



Harper Landscape Architecture LLP
Landscape Institute chartered practice

19 Edmund Road
Hastings
East Sussex TN35 5JY
Partnership no OC392053

Proposed Development at Clays Field, Steyning

Landscape Statement

Commissioned by DMH on behalf of
the Client

HLA Report Reference hla 261 P01

By 

Partner, Harper Landscape Architecture LLP

1st November 2019

Contents

	Pages
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Site description	4
3.0 Landscape Character and Visual Baseline work carried out in 2018	6
4.0 Design proposals	10
5.0 Planning policy	11
5.0 Conclusions	15

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by ██████████ Harper Landscape Architecture LLP (hla), 1st November 2019. It was commissioned by DMH, 31st October 2019. The statement draws on the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) work that was partially completed in October 2018 and was used to inform the subsequent design. Specifically this report responds to the proposal to allocate Clay's Hill as a Local Green Space in the Bramber Parish Council draft Neighbourhood Plan (NP) submitted on the 21st September 2019. The NP is currently in its regulation 14 consultation phase, due to come to a close on 2 November 2019.
- 1.2 The design work put forward includes four options. A number of options are put forward in the document titled Development Proposals, project no: 17056 and the fourth option is for a retirement scheme. The initial three options occupy a similar area and would result in the built development taking up 20% of the Site and the green space 80%.
- 1.3 The partially completed LVIA was produced in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, 2013, by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 1.4 The statement is to be read in conjunction with the legal opinion and advice put forward work issued by Sasha White QC, Landmark Chambers (legal matters), and DMH Stallard (planning matters). It should be read in conjunction with the specialist work put forward by the heritage and ecological consultants.
- 1.5 Nick is a partner of hla and a chartered landscape architect with a BA degree in landscape design, a post graduate diploma in landscape architecture and has been a full member of the Landscape Institute since 1995. He has run the business of Harper Landscape Architecture LLP, a landscape architecture consultancy, since 2008 which is a registered practice of the Landscape Institute. He is also a lecturer and is a member of several Design Review Panels. He has 30 years professional experience as a landscape architect with extensive experience of landscape and visual impact assessment and has been an expert landscape witness at a number of public inquiries and hearings.

2.0 Site description

2.1 The existing site

- 2.11 This 7.9ha Site is located at and directly beyond Steyning's south east settlement edge in the area known as Bramber. The location of the development is proposed at the northern edge of an area of private green space called Claysfield Farm.
- 2.12 The green space is a large grassed area with the following boundary descriptions; to the east is a dense tree lined boundary which screens the busy A283 and also Bramber Castle located beyond; to the south is Clay's Hill, a tree and hedge lined road although there are some gaps with views through; to the west are the backs of houses running along the east side of Goring Road whose gardens directly abut the green space and who have views ranging from obscured to open from elevated positions in to the Site; to the north is Castle Lane which has properties on the opposite side from Claysfield who also have views ranging from obscured to open through trees located along the Site's northern boundary.
- 2.13 Claysfield is a sloping Site that rises from a low point at its south east corner of 4m AOD up towards its western boundary which rises up to 15m. The area proposed for the new housing rises from approximately 5m AOD at the eastern (A283) boundary to 15m AOD at its western (back of 33 Goring Road) boundary. The Site is grassland with some parkland tree species and there is a linear pond that stretches from the centre towards the south eastern corner of the Site and which supports a wetland habitat.
- 2.14 The Site has a parkland character within Steyning's suburban residential edge. Whilst Bramber Castle is not visible from the Site its presence is significant as part of local history and character. Similarly the South Downs ridge line is prominent in the background for occasional views from the Site looking south and is also an integral part of the Sites's context and character.
- 2.15 Most views of the Site are contained to near distance within the Claysfield open space, the backs of houses on Goring Road and the fronts of houses on Castle Lane. There are also long distance views in from the South Downs 1.5km to the south.
- 2.16 There is one Public Right of Way (footpath 2728) that crosses the south west corner of Claysfield and 220m south of the proposed housing.
- 2.17 Bramber Castle is a Scheduled Monument (1012174) and Grade I Listed Building (1286805) is located 200m east of the Site and is screened from view by dense planting along the A283. Burletts Grade II Listed Building (1191946) is located 400m south of the Site and may have views of Claysfield and the new housing. There is no Ancient Semi-natural Woodland in close proximity to the Site and the Site is not in a Conservation Area.
- 2.18 Some trees located to the south east of Clayshill (which would not be impacted by the development) are covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

3.0 Landscape Character and Visual Baseline work carried out in 2018

3.1 Landscape Character

3.11 Landscape Character Assessments

3.111 Baseline Landscape Character was reviewed for the partially completed LVIA. The Site is located within the following National/Landscape Character Areas although these all describe large areas of which the Site is only an incremental and small part of each.

