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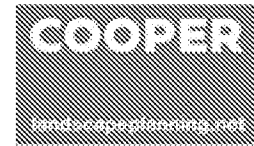
Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Nursery Fields, North Bersted

For Landform Bersted Limited

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) for the Nursery Fields has been prepared by **COOPER** Landscape Planning, on behalf of Landform Bersted Limited, using the methodology set out by the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, 2013. As this is not development involving an ES this appraisal has been carried out as a landscape and visual assessment (LVA), not a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), therefore the effects are assessed in terms of their importance, rather than their significance.
- 1.2 The Guidelines also note in relation to Scope, at paragraph 6.2, page 98, that: '*...The emphasis must be on a reasonable approach which is proportional to the scale and nature of the proposed development...*'
- 1.3 This LVA has been prepared for an outline planning application for Nursery Fields and involves the construction of a new access and private dwellings. It is related in design terms to a previous planning application for the smaller ('Chalcroft Nursery'), which is not the subject of this LVA.
- 1.4 The Description of Development is: *Outline permission for the development of up to 225 residential units, with associated infrastructure, open space, and vehicular and pedestrian access (Access to be determined).*
- 1.5 The site forms part of the Strategic Site Allocation in the Adopted Local Plan Policy H, SP2, Policy SD3: Land at West Bersted. As part of this allocation consultations have taken place directly with Fabrik, the landscape consultants for the wider site, and they have received draft copies of this assessment.
- 1.6 This assessment considers effects on landscape and views as separate issues. Landscape effects relate both to physical changes to landscape elements, for example, landform, watercourses, footpaths, trees, hedgerows, and other types of vegetation, and to the resulting landscape character. Visual effects relate to changes in views from public locations. No assessment was made from private dwellings, to which there was no public access.
- 1.7 Surveys were undertaken in the winter, spring and summer of 2020 and the assessment undertaken in May- June 2020. This assessment considers the following:
- ✦ the landscape character of the site and its relationship to its surroundings;
 - ✦ landscape related planning designations;
 - ✦ views to and from the site;
 - ✦ a landscape strategy designed to integrate the proposed developments into their setting;

- ⌘ mitigation; and
- ⌘ potential landscape and visual effects arising, on completion in winter, and after 15 years, in summer.

1.8 The assessment is based on the following plans and documents:

- ⌘ the illustrative master plans produced by JTP Architects;
- ⌘ the Land Use and Building Heights Parameter Plan also JTP; and
- ⌘ a Tree Condition Survey, undertaken by A.T. Coombes Associates Ltd.

1.9 The assessment has been based on the proposals set out on the master plan. Those elements of the proposals with relevance to this landscape and visual assessment include:

- ⌘ construction of new dwellings;
- ⌘ construction of a new access road;
- ⌘ construction of attenuation ponds and SuDS features;
- ⌘ retention and management of trees and hedgerows
- ⌘ the provision of new public open space;
- ⌘ structural tree planting and community woodland; and
- ⌘ the retention and reinforcement of existing hedgerows.

2.0 METHODOLOGY AND STUDY AREA

- 2.1 The methodology is set out at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 An assessment of the local, largely flat, topography is provided by Plan L1. Landscape designations and landscape character are set out on Plans L2a and b, and the visual assessment and Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) on completion shown by Plan L3. The illustrative Landscape Master Plan is Plan L5. Panoramic photographs from typical representative locations are provided in Appendix 2.
- 2.3 The study area was determined by the theoretical extent to which the proposed development is likely to be visible within the surrounding landscape, as shown by the ZTV, up to an initial limit of approximately 2.5km. Beyond this distance, site appraisal and professional experience shows that visual effects will be limited in this flat coastal plain landscape.
- 2.4 The ZTV of the proposed development was established by computer modelling to determine the visibility of the site and create the study area, using barriers created by buildings and woodland. Representative viewpoints were visited and, where selected, these are set out on the plan. Some views were rejected because there were effectively no views available of the site, these including:
- ✧ Pagham Road;
 - ✧ Bognor Regis town centre; and
 - ✧ Chichester bypass.
- 2.5 This assessment considers landscape and visual effects as follows:
- ✧ On Completion: in winter, without the benefit of effective planting mitigation; and
 - ✧ 15 Years After Completion: in summer, with the benefit of effective planting mitigation.
- 2.6 The assessment of the effects on landscape and visual receptors is explained in Appendix 1, this being derived from GLVIA3, 2013, with landscape and visual assessments being based on receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change. To ensure a consistency and transparency to these assessments, it is useful for the assessor to have an initial touchstone of the likely effects, and this is provided using the table below. This table is to provide initial guidance, with the results then modified by site specific factors, on their merits, using the methodology.

Consistency Checklist				
Sensitivity	High Magnitude	Medium Magnitude	Slight Magnitude	Negligible Magnitude/ No Change
High	Major Effect	Major Effect	Moderate Effect	Minor or No Effect
Medium	Major Effect	Moderate Effect	Minor Effect	Minor or No Effect
Low	Moderate Effect	Minor or No Effect	Minor or No Effect	Minor or No Effect

- 2.7 The assessment of importance of the effect, or its significance is made by professional judgement with the reasons for that judgement given in the text of the assessment tables, and in the conclusions to this report.

3.0 LANDSCAPE POLICY

- 3.1 Plan L2 shows the location of the site in relation to landscape planning designations, noting that Policy matters are properly dealt with in the planning report.

National Planning Policy

- 3.2 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), March 2012. The overarching objective is to help achieve sustainable development.
- 3.3 Section 11 of the NPPF refers to the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes, the weight to be given to criteria based policies, such as landscape character designations, and the need to create, protect, enhance, and manage green infrastructure. This is not a valued landscape.

Local Planning Policy

- 3.4 Plan L2 illustrates the landscape designations applicable to the site and surrounding area.

