national value. Providing setting for internationally valued buildings or cultural features
High	Very attractive or attractive scenic quality and in part rare High / good landscape quality.	National, Regional, District or Local	National Park, AONB, Areas of Great Landscape Value (or similar designation) or key elements within them. Remote countryside (ESCC) Accessible wildlife areas of national value. Providing setting for Listed Buildings or nationally important cultural features.
Medium	Typical and commonplace or in part unusual Good / Ordinary landscape quality	Regional, District or Local	Generally undesignated but value expressed through local cultural associations or through demonstrable use. Accessible wildlife areas of local value

Low	Monotonous, degraded or damaged; Ordinary/ Poor landscape quality.	District or Local	Certain individual landscape elements or features may be worthy of conservation and landscape would benefit from restoration or enhancement. Relatively least tranquil areas (CPRE)
------------	---	-------------------	--

2.5 Landscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of each character area and the scope for mitigation measures has been assessed in accordance with *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Second Edition, 2002 and *Landscape Assessment Guidance – Countryside Agency* (Topic Paper 6, *Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity*).

GLVIA and the Countryside Agency advocate that sensitivity studies are carried out at a regional level to inform strategic and local development frameworks.

Landscape character sensitivity is based on judgements about sensitivity of aspects most likely to be affected e.g. natural, cultural, aesthetic factors. This combined with visual sensitivity and landscape value identifies the capacity of the landscape to accommodate a specific type of change.

Other factors which have been taken in to account in assessing the sensitivity of the landscape resource are existing trends for change in the landscape which may be due to natural process or human activities. Landscapes exhibiting reduction in management due to changed farming practices may be considered less sensitive to change. The Evaluation Criteria of the sensitivity to change of a landscape are defined in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Landscape Character Sensitivity to Change Evaluation Criteria

Sensitivity to Change	Evaluation Criteria
High	A landscape sensitive to proposed type of change, which would result in significant effects on landscape character, features or elements.
Moderate	A landscape capable of accepting limited change, of the type proposed, with some effects on landscape character, features or elements.
Low	A landscape capable of accommodating considerable change, of the type proposed, without effects on landscape character, features or elements.

Note: Strong landscape character could tend to be more able to accept change as it is more robust. An area of weak landscape character could tend to be more vulnerable to change

2.6 Visual Sensitivity

The visual sensitivity of the landscape is recorded on the site assessment sheets for each character area as part of the character assessment. Key views and viewpoints are identified and focal features which enhance or detract from the view are noted. The inter-visibility of the area with surrounding areas has been recorded as have distant views into and out of the area. Key visual receptors with views across the area are recorded. The visual sensitivity is evaluated for each character area in accordance with the following table.

Table 4 Visual Sensitivity

Visual Sensitivity	Evaluation Criteria
High	Views can be gained from visual receptor groups with a High sensitivity to the proposed type of visual change i.e. residential properties, access land, footpaths, informal recreational users. High visitor numbers. Sensitivity will be higher in designated landscapes. Long views across the area with few natural visual barriers i.e. landform, trees, hedges and woods. Usually little scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
Moderate	Views can be gained from visual receptors with a moderate sensitivity to the proposed type of visual change i.e. recreational establishments, hospitals, schools, community uses, roads, railways and equestrian. Moderate visitor numbers. Some long views, some natural visual barriers to contain development. Usually moderate scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
Low	Views can be gained from visual receptors with a low sensitivity to the proposed type of visual change i.e. commercial properties, farms and industrial sites. Low visitor numbers. Few long views, contained landscape with frequent visual barriers to contain development. Usually considerable scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.

2.7 Landscape Capacity

“Landscape capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape type or character area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.”

Landscape Character Sensitivity + Visual Sensitivity + Landscape Value = Landscape Capacity

A gradations of capacity for identified character areas are based on the high (**h**), moderate (**m**), low (**l**) or no capacity (**nc**). This represents the capacity of a particular area to absorb development without significant adverse effects.

2.8 Character Area Landscape Capacity Evaluation

The areas of search have been identified by Rother District Council in the *Brief for the Core Strategy Landscape Assessment* (February 2007(8)). These are broadly areas around Bexhill and Hastings which have been identified through previous studies and the Council’s “Core Strategy: Issues and Options” document.

The capacity of each character area is assessed and set into tables with relevant figures in volume 2 of this report.

Using this information an overall assessment can be made for each character area and on the capacity to accept the type of change being considered. This judgement is made according to the combination of characteristics that contribute to a particular area of landscape.

The capacity of an area to accept change is related to the potential of the area to accommodate development in a particular location without detracting from the overall character of the broader landscape. *In this context the capacity is not a reflection of the scale of potential development* and in all cases defined boundaries to the potential development areas will be identified as part of the second stage of mapping or site analysis. The capacity evaluation for each character area does not assume that this should have the same capacity across the entire potential development area.

The capacity for business use is based on the assumption that this would be light industrial type uses which would be consistent with a residential environment. These would be single storey units which could be considered as part of a mixed use development.

2.9 Mitigation

The tables also identify the potential of a character area to accommodate the required landscape mitigation for development. The potential to mitigate change in a particular landscape will depend on the factors which determine the character of the landscape. This will help to determine the visual and character sensitivity of the landscape. The potential for mitigation is scored as considerable, moderate or low.

This assessment of potential for landscape mitigation is based on the following set of factors:

- the need to improve the landscape structure
- the need to restore lost landscape features such as hedges and woods
- the need to restore degraded landscape
- the need to soften hard urban edges
- whether mitigation would detract from the sense of place
- whether the site is already well contained and not visible in the wider landscape.

Outline mitigation is indicated in Volume two through the indicative development “cells” and the commentary in the tables. This incorporates:

- Retention and management of existing landscape features
- New woodland planting to link with existing
- New tree belts to link with existing
- Creation of multifunctional green networks as planting, open space or recreational corridors.

The detailed landscape mitigation would need to be part of a detailed development brief for each area selected for development.

2.10 AONBs and AONB Buffer Zones

The AONB boundaries are identified in the relevant mapping. The character of the landscape is not assessed on the basis of landscape designations but on the intrinsic characteristic of a particular area. Designations are also for the planning policy layer of consideration, which is outside of the scope of this assessment. The analysis of the capacity of the landscape as described in section 2.7 above takes in to account all of the relevant factors including any

designations. Designated landscapes would be scored as higher value than non designated landscapes by virtue of the designation. When the various factors are considered, an assessment of the capacity can be made. It is possible for an area of landscape within an AONB to have a lower quality score and/or lower visual and character sensitivity than an undesignated landscape elsewhere. From this point of view therefore, it may be possible for areas within the AONB to have greater capacity for development from a landscape point of view than areas outside the AONB.

There is in effect a buffer zone to the AONB landscape this will be identified in the mapping as appropriate. This is usually an area of similar character but not of the same quality as the AONB landscape and not covered by the same planning policies. These areas will be mapped on the Stage 1 mapping. This is supported by East Sussex Brighton and Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 AONB policy EN2 (f) is as follows:

“Conserving and enhancing landscape quality and character will be the primary objective in the Sussex Downs and High Weald AONBs. This will be sought through measures including :-

f)... minimising the impact of any development within AONBs, or close to them and affecting their setting, by measures to carefully integrate the development into the AONB landscape and, where appropriate, providing compensating environmental resource for any necessary loss that is accepted.”

These buffer zones will be identified through the character area analysis and mapped. The relative sensitivity of these areas will be considered according to the landscape character to achieve a balanced comparison with AONB and non AONB landscapes.

2.11 Mapping

All of the mapping is presented as one in Volume 2 but has been through two stages:

Stage 1

Landscape character areas have been defined for each search area.

All designations within the areas of search relating to landscape, biodiversity, historical and Public Rights of Way have been indicated.

Consideration of key views, focal points and landscape features and detractors.

This mapping is accompanied with the Character Area Capacity Evaluation summary table for each search area. This indicates the capacity to accept change in each area.

