

FINAL



LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

relating to

Land at Whitestone Farm

Birdham, Chichester, West Sussex

on behalf of

the Trustees of D. R. Pick Grandchildren's Settlement

January 2019

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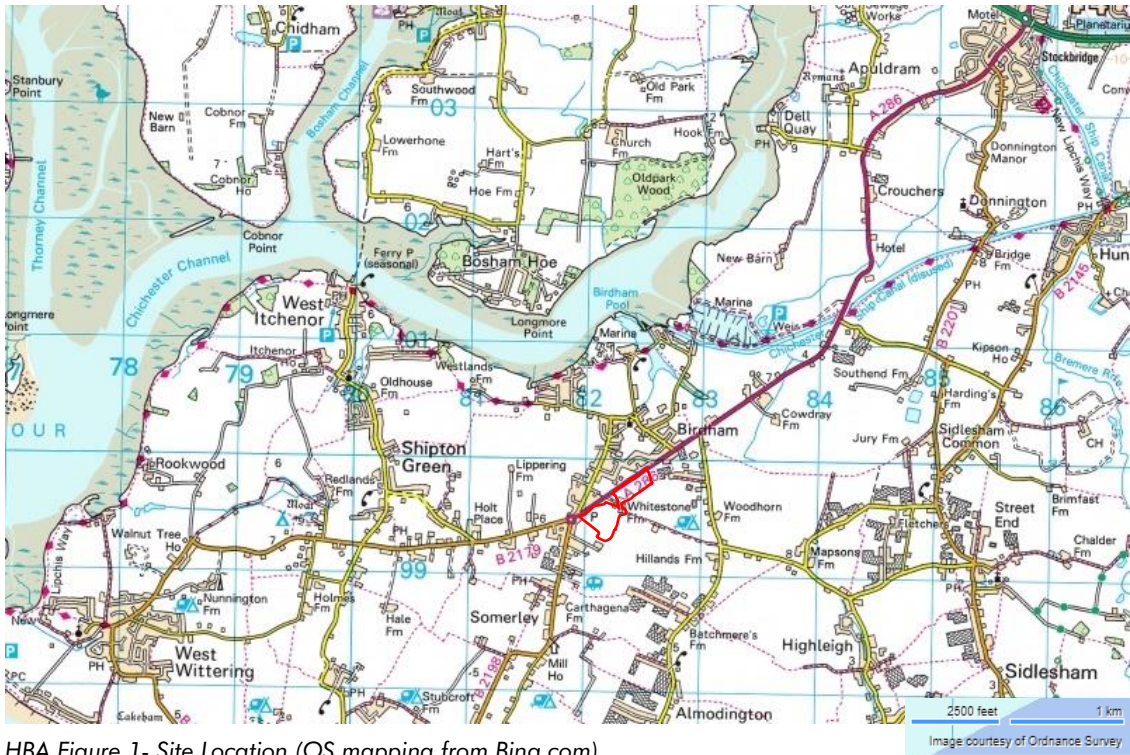
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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Huskisson Brown Associates (HBA) is a firm of Chartered Landscape Architects, established in 1987 and registered since then with the Landscape Institute. HBA has been a member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment since 1992. The practice is Quality Assured to BS ISO 9001:2015. All directors of the practice are Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute.
- 1.2 The practice has undertaken a range of landscape and visual assessment work for many clients including public bodies, private companies and individuals. This includes projects in the commercial, industrial, retail, recreational, healthcare, agricultural, infrastructure and residential development sectors including the presentation of evidence at Public Inquiries. The Practice has also given extensive development control advice to Local Planning Authorities on a wide range of projects.
- 1.3 HBA is now retained by the Trustees of D.R. Pick Grandchildren's Settlement to provide a 'high level' landscape and visual appraisal of their site which lies upon land at Whitestone Farm in Birdham. The Trustees are seeking consideration of their site through the Local Plan process.
- 1.4 The purpose of this Landscape Appraisal is to advise on the potential landscape and visual implications of residential development on the site.
- 1.5 This Landscape Appraisal records the landscape and visual baseline, identifying the key landscape and visual attributes and sensitivities of the site and its landscape context. It considers the range of landscape and visual opportunities and constraints that might inform the development potential of the site. Where appropriate, broad landscape and visual mitigation measures and parameters for development are identified, in particular with regard to overcoming potential landscape and visual constraints.
- 1.6 The preparation of this Landscape Appraisal has involved both desk based and site work. Site work involved a walkover review of the site and walking some of the Public Rights of Way and roads in the local area to help determine the landscape character and visual context of the site and surrounding area, and to start to evaluate the degree of change that might be expected to arise from any proposed development. Site visits were carried out in early January 2019 in fair weather conditions and when vegetation was de-foliated.

2 LOCATION AND BASELINE CONTEXT

2.1 The site and its local context is illustrated on the Ordnance Survey map extract and aerial photograph below.



HBA Figure 2- Aerial photo (from Google Earth)

Site Location and Description

- 2.2 The site covers an area of approximately 13.3 hectares of arable farmland around Whitestone Farm, lying to the south of the A286 Main Road in Birdham, around 6km south west of Chichester in West Sussex. The site forms part of a wider area of land in the client's ownership which extends further east across an area of approximately 63 hectares to Hillands Farm and Sidlesham Lane/Batchmere Road.
- 2.3 The site is irregular in shape, essentially spanning two large field areas located either side of Whitestone Farm Cottages and a surfaced track off the A286 (forming footpath FP48). The cottages and a piece of land adjoining and separating them from the A286 to the north-west, lie outside of the site. A number of former farm buildings are located east and south-east of the cottages and lie almost centrally within the site separating the two field areas. For the purposes of this report, the site is described as the 'northern field' (lying north of the buildings) and broadly rectangular in shape and the 'southern field' (lying south of the buildings) and more trapezoid in shape.
- 2.4 The A286 addresses the majority of the northern site boundary and also marks the southern edge of the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The land north of the A286, and majority of the village of Birdham, lie within the AONB designation.

Relevant Local Landscape Policy Background

Adopted Local Plan and Policy

- 2.5 The adopted Development Plan consists of the Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014-2029 as well as the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (July 2018) and the West Sussex Waste Local Plan April 2014 and at a parish level, the Birdham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.6 Some of the relevant policies within the adopted Local Plan Key Policies document are outlined below:

- Policy 33 - New Residential Development

States that planning permission will be granted for new residential development, where it can be demonstrated that several criteria are met, including meeting the highest standards of design, providing a high quality living environment in keeping with the character of the surrounding area and its setting in the landscape, providing an appropriate density of development and respecting and where possible enhancing the character of the surrounding area and site and its setting in terms of proportion, form, massing, siting, layout, density, height, size, scale, neighbouring and public amenity and detailed design.

- Policy 40 - Sustainable Design and Construction

This requires that all new buildings, provide evidence to demonstrate that 10 sustainability criteria have been considered, including:

"1. How the proposal aims to protect and enhance the environment, both built and natural. Where this is not possible, how any harm will be mitigated;

Huskisson Brown Associates 17 Upper Grosvenor Road Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 2DU
tel: 01892 527828 email: office@huskissonbrown.co.uk www.huskissonbrown.co.uk

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6. *The proposals include measures to adapt to climate change...;*
7. *The historic and built environment, open space, and landscape character will be protected and enhanced;*
8. *The natural environment and biodiversity will be protected and/or where appropriate provision will be made for improvements to biodiversity areas and green infrastructure;*
9. *The development is appropriate and sympathetic in terms of scale, height, appearance, form, siting and layout and is sensitively designed to maintain the tranquillity and local character and identity of the area..."*

- **Policy 43 Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

States that "The impact of individual proposals and their cumulative effect on Chichester Harbour AONB and its setting will be carefully assessed. Planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that all the following criteria have been met:

1. *The natural beauty and locally distinctive features of the AONB are conserved and enhanced;*
2. *Proposals reinforce and respond to, rather than detract from, the distinctive character and special qualities of the AONB;*
3. *Either individually or cumulatively, development does not lead to actual or perceived coalescence of settlements or undermine the integrity or predominantly open and undeveloped, rural character of the AONB and its setting; and*
4. *Is appropriate to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area or is desirable for the understanding and enjoyment of the area (where this is consistent with the primary purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty); and*
5. *The policy aims of the Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan.*

Opportunities for remediation and improvement of damaged landscapes will be taken as they arise."

