

Allen Pyke Associates

**Woodcroft Farm,
Havant**

**Landscape Character
and Visual Impact
Assessment**

Prepared on behalf of:
Grainger plc

By
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Landscape Consultants

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WOODCROFT FARM, HAVANT

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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INTRODUCTION

- I.1 This report has been prepared by Allen Pyke Associates (APAL), a consultancy specialising in landscape design and visual impact assessment with extensive experience in appraising landscape character, sensitivity and the capacity of land to accept development. The practice has been commissioned by Grainger plc to assess the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed residential development at a site to the north of Wecock, Waterlooville, Hampshire.
- I.2 The 10.5 ha site lies on the north western edge of Havant Borough to the north of Wecock.

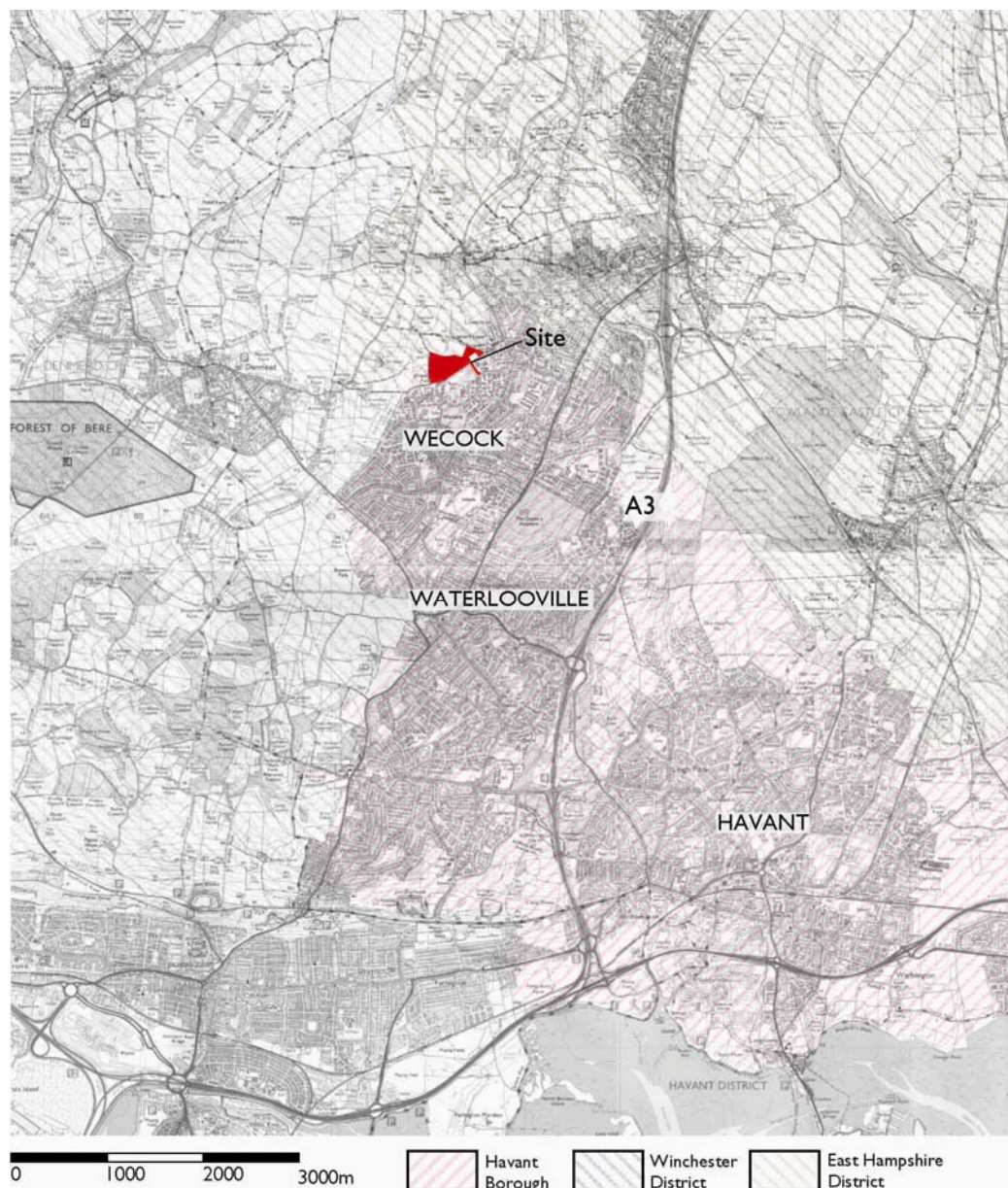


Fig. 1: Site Location Plan

- I.3 The proposed scheme is for 293 new dwellings, associated infrastructure and public open space and new access road.

Planning Status

- I.4 The site has been allocated in the adopted Havant Borough Core Strategy and the draft proposals do not deviate from the broad principles agreed within the Core Strategy.

