

# HAVANT ROAD EMSWORTH

## GAP REPORT

**ACD**  
ENVIRONMENTAL

Ecology  
Archaeology  
Arboriculture  
Landscape Architecture



**BARRATT**  
HOMES

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Havant Borough Council's Core Strategy was adopted in 2011, and a review of the Gap Strategy took place in 2012, in which site UE2b was not recommended for development.
- 1.2 This report contains extracts from the Allocations Gaps Review, the Objection on behalf of Barratt Homes to the Allocations Plan of 2014, Landscape Statement from ACD and the Report on the Examination into Havant Borough Council Local Plan (Allocations) from 2014.
- 1.3 In September 2012 ACD Landscape Architects were instructed by Barratt Homes to carry out a comparative assessment of sites UE13, UE32, UE37, UE39, UE11 and UE2b in the Emsworth Allocations Plan. This was to assess their compliance against the listed criteria for in PUSH Policy framework for Gaps Dec 2008 which reappraised in Policy 15: Gaps from the South Hampshire Strategy 2012, and to provide an up-to-date visual assessment of their likely impact on the current Strategic Emsworth – Havant Gap.
- 1.4 ACD are instructed on the arboricultural and landscape elements of the project and have been involved since the outset. The proposed scheme comprises 192 units. Vehicular (and pedestrian) access to the development will be from Havant Road, and a separate pedestrian, cycle route and emergency access is proposed from Selangor Avenue. The development would also provide public open spaces with associated landscaping and Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDSs).
- 1.5 The site is located on arable farmland and comprises approximately 6.23 hectares. It is bounded to the north by A27 Havant Bypass and a railway line. To the east the site is bounded by houses fronting on to Selangor Avenue, to the south by Havant Road and to the west by a small group of houses

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Gap Review of 2012 included detailed assessment summaries, the following for UE2b Selangor Avenue:

### Landscape Qualities

- Attractive enclosed fields on urban fringe
- Narrow site with long boundary to A27
- A27 on well-wooded embankment, visually significant
- Mature hedgerow along Havant Road gives seclusion from public view

### Suitability for Development

- Gap Assessment Matrix indicates low suitability for development:
- Significant site in narrow gap between Havant and Emsworth
- High sense of separation due to clearly defined boundary vegetation

Havant Borough Gaps Review 2012

### Recommendation

The site is not recommended for development as an urban extension.

### Reasons

The site has high landscape value due to its locally important landscape features. It contributes to the separation between the adjacent urban areas, by representing a large proportion of the gap between Emsworth and Havant.

- 2.2 The Report on the Examination into Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) from 2014 was as follows:

*Emsworth - UE2(b): Selangor Avenue*

*62. It is common ground that one of the reasons for discounting this site, relating to the presence of a gas pipeline, can be overcome. It is therefore accepted that*

*the gas pipeline is not a justification for non allocation of this site. However the site was also assessed in the SLG and the Gaps Review. The former does not refer specifically to site UE2(b). However in assessing site UE2(a), which lies immediately to the north of the A27, the Gaps Review notes that the gap between Havant and Emsworth is already narrow but that the landscape character is open, despite the presence of the A27 running through the gap. This makes it clear that the gap being considered comprised UE2(a) and the open land to the south, which is known as site UE2(b). The SLG is very clear in concluding that both areas of land need to be kept open in order to maintain the Havant-Emsworth gap.*

*63. This conclusion is reinforced by more recent assessment in the Gaps Review, which states that UE2(b) contributes to the separation between the adjacent urban areas by representing a large proportion of the gap between Emsworth and Havant. It is clear that both the SLG and the Gaps Review have considered the two UE2 sites as one gap which serves to visually separate Havant and Emsworth. Both conclude that the two sites together should remain undeveloped so as not to undermine the function of this gap.*

*64. I have taken account of all other matters raised in support of site UE2(b), including proposals for flood alleviation, the surface water drainage strategy and concerns regarding the consultation process. However I am satisfied that the non allocation of the site is supported by robust evidence and that public consultation has been in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.*

- 2.3 The Bryan Jezeph Consultancy prepared an Objection to the Havant Borough Local Plan Allocations Plan in respect of site UE2b, which concluded:

*5.1 There are a number of reasons to challenge the Council's analysis in respect of 'gaps' in relation to the UE2b site.*

*5.2 The most significant point is the conclusion of the report by Kirkham Landscape Associates that the site cannot be perceived as a gap because of its narrowness. It is not clear why the Council has not acknowledged this advice, especially when the supporting text to Policy AL2 states that it has been based on it.*

*5.3 Even if this point is ignored by the Council, there is the further point that there is a 'manmade' barrier that ensures that the two settlements cannot coalesce.*