- **Policy 48 Natural Environment**

States that "Planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that all the following criteria have been met:

1. *There is no adverse impact on: - The openness of the views in and around the coast, designated environmental areas and the setting of the South Downs National Park; and - The tranquil and rural character of the area.*
2. *Development recognises distinctive local landscape character and sensitively contributes to its setting and quality;*
3. *Proposals respect and enhance the landscape character of the surrounding area and site, and public amenity through detailed design;*
4. *Development of poorer quality agricultural land has been fully considered in preference to best and most versatile land; and*
5. *The individual identity of settlements, actual or perceived, is maintained and the integrity of predominantly open and undeveloped land between settlements is not undermined."*

- Policy 52 Green Infrastructure
“Development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of additional green infrastructure and protect and enhance existing green infrastructure.”

Regulation 18 Consultation Chichester Local Plan Review

2.7 The Chichester Local Plan is currently being updated. The Chichester Local Plan Review Preferred Approach 2016-2035 sets out the proposed development strategy and policies for the area and is subject to public consultation until 7th February 2019. The Chichester Local Plan Review Preferred Approach document has two parts:

- Part 1 - the overall development strategy and relevant strategic policies to meet the future needs of the area; and
- Part 2 - Development Management policies which provide the detailed policies to help guide development in general over the plan period.

2.8 Proposed Part 1 Strategic Policies of relevance include:

- Policy S20: Design
Requires all proposals for new development to be of a high quality design including responding positively to the site and its surroundings and creating a distinctive sense of place through high quality townscape and landscaping that physically and visually integrates with its surroundings, incorporating and/or linking to high quality Green Infrastructure and landscaping to enhance biodiversity and meet recreational needs. Proposals must be visually attractive and respect and where possible enhance the character of the surrounding area.
- Policy S21: Health and Wellbeing
Requires that all proposals for new development improve and promote strong, vibrant and healthy communities.
- Policy S24: Countryside
States that development will be permitted in the countryside provided that it conserves and where possible, enhances the key features and qualities of the rural and landscape character of the countryside setting, is of an appropriate scale, siting and design that is unlikely to cause unacceptable harm to the appearance of the countryside; and where it requires a countryside location or meets an essential local need.
- Policy S26: Natural Environment
States that the Council will continue to work with partner authorities and organisations to protect and enhance the natural environment, including, ensuring that distinctive local landscape character and sensitivity is protected in accordance with Policy DM28 and that there is no adverse impact on the openness of views in and around the coast, designated environmental areas and the setting of the South Downs National Park.
- Policy S29: Green Infrastructure
Seeks to ensure development reinforces and enhances the role of green infrastructure.

2.9 Proposed Part 2 Development Management Policies of relevance include:

- **Policy DM16: Sustainable Design and Construction**
Requires evidence to be provided by developers to demonstrate that 2 sustainability criteria are met on all development and 8 additional criteria are met in connection with major development proposals, including how the proposal aims to protect and enhance the environment, both built and natural and where this is not possible, how any harm will be mitigated.
- **Policy DM19: Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**
This reflects adopted Policy 43
- **Policy DM22: Development in the Countryside**
States that within the countryside, development will be permitted where it requires a countryside location and meets the essential, small scale, and local need which cannot be met within or immediately adjacent to existing settlements. Planning permission will be granted for sustainable development in the countryside where it meets a number of criteria including being well related to an existing farmstead or group of buildings, or located close to an established settlement, being complementary to and does not prejudice any viable agricultural operations on a farm and other existing viable uses; and that the scale, siting, design and materials of the development would have minimal impact on the landscape and rural character of the area.
- **Policy DM28: Natural Environment**
This reflects adopted Policy 48
- **Policy DM31: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands**
States that development proposals will need to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance existing valued trees, hedgerows and woodlands. The felling of protected trees, groups of trees or woodland will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the relevant legislation, policy and good practice recommendations. Where protected trees are subject to felling, a replacement of an appropriate number, species and size in an appropriate location will be required. Development proposals must demonstrate that appropriate protection measures are in place prior to any work on site throughout the development process as part of a comprehensive landscaping plan, and that suitable opportunities for the restoration, enhancement or planting of trees, woodland, and hedgerows are identified and incorporated.
- **Policy DM32: Green Infrastructure**
This broadly reflects adopted Policy 52, noting also that the existing green infrastructure network must be considered at an early stage of the design process for all major development proposals.

Regulation 18 Consultation Local Plan Evidence Base documents

2.10 A number of documents form the evidence base to the Local Plan Review Preferred Approach, including the following of particular relevance to this Landscape Appraisal:

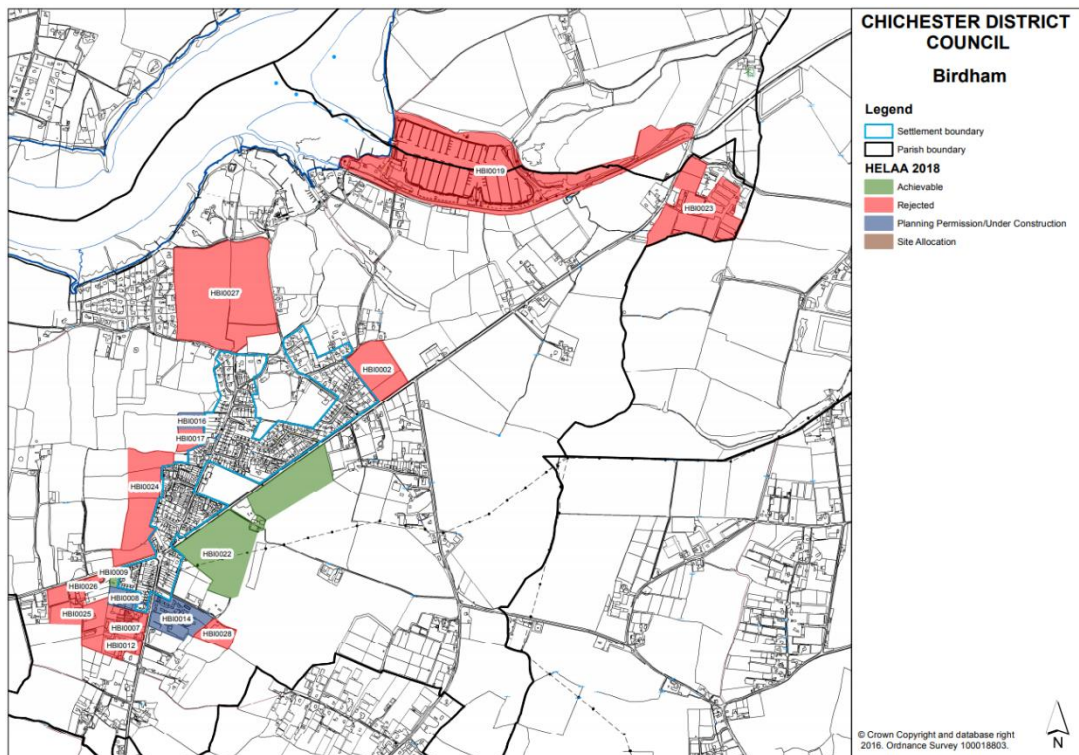
- Chichester Local Plan Review 20135 Landscape Capacity Study November 2018 (LCS);
- Chichester District Council Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Report,

Huskisson Brown Associates 17 Upper Grosvenor Road Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 2DU
tel: 01892 527828 email: office@huskissonbrown.co.uk www.huskissonbrown.co.uk

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August 2018 (HELAA).