- Natural England, National Character Assessment 2010, National Character Area (NCA) 121, the Low Weald.
- Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (WSCC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) LW 9 Upper Adur Valley.
- Horsham District Council (WDC) Landscape Character Assessment October 2003, LCA 04 Lower Adur Valley.

3.112 The Site is also described at a more relevant local scale, Horsham District Council (WDC) Landscape Capacity Study, April 2014, LCA 66 Bramber Castle and Clays Hill.

LCA 66 is described on page 87 as follows,

- **Landscape Character Sensitivity** - third and final points respectively described as follows.

“There is a Parkland character along Clay’s Hill.”

“Overall, the landscape in good condition”

The Table, Assessment Summary states **Landscape Sensitivity** as **High**.

- **Visual Sensitivity** - third and final points respectively described as follows

“The Site would have **Moderate Sensitivity** to housing.”

The Table, Assessment Summary states **Visual Sensitivity** as **Moderate** (for medium scale development).

- **Landscape Value** - whilst proximity to Bramber Castle, Steyning and the South Downs tonal Park the fourth point highlights the landscape detracting nature of the roads

“Low tranquillity due to the A283 and Clay’s Hill roads.”

The Table, Assessment Summary states **Landscape Value** as **Moderate to High** (for medium scale development).

- **Landscape Capacity** - this is described as follows.

“The area has a strong distinctive character and is of overall moderate visibility. The area has no landscape capacity for large scale development which would be likely to result in unacceptable adverse impacts on character and setting of Steyning and Bramber. ”

The Table, Assessment Summary states **Overall Landscape Capacity** as **No/Low** (for medium scale development).

3.12 Landscape character as defined for LVIA purposes

- 3.121 The Site is an area of green space which abuts and is heavily influenced by the suburban edge of Steyning on all four sides. To the north is Castle Lane, to the west is Goring Road, to the south is Clays Hill and to the east is the A283. Castle Lane and Goring Road give a suburban context to the Site with the houses are set back beyond their gardens and to the north beyond Castle Lane. The busy Clay’s Hill and the A283 are visually separated from the Site by mature tree planting but the traffic noise and partial views of vehicles have a landscape detracting influence on the Site. The Landscape Character is more suburban to the north and west where it is closer housing, it relates more to green space towards the centre of the Site with significantly lessened tranquility to the south and east where receptors are in closer proximity to the roads.
- 3.122 The Site itself is green space used by local people (at the discretion of the owner) for walking dogs. It has a parkland character with grassed areas, groups of and individual trees spaced across the Site, a linear pond stretching form the south eastern edge to the centre of the Site, mown grass paths and a small area of hardstanding near to the entrance at the western boundary. Public Right of Way (PRoW) 2728 runs from the entrance towards an access point on Clay’s Hill at the Site’s southern boundary. In hla 261 L01, page 3, General Landscape Analysis Plan, the Site was broken in to three character areas, Suburban Parkland Edge (north and west), Parkland (central area) and Wetland (south east).
- 3.123 The Site is in close proximity to Bramber Castle Scheduled Monument however there is no intervisibility and there is significant separation with the busy A283 and dense mature planting on the intervening land.
- 3.124 The Site’s Landscape Value is of local interest and offers green space views for residents. The roads are significant landscape detractors which lessen tranquility to the south and east of the Site. There is also lessened tranquility towards the residential edges to the north and west with car movements, suburban activities and there is a feeling of being overlooked.

3.125 Overall the Landscape has a recognisable suburban parkland character with some views out and is influenced by the lessened tranquility towards the edges of the Site.

3.126 As such Landscape Quality is judged to be **Medium**, **Landscape Value** as **Medium and Landscape Sensitivity** as **Medium**

3.2 Visual Baseline

3.21 The Site is visually contained to predominantly near distance views with occasional long distance views in from the South Downs escarpment slopes to the south and west. Appendix 1 Viewpoints 1 to 17 Baseline demonstrate the most likely views from public Viewpoints. On page 3 the Zone of Theoretical Visibility demonstrates the contained extent to which the Site can be seen from.