Arun District Council Local Plan

- 3.5 The site has no specific landscape designation; however, landscape planning policies relevant to the site and surrounding area are set out below.
- 3.6 In relation to the form of new development, Policy GEN7 states:

'Planning permission will only be granted for schemes displaying high quality design and layout. Development proposals involving new buildings or significant extensions, or alterations must be accompanied by an illustrated written analysis of the site and its immediate setting, together with its relationship with the relevant townscape, landscape... characteristics of the wider area.

Development will be permitted provided it:

(ii) demonstrates that it responds positively to the identified characteristics and resources of the site and the area to create attractive places and spaces with the needs of people in mind and respects and enhances local distinctiveness;

(vi) retains significant open or wooded areas which, in their own right, make a material contribution to the local environment...'

The Arun District Local Plan

- 3.7 The site has been identified as part of a wider area for growth as part of a strategic site

allocation under Policy SD3.

- 3.8 The Council have prepared a new Local Plan and the planning statement will include a full review of planning policies.
- 3.9 A Sustainability Appraisal has been produced by the Council which appraised the content of the proposed Local Plan. The Sustainability Appraisal - Main Report identifies the site as part of a wider area for growth which proposes up to 2,000 residential units with employment. Regarding the effects upon the landscape character and the strategic gap the report acknowledges that development can be accommodated without significant impacts:

'This would result in an incursion into the countryside westwards but there is sufficient capacity within the landscape that with appropriate landscaping this can be accommodated without any significant impacts on the overall gap and views.'

Arun Landscape Study 2006

- 3.10 Arun District Council appointed Hankinson Duckett Associates (HDA) in March 2006 to consider the landscape and visual amenity aspects of development choices in Arun District over the period 2006-2026. The study is to inform decision-making on where major development might be accommodated within the District without an unacceptable impact on landscape character in general and on the setting of outstanding assets within Arun District.
- 3.11 The Arun Landscape Study undertook a local landscape character assessment to identify landscape types and areas, which provide the framework for the assessment of landscape sensitivity and value, which together determine the overall landscape capacity.
- 3.12 The site lies within the North Bersted Matrix (LCA 8) and has been given a Medium/High landscape capacity for development. Six levels of capacity were used to assess the sites, as follows:
- ⌘ *Medium, Low or Negligible ratings* for landscape capacity indicate that development would have a significant and detrimental effect on the character of the landscape, and/or on the setting to existing settlement or outstanding assets within the District;
 - ⌘ *Medium/High or High/Medium* identifies a landscape character area with the capacity for limited development, in some areas, having regard for the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas; and
 - ⌘ *High or Very High capacity* identifies landscape character areas of low sensitivity and low landscape value which, from a landscape perspective, could accommodate significant allocations of development, subject to the same

caveats set out above for landscape character areas with High/Medium capacity.

- 3.13 The Arun Landscape Study tested the extent to which designated gaps fulfil their policy function. Each of the Strategic and Local Gaps identified in the Arun District Local Plan has been assessed based on the structural landscape analysis, landscape characterisation and visual assessment to address the following criteria:
- » the potential for coalescence between settlements;
 - » the potential for the erosion of settings of a settlement and loss of separate identity;
 - » the potential for impact on Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, and significant views to landmarks;
 - » intervisibility with adjacent settlements; and
 - » protection of undeveloped coastline.
- 3.14 The study concludes that some of the character areas, including the area of the site (North Bersted Matrix LCA 8), has a medium/high capacity for development and states that: '[the character area is a] *partially enclosed arable landscape adjacent to settlement on coastal plateau, some intervisibility with housing*'.
- 3.15 Consultations with officers have suggested that the design should consider Arun District Council SPD on Public Open Space, Playing Pitches and Build Facilities and the emerging Design Guide SPD. Both documents set out expectations for the type and quality of open space provision, including trees together with build and sports facility provision.

4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.1 Plan L2 illustrates the landscape character areas applicable to the site and surrounding area.

4.2 Published sources describing landscape character at the National, Regional and District level are shown on Plan L2:

- ✦ Natural England's National Character Area Profile 126: South Coast Plain;
- ✦ West Sussex County Council Landscape Character Assessment, 2003 (unpublished); and
- ✦ Hankinson Duckett Associates' Arun Landscape Study, August 2006.

National Landscape Character

4.3 The site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 126: South Coast Plain. Key characteristics of this NCA, of relevance to the site and locality, include:

- ✦ *'The plain slopes gently southwards towards the coast. From the coastal plain edge there are long views towards the sea and the Isle of Wight beyond...*
- ✦ *In places, streams and rivers flow south from the higher land of the Downs to the sea...*
- ✦ *There are stretches of farmed land between developed areas, often with large arable fields defined by low hedges or ditches...*
- ✦ *Along the exposed, open coastal plain and shoreline, tree cover is limited to isolated wind-sculpted woodlands and shelterbelts...*

Regional Landscape Character

4.4 The unpublished West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (2003) characterises the area encompassing the site as the Chichester to Yapton Coastal Plain Landscape Character Area (LCA). The key characteristics of this LCA are:

- ✦ *'Low lying flat open landscape.*
- ✦ *Meandering rifes and straight drainage ditch systems, with associated unimproved grassland and edged by reed beds.*
- ✦ *A low density of hedgerows and hedgerow trees with occasional shelterbelts.*
- ✦ *Large-scale arable farming and market gardening. Extensive farms with both traditional and modern farm buildings and silos...*
- ✦ *Scattered, historically nucleated villages with mixed building materials of flint, brick, half-timber and stone.*

- » *Large farmsteads along roads, and on dead-end tracks.*
- » *Long views to Arundel, the Downs and to the distinctive spire of Chichester Cathedral.*
- » *The relatively open character of much of the area allows long views so that village church towers are important landmarks in views...*
- » *Few trees or hedgerows, partly as a result of Dutch Elm Disease, from the 1970s and the Great Storm of 1987 and overall high quality agricultural land, although, where they do exist, they form prominent features...'*