- 2.11 The LCS is addressed subsequently in this Appraisal under ‘Landscape Sensitivity’.
- 2.12 The HELAA provides an assessment of land availability to identify a potential future supply of land that is suitable, available and achievable for development. The site is considered as Site HBI0022 (Land at Whitestone Farm) in the HELAA. Of sixteen sites considered around Birdham, twelve were rejected and two sites already have planning permission or are currently under construction. Only Site HBI0022 and a smaller site of 0.4 hectares (HBI0009 Land at Common Piece) are assessed in the HELAA as ‘achievable’ for future development. The detailed site assessment form for site HBI0022 records, in regard to suitability, that: *“The site is potentially suitable subject to detailed considerations, particularly landscaping”*.



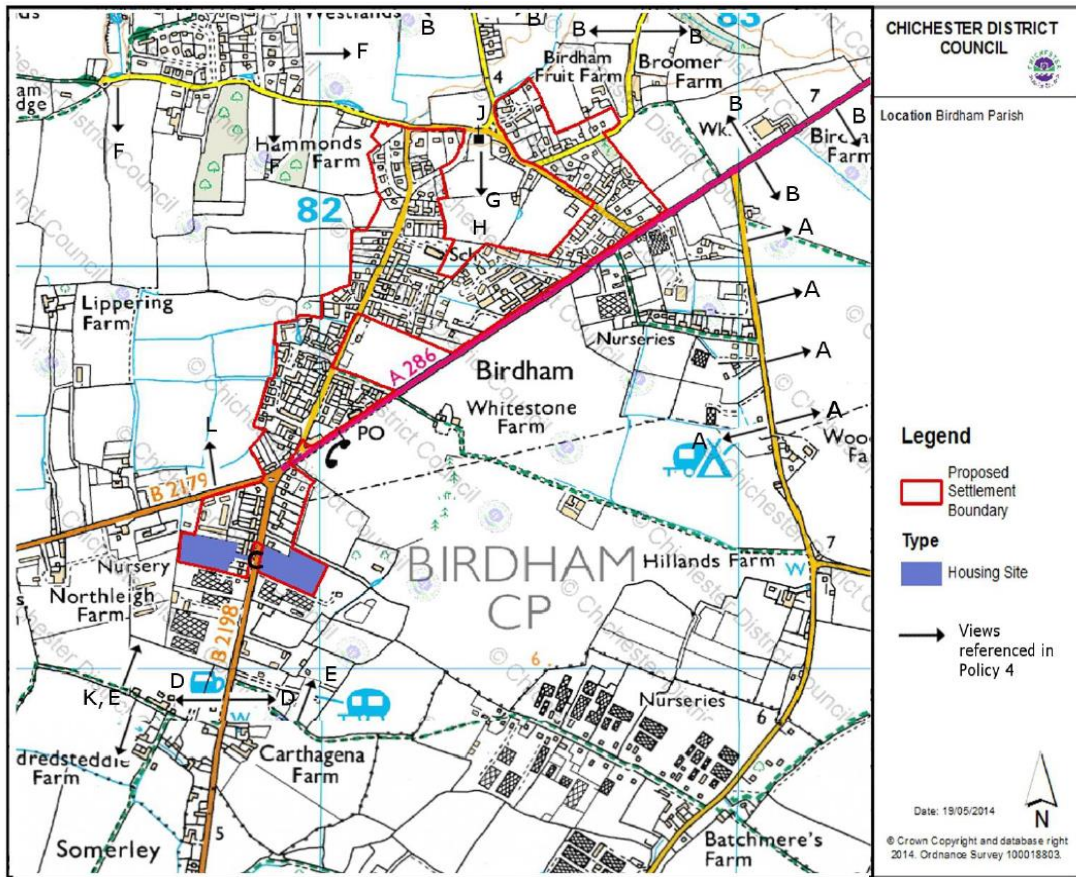
HBA Figure 3- HELAA Parish Map for Birdham

Birdham Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.13 The Birdham Parish Neighbourhood Plan was made in July 2016 and therefore forms part of the statutory Development Plan for Birdham. The primary purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to ensure sustainable development in the Parish including an adequate supply of housing.
- 2.14 The Birdham Neighbourhood Plan includes environmental policies with the stated objective of
- “Conservation & Enhancement. Conserve and enhance the landscape character of the Parish, the open views and important ecological sites and links, including hedgerows, ditches and key species in these habitats.”
- 2.15 Neighbourhood Plan Policy 4 relates to Landscape Character and Important Views and states that:
- “Any development must maintain the local character of the landscape and not cause any

loss or diminution of important views from a public right of way that currently provides open field aspects or views over the harbour or other open spaces.”

2.16 Policy 4 identifies 11 particular areas and views covered by the Policy. These are identified on the map below:



HBA Figure 4- Plan extracted from the Birdham Neighbourhood Plan page 22)

2.17 There are no views identified across the site, however View A is noted as “the views across open land along Sidlesham Lane, Batchmere Road, Alandale Road”.

2.18 Neighbourhood Plan Policy 7 addresses Integration and Sense of Community, requiring that:

“New residential development must be designed to integrate well into the existing community and should provide good pedestrian routes, preferably from more than one access. Consideration must be given to connectivity and permeability as expressed in Policy 11. Site layouts must be designed to provide safe routes to schools and other local amenities, giving consideration to footpaths and other off-site schemes, where appropriate. Any leisure provision within or associated with a residential development must be designed to encourage use by both future residents of the development and existing local residents.”

2.19 Neighbourhood Plan Policy 16 relates to Housing Density & Design and requires that:

“Any residential development as described in Policies 12 & 14 will be supported provided:
 - it is of a density that reflects Birdham’s character as a rural village settlement rather than an urban one giving an impression of space, with uniform houses and plots being avoided

- the design of housing (including outside of the Chichester Harbour AONB) must comply with the Chichester Harbour Conservancy 'Design Guidelines for New Dwellings and Extensions' where applicable and adopt the principles as set out in Building for Life 12
- the design and materials are in keeping with the individual character and local distinctiveness of the Parish through building styles, which should be diverse and make a valuable contribution to the rural character of the village.

.....

- landscaping complies with the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Design Guidelines where applicable."

Boundaries

- 2.20 The site addresses the A286 Main Road on its northern boundary, save for a small inset around a piece of land associated with the adjoining Whitestone Farm Cottages, roughly half-way along the northern boundary of the site. In the northern field, the northern boundary with the A286 is marked by a tall hedgerow and a linear belt of Alder and Norway maple with a scrubby understorey and a wire fence in places. Occasional gaps in the hedgerow and tree line allow glimpsed views into the site from this part of the A286.



HBA Photo 1- View along Main Road and vegetation on the northern boundary to the northern field

- 2.21 In the southern field, the boundary with the A286 is more open, generally comprising lower blocks of scrub vegetation with some individual mature Oaks and a Poplar, but with a predominantly evergreen (Laurel) hedge through part of the western side.



