

SOUTHLEIGH PARK HOUSE
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL
FOR PLANNING APPROVAL
SNELL & WILCOX PENSION FUND
July 2017



TERENCE
O'ROURKE

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1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared by Terence O'Rourke Ltd. to support a 'hybrid' planning application submitted on behalf of Snell & Wilcox Self Administered Pension Scheme. This appraisal identifies, describes and assesses the likely effects of the proposed development on the landscape and visual amenity of the site and its surroundings.

Field work

- 1.2 The site and surrounding area were visited in 2016 during March, July and August to obtain familiarity with the landscape in both winter and summer conditions and to inform the landscape appraisal. Field studies and desk based studies of photographs, map information, character assessments and statutory and emerging planning policy documents have enabled the recording of landscape elements such as topography, land use, development, vegetation and other features. This has allowed an evaluation of the existing landscape features and characteristics, the way the landscape is experienced and the value of the landscape and visual resources in and around the site. An analysis of any possible effects resulting from the proposals was undertaken in consideration of these baseline characteristics.

Visual envelope

- 1.3 A preliminary computerised visual envelope was created using specialist computer software based on the height of the existing land using topographic data and a digital surface model (DSM, source; Bluesky International Ltd), to establish the extent of the existing visual amenity. This plan illustrates the extent to which the site or any part of the site is potentially visible from the surrounding area based on the existing topographic features. This data helped to define the study area, a 2.5km zone in which the development is considered to have potential landscape and visual effects. Beyond this area, and due to the limited height and scale of the development, it is considered that only negligible effects will be experienced. A preliminary zone of visual influence (ZVI) for the proposals was produced based on a height of 12.5m. The ZVI defines the area within which the proposed development may have an influence or effect on visual amenity (see figure 10).

References and data sources

- 1.4 In preparing this chapter the published documents and plans set out in table 1 have been referred to. The application site is from this point on simply referred to as *the site*.

Table 1: References and data sources

Countryside Agency, 2002, Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland
Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (3 rd edition)
Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), March 2012, The National Planning Policy Framework
Havant Borough Local Plan – Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and Allocations (adopted 2014)
Natural England Character Areas Profiles, Internet resource – NCA 126 'South Coast Plain' and NCA 128 'South Hampshire Lowlands'
Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape & Seascape Character Assessment (2007) and Havant Borough Landscape Character Assessment – Sensitivity Report (2007) (online resources)

2. Planning policy

Relevant Planning Policy Documents

- 2.1 The key planning documents applicable to the study area at national level are the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). At local level, the relevant plan is Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy and Allocations). A broad appraisal of these documents has been carried out identifying the key landscape related planning designations, as well as landscape character assessments and relevant nature conservation and cultural heritage designations that will also have an impact in terms of the landscape. These are illustrated on Figures 3 and 4 and summarised below.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

- 2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The most relevant policy statements are summarised below.
- **Paragraph 17** – the core planning principles relating to the roles and character of different areas and the effective use of land and conservation of heritage assets;
 - **Paragraphs 109, 111 and 117** – conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
 - **Paragraphs 128 and 131** – conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 2.3 Of particular relevance is paragraph 93 that deals with meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change and states: *"Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure."*

Havant Borough Local plan (Core Strategy and Allocations)

- 2.4 The site lies within the administrative area of Havant. The principal development plan document guiding development in the Borough of Havant up to 2026 is the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy and Allocations). Those policies which are directly relevant to the landscape strategy of the development proposals are:
- **Policy CS11** – Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough
This includes reference to the Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape & Seascape Assessment and relates to protection and possible enhancement of heritage and nature conservation assets, as well as maintenance of undeveloped gaps between certain settlements including Emsworth/Havant and Emsworth/Westbourne. The site is located within this area of gap.
 - **Policy CS13** – Green Infrastructure
This relates to the maintenance of the green infrastructure network and appropriate improvements through restoration and enhancement.
 - **Policy CS16** – High Quality Design

This relates to designing development to a high standard including responding to the local character, integrating landscape features and promoting biodiversity

- **Policy DM8** – Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of Existing Natural Features

This relates to development only being permitted where it protects and enhances local habitats and distinctiveness, including protection and incorporation of existing natural features such as trees, woodland, hedgerows, and integrating new landscape works into the local environment.