*5.4 The Council has rejected the arguments with regard to this site but, on the other hand, many of the proposed allocations and previous 'reserve' sites were in gaps.*

*5.5 The land at UE2b does not function as a gap and its development will not cause either visual or physical coalescence. It is therefore requested that the gap designation be deleted from this site.*

- 2.4 The Council had instructed Kirkham Landscape Associates to prepare a report on Strategic Gaps for Havant Borough Council and they concluded that the land at UE2b does not function as a Gap:

***With regards to the issue of the Strategic Gap, it is evident that the A27 (T) provides a visual barrier towards Bedhampton, and it is not possible to see the site from the A27 (T) or any development from the north of the A27 (T)'.***

- 2.5 ACD considered the function of the site within the supposed gap, following Havant Borough Council issuing of a consultation document: 'The Formation of Strategic and Local Gap in Havant Borough'<sup>1</sup>, stating within it;

*'The gap must be no greater in size than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements and to maintain their separate identity.'*

‘Gaps must be bounded by permanent defensible features such as roads, topography or major landform.’

This separation has already been achieved by the physical barrier created by the A27, as there is no visual link whatsoever between the settlements south of the road. It suggests that the road should be seen as the edge of the gap where currently it runs through the centre closing up the view and destroying the ‘continuity of separation’.

Objections to site UE2b going forward were based on the importance of its position of keeping the views through the Havant Emsworth Gap. However, it had already been acknowledged that there is no physical or visual gap at that point.

Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd who prepared a report on Strategic Gaps for Havant Borough Council concluded that the land does not function as a gap:

‘With regards to the issue of the Strategic Gap, it is evident that the A27 (T) provides a visual barrier towards Bedhampton, and it is not possible to see the site from the A27 (T) or any development from the north of the A27 (T)’.

- 2.6 The site, along with a section of the A27, lies within the Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment Area 26, Warblington and Wade Court, but is not included in the Chichester Harbour AONB designation. It is visually isolated from land to the north by the A27 and land to the south by the by the A259 and boundary hedgerows and is no longer typical of its designated landscape character type, the Open Lower Harbour Plain. Although designated as Grade 2 agricultural land, it is not viable, unlike fields to the north of the A27 and due to the constraints of access is used for grazing.

The policy of protecting the Strategic Gaps between the urban settlements of the South Coast is a commendable one but at this location the value, benefit and

reality of Strategic Gap 3 has been completely lost due to the overwhelming presence of the A27.

Development of area UE2b would not cause the loss of any visual amenity but provides an opportunity to supplement local housing requirements in an area that is not viable for agriculture or employment, has good transport links and would have minimal landscape impact, being well contained within distinct and finite boundaries.

## 3.0 Report

- 3.1 ACD have carried out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed development, which has informed this further assessment of the site as part of the Havant-Emsworth Gap. We have taken account of the landscape designations and used viewpoints from the public domain to assess the function of the site with the Gap.

### LOCAL CHARACTER AREA

9G: Havant and Emsworth Coastal Plain

9.3 The key characteristics of local character area relevant to the study area are reproduced below:

- A former river terrace landscape of Pleistocene origin with extremely fertile an national important agricultural silty loam alluvial soils.
- Springs emerge on the chalk clay boundary and form short crystal clear chalk streams.
- An early small scale enclosure landscape which has been substantially modified to larger open fields in the northern half of the character area.
- Remnant mature oaks in suburban settings along verges and stream courses likely to have been associated with former field hedges.
- Varying tranquillity levels declining in proximity to modern development/busy transport infrastructure.

- Good access for walkers from settlements down to the harbour shore.
- Well preserved setting of the Saxon origin settlement of Warblington church and manor.
- A historically nucleated settlement pattern that has expanded massively in post second world war – including social housing area of Leigh park.
- A particular concentration of historic tide mills and ponds which have now been converted and adapted to modern uses and evidence of relatively small scale Salterns.

## **LOCAL CHARACTER AREA**

*The character of the surrounding landscape is typical of the Area, dominated by the A27 and open, intensively flat coastal plain. Trees are not a dominant feature, although there are typical poplars for shelter and there is a pattern of large arable fields, defined by low hedgerows.*

*The site is currently a strip of grassland used for grazing, lying to the south of the A27 which forms one of its boundaries, the others being the A259 trunk road into Emsworth to the south and existing residential property. The plot is adjacent to the Chichester Harbour AONB site which lies to the south of the A259 trunk road. The prominent landscape feature at this site is the vegetated embankment along the north western boundary adjacent to the A27. There are also trees in the centre of the site likely to have been associated with former field boundaries.*

- 3.2 The following panoramas illustrate views from north of the A27, from south of the site and from within the site looking north to the 27. They demonstrate that from north of the A27, the site is not visible and therefore does not contribute to the

Havant-Emsworth Gap. From the south, views from public rights-of-way do feature either settlement or the site and it therefore has no function as part of a Gap. This is true of all locations assessed as part of the LVIA as well. From within the site, the strongest feature is the raised embankment of the A27, heavily vegetated and forming a complete visual barrier.