Methodology

- I.5 Prior to assessing the impact of the proposed development, a desktop study was carried out to establish baseline conditions. The desktop study included a review of existing landscape information and published sources to establish the existing landscape character of the site and its setting. A site visit verified these findings as well as identifying the key visual receptor locations around the site. Entry was not made into private properties, so the visibility of the site has been assessed from surrounding public roads, paths and open spaces. The results have been used to establish the magnitude of change the scheme might bring about in order to determine the significance of the effects created by the proposals.
- I.6 The methodology is adapted from the standard guidance given in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA) Second Edition, jointly published in 2002 by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, and the Countryside Agency's 'Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity' published in 2006.
- I.7 The following published sources have been used in the assessment:

Countryside Agency's 'Countryside Character of England'

Hampshire County Integrated Character Assessment (2010 draft)

Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment (2007)

2 BASELINE DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SETTING

Location and setting

- 2.1 The 10.5ha site lies to the north of the current settlement boundary of Wecock, roughly 2.5 miles north of Waterlooville (see figure 1) within the Borough of Havant. Land to the west falls within Winchester District and to the north, East Hampshire District. The application boundary includes an additional 0.4ha to the south for the access road.
- 2.2 To the south the site is bounded by Woodcroft Lane, a metalled track, to the west and north by farmland and to the northeast by a strip of woodland and residential properties on James Copse Road beyond (see figure 2).
- 2.3 To the south of Woodcroft Lane, beyond a belt of mature trees, is Meadowlands School, a recreation ground, containing a MUGA, skate park and 650sqm of equipped play, and residential properties on Linnet Close and Hobby Close. Further to the south residential Wecock is composed of modern mostly low density residential estates.



Fig. 2: Aerial view of site

Land use

- 2.4 The site comprises five fields of grassland, intermittently grazed by horses (see figure 3). There is an outdoor riding school in the southeast corner of Field D. Woodcroft Farm and associated out buildings are contained within the site between Fields C, D and E. There is a telecoms mast in the southeast corner of Field A.



Fig. 3: Landscape features

Local Topography and Drainage

- 2.5 The landscape of the study area is gently undulating and the site itself slopes down from its highest point in the northeast corner of 72.57 AOD to 55.69 AOD at its westernmost boundary. There are four identified solution features, in fields C and D, which are historic features, one of which contains an ephemeral pond.

Vegetation

- 2.6 The fields are laid to grass and contain several groups of mature trees; in some instances these are located within the solution features. Internal boundaries between Fields A, B and C also contain mature trees as well as stretches of hedgerow, predominantly hawthorn.

2.7 The site boundaries are heavily vegetated with mature native hedgerows, individual trees and belts of mature trees.

2.8 All the trees on site are covered by a Tree Protection Order.

Designated Public Rights of Way

2.9 Within the application boundary, there is a bridleway open to all traffic (BOAT) along the northeastern boundary (see Figure 2). There is a bridleway immediately to the south of the southern boundary and a public footpath along the western boundary. There is also a fairly extensive network of footpaths in the wider environs, particularly in the open countryside to the north.

Landscape Designations and other Environmental Designations

2.10 The site does not fall within any statutory landscape designations or building conservation area; nor are there any adjacent to it. The farmhouse building of Woodcroft Farm itself is locally listed.

2.11 There are no environmental designations within the site, however James' Copse to the north and Wecock Wood to the south are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).

Landscape Character

2.12 The landscape character of the site and its wider setting are assessed in several published sources and are described below.

2.13 National Character Areas (NCA)

The Countryside Agency's 'Countryside Character of England' locates the site on the southernmost edge of *Character Area 125 South Downs*, a few miles north of *Character Area 128 South Hampshire Lowlands*. Key characteristics of the western South Downs NCA are:

- A chalk landscape of rolling arable fields and close-cropped grassland on the bold scarps, rounded open ridges and sculpted dry valleys.
- Lightly settled landscape with scattered villages, hamlets and farmsteads.

- Roman roads and drove roads are common and the area is rich in visually prominent prehistoric remains.
- Woodlands - both coniferous and broadleaved - are a distinctive feature of the western Downs.
- In the west, large estates are important features with formal designed parkland providing a contrast to the more typical farmland pasture.

Despite being located within the South Downs NCA, the site shares more characteristics with the South Hampshire Lowlands NCA:

- Gently undulating landscape characterised by a diversity of features and land uses which reflects changing soil types and local variations of topography.
- Predominantly mixed farmland and woodland, a patchwork of small, intimate and irregular fields defined by hedges, winding lanes and scattered farmsteads.
- The rural character, defined by well-managed farmland and a few historic estates, is being diminished by urban expansion and the busy M27/M3 corridors.
- A dispersed settlement pattern of villages and scattered farmsteads linked by winding roads and lanes.
- Oaks prevalent within hedgerows and woodlands help to create an impression of a well-wooded landscape.