Stage 2

Stage 2 mapping follows a site analysis process for each of the areas considered to have some capacity for change and identifies potential development areas with indicative boundaries. Within these areas any significant landscape features which would need to be retained and protected are indicated. In addition a minimum area of at least 10% of the land area would need to be allocated for new landscape infrastructure. The exact requirement would depend on the sensitivity of the local landscape and need for mitigation. In some areas green network requirements are mapped in the form of open space, woodland and tree belts. This is where these features would be required as essential landscape mitigation, in addition to the 10% minimum green infrastructure.

The green networks would include key landscape features such as tree belts, hedges, stream corridors and ancient track ways. They also identify areas of landscape which should be retained as open corridors in the landscape in order to preserve visual, recreational, biodiversity or historic features.

The stage 2 mapping identifies key woods, shaws, hedges and tree belts within these areas as well as other landscape features.

Where appropriate the stage 2 mapping indicates the potential for mitigation planting to link with existing landscape features, notably woods and shaws.

2.12 Potential Development Area Comparison

Within the character areas identified as having some capacity for development, areas have been outlined as broad development areas.

A comparative analysis of the development potential of the different character areas has been carried out to identify preferred options within each search area.

- The potential development areas are assessed in the Potential Development Area Comparison tables (table 2) and the mapping, in Volume 2 of the report,

These tables identify all of the potential development areas which would have some capacity for residential or possibly mixed development. Where the potential development areas are limited to infill areas or brown field sites these have not been mapped and there are no measured areas identified on the comparison tables.

The tables indicate the approximate potential development area for each character area, these are totals and may be comprised of several separate sites, as identified on the mapping.

The areas of developable land would need to allow for green infrastructure within the areas but the main landscape structure has been omitted from the measured areas albeit that the development briefs will need to fully recognise the need for an integrated landscape structure for each area, Where there is a particular landscape sensitivity, areas are identified in the mapping which must be retained as open space or planted as new woodland in order to properly integrate proposed development in to the character of the area. It is assumed that existing woodland, shaws and significant hedgerows would be retained as part of any green infrastructure. Open space provision would need to be in accordance with PPG 17 requirements and Rother District Council's open space strategies.

The tables indicate the density of development which may be appropriate to the location. This is based on the visual sensitivity of the sites and other characteristics including those of other adjacent development. The scale, form and massing of adjacent development should be a guide to new development. This has also informed where light industrial business development may be appropriate as part of a mixed use development. Where existing built up areas are not in keeping with the local character any new development should aim to enhance the existing situation. In this way "hard" urban edges to the countryside could be improved with new development and associated green infrastructure.

The following average housing densities are assumed:

Up to 30 dwellings per hectare = Low density (large detached houses in gardens 'Arcadia')

30 – 40 dwellings per hectare = Medium density (typical two storeys and semi-detached)
40 and above dwellings per hectare = High density (terraced housing, some 3 storeys)

The development opportunities of each character area have been given a preference score within each search area of High, Medium or Low. This preference is a relative comparison between sites in each search area. A high scoring in this context does not mean the area has high capacity for development. The scoring identifies the preferred site for each search area, purely from a landscape point of view and does not take in to consideration other planning constraints such as accessibility. This will identify the sites of greatest landscape potential for development in each search area. This is judged purely from a landscape perspective and is based on the assessment work carried out as a part of this report to identify the capacity of these areas to accommodate development.

Designated sites of nature conservation, archaeological and cultural significance have been mapped and taken into consideration in the identification of potential development areas. This would not preclude the need for site specific ecological or archaeological surveys if these sites were to be considered for further study.

Similarly broad flood risk areas have been mapped from the East Sussex County Council GIS mapping. Detailed hydrological studies and updated information from the Environment Agency would be required for specific site studies.

The key factors in determining potential development area Preferences for each search area include opportunities to contain and mitigate the effects of development and to strengthen the landscape structure. It is inevitable however, that major development will result in a change of landscape character. There may be additional issues which will need to be addressed in relation to providing compensatory measures to minimise the loss of environmental capital from the development. The issue of compensation has not been fully addressed in this report as it takes as its starting point, the given of a need for the development and therefore the loss of some environmental resource as a result of it.

2.13 Comparison between Development Potential in Search Areas.

The brief calls for a comparison of the landscape implications of major development in the respective areas of search, as refined through the assessment process.

The final table compares the potential development areas in each of the search areas for major development – say in excess of 300 units – based upon the assessments carried out. The comparison takes into account all the development potential in each search area and not just the preferred areas in each one.

The table 3 compares the development opportunities of the search areas in order of preference from a landscape point of view. The judgement is based upon a combination of outputs from the previous tables, a professional view and an ability to meet the requirements of the brief for major development.

2.14 Type of development and relationship to previous studies.

The brief calls for this assessment to be related to previous studies. There are two key factors which generate a different context for this study compared with the previous one. Firstly the need for further development sites has increased and the previously available space at North East

Bexhill is no longer available to this plan period. Secondly, since the publication of those studies, the methodology guidance has changed and to be consistent with national standards, this assessment has been carried out independently of previous work. However in the concluding summary to the report, reference will be made to the results of previous work and any significant differences.

Most of the results of this assessment will be covered in the tables and mapping. The tables will give indications of appropriate types of development for particular areas and this will be summarised in the concluding parts of the report.

3.0 Assessment of Search Areas

3.1 Generally

The tables provide the outputs from the assessment process and enable the assessment process to be followed. It is not intended to repeat the content of the tables in this section but to add brief comment where it is considered appropriate to aid in the understanding of the assessment.

3.2 Area 1 Freezeland

The assessment of this area has had in mind that any development here would follow that in North East Bexhill. In these circumstances the context for the eastern part of the site would be very different, with development at Preston Hall being much closer than existing development.

The area already has a strong urban fringe character and this will be strengthened by the NE Bexhill scheme. Whilst the area is quite sloping, the slope is towards the existing and future urban area and would have little effect upon the wider countryside and can remain well contained.

There was some ambiguity about the northern boundary of the area in the area of Cole Wood but it has been taken to the natural boundary which is close to the edge of the woodland.

Generally there is a good tree structure upon which to build a spatial design in the development brief and the mapping indicates in general terms the spatial "cells" which may be created whilst conserving the existing structure.

The three character areas within this search area all display great development opportunities whilst drawing upon the strong existing landscape character and using it to the benefit of the development. No allowance has been made for a significant road corridor which may be needed with this area but it would appear that **this area alone could provide the 1000 houses which is being sought in the plan period.**

3.3 Area 2 - Lunsford Cross

This is a ridge top site which has a mix of uses, some of which are urban fringe in character. However, the location, whilst related to some urban development does need some careful design in order to avoid the creation of a hill top eyesore. It may be that the community at Lunsford Cross could be enriched by some development of a village green style but this is not likely to be on the scale of a major development.

It is considered that this site should not be brought forward during this plan period because it is a natural extension of Freezeland. However, there would be merit in bringing forward advanced tree planting to enable it to be available for future plans and to enhance the area generally.

3.4 Area 3 - Gotham

From a landscape point of view this area has some strong characteristics which could enable it to deliver some high quality development. It is however further removed from the existing urban area than some other sites and like Lunsford Cross should be considered in a later phase of development for Bexhill. However it does have advantages over Lunsford Cross in that it already has a strong landscape structure over a significant part of the site which can provide a robust framework for development and creation of

communities and which can be strengthened for overall environmental advantage in the long term.

There are significant parts of the search area which should not be developed from a landscape point of view, but that still leaves a capacity which can be regarded as major development in the longer term and after development takes place to the south.

Clearly development in this area would represent some loss of countryside but the strong benefits are that it can draw upon the strength of character and remain self contained with minimal effect upon the wider countryside.

3.5 Area 4 - Little Common

From a landscape point of view the eastern portion of this search area presents a robust opportunity for major development, in the face of need. Being relatively self contained and exhibiting a strong tree structure it may lend itself to a phased development whilst retaining the best of what the landscape has to offer but within the context of urban character rather than countryside.

Clearly there would be a loss of countryside as a result of development but the effects upon the wider countryside could be well contained. Indeed some of the best of what the place has to offer could be incorporated into the open space structure with valley and hill top spaces contributing to local sustainability and access to natural green space.

It is considered that this area runs a close second to Freezeland and given the difference in character may be worthy of partial development concurrently.

3.6 Area 5 – Barnhorn

This area displays a wide variety of landscape both in character and quality and consequently in development potential and character.