3 Landscape baseline

- 3.1 As part of the desktop study, previous classifications and evaluations of the surrounding landscape within the study area have been examined. The purpose of this was to assess whether the application site shares any of these common landscape characteristics and to assess how typical or unique the application site is within the landscape context. It also helps to understand the landscape characteristics of the study area and how the application site interacts with them.

National Landscape character areas

- 3.2 With reference to the Natural England's National Character Area Profiles, the site lies on the edge of Character Area 126 'South Coast Plain', with Character Area 128 'South Hampshire Lowlands' just to the north. The information contained within the National Landscape Character Assessment provides a broad and useful context at a large scale.

Local landscape character areas (Refer to figure 4)

- 3.3 The most relevant landscape character documents are the Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment (2007), and the Havant Borough Landscape Character Assessment, Sensitivity Report (2007). These documents provide a description of the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape. The document has been reviewed and the key characteristics that are most relevant to the development proposals have been drawn out in the following paragraphs.
- 3.4 The site falls within the landscape character area of Southleigh Forest (LCA 21). The following paragraph summarises the relevant parts of the character area. A fuller description of this and adjacent character areas can be found in the Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment.

LCA 21 - Southleigh Forest

- *"The landform gently slopes down from Comley Hill to the north in a southerly and westerly direction, with the upper levels forming part of Southleigh Forest and Hollybank Wood and the lower slopes becoming more open with the designed parkland to the south of Southleigh House and the open arable landscape to the west..."*
- *The parkland at Southleigh House consists of small woodland copses and individual trees within an area of grassland...*
- *The north east of this area consists of a large area of broadleaved woodland, none of which is ancient semi-natural woodland...*
- *This is one of the few areas in the Borough where the sparseness of the historical settlement pattern survives with only a few later additions, and contains a number of important listed buildings...*
- *The north eastern part is dominated by woodland which includes pre-1810 woodland north of Southleigh Park and plantation woodland in areas of the historic woodland of Emsworth Common...*
- *The central area retains the designed parkland character associated with Southleigh House...*

- *South of East Leigh House the historic landscape is defined by medium sized regular parliamentary type fields. However, extensive boundary loss has degraded this character and it is hardly recognizable in the current landscape...*
- *Linear intermittent hamlets with predominantly mixed hedgerow boundaries with mature oak trees evoking a rural character...*
- *Individual farmsteads with farm house, outbuildings and adjacent small paddocks...*
- *Southleigh Park retains a number of flint and brick ancillary buildings including stables and a model dairy, which together comprise a fine group, though their setting has been seriously compromised by the modern tinted glass office building to the north...*
- *The woodland provides an enclosed landscape with a variety of vegetation types, including a high density of holly, areas of coppice and yew...*
- *Eastleigh Road due to its thick hedgerows is predominantly enclosed, while further to the north views along the elevated Bartons Road focus down across the landscape to the A27 (T) and beyond. Farmsteads are seen as individual clusters within this open rural scene..."*

3.5 The Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment also contains a number of landscape strategy guidelines including the following -

- *"Retain, manage and improve the parkland character of Southleigh House. Retain the historic setting for Southleigh House and associated buildings within this rural landscape..."*
- *The long distance views from Southleigh Park, once common to all of the estates, should be protected"...*

The site

- 3.6 The site, approximately 3.17-ha in size, is in a semi-rural location approximately 0.5km from the eastern edge of Havant and 1.5km to the north west of Emsworth, as illustrated in figure 1. The site comprises the historic listed main house with other associated curtilage estate buildings, as well as a modern office extension building (and associated car parking) which lies to the north of the main house and which was built in the early 1980s, all set within landscaped grounds. A lawn of improved grassland lies to the south of the main house with a large pond in the south western corner.
- 3.7 The site vegetation includes a number of mature trees throughout the site and around the buildings. Trees within the site are a mixture of quality categories including some category 'A' specimens. The trees on the site, are covered by an area TPO (no. 1068). An ecological assessment and a tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment have been carried out for the site and accompany this application.
- 3.8 Site photographs on figures 6 to 9 show views of some of the site features. The selected viewpoints for visual appraisal on figures 12 to 17 also show some of the external features on the site boundaries.