HBA Photo 2 - Scrub vegetation on the site boundary to southern field and Main Road

- 2.22 On the northern side of Main Road, opposite the northern field of the site, there are a range of older detached and semi-detached predominantly red brick properties set back from the A286 behind a hedgerow, front gardens and a service road and more modern semi-detached and terraced houses and apartments arranged along a cul-de-sac (Old Common Close) off of Main Road.



HBA Photo 3 - Planted verges to Main Road addressing the northern field and development on Old Common Close

- 2.23 Further south, the Birdham playing fields lie opposite the southern end of the northern boundary to the northern field and also address the area of land which is excluded from the site.



HBA Photo 4 - Birdham Playing Field frontage to Main Road and the northern field's northern boundary

- 2.24 Opposite the southern field, buildings on the northern side of Main Road have a more open frontage to the road and in addition to residential dwellings include some commercial use such as a local shop and petrol station.



HBA Photo 5 - Local shop addressing Main Road opposite the open boundary to part of southern field

- 2.25 In the northern field, the eastern boundary is marked by a fence and alder and buckthorn hedgerow which separates the site from Greenlines nursery to the east.



HBA Photo 6 - eastern boundary to northern field and Greenlines nursery

- 2.26 The southern boundary to the northern field is unmarked on the ground but appears to follow the line of a historic field boundary (refer to Historic Mapping section below). To the west, the northern field addresses a mixed hedgerow which runs along the rear of commercial properties at Whitestone Farm and garden to Whitestone Farm Cottages. The western end of this boundary is marked by a fenceline along the edge of a partly wooded area excluded from the site and associated with the cottages.



HBA Photo 7 - looking towards the western boundary of northern field from within the northern field

- 2.27 The southern field has a more trapezoid shape, tapering from the narrowest point of approximately 150m in length along the north-eastern boundary with the access track (and set back from Main Road) to approximately 400m in distance from Main Road to the southern corner of this part of the site near Brierey Cottage off Bell Lane. In the southern field, the

orientation is such that Main Road essentially forms the western site boundary. To the north, the site boundary of the southern field follows the northern edge of the access track to Whitestone Farm (and footpath 48) which is lined by a belt of Alder and a hawthorn hedge.



HBA Photo 8 - access track and northern boundary to southern field

2.28 The eastern boundary to the southern field is unmarked but generally follows the western edge of an area of scrub vegetation which, for the most part, lies offsite in land in the client's ownership.



HBA Photo 9 - eastern boundary to the southern field, viewed from footpath 48, east of the site.

2.29 To the south, the southern field borders the boundaries of the rear gardens to residential properties on the northern side of Pinks Lane, including Brierey Cottage and Garden Cottage and dwellings on The Straight, a private road off of Main Road.



HBA Photo 10 - looking towards the southern boundary of the southern field

Access

2.30 The site is accessed via the surfaced track off of Main Road which provides vehicular access to the residential and commercial uses at Whitestone Farm and is also a public footpath.

Land cover

- 2.31 The land is largely in arable use save for the area of buildings and hardstanding which provide some residential, retail and commercial uses on and adjoining the site.



HBA Photo 11 - buildings on the site

- 2.32 The site abuts residential and some commercial development to the north, along Main Road, and also addresses the commercial horticultural nurseries of Greenline Nursery to the north-east. Beyond Greeline Nursery there are a number of residential and agricultural dwellings located on the southern side of Main Road, off Sidlesham Lane and Alandale Road, a private lane off of Sidlesham Lane.
- 2.33 East of the site, the land cover is predominantly arable farmland around the agricultural buildings of Whitestone Farm, but includes horse paddocks further east closer to Sidlesham Lane and Hillands Farm.

Landform and levels

- 2.34 The landform of the locality is flat, forming part of an extensive area of low-lying coastal floodplain to the Chichester channel and harbour. The nearest Ordnance Survey height datum is recorded at 6m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), approximately 500m south of the site.
- 2.35 In the wider setting, the land rises dramatically to the broadly east-west spine of the chalk scarp of the South Downs which lies some 12km north of the site beyond Chichester.

Vegetation of landscape and visual significance

- 2.36 Significant vegetation on the site itself is limited to the site boundaries of hedgerows and treelines. In particular, the hedgerow and tree belt to Main Road in the northern field contribute to creating a green character to this part of the road, in tandem with the garden and hedgerow vegetation to properties on the northern side of the road.
- 2.37 Six mature Oak and Poplar trees along the site's boundary with Main Road are protected by Tree Preservation Order number 73/00016/TPO, which also includes individual trees and tree groups in the wider farmstead area to the east.
- 2.38 Offsite, the landscape is similarly patterned with large fields sometimes defined by hedgerow and scattered trees. Further afield, the wooded shoreline is a strong feature of the Chichester Harbour.

Public Rights of Way and open access

- 2.39 Public footpath 48 runs broadly east-west across the centre of the site, linking between Main Road (A286) and Sidlesham Lane (near the crossroads with Mapsons Lane) and following the line of the access track to Whitestone Farm Cottages and Whitestone Farm.
- 2.40 Footpath 48 continues offsite to the north of Main Road, following Farne Lane on the southern side of the Birdham playing field.
- 2.41 North of the site, public footpath 2821 follows Alendale Road, linking between Sidlesham Lane and Main Road to the east of Greenline Nurseries. No intervisibility was identified between the footpath and the site.
- 2.42 There is no open access land in the vicinity of the site.

Landscape Designations

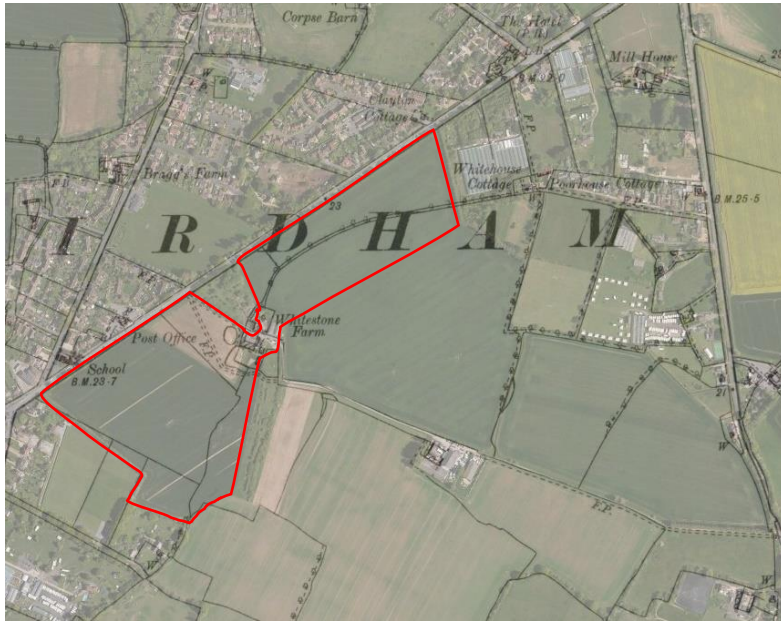
- 2.43 The site lies outside of but adjoins the boundary to the Chichester Harbour AONB, a statutory designation of national importance which recognises that the landscape of the area is generally of the highest quality. The AONB boundary follows the A286 Main Road on the western side of the site, with the AONB designation washing over the majority of the village of Birdham and extending across the tidal estuarine landscape of the Harbour and shoreline. Chichester Harbour AONB was designated in 1964; the primary purpose of the AONB designation being to conserve and enhance natural beauty. The Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019 (Chichester Harbour Conservancy) sets out the special qualities and significance of the AONB, presents a vision for the AONB and sets out the objectives and policies to secure this vision. The AONB Management Plan is referenced further in the 'landscape character' section below.