3.22 The near distance Viewpoints 1 and 2 are from PRow 278 and have open views in to the Site, these are **Medium Sensitivity**. Similarly Viewpoints 11, 12, 13, and 14 are from within the Site and also have open views, all of which are also **Medium Sensitivity**. Viewpoints 6, 7, 8, and 9 demonstrate views from Castle Lane which have partial views seen through predominantly screening boundary edge vegetation, all of which are **Low to Medium Sensitivity**. Viewpoints 4 and 5 show views from Clay's Hill and Viewpoint 10 from the A283, all of which are predominantly screened views from landscape detracting receptor locations, and all of which are **Low to Medium Sensitivity**.

3.23 There are 3 long distance Viewpoints 15, 16 and 17 located 1.5km, 1.6km and 2.7km from the Site, respectively. These are **High Sensitivity** and located along the South Downs Way on the ridge lines of South Downs escarpment slopes. From these locations the Site is just discernible as an incremental part of the view composition and seen within the context of Steyning's suburban built up character.

3.3 Broad conclusions of the Landscape Character and Visual Baseline work carried out in 2018

3.31 The Landscape Character Assessment Baseline descriptions at National, County and District level would not be impacted as they are large scale and the development would be a small and barely discernible element.

3.32 However the Horsham District Council (WDC) Landscape Capacity Study, April 2014, LCA 66 Bramber Castle and Clays Hill is more relevant as it is at a Site scale. This Study includes the Scheduled Monument which it is assumed would be a No Capacity judgement and which infers there is likely to be more capacity within the Clay's Field part of the LCA. The LCA highlights a lessened tranquility as a consequence of proximity to the landscape detracting roads (A283 and Clay's Hill). The Table, Assessment Summary states **Overall Landscape Capacity** as **No/Low** for medium scale development. Medium scale development is described as 100 to 500 houses and there is no description of Small scale development which is specified as up to 100 houses.

- 3.33 On the basis of the information summarised in sections 5.0 and 6.0 above the document hla 261 L01 was put forward to offer greater understanding of the Site's landscape capacity for residential development and the opportunities for enhanced public green space for the local residents.
- 3.34 The general landscape analysis plan (hla 261 01) described the key physical elements that influence the Site.
- 3.35 The Sensitivity according to views to South Downs from eye level plan is shown on hla 261 02 which shows how discrete different areas of Site are in relation to views from the South Downs.
- 3.36 The Potential residential development locations plan (hla 261 03) shows the relationship between sensitivity of edge development according to its intervisibility with the South Downs.
- 3.37 It is concluded that the the most congruous and sensitive location for the new housing would be at Steyning's suburban built up edge allowing maximised visual and physical access to the enhanced green space located at the centre of the Site. New buildings would take up 20% of the overall area to minimise impact. The potential opportunity for the retained green space which makes up 80% of the Site for enhanced biodiversity, greater access and enhanced green infrastructure is high.

4.0 Design proposals

- 4.1 Design proposals were put forward by Folkes Architects in June 2019 with a number of design options put forward in their document Development Proposals Project No 17056. For the purpose of broad built form understanding Option Two is described as follows.
- 4.2 The proposal would cover 1.8ha (20%) of the overall Site area (potentially 40 new dwellings depending upon design option). The houses would be accessed via a central winding road and a spur road curving to the south. Each dwelling would have a front and back garden, an access drive and a number of these may have separate garage buildings.
- 4.3 The new housing would be set back on the south side of Castle Lane. The houses would step down from the high point at the western end to a low point at the eastern end.
- 4.4 In order to blend the housing in to the local landscape planting has been proposed on the south side of the proposed that would have a parkland character, offer clear definition between the housing and the green space and obscure views in from the backs of Goring Road and for the long distance views in from the South Downs. The existing hedge line along the south side of Castle Lane would most likely have to be removed and would be replaced by new hedge and tree planting to retain obscured visibility from existing residents towards Claysfield whilst seeking to retain the Significant NP Views.