- 3.3 For the field assessment, a Canon EOS 500D camera with an 18-55mm lens was used, set at 35mm focal length. This is in line with best practice as shown in the Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment advice notes issued by the Landscape Institute (Advice note 01/11).
- 3.4 The site has few significant landscape features other than the frontage hedgerow and the A27 embankment, contrary to the statements made in the 2012 Gap Review, but reinforced by the Local Character Area statement above.

Viewpoint 1: *View from St Georges Avenue*



|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vp1                  | Panoramic View                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Baseline Description | This is a view from the end of St Georges Avenue, to the north of the A27 and representative of the house-holder views and views from the public domain on all equivalent locations. It is a view over pasture and hedgerows, with the raised and vegetated A27 forming the horizon. |
| Conclusion           | From this and similar vantage points, the site is not visible, nor is any aspect of the landscape to the south of the A27.                                                                                                                                                           |

Viewpoint 2: *View from PRow to the south of Havant Road*



|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vp2                  | Panoramic View                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Baseline Description | This is a view from a public footpath immediately to the south of the site and typical of similar views from all public rights of way to the south of the site. It is a view of arable and pastoral land, typical of the Landscape Character Area, with hedgerows, trees on the field boundaries and a generally flat coastal plain landscape. The A27 tree-line is just visible. |
| Conclusion           | From this viewpoint and others on the PRowS, the site is not discernible, nor are the settlements of Havant or Emsworth, although closer proximity brings glimpses of housing within Emsworth. The landscape in the foreground is the dominant feature, with the horizon formed by the tree canopies of the A27.                                                                  |

Viewpoint 3: *View from within the site looking north*



|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vp3                  | Panoramic View                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Baseline Description | This is a view from within the centre of the site, looking north to the embankment of the A27, which is heavily vegetated with a typical mixture of deciduous trees that are now semi-mature. The site features are characteristic pastoral meadow used for grazing, with hedgerow and scrub evident as well, but the dominant landscape feature is the A27 embankment. |
| Conclusion           | From this vantage point within the site, the visual dominance of the A27 embankment is demonstrated, forming a complete visual barrier between the north and south, with no discernible features being seen from either side.                                                                                                                                           |

## 4.0 Conclusions

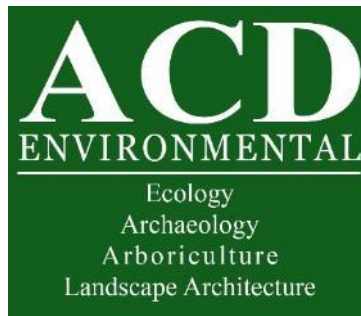
- 4.1 In the 2012 ACD report, we concluded In relation to UE2b, Havant Borough Council's own report stated that the Gap does not function at this point due to the A27. There is no visible gap, but the raised carriageway creates a very significant visual barrier between the settlements of Havant and Emsworth, which would not be compromised by development of the site. Land to the south of Havant Road, in the AONB, should be protected by its designation and forms an important Gap between settlements.
- 4.2 The Gap Review prepared by the Council concluded incorrectly that the site 'has high landscape value due to its locally important landscape features. It contributes to the separation between the adjacent urban areas'. The site in fact has few landscape features of significance, other than a strong hedgerow frontage, which is retained as part of the proposed development and the raised and significant embankment of trees on the A27.
- 4.3 The Inspector's Report accepted the Council's evidence but did not take account of the conclusions of their own Landscape Consultant and declared that he was 'satisfied that the non allocation of the site is supported by robust evidence and that public consultation has been in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. I consider this to be mistaken.
- 4.4 The Bryan Jezeph Consultancy correctly concluded that 'The most significant point is the conclusion of the report by Kirkham Landscape Associates that the site cannot be perceived as a gap because of its narrowness. It is not clear why the Council has not acknowledged this advice, especially when the supporting text to Policy AL2 states that it has been based on it.'

- 4.5 Through our further assessment of the site with the LVIA and in relation to its function as part of the Gap, we have demonstrated that the site does **not** form an integral part of the separation in the Havant-Emsworth Gap.

Stephen J Dale CMLI

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