4.5 The broad landscape management objectives for the Chichester to Yapton Coastal Plain are to:

- » *'Create a new, large scale tree and hedgerow framework which complements the open intensively farmed landscape, whilst maintaining significant views of Chichester Cathedral, the South Downs and local features.*
- » *Maintain and strengthen field boundaries such as hedgerows and shelterbelts.*
- » *Link up existing remnant hedgerows and tree lines to re-establish coherent field boundaries and wildlife corridors...*
- » *Establish landscape management plans for urban edges, notably Bognor Regis, to enhance the distinction between the urban and rural landscape.*
- » *Restore and strengthen the landscape of the gaps between settlements...*
- » *Establish new vegetation features by the planting of hedgerows and tree clumps in field corners and along roadsides, especially those approaching settlements...'*

Local Landscape Character

4.6 The Arun Landscape Study (2006) by Hankinson Duckett Associates includes a local landscape character assessment of the district. The study initially identified a series of landscape character types and has characterised the area encompassing the site as Landscape Character Type (LCT) L2: Medium/Small-scale Arable. The key characteristics of this LCT are:

- » *'Intensive arable farmland;*
- » *Medium-small fields across relatively flat or gently undulating landform;*
- » *Field boundaries include ditches, fencing, hedges; and*
- » *Greater sense of enclosure as compared with large-scale arable farmland.'*

4.7 The Landscape Study also identified local landscape character areas, with the site lying in Landscape Character Area (LCA) 8: North Bersted Matrix. The key characteristics of this North Bersted Matrix are all relevant to the site:

- » *'Patchwork of predominately small scale arable fields and occasional large, open arable fields;*
- » *Abuts a northern extension of Bognor along Chichester Road;*
- » *Backs onto back gardens and roads; and*
- » *High urban influence.'*
(our emphasis)

4.8 The westerly expansion of Bognor Regis and high urban influences are common elements common to the area, its local fields, hedgerows, and shelterbelts. Development is not to be excluded from the area, but it is a stated purpose that a well-considered development should be achieved that is in accordance with the landscape character.

4.9 Hankinson Duckett also considered the landscape capacity of the site and its surroundings in their draft report entitled *Landscape Capacity of Strategic Sites in Arun District, August 2016*. North Bersted is considered at page 27 of that document where at Paragraphs 3.3 it considers Area 3a (the allocated site which surrounds the site to the west and north) as follows:

'Area 3a is a large scale open landscape, with intervisibility with the South Downs to the north, and has been judged as having moderate sensitivity and value. The area is therefore considered to have medium landscape capacity for development and could potentially be suitable in landscape terms for limited development which would 'round off' the settlement edge in combination with adjacent areas. Any development proposals should include careful consideration [and] regard for the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of the adjacent landscapes.'

4.10 Together the application for the wider Nursery Fields site, the subject of this LVA, are referred to as part of Area 3b), which is considered to have a medium/high capacity for new development:

'Area 3b is better related to the existing settlement edge and has been judged to have a medium/ high landscape capacity for development which could accommodate a small urban extension, due to its generally lower landscape value, provides sensitive considerations are taken into account, in particular the setting to the surrounding landscape.'
(our emphasis)

4.11 At Paragraph 4.1-4.3 this report recommends green infrastructure proposals for the potential development of the site including:

- » development of the wider 3a area should include the reintroduction of vegetated boundaries to create a network of green corridors;
- » Area 3a has a greater level of boundary vegetation than 3b, with the potential for enhancement to limit the impact of the built form;

- ❖ open space within development should be located along the western and northern edges, this to maintain a soft edge to the rural landscape; and
 - ❖ landscape policy for the development should be consistent with the protection of the features and character of the rife landscape which lies to the west.
- 4.12 The 2012 Arun Green Infrastructure Study, produced by LUC, refers to the various growth areas being considered at that time and considers by way of stakeholders' meetings the green infrastructure implications for each of the potential allocations.
- 4.13 The implications of development in the Chalcraft Lane area are drawn together in the Bognor Regis Eco Quarter. The pressures on Green Infrastructure of this potential allocation were described as:
 - ❖ population growth and pressures on Pagham Harbour;
 - ❖ potential views from the South Downs National Park;
 - ❖ the need to connect the pedestrian and cycle routes; and
 - ❖ the enhancement of waterways and hedgerows.
- 4.14 The landscape sensitivities to development were:
 - ❖ Pagham harbour, its sensitivity, and the need for mitigation;
 - ❖ preservation of views of the Chichester Cathedral Spire;
 - ❖ a largely high capacity for development;
 - ❖ fragmentation and the loss of hedgerows;
 - ❖ replacement of lost woodland and connections between hedgerows and woodland; and
 - ❖ the preservation of the meandering surface water systems called Rifles, and their associated vegetation.
- 4.15 Recommendations set out in this document provide the strategy for the layout and landscape of the new urban quarter. These include:
 - ❖ a buffer strip around the outside, especially to provide a green framework for views from the National Park;
 - ❖ a restoration of the lost landscape character around development and in the gaps between settlements, particularly field boundaries and shelter belts, including the lost black poplar;
 - ❖ maintain the visual and ecological importance of the rifles;
 - ❖ creation of a large scale woodland and hedgerow network to complement the intensively farmed landscape;
 - ❖ recreation of the indigenous landscape framework;

- » provision of bold tree planting around large agricultural and industrial buildings; and
- » provision of good landscape management; and
- » as priority projects 4a and b, provide community owned open space, including involvement of schools, also orchards, gardens and planting native woodland, and encouraging urban greening projects.