The site context

- 3.9 The site lies within a landscape that slopes gently southwards, just to the south west of the extensive Southleigh Forest. To the immediate east of the site, the busy Horndean Road and the junction with Emsworth Common Road and Bartons Road are a dominant element in the setting of the site. Bartons Road and Eastleigh Road forming the boundaries to the north and east respectively, also contribute to the sense of the site being surrounded by busy roads with the exception of the southern boundary which overlooks parkland, with grassland, small copses and individual/groups of trees extending 0.6km to Southleigh Road. The wider context to the north is predominantly woodland. Scattered farmsteads and individual properties lie along Eastleigh Road further to the south and along Barton Road further to the west (including East Leigh House). The BUPA Spire Portsmouth Hospital lies within wooded grounds to the north of the site.
- 3.10 The site is accessed from Eastleigh Road to the west. Bartons Road forms the northern site boundary and the B2148 Horndean Road forms the eastern site boundary. There are no public rights of way within the site or in its immediate vicinity, the closest rights of way lie within Southleigh Forest to the east and to the edge of Havant to the west.

Background landscape history of the site.

- 3.11 The 3.17ha site at Southleigh Park is the remnant of an early 19th-century gentleman's estate. The extensive grounds extended to 65 hectares at the time that the current house was built (thought to be around 1840). The estate had extended to 147 hectares by 1903.
- 3.12 It is believed that the majority of the ornamental planting, including trees, large evergreen shrubs and the lake, date from the mid to late 19th century and was designed to provide an ornamental garden setting to the house. In the intervening approximately 180 years since it is assumed the first trees may have been planted, the trees have grown together to form woodland clumps with an understorey of non-native evergreens on the boundary areas.
- 3.13 Following Plessey's acquisition of the site in 1969, extensive demolition and alteration of buildings took place and the remaining buildings were not properly maintained leading to severe dilapidation. Best practise would have resulted in inspection of the trees at regular intervals with selective removal and thinning of vegetation at appropriate timings in order to maintain the health of the landscape. However, there is no evidence that any significant tree management was carried out during this period. The density of the original planting has been exacerbated by self-seeded sycamore and ash that have also 'crowded-out' some of the original specimen trees. The current situation is that the site is in desperate need of major tree work to address decades of neglect and ensure that the majority of the key trees that provide the setting of the house, currently 'crowded out' by other trees, are provided with sufficient space to thrive. This would require the removal of the many poorer quality trees and shrubs that are constraining the growth and appearance of the best trees.

4 Visual baseline

Views of the site and extent of visibility

- 4.1 Views from a range of visual receptors within the study area have been identified. A number of representative viewpoints have been selected that, in the assessor's professional judgement, demonstrate how the site is experienced by identified visual receptors. The viewpoints chosen provide a representative selection of views from locations where the site is visible and cover a range of receptors from varying directions. The viewpoint locations are shown on figure 5. The findings of the visual baseline studies are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 4.2 The ZVI studies suggested that visibility of the proposals might extend several kilometres beyond the site. However, site studies have ascertained that the actual extent of visibility would be extremely limited to the north, east and west of the site, mainly to the roads adjacent to the site boundary. To the south, extent of visibility would extend approximately 600m south to Southleigh Road but study of potential views south of this area leads to the conclusion that the proposals would result in no perceptible effect on those views.
- 4.3 Consultation with Havant Borough Council landscape officer has included discussion of visual effects of the proposals. It was agreed that whilst the ZVI suggests that the proposals would be visible from a variety of viewpoints in the surrounding landscape, the reality when checked in the field, is that the site as described in the previous paragraph, is very well screened. The views selected to illustrate the potential visual effects are:
- Viewpoint 1 - From Eastleigh Road
 - Viewpoint 2 - From Bartons Road
 - Viewpoint 3 - From Comley Hill
 - Viewpoint 4 - From Emsworth Road
 - Viewpoint 5 - From Horndean Road
 - Viewpoint 6 - From Southleigh Road
- 4.4 A description of these existing views and analysis of potential effects is provided in section 6. Viewpoint locations are shown in figure 11 and the viewpoints are illustrated in figures 12 to 13.