2.14 Regional Landscape Character Areas (LCA)

The Hampshire County Integrated Character Assessment (2010 draft) identifies the site as belonging to Landscape Character Type (LCT) *Lowland Mosaic: Medium scale*, a wooded agricultural landscape with improved grassland and arable land characterised by blocky shaped woodland, thick hedgerows and few settlements. It is located within LCA 2f: *Forest of Bere east*, whose key characteristics are:

- A low lying landscape with shallow undulations, predominantly south sloping.
- Predominantly pasture, commercial forestry and woodland with some smallholdings.
- High proportion of woodland, both coniferous plantation and ancient semi-natural woodland, some fairly extensive, often accessible.
- Woodland creates a secluded landscape, contrasting with the adjoining major towns, although there are strong urban fringe influences around large settlements.
- Hedgerow oaks and hedgebanks are common features.

The site shares these characteristics.

2.15 The site is immediately adjacent to LCA 10a *Havant Thicket and Southleigh Forest* in the East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment which is identified as belonging to LCT 10 *Wooded Claylands*, LCA 10a's key characteristics are:

- Small geometric fields predominantly of recent enclosure with pasture, some managed as horse paddocks.
- A varies landcover dominated by woodland and including pasture, paddocks and commonland.
- Dominated by woodland, all of it pre-1800 but subsequently replanted and smaller copses which provide enclosure and a strong backdrop to views.

Although not included within the LCA due to its location just beyond the district boundary, the site shares these characteristics.

2.16 Local Landscape Character Areas

The Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment (2007) categorises the site as a discreet LCA - LCA3: *Woodcroft Farm*, which also includes the recreational open area of grassland south of Woodcroft Lane. The LCT is Lowland Settled Wooded Farmland, characterised by medium-sized irregularly shaped fields and woodlands with hedgerows, hedgebanks and mature hedgerow trees.

The main characteristics of the Woodcroft Farm LCA are noted as:

- Small pasture fields used for horse grazing enclosed by good hedgerows characterised by mature hedgerow trees.
- The only surviving small farmstead in NW Havant.
- Thick belt of trees along the southern side of the bridleway and another wide band of trees on the southern boundary adjacent to the built environment.
- Low internal visibility and limited visibility across the landscape due to thick hedgerows, mature trees and bands of woodland.
- Patches of broadleaved woodland in the north and a larger block surrounding the grassed sports area.

- A reasonable level of tranquillity but some urban visual intrusion from adjacent housing and school.

The Havant Borough Landscape Character Assessment Sensitivity Report (2007) gave LCA3 a sensitivity score of Medium. This report was intended to identify the relative sensitivity of 15 key rural LCAs to settlement expansion.

To the south the site borders *LCA2: Waterlooville western suburbs* which belongs to LCT Urban Lowlands - a mainly suburban area characterised by an undulating landform with a strong element of broadleaved woodland in the landscape. Key characteristics of the LCA are:

- A gently sloping landform from north to south.
- Mature trees within open areas of grassland within the Wecock Estate, with Wecock Wood providing an attractive backdrop.
- The Wecock Estate, characterised by two storey blocks of terraces and blocks of three storey flats.
- Little or no transitional zone against the wider agricultural landscape, resulting in a clearly defined urban edge.
- Open areas of grassland in the form of school playing fields and recreation fields.

2.17 Conclusion on Site Landscape Character

The site, being composed of small to medium sized fields laid to pasture with thick hedgerows, hedgerow oaks and mature tree belts is characteristic of Regional Character Area 2f, although there is a limited sense of rural isolation due to the adjoining residential development to the south. However, the predominantly vegetated boundaries provide a strong sense of enclosure and a tranquil character.

2.18 For the purposes of this landscape character assessment, the impact of the proposed development is considered on the following character areas:

- Regional Character Area 2f: Forest of Bere east
- Local Character Area 2: Waterlooville western suburbs
- Local Character Area 3: Woodcroft Farm

Visual Assessment

- 2.19 This section assesses the existing views towards the site.
- 2.20 The visibility of the site from a particular location is determined by the topography, built form and other intervening features.
- 2.21 From the north east, glimpsed views into the main site can be obtained from the properties on James Copse Road. From all other aspects the visibility is limited by the extensive vegetation along the site boundaries and blocks of woodland in the vicinity resulting in a visual envelope defined by the boundary vegetation.
- 2.22 From further afield the site is an indistinguishable element within the wider field of view as it is seen in the context of the dense tree cover and rolling topography.
- 2.23 In summary, the site is an indistinguishable element in long views and is undetectable in most close views amongst the existing mature boundary vegetation.
- 2.24 This finding concurs with the conclusion of the Havant Borough Landscape Character Assessment Sensitivity Report (2007) which gave LCA3 (Woodcroft Farm) a visibility sensitivity rating of Low. This rating considered three factors; the extent of the visual envelope, the occurrence of landmark features within the LCA or visibility to landmarks external to the LCA and the degree of internal enclosure from woodland, hedgerows and built form.
- 2.25 The view of the site has been assessed from 20 visual receptors and representative photographs from these viewpoints taken where appropriate.