4.16 All of these have been incorporated into the proposals for Nursery Fields.

5.0 SITE CONTEXT

Site Description

- 5.1 The site lies on the edge of North Bersted on the north-eastern edge of Bognor Regis.
- 5.2 For the most part Nursery Fields is bounded by mature trees and hedgerows, some with Grade B trees. The eastern corner faces onto the backs of Chalcraft Lane housing. The north faces the Jubilee Playing Fields. A footpath crosses the site linking Chalcraft Lane with land to the west.

Topography

- 5.3 Plan L1: Topography shows Nursery Fields to occupy principally flat low-lying ground at approximately 5m AOD.
- 5.4 In the wider context, the land begins to ascend in the north towards Chichester and Westergate and rises to above 30m AOD. Beyond the built up area of Bognor Regis, the land descends below 5m AOD to the north-east of the site. The land remains flat to the south towards the coastal edge, which is characteristic of the coastal plain. To the west, the land continues to descend before it reaches Pagham Harbour.
- 5.5 A series of small reservoirs lie to the west of the site, connected by a large network of streams which flow between Chichester and Pagham Harbour towards the south coast.

Vegetation

- 5.6 The vegetation surrounding the site consists of trees and hedgerows, as set out on the free standing arboricultural survey. This was carried out by A.T. Coombes Associates Ltd in accordance with BS 5837:2012. This identified A, B and C grade trees either as individual specimens or groups. Assessment criteria are included in the arboricultural report. Notable vegetation includes:
- ✧ rows of Grade B and other trees in the hedgerows;
 - ✧ strong vegetation in the hedgerows; and
 - ✧ a group of trees adjacent, including oak, some of which will need to be removed for the site access.
- 5.7 Apart from those to enable the access, all Grade B trees will be retained. All U trees will be removed immediately.

Public Rights of Way on the Site

- 5.8 There are no designated public rights of way within the site. A public footpath (PROW 136) to the north east runs along the retained hedgerow between New Barn Lane and

Chalcraft lane, as shown on Plan L4.

Views

5.9 Views in this flat coastal plain are limited by trees, hedgerows, and buildings, Plan L4 showing that the enclosure created by the urban area limited views to local viewpoints in the west and the north west. Accordingly, nine publicly accessible viewpoints were selected to provide a representative sample of views towards the site from that direction, and from local views within the urban area.

5.10 These local views consist of the following:

- » from public footpaths to the west and north west, Viewpoints 5, 6, 8 and 9; where the site is mostly framed by trees and hedgerows;
- » local views, partially enclosed by hedgerows, from the cemetery, Viewpoint 7, and the backs of the Chalcraft Lane housing;
- » Chalcraft Lane, where the access road will be visible from Viewpoint 2;
- » other locations in Chalcraft Lane, Viewpoints 1 and 3; and
- » a view from the north over the playing fields , partially enclosed by trees and hedgerows.

Existing lighting

5.11 The local urban area is illuminated by street lighting and lights from residential properties. There are no areas where light sources are not visible, either directly or as point light sources through trees and hedgerows. The site is unlit.

6.0 SENSITIVITY

- 6.1 The landscape features of merit on the site are the hedgerows and trees which are found along the boundaries. These will be retained and incorporated within the new housing layout.
- 6.2 The site is relatively small and exerts little influence on the landscape character beyond it. It is characteristic of the local landscape which comprises low-lying, flat, and open agricultural landscape with hedgerows and hedgerow trees, influenced by the urban edge of North Bersted, which lies adjacent to the south eastern boundary. While development will change the character, the adjacent urban area and the existing commercial uses on the adjacent site have led it to Nursery Fields being graded as having a medium susceptibility to change.
- 6.3 The susceptibility to change for road users with only fleeting or incidental views towards the site are identified as low, for example along Chalcraft Lane, because drivers are rightly concentrating on their journeys.

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

- 6.4 The overall sensitivity of national, regional, and local landscape character is also identified as medium. The overall sensitivity of local landscape features, such as landform, trees and hedgerows and public rights of way are identified as medium. The site is pleasant, but nothing out of the ordinary.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 6.5 No views have been assessed as having high sensitivity. The sensitivity of visual receptors is graded as follows:
- » High: Cemetery users;
 - » Medium: pedestrians with views of the development, or from a local footpath; people engaged in outdoor recreation; and
 - » Low: from roads and places of work or business.

7.0 MITIGATION

7.1 The landscape strategy is shown on Plan L5. One of the objective for this application will be to protect the Cemetery and retain its sense of calm, its visual isolation from neighbouring activities. The second will be to properly protect the amenity of residential properties, and users of the footpaths. This will be achieved by:

- ✦ retention and reinforcement to the existing, already quite strong, tree cover within the site;
- ✦ care with the new layouts and heights of new buildings to avoid visual impact on local properties;
- ✦ new structural planting; and
- ✦ an increase in tree cover within the site along the access road, as a new avenue.

7.2 The landscape master plan for Nursery Fields includes the retention of trees and hedgerows, protection of the landscape character, the creation of soft edges to the countryside, the preservation of the surface water system and the creation of pedestrian routes. All have been fundamental constraints to the layout.

7.3 The landscape strategy includes the following:

- ✦ retention of all significant trees, protection of their RPZs, and all hedgerows, subject only to the tree removals necessary to create access;
- ✦ replacement of any tree losses in kind;
- ✦ creation of a new buffer to the cemetery;
- ✦ green corridors, cycleways and footpaths;
- ✦ tree planted avenues along the access roads;
- ✦ tree planting within housing areas of the site; and
- ✦ links to the allocated site master plan, making use of the existing hedgerows; and

7.4 Trees and hedgerows will be carefully protected, RPZs followed, and access limited to gaps in hedgerows. The setting and character of the site footpaths will change, and new paths will be created, including potential links to adjacent areas such as the Jubilee Playing Fields, and the other allocated site areas to the north and west. The pattern on the landscape cells will be followed by the new development.