The eastern part of the site, whilst not as large as Little Common, has the potential for development of a distinctive community either related to what already exists or self contained, with less overall impact, if a smaller development is sought in the locality during this plan period. Equally it could complement development on the Little Common area.

The other identified area offers opportunity for distinctive high quality architectural design which responds to the special setting. This should necessarily be of a different form of development to either Barnhorne Farm or Little Common. A development with special design could be a triumph but poor design could result in an environmental disaster.

Table 3 has indicated that this search area should be rated third in order of preference. Within that it should be recognised that Barnhorne Farm is of a higher preference than Barnhorne Manor and Barnhorne manor should only be developed if a suitable design is ensured. Considering the risk attached to this, it would be reasonable to not bring forward that part of this search area during this plan period.

3.7 Area 6 – Green Street

This area is one of three being considered on the west side of Hastings.

The area is adjacent to the High Weald AONB and should be considered to be a part of the buffer zone between the AONB and non designated landscape and have a role in protecting the Nationally recognised landscape.

Apart from this important issue, the area is remote countryside with a strong rural character. Its development would represent a loss of countryside which could not be contained and would have a wider effect upon surrounding countryside, unlike, say that at Little Common, Freezeland or Barnhorne Farm.

It is considered that this area is entirely unsuitable for any form of built development which is not “rooted” in the needs of the rural landscape. It has therefore been discounted from any list of sites with development

opportunities.

3.8 Area 7 – Lower Wilting

Although this area is relatively close to urban areas it is entirely detached from it by the railway, Marline Valley Woods and landform. It is rural landscape strongly related to the valley of the Decoy Stream and Marline Valley Woods. It presents little which could be considered to relate it to the town. This will not be changed when the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road is constructed.

Although there are some significant buildings on a part of the area, these are entirely related to agriculture, even though there is an air of gentrification about the houses involved.

It has not been possible to assess the effects of gaining access to this area but given the landform, railway and wildlife constraints, it is anticipated that the effects would be severe.

Although there is theoretically a limited opportunity for built development at Lower Wilting, the strong recommendation from the Landscape Assessment is that it should not be considered for the purposes of meeting any of the housing needs of the area.

3.9 Area 8 – Upper Wilting

Of the three character areas comprising this search area the majority of the area is entirely unsuitable for development from a landscape point of view.

The area is farmland and has a strong rural character, even though parts of the town can be seen from parts of the area. Upper Wilting Farmhouse is a fine grade 2 listed building and the farm land provides its setting on the crown of the ridge, where it forms a local landmark from at least three points of the compass. There are woodlands and some good hedgerows which provide some degree of containment but there is a strong relationship between the search area and the Combe Haven Valley, which is SSSI and the whole area is the proposed Pebsham Countryside Park. The area is a part of the green gap between Bexhill and St Leonards and development here is likely to encroach upon that gap, reducing the integrity of both settlements.

The Bexhill to Hastings Link Road will pass across the northern part of the farm but will not change the character of the search area, other than introducing some more noise and reducing remoteness. The Link road will not enable easier access to the search area and this will be a key consideration in the suitability of any part of the search area for development. As with Lower Wilting, it has not been possible to assess the effects of access to the area but it is expected that it would only worsen the effects. For the purposes of the assessment, it has been assumed that access to the two areas where there may be some marginal opportunity for development will be from the new Crowhurst Road to the north through the railway embankment.

The assessment has suggested that there are two limited areas with low capacity for change and which would need significant mitigation works to make them viable. Even with the appropriate measures, the amount of development which may be realised is such as to make it not of a scale for consideration in the needs for major development. The Landscape Assessment comes to the view that even this limited development should only be considered as a last resort, where the need is very strong.

It is understood that there are plans for a new station in the Wilting area. Should this be feasible then it may be appropriate to consider some of the limited areas for complementary development, provided access is under the railway from the north. However, this is considered to be outside the scope and purposes of this study.

5.0 Conclusions

The previous studies for development at West Bexhill considered opportunities at Gotham and Little Common in comparison with North East Bexhill. It did not consider the other areas addressed in this study.

At that time the housing needs could be met in North East Bexhill without the need to take additional land. The issue at that time was therefore whether West Bexhill should be considered as preferable to North East Bexhill. The study came to the firm conclusion that North East Bexhill was preferable to West Bexhill at that time. This is still the view of the Landscape Group and was supported by the Inspector at the Public Inquiry into objections to the District Local Plan.

The scenario for the Local Development Framework is one in which all the capacity of North East Bexhill is taken up and additional areas are now needed. This assessment therefore uses up to date assessment methods to assist in establishing an order of preference for the range of areas suggested by the District Council, from a landscape point of view. The assessment embraces sites previously considered and others, which tend to be land within 1km of the existing urban edge of Bexhill and Hastings, within Rother District.

There is some strong direction which comes from the assessment:-

- West Bexhill should be considered strongly preferable to West Hastings.
- Sites at Freezeland and Little Common should form the next phases of new development in Bexhill. Freezeland is a logical extension of North East Bexhill and so is marginally preferable to Little Common.
- In the event that inadequate land is brought forward in the most preferred areas, the eastern part of Barnhorn (Barnhorne Farm) should be considered as a very appropriate site for development.
- There is major development potential at Gotham, Lunsford Cross and Western Barnhorn (Barnhorn Manor) but these should only be considered if Little Common, Freezeland and Barnhorn East respectively are fully developed in advance of them.
- Areas in West Hastings are inappropriate for major development from a landscape point of view. The only potential for development which may be considered would be related to facilitating the creation of a new railway station with an access from the new section of Crowhurst Road under the railway line, through the railway embankment. Any such development should be very limited in scale and to the south of Upper Wilting Farmhouse.
- No development should be considered at Green Street and unless a satisfactory access can be devised, no development should be considered at Lower Wilting.

Each of the prospective development areas, if brought forward, must be the subject of a detailed development brief which needs to consider the detail of community design, implications of access, landscape structure, mitigation and compensation works.

It must be acknowledged that any of these developments would generate a loss of countryside and environmental resource, for which good practice, if not policy would suggest that compensation measures should be put in place. Such measures may be through helping to facilitate enhancement of other areas which would be accessible to the community, such as Pebsham Countryside Park and other urban fringe open spaces.

It is clear that, if the need exists for new "green field" development, the West of Bexhill can provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the 1000 houses being sought. The strategy for the phasing of development should also be considered from a landscape point of view in order to minimise landscape effects and maximise benefits.

It may appear that significantly more capacity has been identified through this study than that being sought. It must however, be stressed that the areas of opportunity being identified represent a finite resource and push the limits of development opportunities in Bexhill for the long term. The outcomes of the study suggests that long term landscape implementation planning, for the area can reap real benefits for community and development alike.

END

Appendix 1

Consultancy Brief – February 2007

ROTHER LDF CORE STRATEGY

LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

Purpose

1. Specialist advice is sought on the landscape character and quality of certain 'areas of search' for major strategic development in Rother district.
2. This should enable a comparative landscape assessment, which should also be undertaken, of all strategic development options to help inform the LDF 'Preferred Options', due to be published this Spring.

Background

3. Rother District Council is presently required to provide a total of 4,000 dwellings in the coastal areas of the district over the period 2006-2026.
4. In the Rother District Local Plan, it has already allocated some 100 hectares of land to the north-east of Bexhill for a major urban extension which will accommodate some 1,100 dwellings as well as some 48,000sq.m. of business floorspace.
5. It is anticipated that, having taken account of this strategic development (that is dependent upon the construction of the Link Road), as well as existing commitments and the potential for redevelopment with existing urban areas, there will be an outstanding requirement for new greenfield allocation(s) for some 1,000 dwellings and associated facilities and business space.
6. The Council's 'Core Strategy: Issues and Options' document identified three broad locations to be considered:
 1. West Bexhill
 2. North Bexhill
 3. Western fringe of Hastings, notably the Wilting area
7. There has been a detailed 'Landscape Assessment' for the North East Bexhill Development Areas undertaken by the County Council's Landscape Group for the District Council in September 2004. This assessment essentially considered the area of the allocations contained in the Revised Deposit Local Plan as well as immediately adjoining areas.
8. The western area of Bexhill, north of the A259, was also the subject of a Landscape Assessment in October 2004.
9. These assessments were undertaken as refinements of the 'Landscape Study', which was presented in June 1992 as a background paper for the North Bexhill Strategic Framework. This Study considered the whole of the Bexhill urban fringe wrapping around the town from the A259 in the west back to the A259 in the east. That is, it was all encompassing with the exception of that land on the edges of the Levels in the west, extending south of the A259 to the coast.