Historic Landscape and Cultural Heritage

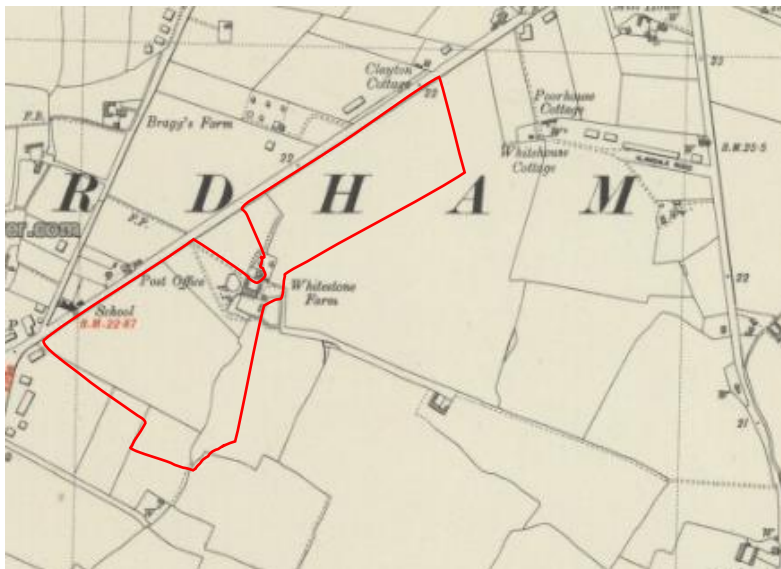
- 2.44 Approximately 120m north-east of the site on the northern side of Main Road, Cherry Tree Cottage is a Grade II listed building, whilst just under 200m to the north east at the crossroads between Main Road and Church Road lies the Birdham Public House (now a residential property) which is also Grade II listed.
- 2.45 Mill House Farmhouse is a grade II listed building lying approximately 350m north-east of the site to the south of Main Road on Sidlesham Lane.
- 2.46 The closest Conservation Area to the site covers the historic core of the village of Somerley, and lies approximately 550m to the southwest corner of the site.
- 2.47 There are no Registered Historic Parks and Gardens in close proximity to the site.
- 2.48 The Birdham Neighbourhood Plan notes at Page 5 that "*Pinks Lane remains undeveloped and maintains the views across Whitestone Farm, which is part of the landscape heritage.*" No further information is provided on the landscape heritage of the Farm or views to it.

Historic Mapping Review

- 2.49 Extracts from Ordnance Survey 6-inch series mapping published in 1899 and 1942 and modern Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 mapping (2015) are shown below, the former being overlaid on modern satellite imagery of the site.
- 2.50 It can be seen that the structure / pattern of fields across the site and adjoining farmland has been subject to much change, with several field boundaries lost, presumably in order to increase field sizes. This is particularly noticeable across the wider farmstead but also in the site itself. In 1899, the northern field comprised a smaller field of around 3.5 hectares abutting Main Road, and parts of a larger field to the south and a small area of around 1 hectare which previously joined to the offsite area associated with Whitestone Farm Cottages.
- 2.51 Up until 1942, a separate access track is shown to Whitestone Farm (in addition to the current track and line of footpath 48), which essentially cut across the northern corner of the southern field.
- 2.52 The mapping indicates that the majority of development on the northern side of Main Road is post-war, appearing after the publication of the 1942 mapping.



HBA Figure 5 – Extract of Ordnance Survey 6-inch series map 1899 overlaid on modern satellite imagery)



HBA Figure 6 – Extract of Ordnance Survey 6-inch series map 1942



HBA Figure 7 – Extract of Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map 2015

Nature Conservation and Biodiversity

- 2.53 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been prepared for the site by Arbeco Ltd (19th December 2018) which records that the site is considered to have moderate ecological value within a local context. It notes that the site contains habitats that are suitable to support badgers, bats, breeding birds, great crested newts, hazel dormice, reptiles and invertebrates and notes that additional ecological surveys will be required to inform any future development. Any recommendations made in subsequent habitat and protected species surveys would need to be taken into account in any development proposal taken forward.

Landscape Character

National Character

- 2.54 The site and surroundings lie within the South Coast Plain National Character Area (NCA) 126, as defined by Natural England. The South Coast Plain is described as:

“a flat, coastal landscape with an intricately indented shoreline lying between the dip slope of the South Downs and South Hampshire Lowlands and the waters of the English Channel, Solent and part of Southampton Water. The coastline includes several major inlets which have particularly distinctive local landscapes and intertidal habitats of international environmental importance for wildfowl and waders. Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies within the NCA and the foothills of the South Downs, along the northern boundary, fall within the South Downs National Park”.

- 2.55 The Manhood Peninsula identified as a distinct area within NCA 126, which notes that, *“The Manhood Peninsula is a small triangular peninsula south of Chichester and remote from the rest of the NCA. Its southern headland, Selsey Bill, is a prominent coastal deposition feature, which projects out into the Solent well beyond the line of the rest of the coast. It is one of the last, and largest, relatively undeveloped stretches of coastline between Newhaven and Southampton.”*

- 2.56 Some of the Key Characteristics of the South Coast Plain are stated as:

- *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.*
- *The underlying geology of flinty marine and valley gravels extends several miles inland to the dip slope of the South Downs and the South Hampshire Lowlands. This gives rise to deep and well-drained high quality soils.*
- *Coastal inlets and ‘harbours’ contain a diverse landscape of narrow tidal creeks, mudflats, shingle beaches, dunes, grazing marshes and paddocks. These include the internationally important Chichester, Langstone, Portsmouth and Pagham harbours, the Hamble Estuary and the recent coastal realignment site at Medmerry between Chichester Harbour and Selsey.*
- *There are stretches of farmed land between developed areas, often with large arable fields defined by low hedges or ditches.*
- *The area has significant urban development, with settlements along the coastline*

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dominated by the Portsmouth conurbation, suburban villages and seaside towns including Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Worthing linked by major road and rail systems.

2.57 The NCA profile identifies a number of Statements of Environmental Opportunity for NCA 126. These include the following of relevance:

- *SEO 2: Plan for the creation of a strong landscape framework within and around major settlements and identified growth areas, while managing and enhancing existing greenspace and access, and balancing the needs of agriculture, communities and the natural environment.*

and

- *SEO 4: Manage the rich archaeological and historic resource and geological exposures within the farmed, coastal and peri-urban landscape, including the longstanding associations of horticultural and maritime industries and the military, enhancing a strong sense of place.*

2.58 Examples of addressing these opportunities include:

- *“Encouraging a strategic approach to the planning of land use around Chichester and Langstone harbours and the Manhood Peninsula to address the pressures of climate change and development, ensuring that natural processes continue to function and the comparatively wild and tranquil character is retained.*
- *Ensuring that development and its associated infrastructure (including light, noise and air pollution) does not intrude on the special qualities of Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the South Downs National Park; and ensuring that the landscape character within these areas and their settings is conserved, restored, reinforced or created as appropriate to reflect the ambitions of their respective management plans.*
- *Restoring the traditional field patterns of the rural peninsulas, such as Chichester Harbour AONB and the Manhood Peninsula, through the replacement of lost hedgerows and improvement in the condition of existing hedgerows through replanting gaps.”*

County Landscape Character

2.59 At a county level, the Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme has carried out a series of character studies of the County, which are published in several separate but linked documents that are read in conjunction with each other and include:

- ‘A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape’ (WSCC October 2005)
- ‘The Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex’ (Chris Blandford Associates for WSCC, 2003) with supporting Land Management Guidelines.
- ‘Local Distinctiveness Study of West Sussex’ (WSCC, Ongoing)

2.60 ‘A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape’ (WSCC October 2005) sets out the vision for the landscape of the County and defines strategies "to protect and enhance the landscape of West Sussex as an asset for future generations" (Para 1.5). It considers the landscape in relation to

the five national landscape character types found in the County and draws directly from earlier landscape character studies carried out in West Sussex.