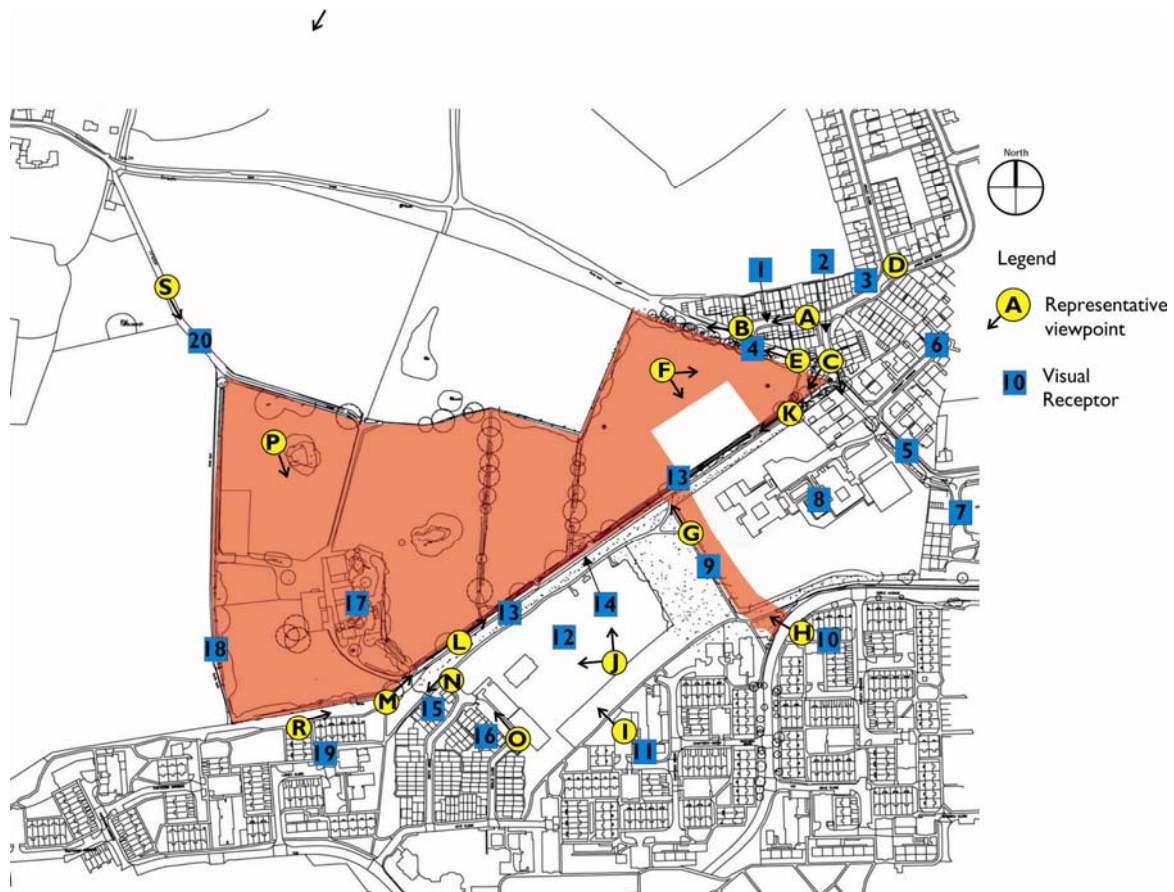


Fig. 4: Location of visual receptors and representative photo locations

Assessment of current views (see Appendix A for photos of representative views)

No	Visual Receptor	Current view
1 & 2	Residential properties on James Copse Road (Photos A, B & C)	There is a 12m wide strip of mature trees and undergrowth between the site and properties on James Copse Road and glimpsed views into the site are only possible where there are breaks in the boundary hedge.
3	Residential properties on James Copse Road east (Photo D)	Views into the site are not possible due to the vegetation on the site boundary and local topography.
4	BOAT (Photo E)	Views into the site are filtered by the vegetation on the site boundary.
5	Residential properties on Woodcroft Lane (Photo F)	Views into the site are not possible due to the vegetation on the site boundary and local topography.
6	Residential properties on Woodcroft Gardens	Views into the site are not possible due to the vegetation on the site boundary and intervening residential properties.
7	Residential properties on Renown Gardens	Views into the site are not possible due to the vegetation on the site boundary, local topography and Meadowlands School.
8	Meadowlands School (Photo F)	Views into the site are filtered by the vegetation on the site boundary.
9	Public Footpath (Photo G)	Glimpsed views into the site are available through the boundary hedgerow. Dense vegetation screens the route of the proposed access road.
10	Residential properties on Eagle Avenue (Photo H)	Views of the main site are not possible due to intervening tree cover and local topography. The location of the proposed entrance is visible where it meets Eagle Avenue.
11	Chaffinch Green (Photo I)	The tree belts to the north and south of the playing field block views into the site.
12	Playing field (Photo J)	The tree belt between Woodcroft Lane and the playing field blocks views into the site.
13	Woodcroft Lane (Photos K & L)	Views into the site are possible above the boundary hedgerow.
14	Bridleway (Photo M)	Glimpsed views into the site are available through the understorey and tree belt.
15	Residential properties on Hobby Close (Photo N)	The trees along the bridleway block views into the site.
16	Residential properties on Merlin Close (Photo O)	The tree belt between Woodcroft Lane and the playing field blocks views into the site.
17	Woodcroft Farm (Photo P)	There are open views of Fields D & E from Woodcroft Farm itself.
18	Footpath (Photo Q)	There are views into the site where there are gaps in the boundary vegetation.
19	Residential properties on Linnet Close (Photo R)	The tree belt beside the bridleway blocks views into the site.
20	Footpath (Photo S)	Views towards the site are blocked by vegetation.