Scope and Main Tasks

10. Areas of search around Bexhill, defined having regard to flood risk, nature conservation, and other relevant planning designations, and reflecting the scale of required development for the sub-region, are shown on Figure 1 attached. Figure 2 similarly shows the areas of search to the west of Hastings.
11. Consultants are invited to propose a detailed methodology, utilising existing information as much as possible, to be able to:
 - i) Provide a consistent overall framework for landscape assessment of options for strategic development areas around Bexhill and on the western fringes of Hastings
 - ii) Specifically assess the strategic 'areas of search' identified on Figures 1 and 2 in the context of their relationship to landscape character areas
 - iii) Compare the landscape implications of major development in the respective areas of search, as refined through the assessment process
12. This will involve the following tasks:
 - a) Relate the assessment to earlier work as referred to above
 - b) Identify critical landscape features of the 'areas of search' and parts thereof
 - c) Identify the visual impact of development on both the setting of existing built-up areas and the character of the surrounding countryside, with specific reference to the AONB
 - d) Identify the extent to which major development may be satisfactorily accommodated within each area of search in landscape terms, and with what, if any, significant mitigation measures
 - e) Give specific consideration of the extent to which the form of development (eg "urban village", "woodland clearing", "hilltop community") may either help assimilate development or help create a "new landscape" in each area

Outputs

13. Two copies of the typed and suitably illustrated report are expected and one electronic version (in Word/PDF format) fulfilling the requirements of the Brief.

Submission

14. A submission is invited for the above work. This should be received by 8th February by letter or email setting out:
 - A fixed fee for the work as set out in this brief
 - The name(s), qualifications and experience of the person(s) undertaking the work.
15. Allowance should be made for an inception meeting and a meeting to discuss the draft Report. A draft report is required as soon as practicable to input to related studies, and in any event, no later than 29th February 2008. The final report will be required within 10 days of receipt of feedback on the draft.
16. Having regard to the extent of available information, a budget for the cost of this work, inclusive of expenses but exclusive of VAT, has been identified as being c£5,000.

Reporting Arrangements

17. The work will be overseen by:

David Marlow
Principal Planning Officer
Rother District Council
Town Hall
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex
TN39 3JX

Telephone: (01424) 787639

Email: david.marlow@rother.gov.uk

NOTE – The plans showing the search areas as proposed in this brief are in Volume 2.

Appendix 2

Landscape Character Assessment Sheets

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 1

Location: **Freezels 1A**
 from footpath at top of ridge
 Direction of View: South

Date: 21.02.08

Photograph



Brief description

Grazed south facing hillside with some good surrounding trees and hedges but internal hedges heavily cropped. Essentially heavily farmed/grazed – horses.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	x	walls	woodland (surrounding mixed)	x	river	footpath	x
churches		fences	plantation		stream	track	x
masts, poles	x	hedges	isolated trees		lake	road	
pylons	x	banks	tree clumps		reservoir	motorway	
industry		shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x	pond	railway	
vernacular buildings		field pattern	parkland		canal		
settlement (type)		arable	scrub		waterfall		
built-up		pasture	marsh	x	beach		
mineral working		orchards			dune		
ruins					mudflat		

Landform		
flat		plain
undulating	x	rolling lowland
rolling		plateau
steep		hills
vertical		scarp
sloping	x	cliff
		coast
		estuary
		broad valley
		narrow valley
		deep gorge

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	x	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small		medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed	x	open	exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple		diverse	x complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	vacant		peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	interrupted		fragmented	x chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular		curved	x sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe		unsettling	x threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland	x	interesting	invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant		pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Fair to medium – farmed.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Farming.

Conservation

Retain and manage hedges.

Restoration

Restore hedges and screen buildings.

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

The ridge to north defines extent of developable area but otherwise it has significant potential.

Visual appraisal

A few houses nearby on main road but otherwise fairly localised.

Types of view

Fairly enclosed.

Visual barriers

Hedges with trees.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Good with distribution of trees within the site to ease effect upon areas to south.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 2

Location: **Freezlands 1B** from
Valley floor
Direction of View: West

Date: 21.02.08

Photograph



Brief description

Small fields with strong treed hedgerows. Presenting an intimate small scale landscape with strong rural character but degraded by horse-culture and caravan type dwelling and some urban fringe character. Ridge is key defining feature and then hedges. Stream a key feature.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	x	walls	woodland (mixed)	x	river	footpath	x	
churches		fences	x	plantation	stream	x	track	x
masts, poles		hedgerows	x	isolated trees	lake		road	
pylons		banks		tree clumps	x	reservoir	motorway	
industry		shelterbelt		hedgerow trees	x	pond	railway	
vernacular buildings		field pattern	x	parkland		canal		
settlement (type)		arable		scrub	x	waterfall		
built-up		pasture	x	marsh		beach		
mineral working		orchards				dune		
ruins						mudflat		

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating x	rolling lowland	estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	hills	narrow valley x
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	x	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small	x	medium	large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed	x	open	exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple		diverse	x complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	vacant		peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	x	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular		curved	x sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe		unsettling	x threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland		interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant		pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Fair to poor – horsey culture.
Hedgerows with trees are good.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Retain hedges with trees to form a framework for development.

Conservation

Trees, hedges and stream.

Restoration

Valley character as a core to development.

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Good – with strong landscape structure creating local communities.

Visual appraisal

A few houses.

Types of view

Enclosed.

Visual barriers

Trees and hedges.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Yes, use and develop the existing structure of trees and hedges.
Good development site.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 3

Location: **Freezelsands 1C** – from top
 of ridge to north

Date: 21.02.08

Direction of View: South

Photograph



Brief description

Area very similar to 1A but better farmed and with little horsey-culture – more sheep and a little arable. Open a little to south but this is either developed or to be developed. Valley key feature with treed hedges and ridge to north.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	walls	woodland (mixed)	x	river	footpath	x
churches	fences	plantation	x	stream	track	x
masts, poles	x	hedgerow trees	x	lake	road	
pylons	banks	tree clumps		reservoir	motorway	
industry	shelterbelt	x	hedgerow trees	x	pond	railway
vernacular buildings	x	field pattern	x	parkland	canal	
settlement (type)	arable (a little)		scrub		waterfall	
built-up	pasture	x	marsh		beach	
mineral working	orchards				dune	
ruins					mudflat	

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 4

Location: **Lunsford Cross 2A**
 Next to stile on public footpath.

Date: 21.02.08

Direction of View: North west

Photograph



Brief description

Two fields on north of ridge which is defined by good treed hedgerow.
 Long open views make very exposed.
 Good boundary hedges, but slope negates their benefit to north.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	walls	woodland (type)	river	footpath
churches	fences	x plantation	stream	track
masts, poles	x hedges	x isolated trees	lake	road
pylons	banks	tree clumps	reservoir	motorway
industry	shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x pond	railway
vernacular buildings	field pattern	parkland	canal	
settlement (type)	arable	scrub	waterfall	
built-up	pasture	x marsh	beach	
mineral working	orchards		dune	
ruins			mudflat	

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 5

Location: **Lunsford Cross 2B**
St Johns Ambulance camping
site and a field
Direction of View: North east

Date: 21.02.08

Photograph



Brief description

Two fields at top of ridge, with some good hedges, which provide a significant degree of containment. Larger field used for camping, and smaller for grazing.
Large St John's buildings – garage and recreation buildings.