5 Development proposals

Description of the proposals

- 5.1 The design and access statement and application drawings describe the proposals in full and should be read in conjunction with this appraisal. The following description summarises the specific elements of the proposals that will affect the landscape and visual resources and the primary mitigation measures that are incorporated into the design.
- Building 4, a 2 storey 1980s building and ancillary structures, vehicle access and car parking, which occupies the core of the northern part of the site will be removed.
 - The listed buildings will be retained, with some later additions removed, and will be converted for residential use.
 - In addition to the apartments up to 70 new housing units and associated infrastructure will be constructed.
 - Two previous accesses to the site, currently not used, from Eastleigh Road, will be re-opened to provide access to different zones of the site
 - A number of trees will be removed to enable the development of the site and to redress the lack of landscape management of the site over recent decades
 - Non-native evergreen shrubs will be retained where appropriate, but where opportunities allow, these will be replaced with native species to reflect local landscape character and improve biodiversity
- 5.2 The potential impacts on the landscape and visual resources have been a significant consideration from the outset and the design has evolved to address landscape, ecology and arboricultural concerns during the design process. To ensure a sustainable future for the listed buildings and their setting, the site requires a minimum quantum of development in order to be viable. The scheme design has therefore been developed in the viability context to make best use of the site whilst retaining the key identified landscape resources, including mature trees and an appropriate landscape setting for the listed buildings. The baseline studies show that the changes to the site will not be perceived in the wider landscape and so the design strategy is mainly focussed on maintaining an appropriate landscape setting for the listed buildings and addressing effects on views from the local area.

Natural heritage considerations

- 5.3 In addition, the landscape strategy has integrated measures to address ecology issues identified in the natural heritage reports. The site is dominated by habitats that comprise non-native and common and widespread native species. The site is therefore considered to be of low ecological value overall. The features of most ecological value are the mature trees within the site margins including their role as foraging and commuting habitat for bats and breeding birds. Whilst the site development requires the removal of a number of trees, many will be retained and the proposed landscape will incorporate new native trees and shrubs and species-rich grassland. The following specific mitigation measures set out in the ecology report will be incorporated into the landscape:

- New native trees and hedgerows on the boundaries will be managed to mitigate the loss of bat foraging habitat and maintain connectivity across the site in the long term
- Retained areas of suitable habitat will be retained and enhanced and managed to provide bat foraging habitat
- New meadow grass areas will enhance the prey resource
- The lighting strategy will result in an overall reduction in light spill
- New bat boxes will be attached to retained trees
- New bird boxes will be installed on existing retained trees and new buildings
- Where possible dead trees will be retained on site and log piles created to provide habitat for saprophytic invertebrates.

Landscape strategy

5.4 The key design solutions incorporated into the development proposals are shown on the landscape and ecology strategy plan illustrated in the submitted landscape strategy plans (drawing references: 245001/P004, P010 and P011). The development will include the following landscape related elements:

- A number of trees as detailed in the Arboricultural Method Statement, will be removed to enable the development of the site. The lengthy and detailed process of selection of trees for retention and removal has involved the whole design team and liaison with Havant Borough Council officers. Layout options have been considered in great detail to ensure that where possible, the trees which make greatest contribution to the setting of the listed buildings and to local landscape character will be retained.
- There are locations where some trees that might otherwise have been retained, need to be removed in order to enable development to take place and to provide a safe and appropriate environment for residential development. These include trees removed to allow a safe degree of visibility at the access into the site and some trees removed in order to enable road access, drainage and services to be provided.
- The proposed development provides the opportunity to remove the many poorer quality trees and shrubs that are constraining the growth and appearance of the best trees. This thinning would also address issues of overshadowing and proximity in relation to residential development.
- New predominantly native tree planting will mitigate the loss of the removed trees, maintaining a well treed appearance to the site and improving the foraging and nesting opportunities for bats and birds.
- New hedgerows on the boundaries will replace much of the existing dense non-native evergreens. This will restore a more rural character to the boundaries, will improve the biodiversity of the site.
- Removal of dense evergreen shrubs elsewhere on site will lead to better light conditions to establish native woodland understorey vegetation.
- The immediate setting to the south of Southleigh Park House will be designed and planted as an interpretation of a mid-Victorian period country house garden. Parts of the immediate setting of the house and ancillary buildings that are not currently contributing positively to the setting will be replaced with appropriate hard and soft landscape. This will include a new formal lawn to the west of the house, new tree planting, new high quality

natural stone terrace paving, low retaining walls and steps to match the existing paving walls and steps on the Southleigh Park House frontage. Estate fencing will replace the current chain link boundary planting.

- Dense and overgrown laurel in area around the pond will be removed to allow light in to enhance the biodiversity of ground flora and improve intervisibility between the house and the area around the pond.
- Key groups of trees and shrubs will be retained elsewhere on the site, including the group of trees 'holding the corner' at the Eastleigh Road/Barton Road junction, trees forming the background to the lodge and trees on the east side of the site adjacent to Horndean Road, where a strong distinctive group will form the structure to a new informal open space, providing them with a more sustainable growing area than the current car park surfacing.
- The eastern boundary with Eastleigh Road will be designed to enhance the rural character of that lane, with a new native hedgerow including holly and yew replacing the overgrown non-native evergreens. This will provide a lighter environment, more appropriate for residential development but also beneficial for biodiversity, allowing more light to reach the ground flora. Where required for noise attenuation, the existing timber fence will be retained, replaced or repaired. The northernmost part of the boundary will include a pedestrian cycle access path into the site.
- The strategy for the boundary with Barton Road will involve the removal of dense vegetation of low biodiversity and amenity value, mainly self-seeded sycamores. This will be replaced with a more formal hedge of native species with individual trees appropriate to the character of the road and forming an appropriate setting for the development on that boundary.
- The Horndean Road boundary will retain a fenced boundary to alleviate road noise, but the areas of dense overgrown evergreens and sycamore will be replaced by a new hedge and trees, maintaining a green appearance to the site in views from the road but with the greater transparency enabling the house and specimen trees, (currently virtually invisible to the outside world), to be appreciated, contributing to the local landscape and sense of place.
- The existing low flint and brick wall on the Lodge's boundary with Horndean Road will be retained and repaired and the gate opening provided with a new pedestrian gate. A new section of wall in brick (to distinguish it from the flint wall) will be constructed to enclose the Lodge.
- Existing security features including security fences and lighting will be removed. This will improve the appearance of the site from the surrounding roads.

6 Predicted landscape and visual effects

- 6.1 The form and nature of the proposals mean that there will be potential effects on the landscape character of the area, landscape resources and on views within the local area. The following paragraphs describe those potential effects and how the design measures including the landscape strategy mitigate those effects.

Predicted effects on landscape character

- 6.2 The site is located within the character area Southleigh Forest (LCA 21 Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment 2007), Southleigh Park and Southleigh House are referenced a number of times in the description, mainly in relation to the listed buildings and parkland landscape of the area south of the site. The character assessment acknowledges that the setting of the historic buildings *'has been seriously compromised by the modern tinted glass office building to the north...'*
- 6.3 Although the proposed development will increase the overall area of development on site, it is considered that the scale and appearance of the development will be much more appropriate in the context of the historic buildings than the current larger scale commercial development.
- 6.4 The current trajectory of the site will result in an increasingly overgrown landscape. Currently there is virtually no public view into the site and as a result the attractive group of historic buildings is unable to be appreciated and do not visibly contribute to the local landscape character and sense of place. The new landscape strategy will result in a sustainably managed landscape and will open up views of the house, restoring its role as the key building in the local landscape.
- 6.5 Whilst a significant number of trees will be removed to enable development, the retained trees will be provided with sufficient 'breathing' space to achieve a more natural form and will also be more easily distinguishable as individual specimens.
- 6.6 For the reasons set out in the preceding paragraphs, on balance it is considered that the proposals will have a negligible small effect on the wider overall landscape character area. It will arguably have a beneficial effect on the character of the immediate area, as rather than being a fully enclosed site with no significant intervisibility, the site and its attractive and characterful features will once again become an integral part of the local landscape