3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The proposed development comprises 293 residential units of varying size from one bedroom apartments through to four bedroom detached houses and the retention of Woodcroft Farm farmhouse. Parking will be provided in single storey garages, on-plot and in small parking courts. The units will be predominantly two storeys with ridge heights between 8 and 9m. Principle vehicle access will be via a new entrance at the south from Eagle Avenue. There will be additional emergency access from James Copse Road and a secondary vehicle access serving a small proportion of the development from the eastern end of Woodcroft Lane.
- 3.2 The buildings are in traditional style using predominantly red brickwork and plain tiles, with a small number of units roofed in slate. The facades will include appropriate detailing to contribute to the sense of place within the development.
- 3.3 A new sports pitch for Meadowlands School is to be allowed for within the south east of the site, abutting the northern boundary of the school land. This will result in the bridleway being severed on its east/west trajectory by the requirement for unfettered access between the school and the playing field and a diversion will need to be made through the development site. The pitch is subject to a separate application and does not form part of this application boundary.
- 3.4 The significant structural vegetation along the boundaries and within the site has informed the development of the proposed lay-out and means that the scheme will be set within a strong landscape framework (see Appendix B).
- 3.5 Additional planting of trees and shrubs is proposed within the development to soften the profile of the buildings and provide a green structure within the streetscape, creating an attractive living environment and providing year-round visual interest. The tree planting will contain a significant proportion of oaks as recommended in the Bat Surveys. Native tree planting is proposed along the route of the new access road from Eagle Avenue to replace any trees lost to development, and new native hedge and tree planting is also proposed along the northern boundary which is currently relatively open.

- 3.6 The principal public open space will be a 0.5ha green at the heart of the development. This will include an equipped play area, and also contains two of the four sink holes. No significant interventions are proposed within the sink holes to ensure their structural integrity is not compromised. In addition to the main central green, there are an additional 1.5ha of green open space throughout the development, including a further five informal play areas.
- 3.7 As part of the site wide Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy, two ponds and a green swale are proposed. These will be appropriately planted to create attractive, wild-life friendly enhancements to the public domain. Areas of permeable block paving will also provide attenuation capacity.
- 3.8 The rerouted bridleway will be finished with an appropriate surface and timber holding points provided where it crosses the carriageway.

4 EFFECTS OF SCHEME PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The effects of any development can be positive or negative and can change during both construction and after completion. Some impacts may only be temporary while others may remain after completion. The following assessment establishes the likely effects of the scheme proposals on completion (Year 1) and residual effects (Year 15) on landscape character and their visual impact on the key visual receptors identified in section 2.23 above.

Effects on Landscape Character

Impact on Regional Landscape Character Area 2f: Forest of Bere east

- 4.2 The site is currently typical of LCA 2f, but post-development will become atypical. However, it represents a small proportion of the LCA and as such the proposals will have negligible impact on the overall landscape character of the LCA.

Impact on Local Character Area 2: Waterlooville western suburbs

- 4.3 The effect on the character of LCA 2: Waterlooville: western suburbs will be minimal due to the retention of the hedgerows and tree belts on its northern boundary which will mean that its green boundary remains predominantly intact. The character of Eagle Avenue will become less rural at the junction with the new access road. The scale and style of the proposed development will complement the existing built form and, on completion, the site will become part of this character area.

Impact on Local Character Area 3: Woodcroft Farm

- 4.4 Despite the retention of the mature hedgerows, trees and bands of woodland, the landscape character of LCA3 will undergo major change and will change from rural to semi-suburban, similar to LCA2.

Effects on Visual Receptors

- 4.5 During construction, activities on the site, particularly of the new access, will be an element in the immediate views from residential properties to the east and south but from other viewpoints, the changes within the site will largely remain hidden. On completion, the development, due to the substantial structural vegetation around the site, will be integrated into the setting from Year 1. The site is well contained by the

significant existing vegetation which will provide the kind of screening normally associated with mitigation planting only on reaching maturity.