2.61 The 'Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex' identifies and maps 42 unique landscape character areas within West Sussex and provides Land Management Guidelines for each character area. The site lies in the south-east part of character area SC3 Chichester Harbour in the wider South Coast Plain area. SC3 Chichester Harbour extends from the south-west of Chichester across the Chichester harbour and channel, encompassing number of inlets and the shorelines to the north and south of the water, extending to the northern edge of East Wittering in the south and including Bosham and Thorney Island to the north. Key characteristics of SC3 Chichester Harbour include:

- *"Enclosed natural harbours of marine water, tidal mudflats and saltmarsh with small inlets and creeks.*
- *Contrast with the surrounding agricultural land.*
- *Localised presence of woodland, for example, Old Park Wood, Bosham and Church Norton Wood.*
- *Wind-shaped trees and scrub."*

1.1 For Landscape Change, many of the key issues highlight relate to the shoreline, but also include:

- *"Gradual reduction of tree and hedgerow cover especially on the Chichester Harbour peninsulas.*
- *Traffic generation resulting in erosion of rural lanes and loss of tranquillity"*

1.2 The overarching Land Management Guideline is to "Conserve existing area of tranquil character" with relevant guidelines including:

- *"Maintain key views and vistas around the harbours.*
- *Conserve and enhance the character and setting of the villages*
- *Strengthen the existing landscape framework through hedgerow and native tree planting, especially around settlements on Chichester Harbour peninsulas and to the north of Chichester Yacht Basin.*
- *Maintain existing hedgerows and strengthen the wider network through hedgerow restoration.*
- *Maintain, restore and enhance floodplain woodland and associated species, including native black poplar, where appropriate."*

2.62 Approximately 750m south-east of the site, east of Batchmere Road, the land falls within county Landscape Character Area SC2 Manhood Peninsular, described as a "mainly flat open landscape, dominated by highly productive large arable fields and modern settlements and larger suburban villages. Areas of unimproved grassland still exist along the edges of streams and rifes which are often immediately bordered by reed beds. In contrast, some arts have a patchwork of smaller enclosed pastures and horse paddocks which have a more intimate character".

2.63 Key sensitivities of SC2 include:

- *“Expansion and development on urban and village edges.*
 - *Close proximity to internationally important landscapes of Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty...”*
- 2.64 Similar to SC3, the overarching land management guideline for SC3 Manhood Peninsular is to “Conserve existing area of tranquil character”, with [articular guidelines including:
- *“Create a new large scale tree and hedgerow framework which complements the open, intensively farmed landscape, whilst maintaining significant views.*
 - *Formulate a management plan for urban edges to enhance the distinction between the urban and rural landscape.*
 - *Substantially extend woodland and hedgerow cover around village fringes to screen unsightly elements*
 - *Maintain and link existing remnant hedgerows and tree lines to re-establish coherent field boundaries and wildlife corridors, strengthening the wider network.”*
- 2.65 Additionally, West Sussex County Council have published Local Distinctiveness Guidelines. These have been produced to improve the understanding of local distinctiveness within the county, providing “on the ground” guidance for communities, planners, developers, businesses, and landowners, to help build local distinctiveness into development and land management decisions. The Local Distinctiveness Guidelines address the South Coast Plain Character Area. With regard to Key Settlement Characteristics, features to “Maintain, protect and enhance where possible” include:
- *“The existing pattern of dispersed farmsteads and associated agricultural land and woodland*
 - *The scale, vernacular style, massing and materials of rural and village buildings”*

Chichester Harbour Character

- 2.66 The Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 addresses the components of character that define the natural beauty of Chichester Harbour.
- 2.67 Ten Special Qualities are defined for the Chichester Harbour AONB (AONB Management Plan page 12). These are summarised below:
- *“The unique blend of land and sea – especially the combination of large open water area, narrow inlets and intimate creeks. Threatened by climate change, rising sea levels and inappropriate development.*
 - *The frequently wooded shoreline...*
 - *The flatness of the landform, unusual among AONBs, accentuates the significance of sea and tide and of distant landmarks across land and water. Inappropriate development can be seen from long distances and intrudes into the landscape, detracting from the historical features of interest.*
 - *The open water of the central area of the Harbour...*
 - *An overall sense of wilderness within the seascape...*

- *Particularly strong historic character and associations...*
- *Picturesque harbourside settlements...*
- *Wealth of flora and fauna, notably the vast flocks of wading birds, adds to richness and diversity of the landscape...*
- *The unspoilt character and unobtrusive beauty. It is important that visitors to the Harbour understand and value its special qualities. The promotion of these special qualities should concentrate on raising visitors' awareness rather than attracting greater numbers.*
- *The Harbour offers a very special sense of peace and tranquillity, largely engendered by the gentle way it is used and the closeness to nature that is experienced. People pressure, inappropriate development and pollution, particularly light and noise, can easily destroy this fragile value as can inappropriate activities."*

2.68 Whilst some of the Special Qualities can be found within the wider landscape setting of the site and village of Birdham, the part of the AONB which the site addresses, lies at the periphery of the designation and is characterised by built development that does not reflect the Special Qualities. It is only the flatness of the landform that is considered to be appreciated and therefore directly relevant to the site and its immediate setting.

2.69 The AONB Management Plan notes in relation to "The Land and Seascape" (Chapter 2) that "In parts of the AONB the urban areas of Chichester, Havant and South Hayling have a strong influence on character. In other areas, settlements spread along main roads with clusters of glasshouses and light industrial units associated with agriculture and commercial activity". In this regard, a Management Issue is recorded as:

- *"Pressure for new housing development and associated infrastructure within or close to the AONB boundary leading to a loss of rural character and setting"*

2.70 Policy LS1 placing a requirement to:

- *"Promote the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the AONB and its setting, and raise awareness of the AONB designation."*

2.71 Policy BD1 requiring:

- *"Ensure that all development is appropriate and conserves and enhances the landscape, wildlife and historic environment of the AONB."*

2.72 The Chichester Harbour AONB Landscape Character Assessment was reported in June 2005 by Chris Blandford Associates. It includes the site within Landscape Character Type I Large Coastal Peninsula, with key characteristics of

- *"Large flat peninsula underlain by brickearth drift deposits.*
- *Drained by many small streams and rithes.*
- *Medium to large scale arable field patterns defined by low hedgerows and/or lines of windblown.*
- *Hedgerow trees.*

- *Small pastures and hedged paddocks associated with the settlements.*
 - *Large clusters of glasshouses.*
 - *Linear settlement patterns.*
 - *Restricted views of the open water of the harbour.”*
- 2.73 This is more locally characterised as Landscape Character Area I1 West Manhood Peninsula. Key characteristics of I1 broadly align with those identified for SC3 ‘Manhood Peninsula’ defined by the West Sussex Assessment, but with additional characteristics identified including:
- *“Historic north to south road and settlement pattern*
 - *Dispersed modern roadside development along the A286.*
 - *Distinctive clusters of flint and brick cottages at Itchenor, Birdham and Dell Quay.*
 - *Overall the area retains a largely rural undeveloped character.”*
- 2.74 The description of overall character notes that *“...the linear settlement of Birdham is surrounded by small hedged fields and paddocks...To the east is an extensive area of glasshouses and medium to large scale arable land outside the AONB.”*
- 2.75 Under ‘Settlement Character’ it is noted that *“Birdham has a very small historic core centred around the church and a small green, comprising a few brick and tile cottages. The rest of the settlement comprises undistinguished modern terrace/detached house development, together with small commercial buildings along the A259”*
- 2.76 Overall condition of the I1 character area (within the AONB) is recorded as *“moderate. The loss of hedgerows from parts of the arable farmland has eroded visual and ecological character in parts”*
- 2.77 The sensitivity of Area I1 within the AONB is recorded as *“moderate to high. The coastal edge is particularly sensitive to any built development which would result in the loss of eroded shoreline and intrude on characteristic views.”*
- 2.78 The above characterisation studies, are considered to be a good overall summary of the wider landscape character of the site’s surrounding area.
- 2.79 In addition, the published character studies give some helpful pointers to the approach that should be adopted in addressing the particular sensitivities inherent when considering development in the area. Should the site be allocated, the above assessments will be used to ensure the development responds to the landscape character, and is sensitively integrated within the surrounding context.