5.0 Planning policy

5.1 Introduction

5.11 Planning policy is discussed in detail by Landmark however there are specific landscape related items raised in the NPPF 2019 and by Bramber Parsh Council in their Draft NP specifically Policy B7 and Appendix B in relation to local communities having the option to designate certain areas of land as Local Green Spaces via the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.2 National policy

5.21 Local Green Spaces are described in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraphs 99, 100, and 101 (page 29) and these are quoted as follows

“Paragraph 99

The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

Paragraph 100

The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Paragraph 101

The Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.”

5.3 Parish Council - Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2031, Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Consultation Draft September 2019

5.31 Objectives 2, 3 and 7 of the NP are relevant to the Site and landscape, these are listed as follows.

- Objective 2 (page 14)

“Carefully manage the siting of development to protect the individual identity and setting of Bramber.”

- Objective 3 (page 14)

“Ensure that development is sustainable and sympathetic to the scale, landscape setting, topography and architectural and historic character of where it is sited in the parish.”

- Objective 7

“Safeguard local green spaces that are valued by the community, improve their biodiversity and integrate them with the footpath and bridleway network.”

5.32 Policy B2: Character of the development (page 25), states (1st and 2nd sentences) that development should,

“preserve and enhance character area in which it is located. The design should demonstrate how it has taken account of the local context.”

and goes on at point 2 as follows.

“In particular, development proposals are expected to address the following criteria:

- a. Make a positive contribution to the visual impact of the main highway approaches into the settlements.
- b. Not have a significantly detrimental impact on the local views as set out in Policy B9.

5.33 Policy B3: Design of development (page 26), states (1st sentence),

“Development is expected to demonstrate a high quality of design, which responds and integrates well with its surroundings, meets the changing needs of residents and minimises the impact on the natural environment.”

5.34 Policy B6: Green Infrastructure (page 32), states (1st sentence),

“Proposals should be designed from inception to create, conserve, enhance and manage green spaces and connective chains of green infrastructure.”

5.35 Policy B7: Protection and maintenance of Local Green Spaces (page 33), states (1st sentence) states,

“Clays Field, detailed in Appendix B and defined on the Policies Map, is designated as Local Green Spaces:

Local policy for managing development on a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts (NPPF paragraph 145); proposals for built development will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to enhance the role and function of that Local Green Space.”

5.36 Policy B9: Protection of Locally Significant Views (page 35), states (1st sentence),

“Development proposals are required to ensure that they do not have a significantly detrimental impact on the locally significant views”

5.361 It is noted that the Significant Views listed are from similar locations (likely to have the same Landscape Sensitivity judgements) to those included in Appendix 1 hla 261 R02 in the following instances, NP View 7 is similar to hla Viewpoints 15 and 16, NP Views 9 and 10 are similar to hla Viewpoint 17, NP View 11 is similar to Viewpoints 7 and 8, NP View 12 is similar to hla viewpoints 9, 10 and 12, and NP View 13 is similar to hla Viewpoints 6 and 11. The other NP views are not visually relevant to the Site.

5.362 There would be no views or indiscernible views of the Site and which would see it in the context of Steyning’s suburban built up edge, from NP Views 7, 9 and 10. NP Views 11, 12 and 13 are all from within the Site and in or close to the development area. It is noted that these views are not from public land. Detailed design proposals would seek to ensure these views are retained where this is feasible and perhaps offer alternative viewing areas that focus on panoramic long distance views from other areas within the green space.

5.4 Planning policy conclusions in relation to landscape matters

5.41 The most relevant question in respect of the NPPF 2019 Paragraphs 99, 100 and 101 that describe Local Green Space and in relation to Landscape Character and Visual matters is what would the impact be for point b. specifically where it refers to ‘particular local significance,’ for example because of its ‘beauty’ and ‘tranquillity.’

5.411 In relation to beauty the conclusions put forward for Landscape Character and Views above demonstrate what can be seen and highlight that 80% of the existing green space would be retained, enhanced and maintained for public access with the new housing being located at the Site’s suburban built up edge boundary.

5.412 In relation to tranquillity the Site is influenced by the landscape detracting roads to the south and east which would receive greater screening in the enhancement of the green space. A planted buffer zone to the south of the Site could also lessen tranquillity of the areas closest to the existing housing with its suburban use by people and cars .

5.42 In relation to the Bramber Parish Council - Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2031, Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Consultation Draft September 2019 the proposals seek to comply with policy as follows.