4.6 Assuming the retained vegetation around the site is appropriately managed on an on-going basis, the screening which it currently provides will be remain, and there should be no change in the significance of the impact of the development in future years on the majority of identified receptors.

4.7 The table below summarises the impact of the development on the Visual Receptors identified in section 2 using the criteria and definitions provided in Appendix C.

Assessment of Visual Impact of development on Key Visual Receptors

No	Visual Receptor	Change in view	Significance of Impact	
			Year 1	Year 15
1 & 2	Residential properties on James Copse Road	Glimpsed seasonal views of the development through the mature trees and undergrowth bordering the site	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
3	Residential properties on James Copse Road (east)	The proposed development will not be visible.	Neutral	Neutral
4	BOAT	Filtered views of the development through the mature trees and undergrowth bordering the site	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
5	Residential properties on Woodcroft Lane	The proposed development will not be visible although glimpsed views of the access road will be possible beyond the school.	Neutral	Neutral
6	Residential properties on Woodcroft Gardens	The proposed development will not be visible.	Neutral	Neutral
7	Residential properties on Renown Gardens	The proposed development will not be visible although glimpsed views of the access road will be possible beyond the school.	Neutral	Neutral
8	Meadowlands School	The proposed development will not be visible although glimpsed views of the access road will be possible.	Minor adverse	Neutral
9	Public Footpath	The proposed development will not be visible through the boundary vegetation, although views of the access road will be possible.	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
10	Residential properties on	There will be glimpsed views of the proposed development at the end of the access road	Minor adverse	Minor adverse

	Eagle Avenue	and open views of the access road itself.		
11	Chaffinch Green	The proposed development will not be visible.	Neutral	Neutral
12	Playing field	The proposed development will not be visible.	Neutral	Neutral
13	Woodcroft Lane	The proposed development will be visible over the boundary fence.	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
14	Bridleway	Glimpsed views of the development will be possible through the understorey and tree belt.	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
15	Residential properties on Hobby Close	The proposed development will not be visible.	Neutral	Neutral
16	Residential properties on Merlin Close	The proposed development will not be visible.	Neutral	Neutral
17	Woodcroft Farm	Views of open fields will be replaced by views of the development.	Major adverse	Major adverse
18	Footpath	Glimpsed seasonal views of the development through the mature trees and undergrowth bordering the site	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
19	Residential properties on Linnet Close	The proposed development will not be visible through the boundary vegetation.	Neutral	Neutral
20	Footpath	The proposed development will not be visible through the boundary vegetation.	Neutral	Neutral

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The site is located adjacent to the Wecock settlement boundary and has been allocated in the adopted Havant Borough Core Strategy. Neither the site nor its immediate environs are subject to any landscape or townscape designations.
- 5.2 The proposed scheme is of a scale and form that fits within the topography. In combination with the retained framework of boundary vegetation and proposed landscape mitigation treatments, such as native hedge planting on the northern boundary and street trees across the site, the development is capable of being integrated into the wider rural area to the north, whilst forming an extension of semi-suburban Wecock to the south.
- 5.3 Proactive management of hedgerows and trees will ensure their long-term health and survival and provide green corridors which are truly integrated into the development, enhancing habitat connectivity as well as improving the living environs for residents.
- 5.4 There will be no residual negative effects on the wider Landscape Character.
- 5.5 There will be minor adverse visual impact on the immediate environs, notably for properties on Woodcroft Lane and Eagle Avenue and Meadowlands School due to the impact of the access road, but this will reduce as the proposed tree planting on the access road matures. The significant boundary vegetation will screen the development, and give it a mature, green character from the outset.

APPENDIX A

Representative views from key receptors



VIEW A : From James Copse Road(north) towards the site. There are only glimpsed views into the site through the boundary vegetation and mature tree cover.



VIEW B : Boundary hedge with tree belt behind between properties on James Copse Road(north) and the site.



VIEW C : From James Copse Road towards the site. There are only glimpsed views into the site through the boundary vegetation and mature tree cover.



VIEW D : Looking north along James Copse Road the site cannot be seen due to vegetation and local topography.



VIEW F : Looking south towards Woodcroft Lane and Meadowland School views are blocked by the dense boundary vegetation.



VIEW E : Looking north-west along the BOAT on the northeastern boundary views into the site are filtered by existing vegetation on the site boundary.



VIEW G : Looking north along the Public Footpath, the site is visible through breaks in the boundary hedgerow. Dense vegetation to the east lines the route of the proposed access road.



VIEW H : Looking north towards the site and the location of the proposed site entrance from public open space adjacent to Eagle Avenue.