Predicted effects on visual amenity

- 6.7 As described in Section 4, the site is very well contained by surrounding vegetation and development and, where views of the site are possible, this is generally restricted to locations immediately adjacent to the site's boundary or longer distance, filtered views where the site comprises a small element of a much wider view.
- 6.8 A summary of potential visual effects of the proposals on available views listed in Section 4 is set out in the following paragraphs.

Viewpoint 1 - From Eastleigh Road

- 6.9 Eastleigh Road has a generally rural character, with planting both sides of the road, although on the site boundary, the non-native evergreens and security fencing and gates detract from that rural character. The road has the current site access and three disused access points on the western boundary of the site. There is a view into the central part of the site with from the road opposite the current access, but otherwise the site is screened by a combination of fencing and dense planting.
- 6.10 The main element of the proposals resulting in change from views from Eastleigh Road will include vegetation clearance, replacement and removal of boundary fences and construction of a new pedestrian footway adjacent to the road. The new native hedgerow planting, once established, will reinforce the rural character of the road. The clearance of dense evergreens will mean that both the existing retained historic buildings and the new residential development will be partially visible from the road and therefore on balance there will be more visible development in this view, but the appearance of the listed buildings will enhance and add interest to the view.

Viewpoint 2 - From Bartons Road

- 6.11 Bartons Road has a mainly urban edge character, due to the scale of the road and the development on its corridor. The site is visible from the nearby section of road but appears as an area of woodland and so is no more distinctive than other wooded areas. From the section of road immediately opposite the site, the car parking area north of the main modern building is visible through the trees. The trees on the northern boundary are mostly self-seeded sycamore and their location within a main water supply pipe easement means that they are a temporary feature.
- 6.12 The main elements of the proposals resulting in change from views from Bartons Road will include the clearance of the sycamore growth on the northern boundary and replacement with new housing up to two storeys set back from the boundary which will be enclosed with a new hedge and trees. Southleigh Park House will probably not be visible due to the screening effect of the intervening proposed development, but the generally wooded appearance of the site will remain, although the density of tree cover will be reduced.

Viewpoint 3 - From Comley Hill

- 6.13 Comley Hill has a mainly rural character, due to the woodland context of the road corridor. The site is visible from Comley Hill on the approaches to the junction with Bartons Road. The currently boarded-up lodge and the flint gate pier and walls on the north east corner of the site are the most noticeable feature. The remaining perception of the site is of a wooded area with some specimen conifers appearing on the skyline.
- 6.14 The main elements of the proposals resulting in a change in views from Comley Hill, will include the restoration of the lodge building, the repair of walls, the construction of new sections of boundary wall, the clearance of the sycamore growth on the northern boundary and replacement with new housing up to two storeys set back from the boundary which will be defined with a new hedge and trees. Southleigh Park House will probably not be visible due to the screening

effect of the proposed development, but the generally wooded appearance of the site will remain, although the density of tree cover will be reduced.

Viewpoint 4 - From Emsworth Common Road

- 6.15 Emsworth Common Road has a mainly rural character, due to the woodland context of the road corridor. The site is visible from the road on the approaches to the junction with Bartons Road. The currently boarded-up lodge house and the flint gate pier and walls on the north east corner of the site are the most noticeable feature, particularly as they are the focus of the view corridor. The remaining perception of the site is of a wooded area with some exotic trees appearing on the skyline.
- 6.16 The main element of the proposals resulting in change from views from Emsworth Common Road will include the restoration of the lodge building, the repair of walls, the construction of new sections of boundary wall, the clearance of the sycamore growth on the northern boundary and replacement with new housing up to two storeys set back from the boundary which will be defined with a new hedge and trees. The generally wooded appearance of the site will remain, although the density of tree cover will be reduced.

