

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
S78**

APPEAL BY

**PERSIMMON HOMES
SOUTH COAST**

FOR:

**DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 206
DWELLINGS**

AT

**LAND EAST OF CROFTON CEMETERY
AND WEST OF PEAK LANE,
STUBINGTON, HAMPSHIRE**



**SUMMARY
PROOF OF EVIDENCE
OF
JON SEYMOUR
BA Hons Dip LA CMLI**

**PINS REF: APP/A1720/W/21/3275237
LPA REF: P/20/0522/FP
ACD REF: PERSC22805**

1.0 SUMMARY PROOF AND CONCLUSION

- 1.1 ACD Environmental Ltd undertook a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment in accordance with best practice guidelines, to inform and assess an initial planning application for 261 units. This scheme was refused and the developer engaged in Pre-Application discussions with FBC to prepare a new Second Application to overcome the Reasons for Refusal and provide a scheme for 206 units that was acceptable and recommended for approval to the planning committee. The scheme was refused by the planning committee.
- 1.2 The Appeal Site is for 206 residential dwellings with associated open space. It is appreciated that due to the change in baseline characteristics (i.e. the introduction of residential dwellings into an arable field) a change in the landscape character will be appreciated.
- 1.3 The development proposals can be considered to contribute positively to the landscape of the site and the surroundings and to the wider green infrastructure. The proposed development includes the retention of all of the existing boundary trees and vegetation with the exception of the small area of planting required to facilitate the single access into the site. Other valuable landscape components of the site include the views to the west across the cemetery. The layout and landscape design has evolved to incorporate these views and balance the mitigation required. The boundary vegetation has been included within the landscape buffers and incorporated into areas of public open space. The public open spaces will be connected by a combination of green spaces, footpaths, tree lined avenues and visual corridors through the site. The public open spaces, green links and built form are proposed on areas of former arable land that offers little ecological value. The introduction of a large number of native trees, shrubs and hedgerows, along with a significant amount of marginal, herbaceous, deciduous and wildlife friendly planting and a range of species rich wildflowers and grassland, will provide significant positive benefits positively contribute to the enhancement of the landscape on the local level.
- 1.4 The overall weighted assessment of landscape character sensitivity for the site and the surrounding landscape has been assessed as low. This has considered the quality, value, visual and character sensitivities.

- 1.5 The magnitude of landscape impacts has been assessed as small as there is likely to be minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features, characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. May not quite fit into the landform and scale of the landscape. Affect an area of recognised landscape character.
- 1.6 With an assessed low landscape sensitivity to this form of development, set against a small magnitude of change, it is considered that there is a negligible overall landscape character effect.
- 1.7 Following an initial scoping process with FBC, a total of nineteen viewpoints were selected to represent residents of Stubbington, users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and users of adjacent roads which surround the site.
- 1.8 In terms of overall visual amenity, it has been concluded that visual effects are constrained and localised given the flat topography of the area, strong vegetative network, and location of the proposed development behind existing properties and vegetative boundaries. The receptors that would be most affected are along the Oakcroft Lane, from Crofton Cemetery, a few locations along Marks Tey Road and the PRoW no 509 due to their close proximity. Beyond the site, generally, views would be limited and seen within the same context as the existing vegetation. The proposed development would be partially visible from PRoW no 67. However, the consented bypass will create a degree of visual separation between the proposal and wider landscape to the north of the bypass. The majority of visual receptors within the 2.5km study area would experience negligible effects from the proposed development.
- 1.9 The site does not fall within any areas of designation although the site does fall with the Stubbington to Fareham Gap. However, the site has been allocated for residential development and an indicative yield of 180 dwellings, within the revised FBC Local Plan 2037.
- 1.10 The principle of introducing a large scale residential development into the site has therefore been established through the allocation. It has also been

established within the Planning Statement of Common Ground, that the site is suitable, in principle, for housing, with an indicative yield of 180 dwellings.