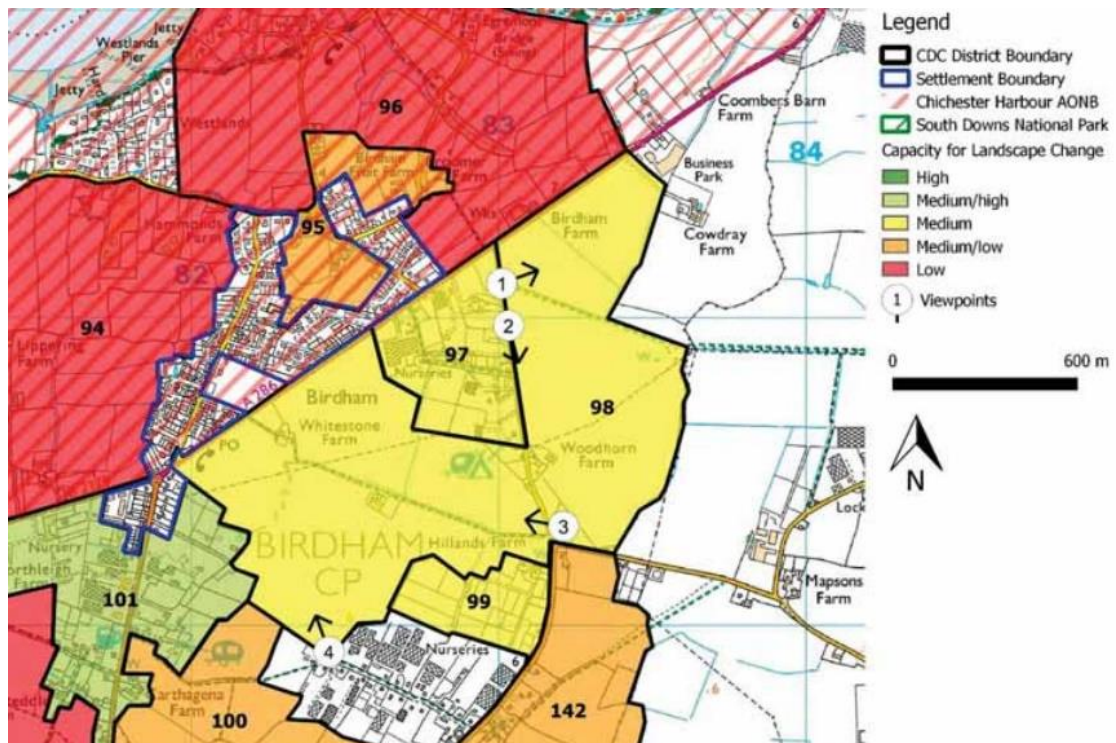
Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity

Chichester Local Plan Review 2035 Landscape Capacity Study, November 2018 (CLPRLCS)

- 2.80 The CLPRLCS was prepared for Chichester District Council by terrafirma and reported in November 2018.
- 2.81 The Introduction to the CLPRLCS notes that *“The Study includes a high level assessment of landscape capacity to help inform decision making relating to the need to accommodate strategic development over the plan period.”* The CLPRLCS considers capacity as *“the extent*

to which a particular area or type of landscape is able to accommodate change without significant effects on character or overall change in the landscape type” by combining considerations of the sensitivity of the landscape character and the value attached to the landscape.

- 2.82 The site forms the south-western edge and a small component of assessment sub-area 98: Whitestone – Woodhorn Coastal Plain.



HBA Figure 8 – CLPRLCS Figure 98, Landscape Capacity to accept change and photographic viewpoints

- 2.83 The CLPRLCS assesses the visual sensitivity of sub-area 98 as being “**Medium**”, noting the following characteristics (emphasis added):

- “Some sensitive view receptors close to AONB
- North-eastern part prominent in views from roads and footpaths
- Distant views to South Downs
- Western part openly visible from footpaths crossing the area
- Sub-area forms skyline where there is an absence of taller vegetation or landform forming a backdrop
- Relatively strong vegetation on remaining boundaries provides some opportunities to build upon, including opportunity to reinstate historic boundaries” (HBA underlining emphasises characteristics that are relevant to the site within the sub-area)

- 2.84 The Landscape Sensitivity of sub-area 98 is assessed in the CLPRLCS as “Medium /low”, noting:

- “Perceptibly flat and low-lying – around the 7m contour
- Distinctive poplar tree belts near Hillands Farm and around adjacent nurseries

- *Hedgerows between fields and along lanes*
 - *Most of sub-area has an open character, particularly east of Siddlesham Lane*
 - *Large -scale homogenous landscape” (HBA underlining emphasises characteristics that are relevant to the site within the sub-area)*
- 2.85 The CLPRLCS therefore assesses Landscape Character Sensitivity as *Medium/Low*. “Wider landscape sensitivity” is considered in the CLPRLCS to be *Medium/High* (the methodology recording this as equating to a situation where “*the Sub-area has strong physical and visual links to the wider landscape and these outweigh any minor impacts from urbanising development*”), on account of there being “*little influence from/connection with Birdham to the north*” and that “*the area is largely typical of the wider LCA*”. These rankings are combined to give an overall Landscape Sensitivity ranking of *Medium*
- 2.86 Landscape value is considered in the CLPRLCS on the basis of designation. Sub-area 98 is therefore assessed of having *Medium* landscape value as it “*forms part of setting of AONB*”.
- 2.87 Combing the rankings of sensitivity and value, the CLPRLCS assesses the Landscape Capacity of sub-area 98 to be *Medium*, defined in the methodology as being where “*The Sub-area could be able to accommodate areas of new development in some parts, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. There are landscape constraints and therefore the key landscape and visual characteristics must be retained and enhanced.*”
- 2.88 Under Landscape Capacity, the CLPRLCS considers a range of potential effects and landscape mitigation and contribution to green infrastructure, noting:
- “Potential effect on key visual characteristics**
- *Impact on sensitive receptors in setting of AONB*
 - *Loss of views to SDNP*
- Potential effect on key landscape characteristics**
- *Loss of Grade 2 agricultural land*
 - *Extension of dense settlement into largely undeveloped countryside*
 - *Impact on rural and generally tranquil area*
- Potential effect on key settlement characteristics**
- *Further erosion of linear pattern of Birdham*
 - *Introduction of built form into largely undeveloped countryside*
- Landscape mitigation and contribution to green infrastructure**
- *Retention and restoration of hedges and trees*
 - *Strengthen the existing landscape framework through hedgerow and native tree planting*
 - *Encourage the planting of new small woodlands and long-term management of woodland blocks*
 - *Retaining legibility and setting of PRoW network and creating additional links*
 - *Conserve rural character of settlements*

- *Restoration of historic field pattern”*

2.89 The CLPRLCS concludes that Sub-area 98 has a medium capacity:

“influenced by its location adjacent to the AONB, its visual prominence, its strong links with the wider landscape and the potential for impacting the settlement pattern of Birdham. Some development may be possible within the sub-area, within the constraints of the location adjacent to the AONB and the potential for impacting the settlement pattern of Birdham and the wider rural landscape” and that “Any development would need to be informed by further landscape and visual impact assessment and sensitively integrated into the landscape and existing settlement with great care taken to avoid any landscape or visual harm. Particular care would be needed to protect the settlement pattern, the setting of the AONB, the setting of the Public footpaths and local distinctiveness”.