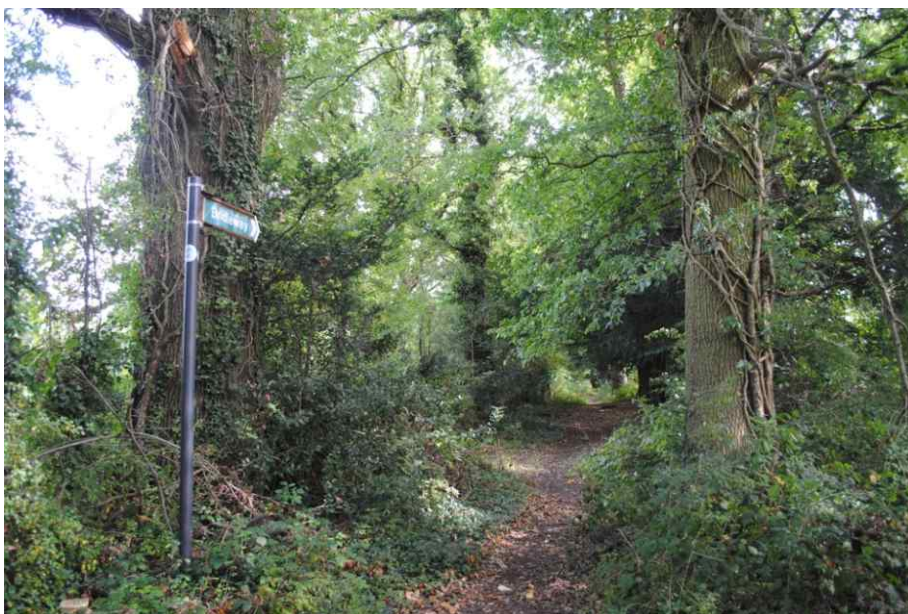
VIEW I : The tree belts to the north and south of the playing field block views towards the site from Chaffinch Close.



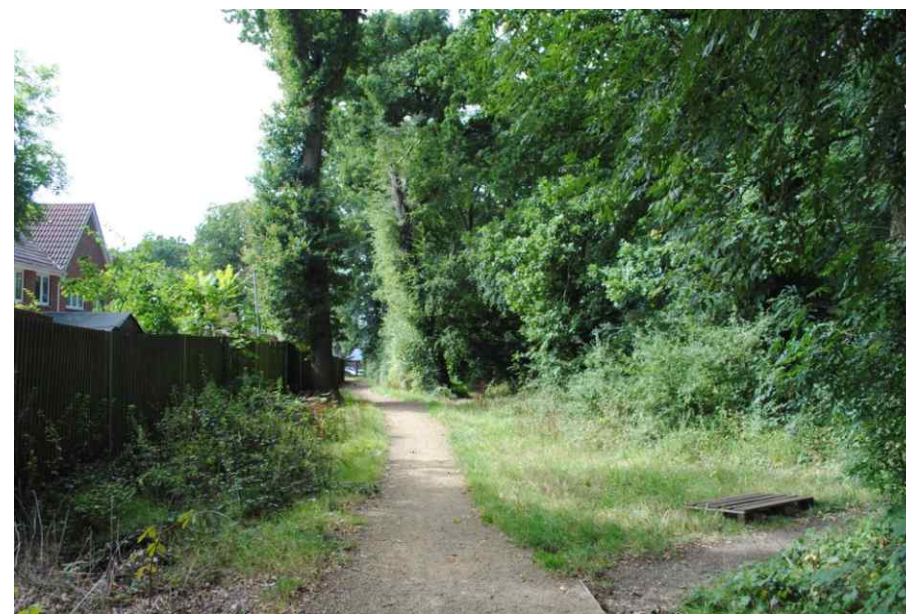
VIEW J : The view north towards the site from the playing field. The tree belt between Woodcroft Lane and the playing field blocks views toward the site.



VIEWS K & L: Views looking west and east along Woodcroft Lane. Views into the site are possible in some locations over the boundary hedge.



VIEW M: View looking east along the bridle path. Views into the site are screened by the existing vegetation.



VIEW N : Views into the site from residential properties on Hobby Close are blocked by the belt of trees and understorey to the south of Woodcroft Lane.



VIEW O : Views into the site from residential properties on Merlin Close are blocked by the belt of trees along the northern boundary of the playing field.



VIEW P : There are open views from Woodcroft Farm into the site from Fields D & E..



VIEW Q : There are views into the site from the public footpath on the western boundary through gaps in the boundary vegetation.



VIEW R : Views into the site from properties on Linnet Close are blocked by the tree belt.



VIEW S : Vegetation alongside the footpath encloses views towards the site to the south.

APPENDIX B

Landscape Strategy



North



Landscape Strategy

- The retained mature trees (predominantly oaks) and hedgerows provide a strong landscape structure, supplemented with additional native tree and hedge planting.
- Additional tree and shrub planting within the streets creates green corridors and links.
- 400sqm of equipped play for all ages will be provided in the Central Green, with additional informal, playable spaces across the development.
- The four solution features are retained as landscape features within areas of public open space.
- Attenuation ponds and swale become landscape features, with wildlife benefit.