7.5 Existing and new footpaths will be retained within new green corridors, with consequential changed more urban views, and new links will be created to the playing field, the cemetery and to the wider allocated site.

- 7.6 Care will be taken with the detailed layout to ensure there will be no overlooking or loss of character in views. The site will be comprehensively planted to create benefit including new avenues of upright growing trees along the access roads. The opportunity will be taken to create a glimpse of the Cathedral Spire, and a view point will be created to views over the playing fields to the north.
- 7.7 The detailed objectives for the landscape design proposals are to:
- ✧ retain the visual amenity of residents;
 - ✧ ensure that the existing and new footpaths are set within attractive green corridors;
 - ✧ allow for key views of the Cathedral Spire, and the South Downs, where these are available; and
 - ✧ link positively to the wider allocated site.
- 7.8 The landscape mitigation and design proposals are designed to minimise landscape and visual effects, integrate the proposed development into the landscape, and to provide benefits to the wider landscape. This is in the interests of visual amenity and sustainability, using the following landscape design features:
- ✧ providing a strong vegetative edge to the Cemetery extension, including some evergreen species;
 - ✧ new and reinforced planting along hedgerow boundaries;
 - ✧ green corridors and footpaths, as shown on the landscape master plan, **Plan L5**;
 - ✧ the replacement in kind any trees that may need to be felled to provide access, using 18 cm advanced nursery stock;
 - ✧ a planted avenue of trees along the new roads, also with 18 cm stock, planted on one side to allow services on the other;
 - ✧ a generous level of new trees within the housing area of the housing areas, with 1 tree per house overall.
 - ✧ a variation in housing types and heights, and varying orientation of buildings, this to break up the development;
 - ✧ indigenous structure planting comprising locally indigenous species, designed to provide a strong landscape framework, and setting for the new development, integrate the proposed development within the surrounding countryside, and reduce its visual impact on local views;
 - ✧ use of directional downlighting to minimise surplus light spill and careful location and alignment of light sources to minimise night-time visual effects.

8.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

8.1 The landscape character areas of the site are set out in the **Design and Access Statement**. Landscape details are annotated on the **Landscape Master Plan L5**.

8.2 The landscape character areas are as follows:

- » **The Community Green** will be a focus for residents, comprising an attractive amenity and functional area, a pocket park which lies at the focal point of paths and cycleways. Activities include picnic spaces, informal kick around areas, and play spaces enclosed by colourful shrub planting. One of the more interesting features will be the Community Orchard and Woodland, an area of fruiting and amenity trees managed and run by a management committee organised by those who live in Nursery Fields, thereby providing local ownership. A sitting area will overlook the play space and take advantage of a glimpse to the Cathedral. The community green will be enclosed by hedges and indigenous trees, reflecting the local area, underplanted by meadow grass with mown paths.
- » **Green Corridors** will separated and define areas of housing. These will generous, up to 15m wide. New trees will be planted to create leafy spaces of locally indigenous trees and shrubs, with colourful meadow grass beneath the trees. These linear spaces will be an attractive linking element for the open space, and belong to the community, with soft surfaced paths, mown grass paths and sitting areas. Each corridor will be focussed upon a landscape feature of interest, such as: the play mound, with its viewpoint; the community green; or on local woodland.
- » **Natural Space** will surround the houses. These provide the ability for residents to feel part of their countryside. Rather than the left over spaces which seen on many modern developments, these natural spaces will create fascinating wetland landscapes with circuitous paths linking between and around the ponds, some of which will be permanently wet, sensitively fenced for safety. These secret areas will be full of wildlife and provide the opportunity for residents to enjoy the nature on their doorstep. Species will all be locally indigenous, and the management will also be local.
- » **The Cemetery Extension** will be enclosed by a 10m planted buffer of local tree and shrub species including poplar and willow, thereby ensuring its quiet and reflective nature, and its purpose respected. Rural pedestrian gates will provided from local footpaths. The cemetery is a place to savour, creating a garden of stillness.
- » **Play** will be an intrinsic part of the open space and gardens, as children of all ages are themselves part of the community. Therefore, all open spaces will bear this in mind in their design, with linear play and exercise trails and play

features located next to bench seats. Formal play space are required in addition, with local areas of play enclosed by attractive planting and fences, and with parent's sitting spaces within them. Equipped areas of play will be available for older children, and these will be located within the open spaces overlooked by local houses. The whole space will be maintained as one, again by the local management community.

Management

- 8.3 The plant stock will be locally sourced and will be maintained for a minimum of 3 years, thereafter by the management company which will include residents. Materials for hedgerows will be locally indigenous and robust. Subject to discussions with officers, the Cemetery extension boundary planting will include suitable evergreens, otherwise indigenous trees, and hedgerow plants. Tree planting within the housing of the nursery site will comprise upright street trees and densely planted flowering shrubs to be agreed with the local authority. All planted areas will be mulched with 75mm composted wood bark and organic matter dug into the soils.
- 8.4 A site management plan and the make-up of the management committee will be agreed with the local authority as part of detailed design.

9.0 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

- 9.1 Details of the landscape and visual effects, including effects on the landscape resource and on landscape character, are set out in the landscape table in Appendix 2 and the visual table at Appendix 3.

Landscape Character

- 9.2 The assessment shows that apart from the change to the character of the site, which is graded as *Important*, there will be no high or high/medium adverse landscape effects created by the proposals, and no other effects will be *Important*.

- 9.3 The landscape effects are summarised below:

- ✧ there is an inevitable change to the site's character, because of development, and this is graded as *Important*;
- ✧ elsewhere there are only limited and localised changes within national and regional landscape character areas, the overall landscape effect on these character areas has been assessed as minor;
- ✧ there will be a change in the local landscape character area, which has been assessed in the Arun Landscape Study (2006) by Hankinson Duckett Associates, as the North Bersted Matrix LCA. However, a characteristic of this area is a high urban influence. Therefore, the overall landscape effect at all periods has been assessed as up to medium.