Landscape and visual detractors

2.90 The main landscape and visual detractors are the presence of the busy and lit A286 adjacent to the site (visual and auditory detractor) and overhead power lines which cut across the site.

2.91 Offsite, the nearby petrol station and roadside car park area to the local shop do not enhance the character of the streetscape or AONB within which they lie.

Landscape and visual attributes

2.92 The flat and generally open nature of the site is a strong visual attribute.

2.93 The tree line/hedgerow along the site boundary with the A286 in the northern field in tandem with the hedgerow and garden frontages to housing on the opposite side of the road, helps to provide a green character to this part of the road, creating a soft edge and containing much of the site from public views from the A286/Main Road.

2.94 In the southern field, the open nature of the boundary to the A286 does not enhance the character of the street as such, but has the benefit of allowing views out across the open agricultural field of this part of the site.

2.95 The presence of public footpath 48 through the site provides recreational value linking the village to the wider countryside.

2.96 Offsite, the network of drainage ditches in the farmland to the east are a notable landscape feature.

3 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Whilst the site is largely free of landscape constraints, it lies in a sensitive location in the countryside at the edge of the settlement and addresses the boundary of the Chichester Harbour AONB to the north-west.

3.2 The Landscape Capacity Study (prepared to support the Local Plan Review, considers that the wider area within which the site lies, when considered as a whole, has a Medium capacity to accommodate two or three storey development at a density of 15-30 dwellings per hectare.

3.3 Taken in the context of the 34 sub-areas considered in the Manhood Peninsula, only three other sub-areas are considered to have a greater capacity for development than sub-area 98.

At a district-wide level, just 12 of the 144 sub-areas considered, have a higher capacity for development than sub-area 98.

- 3.4 Given that the CLPRLCS is a “high level” appraisal which considers the site as part of a much wider sub-area and in relation to either inherent sensitivity or a generic assumption of development (the methodology is unclear), it is considered that there is scope for different assessment rankings to be concluded both when the smaller area of the site is considered and in relation to a specific development proposal.
- 3.5 For example, many of the characteristics noted in the CLPRLCS as contributing to visual and landscape sensitivity relate to wider areas of the sub-area and are not relevant to the site. In terms of visual sensitivity, the prominent views of the north-eastern part of the sub-area and distant views to the South Downs are characteristics that have led to a Medium visual sensitivity ranking but neither area characteristic or relevant to the site. Clearly the visual sensitivity of the component area of the site in its context could be considered to be lower.
- 3.6 In terms of wider landscape sensitivity, the site addresses the A286 and development along it and therefore has a stronger relationship with the existing built settlement of Birdham than the wider areas of the sub-area. The consideration for the sub-area that there is “*little influence from/connection with Birdham to the north*” is therefore not the case for the site itself. Whereas the CLPRLCS considers the wider landscape sensitivity to be medium/high, the site alone might be better considered as Medium/low wider sensitivity, defined in the CLPRLCS methodology as being where the area is “*heavily influenced by urbanising development and has views of some parts of the adjacent urban settlement but shares some of the characteristics of the adjacent wider landscape.*”
- 3.7 It is considered that in the context of the existing landscape, there is scope for a modest residential development to be sensitivity accommodated on the site, respecting the intrinsic character, relationship with the AONB and the visual amenity of the locality
- 3.8 Despite the flat and low-lying nature of the locality, the site is generally well contained in the wider landscape by the tree line/hedgerow along the site boundaries to the north and south and along the A286 which forms the boundary to the AONB. This boundary vegetation should be retained and enhanced and incorporated within publicly managed green space in any new development proposal. Any new development should be set back from the road frontage with the A286 to retain a green edge to the road corridor and AONB boundary.
- 3.9 Any development proposal for the site should respect the key sensitivities outlined in the various landscape characterisation studies, the Landscape Capacity Study and within this Landscape Appraisal, in particular:
- Retention and augmentation of existing significant boundary features and creation of a new tree and hedgerow framework which complements the open landscape, with consideration to re-establishing historic and coherent field boundaries where appropriate and creating an attractive village fringe and a strong eastern boundary to allow a distinction between the urban and rural landscape.
 - Built form to be set back from the inside edge of the frontage tree cover to the A286/Main

Road to both avoid damage to the existing trees and to allow for the development of a strong green frontage to the development and AONB interface.

- Careful consideration to be given to the layout and juxtaposition of roads, landscape treatments, open space and built forms to respect existing settlement patterns and allow some views out of the development from the public footpath and from the A286/AONB boundary in the southern field.
- Existing landscape features and the overall framework of new trees, hedgerow and scrub belts should be retained in green space/landscape buffers that should remain outside of private curtilages in the layout for any new development.
- Opportunities could be sought for providing public access through any new areas of green space which could link to offsite provision at Birdham playing fields as well as the onsite public footpath link between the village edge and countryside.

3.10 The overarching objective of the landscape strategy should be to protect and enhance the open character of the wider landscape setting and ensure that the inevitable changes arising from the development would be appropriately mitigated over time.

3.11 The following key landscape and visual mitigation measures should also be given consideration to help achieve this:

- Design measures such as blue or green roofs should be considered. In addition to providing environmental and drainage mitigation, this could help to soften the appearance of built form and minimise the potential height of buildings that would inevitably need to incorporate non-habitable accommodation on the ground floor.
- Additional tree cover, hedgerows and scrub planting could be incorporated both within the development and at its boundaries to help to soften the settlement edge, without detracting from the generally open character of wider LCA. Overly ornamental species and heavily wooded belts should be avoided. The existing public footpath and boundary vegetation, as well as areas of new green space and landscape buffers should be incorporated in public areas of the scheme and not within private curtilages.
- Any new access should be located to avoid loss of significant trees, notably in the northern field and boundary to the A286.
- Consideration to be given to relocating or burying the existing overhead power lines which are a landscape and visual detractor.
- The overall planting strategy objective should be to embed the development into a landscape framework that respects the open character of the area and creates a sensitive transition between a new settlement edge, the AONB and the wider countryside to the east.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 The wider area around the site has been assessed in the 2018 Landscape Capacity Study, which forms part of the Local Plan evidence base, as having medium sensitivity and a medium capacity for two or three storey residential development.

- 4.2 Whilst development of the site would clearly result in a direct loss of the landscape resource (as would be the case for any greenfield development), the site lies outside of the AONB and is largely free of landscape constraints, containing a cluster of existing buildings, adjoining the busy A286, existing residential development on two sides as well as commercial/horticultural development.
- 4.3 From a landscape and visual perspective, the site could accommodate a modest degree of two to three storey residential development. This would need to be set within an appropriate and robust landscape strategy to ensure the setting of the AONB and the existing open character of the wider area is retained and that landscape and visual effects are minimised.
- 4.4 Development would need to be set within a robust landscape framework that seeks to create a positive urban-rural interface and retain the wider open setting of farmland at this edge of Birdham. Any development proposal would also need to retain and augment the characteristic trees and hedgerow belts to help to contain and soften the settlement edge and interface with both the countryside and the A286 and AONB. The above measures would be in keeping with the local landscape character and would respond to the local character guidelines.