Viewpoint 5 - From Horndean Road

- 6.17 The section of Horndean Road adjacent to the site has a generally semi-rural character, with planting both sides of the road, although on the site boundary, the non-native evergreens and security fencing and lighting detract from that rural character. Further south on the road, housing on the east side of the road gives the road a more suburban character. The site features visible from the road vary with the location on the road, but the prevailing perception is that the site is screened from the road by fencing and dense vegetation. In some viewpoints, the upper parts of Southleigh Park House are visible through the trees, but it is mostly not easily discerned. At the northern end of Horndean Road, the lodge and associated walls are the most distinctive feature of the site. The generally wooded appearance of the site will remain, although the density of tree cover will be reduced.
- 6.18 The main element of the proposals resulting in change from views from Horndean Road will be the removal of dense non-native evergreen planting and other planting that will have the effect of allowing a greater extent of visibility into the site. The removal of the security elements of the boundary fence and security lighting will help to restore a more rural character to the boundary, although more development will be visible. Southleigh Park House will be a more visible element in the views. Towards the northern end of Horndean Road the most noticeable change will be the restoration of the Lodge building, the repair of walls and the construction of new sections of boundary wall back from the boundary, which will be defined with a new hedge and trees. The generally wooded appearance of the site will remain, although the density of tree cover will be reduced.

Viewpoint 6 - From Southleigh Road

- 6.19 Views from Southleigh Road 600m south of the site, are generally screened by a hedgerow on the northern side of the road. This extends along the full length of the road and there are no obvious viewpoints. However, there are a few gaps in the vegetation and these allow limited views of Southleigh Park House. In this

view, the light-coloured flint facing of the building distinguishes the house from the woodland framing it and the trees forming its backdrop. At this distance, no other features of the site are visible.

6.20 The proposals will result in a negligible perceptible change in the view.

7 Summary and conclusion

- 7.1 The effects of the development on local landscape character and on views, are restricted to the immediate local area surrounding the site, as a result of the screening effects of vegetation and development in the local area around the site.
- 7.2 The proposals will result in a greater area of development than currently exists and to enable that development a significant number of trees will require removal. However the small scale of the houses comprising the development and the retention and enhancement of most of the boundary trees will result in a development that will not appear out of scale in its context and will retain the generally wooded appearance of the site in external views.
- 7.3 The improvement to the appearance of the boundaries, the restoration of the listed buildings and the opening-up of the views of the listed buildings will all be beneficial effects on both the perception of the landscape and on views. Also to be taken into account, is the current trajectory of the site, which is that in the absence of development, the existing historic features will deteriorate and the vegetation will continue to become further over-grown and under-managed.
- 7.4 The biodiversity value of the site, described in the ecology report, is relatively low. Whilst the proposed tree and non-native shrub clearance will result in a moderate decrease in overall vegetation cover, the proposed replacement of non-native evergreens with native species and the establishment of wildflower grassland and native woodland understorey will enhance the biodiversity value of the site.
- 7.5 On balance, taking all elements into account, the effects on landscape character are small being limited to a very localised area. In some respects, the increased visibility of Southleigh Park House will fulfil the role inferred in the Havant landscape character assessment of being a key element in the character area, which, due to its invisibility, it currently fails to perform.
- 7.6 Effects on views will be limited to the immediate locality and will involve changes to the perception of the site. The increase in the amount of development is likely to be perceived as an adverse effect; however, this perception will be largely due to the density of screening of the site, which means that the current development is not easily perceived. The greater opening up of the site to views from the road so that Southleigh Park House becomes an element of the view will add greater interest and depth to the views of the site, most of which are currently focussed on the boundaries characterised by an unappealing combination of dense evergreens and security fencing.