Legend

- Application Boundary

Soft Landscape

- Existing tree
- Existing woodland belt to eastern boundary with understorey
- Existing native hedge
- Proposed tree
- Proposed shrub planting
- Proposed native shrub planting
- Private garden
- Proposed ornamental hedge to private frontage
- Proposed grass
- Proposed meadow grass and seasonal bulbs
- Proposed native marginal planting to ponds
- Proposed swale planted with damp-tolerant species

Proposed surface materials

- Tarmac to carriageways
- Block paving to parking courts and private roads - parking spaces delineated with contrast banding
- Block paving raised tables
- 450x450 slabs to pavements and paths
- Pressed gravel to brideway
- Bound gravel paths in public open spaces
- Resin bound rubber mulch beneath play equipment

Other landscape elements

- Seating in public open space
- Cycle stands in public open space
- Informal play area (LAP)
- Indicative play equipment
- Spot height
- Proposed underground surface water storage in public open space

Please refer to the Design Code for further detail on proposed planting species, hard materials etc

APPENDIX C

Criteria for assessing significance of impact on Landscape Character and Visual Effects

APPENDIX C

Criteria for assessing significance of impact on Landscape Character and Visual Effects

Significance /Impact	Criteria
Substantial adverse	Where the scheme would cause a substantial negative change in the existing view and the new development would be the dominant visual element. The Proposal would do one or more of the following: • be at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape; • result in a total loss or major alteration to the key attributes and their setting • disrupt a finely balanced or intact landscape; • cause a major deterioration to the contribution that the Site makes or has the potential to make to the local landscape character; • be visually intrusive and disrupt valued views of the area; • cause a major reduction in the current level of tranquillity; • introduce incongruous elements into the landscape; • be incapable of the full mitigation; • be in serious conflict with the local guidelines for landscape character areas. • be in serious conflict with the national/local policies for protecting the countryside/townscape.
Moderate adverse	Where the scheme would cause a significant negative change in the existing view and the new development would be one of a small number of elements in the overall setting. The Proposal would do one or more of the following: • be out of scale with the landscape, or at odds with the local pattern landform; • result in a partial loss of key attributes, or reduce or remove their setting; • cause a noticeable deterioration to the contribution that the Site makes or has the potential to make to the local landscape character; • be visually intrusive and adversely affect views into and across the area; • cause a noticeable reduction in the current level of tranquillity; • introduce prominent new elements that are not entirely characteristic; • be incapable of adequate mitigation; • be in conflict with the local guideline for landscape character areas. • be in conflict with the national/local policies for protecting the countryside/townscape.
Minor adverse	Where the scheme would cause a noticeable negative change in the existing view and the new development would be one of many elements in the overall setting. The Proposal would do one or more of the following: • not quite fit the landform and scale of the landscape; • result in a minor loss of the key/characteristic elements of features or their setting reduced; • cause a minor deterioration to the contribution that the Site makes or has to make to the local landscape character; • although not very visually intrusive, would adversely affect certain views into and across the area;

	• cause a minor reduction in the current level of tranquillity; • introduce noticeable new elements that are not entirely characteristic; • not fulfil local guidelines for landscape character areas; • conflict with the national/local authority policies for protecting the local character of the countryside/townscape.
Neutral/negligible effect	Where there is no discernible / minimal positive or negative change in the existing view. The Proposal would do one or more of the following; • complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape; • incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure that the scheme will blend in well with surrounding landscape; • avoid being visually intrusive; • have no adverse effect on the current level of tranquillity of the landscape; • maintain existing landscape character; • avoid conflict with national/local policies towards protecting of the countryside/townscape.
Minor beneficial	Where the scheme would cause a noticeable positive change in the existing view and the new development would be one of many elements in the overall setting. The Proposal would do one or more of the following; • provide some mitigation for an existing severe adverse effect; • fit well with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape; • incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure they will blend in well with surrounding landscape; • be capable of a good degree of assimilation in to the landscape; • enable some sense of the place and scale to be restored through well-designed planting and mitigation measures; • make some improvement to the contribution that the Site makes to the local existing landscape character; • be in line with local government guidelines for landscape character areas; • make a contribution to national/local policies towards protection of the countryside/townscape.
Moderate beneficial	Where the scheme would cause a significant positive change in the existing view and the new development would be one of a small number of elements in the overall setting. The Proposal would provide an opportunity to enhance the landscape because they do one or more of the following; • partially mitigate an existing severe adverse effect; • fit very well with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape; • have the potential, through mitigation, to enable the restoration of key/character features, partially lost or diminished; • be capable of being largely assimilated in to the landscape; • make a significant improvement to the contribution that the Site makes to the local landscape character through well-designed planting and mitigation measures; • enable some quality to be restored or enhanced through beneficial landscape proposals and sensitive design; • support objectives in the local guidelines for landscape character areas; • further national/local objectives to regenerate degraded countryside. • make a significant contribution to national/local policies towards protection of the countryside/townscape.