Landcover and landscape elements

camping buildings	x	walls	woodland (type)	river	footpath
churches		fences	x	plantation	track
masts, poles		hedges	x	isolated trees	road
pylons		banks		tree clumps	reservoir
industry		shelterbelt		hedgerow trees	x
pond				pond	railway
vernacular buildings		field pattern	x	canal	
settlement (type)		arable		waterfall	
built-up		pasture	x	beach	
mineral working		orchards		dune	
ruins				mudflat	

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	estuary
rolling	plateau	x broad valley
steep	hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	discordant	x	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small	medium	x	large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed	x	open	exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple	diverse	x	complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	vacant	peaceful	x	active
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	x	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular	curved	x	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe	x	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland	x	interesting	invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant	pleasant	x	beautiful

Landscape Condition

Fit for purpose but not making the most of landscape character.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

More effort with hedges – thicker to tree belts.

Conservation

Hedges work.

Restoration

Hedges.

Reconstruction

Review appearance of camping site and reinstate landscape features to create an attractive space.

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Moderate ability when hedgerows thickened – may need to keep back from camping field north boundary.

Visual appraisal

Distant receptors, houses but few – a few local to camping field.

Types of view

Obscured long views south – limited north from camping field.

Visual barriers

Hedges and trees.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Yes by widening hedgerows and incorporating trees – maybe village green approach to development.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 6

Location: **Lunsford Cross 2C** view from ridge top

Date: 21.02.08

Direction of View: South

Photograph



Brief description

Undulating south facing slopes backed by good ridge top tree belt/hedge, related to town to south, brickworks and cemetery.

Slopes a bit more at western end and becomes a little more exposed so it might drop to medium to low preference at that end, but similar character.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	x	walls	woodland (mixed)	x	river	footpath	x
churches		fences	plantation		stream	track	
masts, poles	x	hedges	isolated trees		lake	road	
pylons		banks	tree clumps		reservoir	motorway	
industry	x	shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x	pond	railway	
vernacular buildings		field pattern	parkland		canal		
settlement (type)		arable	scrub	x	waterfall		
built-up		pasture	marsh		beach		
mineral working		orchards			dune		
ruins					mudflat		

Landform		
flat		plain
undulating	x	rolling lowland
rolling		plateau
steep		hills
vertical		scarp
		cliff
		coast
		estuary
		broad valley
		narrow valley
		deep gorge

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	x	balanced	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate		small	medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined		enclosed	open	x exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth		textured	x rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome		muted	x colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform		simple	diverse	x complex
MOVEMENT:	remote		vacant	peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified		interrupted	x fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight		angular	curved	x sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable		safe	x unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring		bland	interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive		unpleasant	pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Well farmed grazing.
Hedgerows/tree belt could be better managed.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Trees and hedgerows – produce better continuity.

Conservation

Trees and hedgerows.

Restoration

Strengthen hedgerows.

Reconstruction

Break up exposed slopes with more treed hedgerows.

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Good ability because of relationship with/aspect to urban area to south.
Need good tree cover to maintain character - overall woody appearance so create spaces and corridors amongst dense development plots.

Visual appraisal

Various houses but fairly distant.

Types of view

Long – to urban area and brick works.

Visual barriers

Trees and hedges.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Yes with good tree cover – retaining and developing what is there.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 7

Location: **Gotham – 3A** view from south east corner

Date: 25.02.08

Direction of View: North west

Photograph



Brief description

Medium to relatively large fields with good treed hedgerows, relatively low lying contained by woodland to north and treed hedges to south. Strong countryside character is marred by caravans to north and occasional views or urban edge to south.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	x	walls	woodland (type)	river	footpath	x
churches		fences	x	plantation	stream	x
masts, poles	x	hedgerows	x	isolated trees	lake	road (minor)
pylons		banks		tree clumps	reservoir	motorway
industry	x	shelterbelt		hedgerow trees	x	pond
vernacular buildings		field pattern	x	parkland		canal
settlement (type)		arable		scrub		waterfall
built-up		pasture	x	marsh		beach
mineral working		orchards				dune
ruins						mudflat

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	x	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small		medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed	x	open	exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple		diverse	x complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	vacant		peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	x	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular	x	curved	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe	x	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland		interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant		pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Generally well grazed fields and good treed hedges. Generally in good condition.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Manage tree and hedge structure – much as existing.

Conservation

Manage hedges and break up field sizes where possible

Restoration

Review and reduce field sizes with more treed hedgerows.

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Significant opportunity for development after the area to the south – real opportunity for a new community as an adjunct to Bexhill using the good quality existing structure, need green linkages and access to countryside – High Woods becomes very important resource. This could all be developed without far reaching landscape consequences. Care needed to define extent of development at Kloofs

Visual appraisal

Various houses to north and caravan site.

Types of view

Medium length but all within the potential development area.

Visual barriers

Trees and hedges and longer distance ridge lines and woods.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Very good, provided a comprehensive development plan is adopted.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 8

Location: **Gotham 3B** from public
 footpath along the ridge
 towards the west.

Date: 25.02.08

Direction of View: East

Photograph



Brief description

West of Sandhurst Lane the hedgerows are a little less robust and become more so, the further west you go. Fields towards the larger size but area becomes increasingly more open until the most western fields are very open. The character is related to the levels, particularly to west and south. Remote feel, in spite of unsavoury waste uses on the lane.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	walls	woodland (type)	river	footpath
churches	fences x	plantation	stream x	track
masts, poles	hedges x	isolated trees	lake	road
pylons	banks	tree clumps	reservoir	motorway
industry	shelterbelt	hedgerow trees x	pond	railway
vernacular buildings	field pattern x	parkland	canal	
settlement (type)	arable	scrub	waterfall	
built-up	pasture x	marsh	beach	
mineral working	orchards		dune	
ruins			mudflat	

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	x	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small		medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed		open	x exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple		diverse	x complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	vacant		peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	x interrupted		fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular	x	curved	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe	x	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland		interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant		pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Well managed farmland - grazing.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Keep the existing open character relating the area to Levels, Downs and Hooe ridge so existing treed hedges should not be managed as continuously as 3A.

Conservation

As existing.

Restoration

N/A

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Absolutely no capacity in western part and slightly more enclosed eastern fields are sensitive and should be resisted for development. Pragmatically the lane should be the limit with some of 3B being a buffer, open space area. Even the caravan areas to north are marginal but built development could be less intrusive.

Visual appraisal

Several rural properties view the area and footpaths.

Types of view

Very long from the western areas and gradually increase from east to west.

Visual barriers

Trees and hedges.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Very little potential the further west you go, but some limited scope in the eastern fields if the need for development here is essential.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 9

Location: **Little Common 4A** from
Public footpath on the ridge
Direction of View: North

Date: 22.02.08

Photograph



Brief description

High ground, as a promontory from Bamhorn to the north – defined by streams and low laying land. Countryside, which is not related to town but embraced by lanes.

Long views from high ground give a spacious “on the top of the world” feeling where trees and hedges have little influence, except for defining the field units.

Some urban fringe horsey culture to south but farming otherwise – all quite well managed.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings – few	x	Walls	woodland (type)	river	footpath	x
churches		Fences	x	plantation	stream	track
masts, poles	x	Hedges	x	Isolated trees	lake	road
pylons		Banks		tree clumps	reservoir	motorway
industry		shelterbelt		hedgerow trees	x	pond
vernacular buildings		field pattern	x	parkland		canal
settlement (type)		Arable		scrub – a little	x	waterfall
built-up		Pasture	x	Marsh		beach
mineral working		Orchards				dune
ruins						mudflat

Landform		
flat	Plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	Hills	narrow valley
vertical	Scarp	deep gorge
	Cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	x	Balanced	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate		Small	Medium to large	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined		Enclosed	open	x exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth		Textured	x rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome		Muted	x colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	x	Simple	diverse	complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	x	Vacant	peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified		Interrupted	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight		Angular	curved	x sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable		Safe	x unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring		Bland	interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive		Unpleasant	pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Generally well managed grassland with not so well managed hedgerows and shaws.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Manage hedgerows and shaws.

Conservation

Grassland and hedges continuity.

Restoration

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

There may be some limited opportunity close to urban area but to hill top and north and western slopes would represent significant loss of countryside and affect a large additional area. However there is something of the feeling of the town wanting to burst out here. Suggest limiting to southern fields below the footpath including the two paddocks (one outside the area). Some hill top may be OK in the long term if a strong tree buffer is created but not within the plan period.