- In response to NP Objectives 2 and 3, the location of new housing at the edge of the Site closest to the existing, suburban, built up edge (Castle Lane and Goring Road) of Steyning would have least impact.
- In response to NP Objective 7, 80% of the green space would be retained with the potential for new parkland interventions to enhance use, create better connected paths,

and green infrastructure including enhanced biodiversity, a better landscape experience, and enhanced space to enjoy views.

- In response to NP Policy B2: Character of the development and Policy B3: Design of development, the design proposals retain 80% of the existing green space which would be enhanced and introduce housing at the suburban residential area of the Site where it would be most congruous to its local character setting. As such it is judged that the sense of place of the Site would be preserved and for a large part of the Site the landscape would be enhanced.
- In response to Policy B6: Green Infrastructure and Policy B7: Protection and maintenance of Local Green Spaces, the enhancement of the retained green space would include the creation of greater biodiversity with improved access to enhanced habitats and landscape areas for human and ecological connections.
- In response to Policy B9: Protection of Locally Significant Views, it is noted above that the visually impacted NP Views 11, 12 and 13, which are all within the Site (not from public land), should be incorporated within or mitigated for in the detailed design proposals. In order to blend the housing in to the local landscape, planting has been proposed on the south side of the houses to offer clear visual definition between the housing and the green space and obscure views in from the backs of Goring Road and for the long distance indiscernible views in from the South Downs. Views from the southern edge of this proposed buffer planting area would offer very similar views to those experienced at NP Views 11, 12 and 13.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Proposals have been put forward using an environmentally (landscape) lead process.**
- 6.2 The existing findings for Landscape Character, Views and the Landscape Capacity of different areas within the Site to accept change demonstrates that there is capacity for small scale residential development.**
- 6.3 Landscape Character Area impacts would be Not Significant at national, county and district scales of Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape capacity at district scale is less clear however the description of LCA 66 with No to Low Capacity is stated for Medium scale development only with no judgement put forward for Small scale development as is proposed. The LCA also includes Bramber Castle Scheduled Monument, a site with No Capacity and which must have weighed the final judgement towards less rather than more capacity.**
- 6.4 Views in to the Site are generally near distance although there are almost indiscernible long distance views from the South Downs Way located at least 1.5km to the south (see hla Viewpoints 15, 16 and 17). These long distance views see the Site within the context of Steyning's suburban built up edge. The near distance visual receptors include views from houses on Castle Lane and Goring Road, from PRow 278, from the green space and from NP Views 11, 12 and 13 (it is noted these are not from public land). Views from the southern edge of the proposed buffer planting area would offer very similar views to those experienced at NP Views 11, 12 and 13.**
- 6.5 Beyond the published Landscape Character Assessments no Landscape Character and Visual Impact judgements are put forward at this stage however the following design proposals seek to lessen, mitigate and enhance different parts of the Site.**
- The new housing is sensitively located at the existing suburban built up edge of Steyning so that it would most successfully blend with its residential context and leave the largest possible area of green space.**
 - By retaining and enhancing 80% of the existing green space the Site's special sense of place and Landscape Character would be preserved.**
 - The detailed design would include landscape design for new and enhanced parkland interventions for greater use, better connected paths and green infrastructure including enhanced biodiversity, a better landscape experience, and enhanced space to enjoy views.**
 - Integrating significant (NP) Views into the proposal would be an integral part of the final design ensuring that long range panoramic views out of the Site would be retained wherever possible.**

- **The landscape proposals would include mitigation and enhancing design to offer a greater buffer between the landscape detracting roads and also to soften the views from the South Downs towards Steyning's suburban built up edge.**

6.6 Whilst the Site has green space it is also heavily influenced by the landscape detracting roads (Clay's Hill and the A283 to the south and east respectively). Similarly to the western and northern boundaries the built up edge of Steyning at Castle Lane and Goring Road give a suburban character. As such it is unlikely whether the Site would pass the NPPF Paragraph 100 test for Local Green Space as being demonstrably special to the local community in terms of beauty and tranquility.

6.7 As such it is judged that this is a good opportunity to deliver high quality, well designed housing that respects its landscape context by retaining and enhancing a large area of publicly accessible green space. This would minimise Landscape Character and Visual Impacts to retain 'beauty,' improve the perception of 'tranquility,' and incorporate sensitive views. Such measures would ensure that the development would conform with landscape related planning policy at all scales.