

LAND BETWEEN APPLIEDORE AND WOODCHURCH ROADS, TENTERDEN

LANDSCAPE STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

PINS Ref: APP/E2205/W/21/3284479

The Appeal Site

1. The appeal site is 24.34ha in extent, of which 8.66ha would be set aside for the country park, 3.33ha would be provided for the new sports facilities (including the new pavilion), and an area of 12.35ha at the western end of the appeal site would be occupied by the proposed residential development, greenways and open spaces.
2. The appeal site currently comprises 14 grassland fields, 13 of which have been used for sheep grazing and one of which has been used as a football pitch. The fields are largely bounded by hedgerows, some of which contain mature trees. However, the hedgerows are generally fragmented.
3. Some houses on Woodchurch Road and Appledore Road are visible from the site at the western end of the appeal site. The boundaries to rear gardens form the appeal site boundaries at the south-west and north-west of the site. The rear boundaries to these properties are defined by a combination of fencing with mature trees and other vegetation in gardens extending across the boundaries in some locations and simple fencing in others.
4. The appeal site is crossed by a perceptible ridge, orientated in an approximately north-south direction and extending above 60m AOD at its northern end. This ridge becomes less pronounced at the southern end. Land to the west of this ridge is orientated towards the existing settlement edge, whereas land to the east of the ridge is orientated away from the settlement edge and towards the open countryside, and the AONB, to the east.
5. Parts of the western end of the appeal site afford views towards the tower of St Mildred's church, including views from Footpath AB12. The church tower is sometimes viewed over the canopies or through gaps in the existing trees and is viewed in the context of the existing settlement edge.
6. The appeal site is crossed by footpath AB12, which connects Woodchurch Road with Appledore Road. AB12 is broadly aligned with the low ridge that crosses the appeal site.

Appledore Road

7. To the south of the appeal site is Appledore Road (B2080). In the vicinity of the appeal site this is a broad, 40mph, two-way road with road markings, street lighting, footways on either side, signage and frequent traffic.
8. For much of the length of Appledore Road in the vicinity of the appeal site there are fronting houses on both sides of the road. The exception to this is at fields 13 and 14, near the proposed site access.

9. The road has broad grass verges and a number of mature trees, many of which are either horse chestnuts or limes, although other species are also present. The trees vary in age and condition.

Settlement Structure and Form

10. The proposed development is located on the south-eastern edge of the settlement of Tenterden.
11. Tenterden has historically had a linear form, with development following main routes. However, in the 20th century there has been infill which has added broader areas of residential development along the main routes.
12. The residential areas to the south of Appledore Road, and to the north of Woodchurch Road, are of low to moderate density, developed mainly in the 20th century. These areas merge at Beacon Oak Road, to the west of the appeal site.

Designations and Landscape Value

13. The appeal site is not within a formal landscape, or landscape-related, designation. The western end of the appeal site does, however, contain a number of TPO'd trees, and there are other protected trees around the boundary at the western end of the appeal site. The trees along Appledore Road are also now protected by TPO.
14. The Tenterden conservation area abuts the western boundary of the appeal site, and the High Weald AONB abuts part of the eastern boundary of the appeal site.
15. The eastern end of the appeal site, to the east of the ridge, is within the setting of the AONB, since this part of the site has landscape and visual connections with the AONB.
16. However, the western part of the appeal site is not within the setting of the AONB, since this does not have strong landscape and visual connections with the designation.

The Appeal Proposals

17. The height of proposed homes would be mostly 2 storey, with a small area at 2.5 storeys and also an area of bungalows. These building heights are compatible with existing building heights on Woodchurch Road and Appledore Road.
18. The proposals would safeguard the majority of hedgerows and trees within the appeal site, with only two mature trees needing to be removed.
19. The appeal proposals would provide new hedgerows and hedgerow standards, new street trees, orchard trees, and new native scrub.

Relevant Character Assessments

20. At a national level, the appeal site is within National Character Area (NCA) 122, High Weald. NCA 121, Low Weald, extends to within approximately half a kilometre of the north-eastern boundary of the appeal site.
21. In the Kent Landscape Character assessment the site is classified as being on the edge of the settlement but also on the northern edge of the Oxney: Lower Rother Valley character area, with land to the north-east of the site within the Biddenden-High Halden Wooded Farmlands character area.
22. At a District level in the Ashford Landscape Character Assessment the appeal site is again shown on the settlement edge and is classified as part of the Woodchurch Undulating Farmlands (LCA 23), and this character area continues to the north-east of the site.

Methodology for Assessing the Landscape and Visual Effects of Development

23. The “*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*”, 3rd Edition, (GLVIA3) provides best practice and widely accepted guidance on how to carry out landscape and visual assessments. One of the main objectives of this guidance is to achieve quality and consistency in the approach to landscape and visual assessments.
24. The most up to date guidance on how to assess landscape value is within the Landscape Institute’s Technical Guidance Note 02/21, “*Assessing Landscape Value Outside of National Designations*”.
25. The methodology used in the SLR LVIA conforms with the requirements of GLVIA3.
26. The landscape receptors assessed in the SLR LVIA are appropriate.
27. The representative viewpoints used in the SLR LVIA are appropriate, although both parties refer to additional viewpoints for illustration.

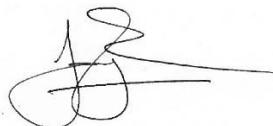
The Landscape and Visual Effects of the Appeal Proposals

28. The landscape and visual effects of the Appeal proposals would be mainly focused upon the Appeal Site and its immediate locality.
29. The Appeal proposals would not result in significant landscape or visual effects for the High Weald AONB.
30. The character of the western end of the appeal site is more enclosed than the land to the east of the low ridge, which provides open, long views.
31. The character of the western end of the appeal site is more influenced by the existing settlement edge than the land at the eastern end of the appeal site.

Area of Disagreement between the Parties

32. The Council states that the appeal site can be described as strongly rural, whereas the appellant has concluded that the western part of the appeal site is influenced by the settlement edge.
33. The Council concludes that the appeal site is an integral and important part of the landscape setting to Tenterden and that the development would cause harm to the landscape setting to the town. The appellant contends that the appeal site does not provide a fully functional setting for Tenterden and that the development proposals could be integrated within the landscape of the appeal site and provide an attractive and distinctive setting for the settlement.
34. The Appellant states that all green field residential developments result in at least localised landscape and visual harm. The Council agree that this is often the case but contend that the level of harm is unacceptable in this case.
35. The Council asserts that the trees on Appledore Road are part of a coherent and largely unbroken avenue feature, whereas the appellant has concluded that the avenue is an irregular feature with many trees missing, and new species added.
36. The Council has concluded that the appeal proposals would result in a harsh settlement edge extending up to footpath AB12, whereas the appellant maintains that the proposed landscape masterplan would create a permeable edge, with development set back behind landscape buffers and with greenways extending out to AB12.

Agreed by



Jeremy Smith
(for Wates Developments Ltd)



David Withycombe
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