Visual appraisal

A few rural properties and urban edge to south but not a big issue.

Types of view

Long open views to north and northwest.

Visual barriers

Trees and hedges in places.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Would need to develop the tree cover but mitigation on the ridge would take a long time – outside of plan period.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 10

Location: **Little Common 4B** from
Public footpath near mast
Direction of View: North west

Date: 25.02.08

Photograph



Brief description

Small to medium grazed fields with very strong treed hedgerows – strong countryside character and well used for access to countryside. Transmission masts next to footpath.

Views to and from urban edge relates much of the area to urban area.

Some areas with long views should be avoided – say become open spaces.

Strong sense of place mainly because of trees.

Some urban fringe horsey culture.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	walls	woodland (mixed deciduous)	x	river	Footpath – many unofficial	x
churches	fences	plantation	x	stream	track	x
masts, poles	x	hedgerows	x	lake	road	
Pylons (2 masts)	x	banks		reservoir	motorway	
industry	shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x	pond	railway	
vernacular buildings	field pattern	x	parkland	canal		
settlement (type)	arable	scrub	x	waterfall		
built-up	pasture	x	marsh	beach		
mineral working	orchards			dune		
ruins				mudflat		

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	x	balanced	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate		small	medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	Confined in places	x	enclosed	x open	exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth		textured	x rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome		muted	x colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform		simple	diverse	x complex
MOVEMENT:	remote		vacant	peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	x	interrupted	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight		angular	x curved	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable		safe	x unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring		bland	interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive		unpleasant	pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Good, generally well grazed and treed hedgerows, though left to themselves, are very good.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Manage trees and hedgerows.

Conservation

Continuity of trees and hedges.

Restoration

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Very good ability to absorb development within the existing structure.

Green space on some high bits and along stream corridor.

Visual appraisal

Some urban edge houses view the area. Also footpath users gain major appreciation.

Types of view

Apart from a few long views from high ground – most views are limited by treed hedgerows to a few fields.

Visual barriers

Trees and hedges.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Very good scope to contain development and relate it to the existing landscape pattern.

High Woods and other woods to the north provide superb containment to development and strong visual horizon.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 11

Location: **Barnhorn Manor 5A** from Date: 21.2.08
Close to Cooden Nature Reserve
Direction of View: North

Photograph



Brief description

Area of mixed grazing and recreation (caravans) enclosed by treed hedges and the block of woodland.

Strong urban fringe character, with relationship to urban edge and flavour of countryside but very much transitional in character.

Well being of adjacent woodland is important to integrity of 5A, so caravans will need to be removed in woods.

andcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	x	walls	woodland (mixed deciduous)	x	river	footpath	x
churches		fences	x	plantation	stream	x	track
masts, poles	x	hedges	x	isolated trees	lake		road
pylons		banks		tree clumps	reservoir		motorway
industry		shelterbelt		hedgerow trees	x	pond	railway
vernacular buildings		field pattern	x	parkland	canal		
settlement (type)		arable		scrub	waterfall		
built-up		pasture	x	marsh	beach		
mineral working		orchards			dune		
ruins					mudflat		

Landform		
flat		coast
undulating gently	x	rolling lowland
rolling		plateau
steep		hills
vertical		scarp
		cliff
		estuary
		broad valley
		narrow valley
		deep gorge

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	x	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small	x	medium	large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed	x	open	exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple		diverse	x
MOVEMENT:	remote	vacant		peaceful	x
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	x	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular	x	curved	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe	x	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland		interesting	x
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant		pleasant	x
					beautiful

Landscape Condition

Moderate to poor – mix of grazing and recreation.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Tree belts and hedges – hedges could be thickened to strengthen landscape structure.

Conservation

Hedge, trees and woods.

Restoration

Better overall management. Removal of urban edge untidiness.

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Good – subject to strengthening the hedges and using them as structure for defining communities.

Visual appraisal

Some boundary properties.

Types of view

Limited to field units.

Visual barriers

Trees and hedges.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Good. The conservation of existing adjacent woodland is key to successful mitigation.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 12

Location: **Barnhorn Manor 5B** from
public footpath

Date: 21.02.08

Direction of View: North east

Photograph



Brief description

Fields on urban edge – with urban fringe influence and noise related to houses, but rural fringe character.

Scrubby but significant hedges breaking up skyline.

Edge of levels feel but without remoteness.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	walls	woodland (type)	river	footpath
churches	fences	x plantation	stream	x track
masts, poles	hedges	x isolated trees	lake	road
pylons	banks	tree clumps	reservoir	motorway
industry	shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x pond	railway
vernacular buildings	field pattern	x parkland	canal	
settlement (type)	arable	scrub	x waterfall	
built-up	pasture	x marsh	beach	
mineral working	orchards		dune	
ruins	x		mudflat	

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland - gentle	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	x	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small		medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed	x	open	exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	x simple		diverse	complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	vacant		peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	x	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular	x	curved	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe	x	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland		interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant		pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Medium, farmed, but urban fringe elements – horses, etc.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Strengthen hedges and manage grassland.

Conservation

Connectivity of tree/hedge features.

Restoration

Strengthen hedgerows.

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Modest ability to take low profile development with rich woody content – has potential for special character – if special character is not achieved, then it could result in a visual disaster.

Visual appraisal

Urban edge houses – some tall.

Types of view

Open to Downs above hedges.

Visual barriers

Hedges.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Fair to good.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 13

Location: **Barnhorn Manor 5C** - from
 A259 outside of the site

Date: 21.02.08

Direction of View: East

Photograph



Brief description

Similar to 5B but strong relationship to Levels – should be open transition zone between development and levels.

Feeling of remoteness is much stronger than in 5B and open countryside character dominates.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	walls	woodland (type)	river	Footpath
churches	fences	x plantation	stream	x Track
masts, poles	x hedges	x isolated trees	lake	road
pylons	banks	tree clumps	reservoir	Motorway
industry	shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x pond	Railway
vernacular buildings	field pattern	x parkland	canal	
settlement (type)	arable	scrub	x waterfall	
built-up	pasture	x marsh	beach	
mineral working	orchards		dune	
ruins			mudflat	

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland – gentle	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	Hills	narrow valley
vertical	Scarp	deep gorge
	Cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	x	balanced	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate		small	medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined		enclosed	open	x exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth		textured	x rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome		muted	x colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	x	simple	diverse	complex
MOVEMENT:	remote		vacant	peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	x	interrupted	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight		angular	x curved	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable		safe	x unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring		bland	interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive		unpleasant	pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Well grazed – but some horsey culture.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Ensure retention of open character with scrubby hedges and continuity.

Conservation

Hedges and perhaps wet areas.

Restoration

N/A

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Development here would represent a major loss to the integrity of the area. It should be retained and managed as a buffer/transition zone for informal recreation, landscape and wildlife.

Visual appraisal

Few receptors other than walkers.

Types of view

Open.

Visual barriers

Limited hedges and trees.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Very limited.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 14

Location: **Green Street 6A** from
the public road
Direction of View: South west

Date: 22.02.08

Photograph



Brief description

South facing gentle slopes from ridge at Swainham Lane. Large open fields with long distance, open views to Bexhill, Glyne Gap, Upper Wilting Farmhouse. Roadside hedges well cut but other hedges of mixed quality. Marline Valley Woods dominate the character, with Queensway Development peeping over the crest of ridge. Very strong countryside character but with much horse influence, but not urban fringe. Remote countryside.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	x	Walls		woodland (type)		river		footpath	x
Churches		fences	x	plantation		stream		track	
masts, poles	x	hedges	x	isolated trees		lake		road at edge	x
Pylons	x	banks		tree clumps		reservoir		motorway	
Industry		shelterbelt		hedgerow trees	x	pond		railway	
vernacular buildings		field pattern	x	parkland		canal			
settlement (type)		arable	x	scrub		waterfall			
built-up		pasture	x	marsh		beach			
mineral working		orchards				dune			
Ruins						mudflat			

Landform		
Flat	plain	coast
Undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
Rolling	plateau	broad valley
Steep	hills	narrow valley
Vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	x	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small		medium	large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed		open	x exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple		diverse	x complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	x vacant		peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	x	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular		curved	x sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe	x	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland		interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant		pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Managed arable with woodland and rough grass in surrounding visible areas.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Reduce field size and return to pasture with better tree belts and hedges.