Landscape Features

During Construction and On Completion

- 9.4 It is anticipated that construction activities will include the excavation and formation of building levels, excavation of attenuation basins and construction of SuDS features, and removal of some trees to enable the proposed access road into the site. The overall landscape effect on the site features during construction has been assessed as medium/low, this being due to the following:

- ✧ changes due to excavations required for the construction of roads, houses, and attenuation features;
- ✧ the change in character of the site;
- ✧ trees and hedgerows due to the limited areas of hedgerow removal required to accommodate the access road, most other trees and hedgerows will be retained as part of the development; and
- ✧ the existing public right of way will be retained and managed as it is within a green corridor.

- 9.5 On completion, the land use and character will have changed from fields to a residential development with associated public open space, an access road, and green corridors.

Landscape Effects on Site features 15 years after Construction

- 9.6 There will be a loss of trees for the new access road, but extensive new tree planting will be provided across the site, although it will take time to be effective in providing visual enclosure. The field boundaries will be enhanced to provide a further enclosure, and a new avenue of specimen trees will be planted. The overall long term landscape character effect will be important, but the effect on the site features on completion has been assessed as of low magnitude.
- 9.7 There will be a loss of some trees, but an extensive long-term planting of new trees and hedgerows is proposed within and around the development, as well as enhancements to the existing hedgerows along the site boundaries. These will be both positive and negative.

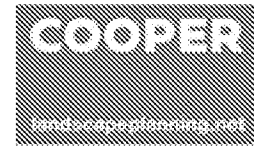
Assessment of Visual Effects

Visual Effects During Construction and on Completion

- 9.8 Details of the visual effects are set out in Appendix 3. The following provides a summary of high and medium effects, together with the reasons for those effects. None have been graded as *Important*.
- 9.9 Construction activities will be as set out above. During construction, there will be minor visual effects when seen from Chalcraft Lane, from outside local properties, opposite the site entrance, including Viewpoints 1 and 2. There will be an initial effect of moderate magnitude when seen from Viewpoint 7, located on the northern side of the playing fields.
- 9.10 There will be up to moderate magnitude effects from local footpaths, and slight from the cemetery due to the proximity of construction activity to the receptor and the sensitivity of the location.
- 9.11 All other viewpoints are assessed as having no or negligible effects during construction.

Visual Effects 15 Years After Completion

- 9.12 Residual visual effects are those remaining 15 years after completion, when proposed tree planting will have had the benefit of over 15 years establishment and are likely to be up to 8m in height, depending on the species and their initial planting height. Shrub planting and trees will have grown along the access road, at the entrance, and adjacent to the cemetery. New development would also have matured in this time.
- 9.13 15 years after completion, the visual effects from the playing fields will reduce from a



moderate magnitude, as the green corridor within which the site footpath sits becomes partly mature, because of the new tree planting. There will be only limited glimpses of development from the cemetery, and slight from the cemetery extension, which will fade away as the new tree, hedge and shrub planting grows.

10.0 THE WIDER SITE

10.1 Nursery Fields forms part of a wider allocation for the site, and discussions have been ongoing between the two developers and their consultants to ensure that the two schemes are both compatible and complementary. Viewpoints have been compared between the two schemes, and an overview taken of the landscape and visual effects predicted for Nursery fields in the context of the wider allocation. A descriptive assessment of the wider site is set out below.

10.2 The Council have requested that the LVA for Nursery Fields considers both the landscape and Visual effects of the Nursery Fields scheme on its own, and in the context of development on the wider site. This is achieved in this LVA as follows:

- ✦ by carrying out a formal assessment of the planning application for Nursery Fields at the following times: on completion, in winter, and after 15 years, in summer; and
- ✦ by a separate descriptive assessment taken from the same viewpoints, for the long term (15 years plus) of Nursery Fields, in summer, but in the context of completion of the wider allocation.

Comparative Viewpoints

10.3 The viewpoints of the two schemes are compared in Table 1 below.

Viewpoints agreed with the Council for the wider site	Equivalent Viewpoints for Nursery Fields (NF)	Comment
Wider Viewpoint 1, FP 134	N/A	No view of Nursery Fields
Wider Viewpoint 2 link Road	N/A	No view of Nursery Fields
Wider Viewpoints 3 and 4, Chalcraft Lane	NF 1 and 2	No materially effective view of Nursery Fields from Wider Viewpoints 3 and 4, NF 1 and 2 are more relevant
Wider Viewpoint 5, FP 132	NF 8 Lower Bognor Road	Closer View more relevant to Nursery Fields
Wider Viewpoint 6, FP 135 at Morell's	NF 8 Lower Bognor Road	Closer View more relevant to Nursery Fields

Farm		
Wider Viewpoint 7, 8 and 9, FP 134	NF 5 and 9	Closer View more relevant to Nursery Fields
N/A	NF 3 and 4	Closer view from the north, more relevant for Nursery Fields
N/A	NF 6 and 7	View from Footpath 137 on edge of Nursery Fields and the Cemetery

Assessment

- 10.4 The viewpoints for Nursery Fields have all been taken with the landscape and visual effects of that scheme in mind. That is the purpose of this LVA. However, in the longer term, Nursery Fields will be partly enclosed by the new development of the wider scheme. Therefore, it is helpful to consider the changes to the assessment of Nursery Fields when the development of the wider scheme is complete. The table below explains the difference in the view and the assessment of this LVA