Conservation

Improve hedgerow management.

Restoration

N/A

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Development here would represent a major intrusion into countryside – even though the urban edge is visible. When viewed from the urban edge and NE Bexhill development area, it would appear as development in the countryside. Adjacent to AONB boundary and is in AONB buffer zone and would therefore be likely to have detrimental impact on AONB.

Visual appraisal

A few rural houses and urban edge properties.

Types of view

Open to south – to the sea.

Visual barriers

Few because of slope of land but some effect from treed hedges.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Need to generate an overall woody feel so significant open space and tree covered spaces would be needed to mitigate some of the effects.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 15

Location: **Green Street 6B** from Date: 22.02.08
 Swainham Lane
 Direction of View: East

Photograph



Brief description

South facing slopes with views to Countryside Park and Upper Wilting Farm as key feature. Although there are views to urban edge, it is pleasant remote countryside with AONB to north. Strong horsey culture, but well managed in smaller grazing fields with poorly managed but potentially good hedgerows.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	x	walls	woodland (type)	river	footpath
churches		fences	x	plantation	stream
masts, poles	x	hedges	x	isolated trees	lake
pylons	x	banks	tree clumps	reservoir	motorway
industry		shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x	pond
vernacular buildings		field pattern	parkland	canal	railway
settlement (type)		arable	scrub	x	waterfall
built-up		pasture	x	marsh	beach
mineral working		orchards			dune
ruins					mudflat

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	x	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small		medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed		open	x exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple		diverse	x complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	x vacant		peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	x	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular	x	curved	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe	x	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland		interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant		pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Well managed for horse culture – certainly not urban fringe quality.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Strengthen hedgerows and better grassland management.
Benefit from some footpaths to link to mature woods and plants.

Conservation

Hedges.

Restoration

N/A

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

This is countryside and not appropriate for development. Development here would represent a significant intrusion into countryside, whether considered from countryside or the town. Need also to consider the links from Combe Haven to countryside beyond.

Visual appraisal

A number of country residencies. Views from urban edge properties from a distance.

Types of view

Long views to Pebsham and sea.

Visual barriers

Some interruptions by trees and hedges but lay of land negates benefits of that – particularly on upper slopes.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Would need to achieve a strong tree cover to absorb development. This would be difficult to achieve and could never deal with the loss of and intrusion into remote countryside.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 16

Location: **Lower Wilting 7A** from
southern tip.
Direction of View: North

Date: 22.02.08

Photograph



Brief description

A steep, north facing, slope adjacent to the railway line. Relatively self contained but significant views northwards although not really visible from public view points. Strong woody character, albeit a grazed field. Very little relationship with the town although not physically far from it. Strongly related to Marline Valley Woods.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	walls	woodland (mixed deciduous)	x	river	footpath
churches	fences	plantation	x	stream	track
masts, poles	hedges	isolated trees	x	lake	road
pylons	banks	tree clumps		reservoir	motorway
industry	shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x	pond	railway
vernacular buildings	field pattern	parkland	x	canal	
settlement (type)	arable	scrub	x	waterfall	
built-up	pasture	marsh		beach	
mineral working	orchards			dune	
ruins				mudflat	

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	x hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	x	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small		medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed	x	open	exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple		diverse	x complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	vacant		peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	x interrupted		fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular	x	curved	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe	x	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland		interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant		pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Farmed as part of Upper Wilting Farm – medium quality but appropriate to the area.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Manage trees and woodlands.
Continue with grassland.

Conservation

Hedges and woodlands.

Restoration

Tree and Hedgerow management.

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Whilst the area is a part of the relatively self contained search area 7. There would have to be an acceptance of significant countryside loss which would not be greatly changed in character by the construction of the BHLR.

Visual appraisal

A couple of long distance residencies. Nearby houses would be affected but would not necessarily see the development.

Types of view

Long to countryside to north.

Visual barriers

Woodland to south, east and west with landform to east, but lay of land negates benefits to the north.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Would need to generate an overall appearance of woodland with belts of trees east and west along the contours.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 17

Location: **Lower Wilting 7B** from Crowhurst Road.

Date: 22.02.08

Direction of View: North

Photograph



Brief description

A contained narrow valley floor, gently rising to railway line. Very rural in character and detached from town. Strong identity with Decoy Stream and Marline Valley Woods as well as area 7c. Somewhat degraded by the access track to the railway but still strong countryside character.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	walls	woodland (mixed broadleaf)	x	river	footpath
churches	fences	plantation		stream	x track
masts, poles	hedgerows	x isolated trees		lake	road
pylons	banks	tree clumps		reservoir	motorway
industry	shelterbelt	hedgerow trees		pond	railway
vernacular buildings	field pattern	x parkland		canal	
settlement (type)	arable	scrub		waterfall	
built-up	pasture	x marsh		beach	
mineral working	orchards			dune	
ruins				mudflat	

Landform		
flatish	x	plain
undulating		rolling lowland
rolling		plateau
steep		hills
vertical		scarp
		cliff
		coast
		estuary
		broad valley
		narrow valley
		deep gorge

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	x	balanced	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate		small	x	medium
ENCLOSURE:	confined		enclosed	x	open
TEXTURE:	smooth		textured	x	rough
COLOUR:	monochrome		muted	x	colourful
DIVERSITY:	uniform	x	simple		diverse
MOVEMENT:	remote	x	vacant		peaceful
UNITY:	unified		interrupted	x	fragmented
FORM:	straight		angular	x	curved
SECURITY:	comfortable		safe	x	unsettling
STIMULUS:	boring		bland		interesting
PLEASURE:	offensive		unpleasant		pleasant
				x	beautiful

Landscape Condition

Fair.

Access to and works to railway has created a scar on the landscape.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Manage trees and woodland.

Conservation

Make more of the stream.

Restoration

Better management of trees and hedges.

Reconstruction

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Although this is a self contained area, it is fine countryside and development would be a significant loss of countryside. Access to the area, as all of 7 is also likely to further degrade the countryside and be very problematic.

Visual appraisal

Houses in 7c.

Types of view

Few and rural.

Visual barriers

Trees, hedges and woods.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

If the loss of countryside is accepted, retention and management of boundary trees and hedges will be the main mitigation issue.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 18

Location: **Lower Wilting 7C** from Date: 22.02.08

Within 7A

Direction of View: West

Photograph



Brief description

The west side of Decoy Valley with two houses and farm buildings. Relatively self contained but some southerly views. Strong countryside character backed by strong woodland framework. Not related to town at all.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	x	walls	woodland (mixed broadleaf)	x	river	footpath
churches		fences	plantation		stream	track
masts, poles	x	hedges	isolated trees		lake	road
pylons		banks	tree clumps		reservoir	motorway
industry		shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x	pond	railway
vernacular buildings	x	field pattern	parkland		canal	
settlement (type)		arable	scrub	x	waterfall	
built-up		pasture	marsh		beach	
mineral working		orchards			dune	
ruins					mudflat	

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	discordant	x	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small	x	medium	large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed	x	open	exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	colourful	x	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple	diverse	x	complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	x	vacant	peaceful	x
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	fragmented	x	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular	x	curved	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe	unsettling	x	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland	interesting	x	invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant	pleasant	x	beautiful

Landscape Condition

Houses and gardens well kept and surrounding fields generally grazed.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Manage trees and hedges.

Conservation

Manage trees and hedgerows

Restoration

Manage trees and hedgerows

Reconstruction

N/A

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Although there are lots of buildings on the site and it could be argued that more could be accommodated here, the character should remain rural. Significant development would be out of place.

Visual appraisal

Residents of the two houses.

Types of view

Fairly self contained but some southern views from western part of the area and higher up the slopes.