Nursery Fields Viewpoint	Description of View	Change in View after Wider Development	Change to Assessment of this LVA
Viewpoint 1	Local View from Chalcraft lane	No Change	No Change to Assessment
Viewpoint 2	Local View from Chalcraft lane	No Change	No Change to Assessment
Viewpoint 3	Local View from North	No change	No Change to Assessment
Viewpoint 4	Local View from North	No change	No Change to Assessment
Viewpoint 5	View from FP 134	New development to north, new open space to south, view becomes partly enclosed by housing or new trees.	No Change to Assessment

Viewpoint 6	Local view of Cemetery	No change to view	No Change to Assessment
Viewpoint 7	Local Views of Cemetery, FP 137	Open space and new housing to west and south	Openness of view reduced, but no change to assessment
Viewpoint 8	View from Lower Bognor Road	View blocked by housing.	No View in long term
Viewpoint 9	View from FP 134	View blocked by housing.	No View in long term

- 10.5 The table shows that the result of development of the wider site, as seen from these viewpoint, will either be: no change; or the visual effects will be reduced. In short there will be no change to the significance of the importance of the assessed views of Nursery Fields because of development of the wider site.
- 10.6 The Nursery Fields proposal lies within and is part of the Greater Bersted Strategic Allocation. A comparative assessment of this scheme shows that the long term landscape and visual effects of this wider proposal will not cause any significant effects on Nursery Fields. The visual effects will be less, due to the visual enclosure of the wider development.

12.0 SUMMARY

- 12.1 Nursery Fields lies on the edge of North Bersted on the north-eastern edge of Bognor Regis. It occupies flat low-lying agricultural fields and has no landscape planning designation.
- 12.2 Views are mainly local and medium in terms of distance from the site. These tend to be from surrounding roads, as well as from public rights of way. Such views are mainly located from the east, with other views being limited.
- 12.3 The unpublished West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment characterises the area encompassing the site as the Chichester to Yapton Coastal Plain LCA. The key characteristics of this LCA include a low-lying, flat, open landscape, with meandering rife and straight drainage ditch systems, with associated unimproved grassland and edged by reed beds. There are few trees or hedgerows, partly because of Dutch Elm Disease, from the 1970s and the Great Storm of 1987, although where they do exist, they form prominent features. Large-scale arable farming with extensive farms exist that have both traditional and modern farm buildings and silos. The relatively open character of much of the area allows for long views with village church towers being important landmarks within the views.

Landscape Effects

- 12.4 These are set out in Appendix 2.
- 12.5 The overall landscape effect of the proposals on the character of the surrounding landscape is limited, this being due to localised changes being proposed.
- 12.6 There will be changes to the local landscape character area assessed in the Arun Landscape Study (2006) by Hankinson Duckett Associates, as the North Bersted Matrix LCA. A characteristic of this area is a high urban influence. However, this is an allocated site which is assessed by the Council as having the capacity for development.
- 12.7 During construction, the landscape character of the site will change. This change will occur due to excavations required for the construction of roads, houses, and attenuation features, and the removal of some trees to accommodate the access road. This effect will also occur to trees and hedgerow removal where this may be needed to accommodate the access road. The setting of the footpath will change.
- 12.8 On completion, the adverse landscape effect upon the landform, trees and hedgerows and public right of way will reduce, as mitigation measures will be put in place, which will become fully effective in time.

- 12.9 15 years after planting, there will still be change but some of this will be positive in the planting of trees and expansion of the footpath network.
- 12.10 There will be a change to character of the site which is inevitable and graded as *Important*.

Visual Effects

- 12.11 During construction, there will be minor visual effects from Chalcraft Lane, the cemetery and from local footpaths, due to the proximity of construction activity to the receptor and the nature of the view.
- 12.12 On completion, in winter, the development, including the houses, buildings, roads, attenuation features and planting, will all be complete, albeit the planting will not yet be effective in visual terms.
- 12.13 15 years after completion, in summer, there will be no important visual effects. The view from the access road will be of an attractive development to one side of the access road, framed by a new avenue of trees. The view from the cemetery and its extension will become enclosed.
- 12.14 Views from the footpaths will change and will become enclosed with a green corridor. The initial view above, which will fade over time, *no visual effects are considered Important*.

13.0 CONCLUSIONS

13.1 This LVA deals with important landscape and visual effects of this planning application for development on Nursery Fields, as part of development of the allocated wider area to the north and north west. The layout of that land is led by Planning Consultants, Lichfields, and Landscape Consultants, Fabrik. Discussion with Lichfields and Fabrik are underway, and the two evolving master plans are being brought forward together.

13.2 Contacts have been made with the Council's landscape officer and the landscape character and planning guidance agreed.

13.3 The landscape and visual issues discussed at the meeting included matters such as:

- ✦ the master planning of the allocated site and how the scheme would fit into that plan;
- ✦ landscape and visual amenity;
- ✦ the effects on local properties;
- ✦ links to the wider allocated site.

The Wider Master Plan of the allocated site

13.4 The evolving master plan has been carefully considered as part of the application. Factors such as the retention of trees and hedgerows, protected of the landscape character, the creation of soft edges to the countryside, the preservation of the surface water system and the creation of pedestrian routes have been fundamental constraints to the layout.

The proposals

13.5 Landscape has been a fundamental factor in determining the layout of the site. The landscape strategy for the site is set out on the **Illustrative Landscape Master Plan L5** and includes:

- ✦ retention of all significant trees, protection of their RPZs, and all hedgerows, subject only to the tree removals necessary to create the site access;
- ✦ replacement of any tree losses in kind;
- ✦ strengthening of the existing planting to the cemetery;
- ✦ green corridors and footpaths as shown on the landscape master plan;
- ✦ a tree planted avenue along the access road;
- ✦ tree planting within the car parking and housing areas of the site, together with new amenity space;

- » creation of a pedestrian spine, as advised by the allocated site master plan, making use of the existing hedgerows which run down the site; and
- » care with the new layouts and heights of new buildings and the creation of landscape buffers to avoid visual impact on local properties.