Visual barriers

Trees and woodlands.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Some scope with more trees and woodland but there is real conflict between urban and rural character which could not be accepted here.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 19

Location: **Upper Wilting 8A** from
 Public footpath close to railway
 Direction of View: South

Date: 22.02.08

Photograph



Brief description

Open arable field between railway and woodland but open to views to the south. Strongly related to countryside and woodland in character. South facing valley side. Some relationship with town but clearly countryside and valley landscape in character. Adjacent to SSSI so special conservation measures would be needed.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	walls	woodland (mixed broadleaf)	x	river	footpath	x
churches	fences	plantation		stream	track	
masts, poles	hedgerows	isolated trees	x	lake	road	
pylons	banks	tree clumps		reservoir	motorway	
industry	shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x	pond	railway	
vernacular buildings	field pattern	parkland		canal		
settlement (type)	arable	scrub	x	waterfall		
built-up	pasture	marsh		beach		
mineral working	orchards			dune		
ruins				mudflat		

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley x
steep	hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	x	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small		medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed		open	x exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple	x	diverse	complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	vacant		peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	x interrupted		fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular	x	curved	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe	x	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland		interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant		pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Generally well managed as part of the productive farm.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Develop woodlands and hedge into belts.

Conservation

Manage trees, woodlands and hedges.

Restoration

Improve management related to trees and valley side character.

Reconstruction

N/A

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

Because of the relationship with town, there is a marginal opportunity to carry out limited development here but it would tend to start to enclose the Combe Haven Valley which is entirely uncharacteristic of the area.

Visual appraisal

Views from urban area to south and from Farmhouse at Upper Wilting.

Types of view

Long, to the south.

Visual barriers

Trees and woodland east and west and intermittent to south.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

There is some scope for mitigation with a strong tree cover. Special conservation measures close to SSSI.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 20

Location: **Upper Wilting 8B** from
Public footpath close to railway.

Date: 22.02.08

Direction of View: North west

Photograph



Brief description

Foreground setting to the listed building of Upper Wilting Farmhouse. Arable field with some containment by woodland and treed hedgerow. Clearly countryside in character with limited views of urban area. Adjacent to SSSI so special conservation measures needed.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	x	walls	woodland (mixed broadleaf)	x	river	footpath	x
churches		fences	plantation		stream	track	x
masts, poles	x	hedges	isolated trees		lake	road	
pylons		banks	tree clumps		reservoir	motorway	
industry		shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x	pond	railway	
vernacular buildings	x	field pattern	parkland		canal		
settlement (type)		arable	scrub		waterfall		
built-up		pasture	marsh		beach		
mineral working		orchards			dune		
ruins					mudflat		

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	x	balanced	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate		small	medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined		enclosed	x open	exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth		textured	x rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome		muted	x colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform		simple	x diverse	complex
MOVEMENT:	remote		vacant	peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified		interrupted	x fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight		angular	x curved	sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable		safe	x unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring		bland	interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive		unpleasant	pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Apart from old vehicles, etc., around the farm buildings, the land is well managed farmland.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Manage the woodlands and treed hedgerows. Tidy up around buildings and maintain the setting of listed building.

Conservation

Special measures to protect SSSI and setting of listed building.

Restoration

Tidying up around buildings and general tree and hedgerow management.

Reconstruction

N/A

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

The setting of the listed building limits opportunities for development and coupled with the rural character and SSSI sets strict parameters for designing any built development and limits its extent to that area screened by the woodland.

Visual appraisal

Views from farmhouse, cottages and lodge.

Types of view

Fairly self contained but some long views to south and west.

Visual barriers

Trees and woodland.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Some scope with strong tree cover.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 21

Location: **Upper Wilting 8C** from
private view point on farm

Date: 22.2.08

Direction of View: East

Photograph



Brief description

Ridge top with wide ranging views, north, west and south. Grazing land with farm buildings. strong rural character related to farmland to north and west and valley to south. Strong tree and woodland features all providing a degree of setting for the listed building at Upper Wilting Farm.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	x	walls	woodland (mixed woodland)	x	River	footpath
churches		fences	plantation		Stream	track
masts, poles		hedges	isolated trees		Lake	road
pylons		banks	tree clumps		Reservoir	motorway
industry		shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x	Pond	railway
vernacular buildings	x	field pattern	parkland		Canal	
settlement (type)		arable	scrub	x	Waterfall	
built-up		pasture	marsh		Beach	
mineral working		orchards			Dune	
ruins					Mudflat	

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
rolling	Plateau (almost)	x broad valley
steep	hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	balanced	x	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate	small		medium	x large
ENCLOSURE:	confined	enclosed		open	x exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	x	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	x	colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform	simple	x	diverse	complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	x vacant		peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	x	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight	angular		curved	x sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable	safe	x	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring	bland		interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive	unpleasant		pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Well managed grassland although trees, treed hedgerows and woodland should be better managed. There is an air of dilapidation about the farm group.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

General tidy up and building management.
Manage trees and hedges.

Conservation

Improve setting of listed building.

Restoration

Restore farm buildings.

Reconstruction

N/A

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

The open rural character of the area does not lend itself to development. The BLHR will affect this area too. There may be limited opportunities around the buildings but this is likely to be for rural related activities.

Visual appraisal

Views from Green Street and Upper Wilting Farmhouse.

Types of view

Open to north, south and west.

Visual barriers

Trees and woodland in places.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Some limited scope but as a ridge top site which is visible from around about, opportunities for mitigation are always going to be limited.

Landscape Character assessment sheet

Viewpoint No: 22

Location: **Upper Wilting 8D** from Date: 22.02.08
private view point on farm
Direction of View: South east

Photograph



Brief description

Open area of valley side countryside on foot slopes of the Upper Wilting Ridge. Strong valley related character but with some strong tree/hedgerow belts which provide limited containment. Although some parts of the urban area are visible, the character area is entirely in countryside and provides an important part of the context of the Combe Haven and Decoy valleys. Also adjacent to SSSI.

Landcover and landscape elements

farm buildings	walls	Woodland - broadleaf	x	river	footpath	
churches	fences	x	plantation	stream	x	track
masts, poles	hedges	x	isolated trees	lake	road	
pylons	banks	tree clumps	x	reservoir	motorway	
industry	shelterbelt	hedgerow trees	x	pond	x	railway
vernacular buildings	field pattern	x	parkland	canal		
settlement (type)	arable	x	scrub	waterfall		
built-up	pasture	x	marsh	beach		
mineral working	orchards			dune		
ruins				mudflat		

Landform		
flat	plain	coast
undulating	rolling lowland	x estuary
rolling	plateau	broad valley
steep	hills	narrow valley
vertical	scarp	deep gorge
	cliff	

Aesthetic factors					
BALANCE:	harmonious	x	balanced	discordant	chaotic
SCALE:	intimate		Small to medium	x medium	large
ENCLOSURE:	confined		Enclosed in part	x Open in part	x exposed
TEXTURE:	smooth		textured	x rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome		muted	x colourful	garish
DIVERSITY:	uniform		simple	diverse	x complex
MOVEMENT:	remote	x	vacant	peaceful	x active
UNITY:	unified	x	interrupted	fragmented	chaotic
FORM:	straight		angular	curved	x sinuous
SECURITY:	comfortable		safe	x unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	boring		bland	interesting	x invigorating
PLEASURE:	offensive		unpleasant	pleasant	x beautiful

Landscape Condition

Whilst hedgerows are not well managed the overall appearance of the landscape is good and rich in trees and woodland interleaved with fields on the hillside.

Most Appropriate Management Strategy

Manage trees and woodland.

Conservation

Manage trees and woodland. Special conservation near SSSI. Pond management.

Restoration

Trees and woodland could be better managed to maintain the quality of the landscape.

Reconstruction

N/A

Ability to Accommodate Change/stability of character/attributes vulnerable to change and which are irreplaceable.

This is very rural in character and has no capacity for development.

Visual appraisal

Visible from users of the valley's paths and some urban edge areas.
Limited areas from The Briars to the north at Lower Wilting.

Types of view

Long to open countryside.

Visual barriers

Trees and woodlands.

Scope to mitigate visual intrusion

Very limited scope but would need major injection of tree cover to help mitigate. But the loss of overriding countryside character cannot be mitigated.