Landscape Effects

- 13.6 The landscape effects of the proposals are not assessed as *Important*, apart from the inevitable change to the site's landscape character and the short term effect of the loss of trees at the access. Trees and hedgerows will be carefully protected, RPZs are followed, access is located adjacent to gaps in hedgerows. The setting of the site footpath system will change, but new paths will be created, including links to adjacent areas such as the Jubilee Playing Fields to the north east, and the other allocated site areas to the north and west. The pattern on the landscape cells will be followed by the new development, as this scheme is landscape led.

Visual Effects

- 13.7 Change will occur to views, but these are not assessed as being important. There will be a minor visual change when seen from the new access road. Most views are set within the context of the existing urban area, and some changes such as additional trees are anticipated to be beneficial, despite the losses at the entrance. The existing footpath to the north will be retained within a new green corridor, with new links created to the playing field, the cemetery and to the wider allocated site.
- 13.8 Care will be taken with the detailed layout to ensure there will be no overlooking or loss of character in views. The site will be comprehensively planted to create benefit in an area lacking in trees, including a new avenue. The opportunity will be taken to create a glimpse of the Cathedral Spire, and a view point will be created to views over the playing fields to the north.

Conclusion

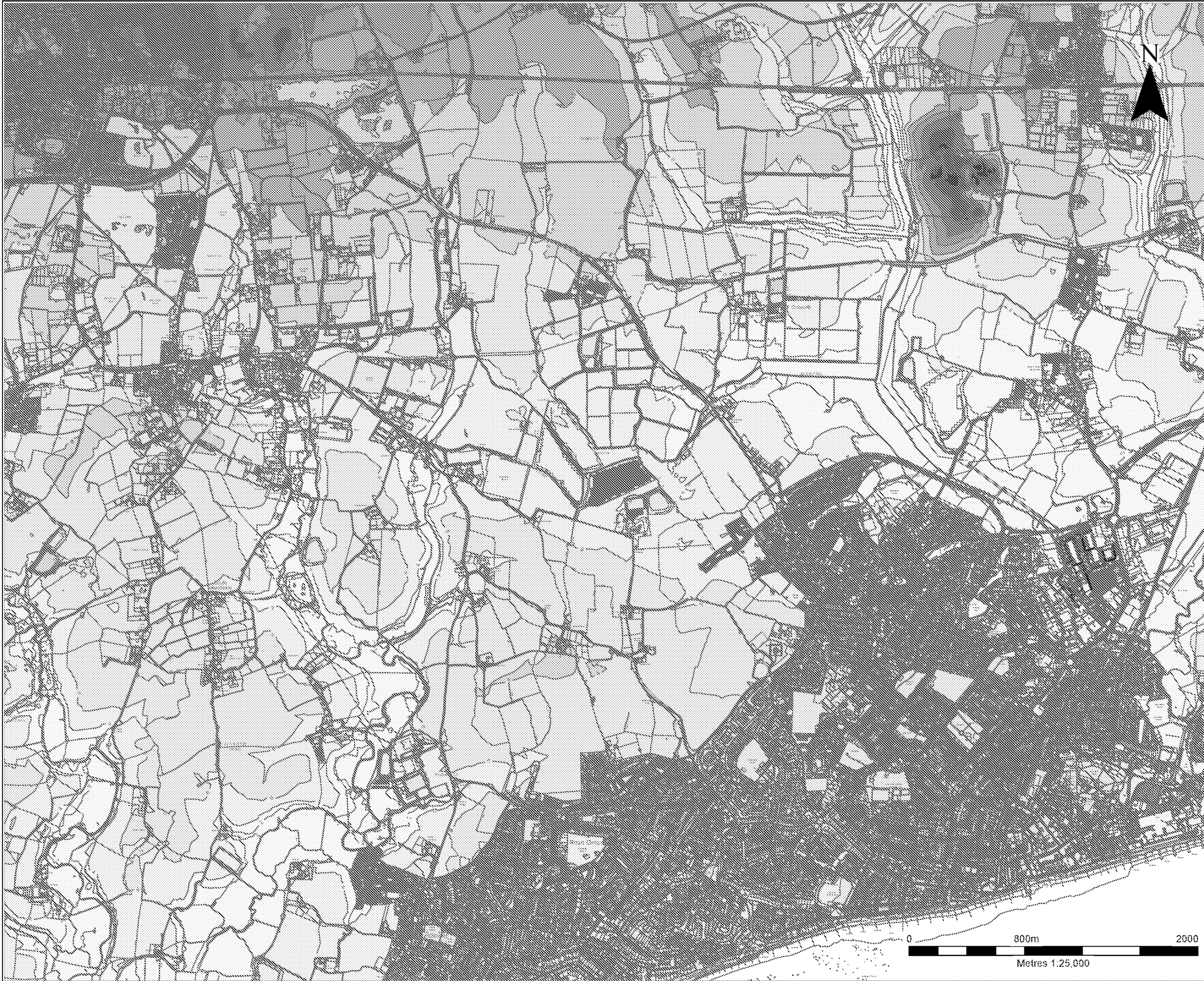
- 13.9 The residual landscape and visual effects of the proposals are not assessed as *Important*, apart from the inevitable change to the site's character, and they will form an integral part of the proposals for the Council's allocated site.

APPENDICES 1, 2 AND 3

COOPER Landscape Planning

The Studio
Littleton-upon-Severn
Bristol
BS5 1NR





LEGEND



SITE BOUNDARY

HEIGHT IN M AOD



0M AND BELOW
0 - 2M
2 - 4M
4 - 6M
6 - 8M
8 - 10M
10 - 12M
12 - 14M
14 - 16M
16 - 18M
18 - 20M
20M AND ABOVE

L1

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TOPOGRAPHY PLAN

BER-S1-002.0

Scale
1:25,000 @ A3

Date
JULY 2020