- 1.11 An alternative planning application has also been submitted which delivers 180 units within the proposed development site. As part of this planning application, a revised scheme has been prepared and has been accompanied by an updated landscape and visual impact assessment and landscape strategy.
- 1.12 The 180 unit scheme utilises the same overall built extents as the 206 unit scheme. The landscape buffers around the site boundaries remain the same for both schemes in terms of both the widths and the landscape treatments, although there is a marginal increase in width in the landscape buffer along Oakcroft Lane for the 180 unit scheme, although this remains a substantial landscape buffer in the 206 unit scheme. The general layout and arrangement of all of the primary and secondary roads and residential blocks remains the same in both schemes, which retains the same hierarchical structure to the site boundaries, with the roads on the outside of the blocks, to continue to set the lower density housing back from the boundaries. Both schemes also deliver the same key landscape features including exactly the same central open spaces and the same tree lined avenues through the site, providing the green corridors of connectivity, the same east to west corridors through the site, frontage parking and pedestrian connectivity around the site with links to the PROW to the south and Marks Tey Road.
- 1.13 A landscape and visual impact assessment was undertaken to assess the impacts on the 180 unit scheme and submitted as part of the planning application. The assessment for the 180 unit scheme reached the same conclusions as the 206 unit scheme for both the impact on the landscape character and the visual impact on the agreed receptors and viewpoints. The slightly reduced density of the 180 unit scheme has not affected the thresholds of the assessment and the magnitudes of change and overall impacts remain the same for both schemes.
- 1.14 From a landscape perspective, it has been demonstrated that there will be no material change in the impacts of the 206 unit appeal scheme and the 180 unit scheme. As such, if a 180 unit scheme is acceptable, and it is agreed the site is

suitable, in principle, to support an indicative yield of 180 units, then this 206 unit scheme should be considered acceptable.

1.15 In response to the Reasons for Refusal. The first landscape Reason for Refusal is:

'ii) the development of the site would result in an adverse visual effect on the immediate countryside setting around the site'.

1.16 ACD Environmental Ltd have concluded that the visual effects are constrained and localised given the flat topography of the area, strong vegetative network, and location of the proposed development behind existing properties and vegetative boundaries. The receptors with the greatest potential change would be along the Oakcroft Lane, from Crofton Cemetery, a few locations along Marks Tey Road and the PRoW no 509 due to their proximity. Beyond the site generally, views would be limited and seen within the same context as the existing vegetation. The proposed development would be partially visible from PRoW no 67 to the north. However, the consented bypass will create a degree of visual separation between the proposal and wider landscape to the north of the bypass. The majority of visual receptors within the study area would experience negligible effects from the proposed development.

1.17 A development of this scale would expect to have visual impacts for locations along the site boundaries or from within the site. To mitigate the visual effects on the immediate countryside (i.e. the northern and western boundaries of the site) and in conjunction with the Pre-Application discussions and recommendations from Officers, the Appeal Scheme has increased the landscape buffers along the northern and western boundaries to form generous landscaping belts. The existing trees along these boundaries are being retained and have space to continue to grow to maturity. Within the landscape buffers, large, native broadleaf tree planting, along with mixed native understorey and mixed native hedgerow planting, have been provided to enhance the visual barriers. The density of housing has been reduced along the northern and western site boundaries, along with the mix of property types and styles reflecting the edge of settlement character.

1.18 As a result, it is considered by the Appellant and the Officers that the Appeal Scheme would not have an adverse visual effect on the immediate countryside setting around the site’.

1.19 The second landscape reason for refusal is:

(iii) the introduction of dwellings in this location would fail to respond positively to and be respectful of the key characteristics of the area, in this countryside, edge of settlement location, providing limited green infrastructure and offering a lack of interconnected green/public spaces;

1.20 The first element of the reason for refusal is the ‘*introduction of dwellings in this location would fail to respond positively to and be respectful of the key characteristics of the area, in this countryside, edge of settlement location*’.

1.21 ACD Environmental Ltd have concluded that the overall effect on landscape character was negligible. In response to the refusal of the First Application and in conjunction with the Pre-Application discussions and recommendations from Officers, the Appeal Scheme positively responded to the edge of settlement location, by increasing the landscape buffers to form generous landscape belts, introducing further native planting, including large broadleaf trees, reducing the development density and varying the house types and styles to focus on detached dwellings to the northern and western parts of the Application Site. The landscape strategy also introduced landscape character areas within the site to give the development greater identity and a greater sense of integration with the surrounding landscape. As part of this, the landscape scheme included a higher degree of native planting and native hedgerows amongst the plot landscape to the northern and western areas.

1.22 This element will also be addressed by others to look at the urban design characteristic, but as a result, it is considered by the Appellant and the Officers that the Appeal Scheme would respond positively to and be respectful of the key landscape characteristics of the area, in this countryside, edge of settlement location.

1.23 It is considered that the second and third elements of the reason for refusal, ‘providing limited green infrastructure’ and ‘*offering a lack of interconnected*

green/public spaces', have been included essentially by error, because they have been addressed through the process of the Appeal Scheme.

1.24 I conclude therefore, that the site was adequately assessed and the landscape enhancement and mitigation scheme proposed is appropriate to the setting, retaining all natural features of merit and enhancing aspects of the current site and landscape character of the proposed development and is compliant with policies CS4, CS14, CS17, CS21, DSP1, DSP6 and DSP40.

1.25 I respectfully submit that landscape and visual matters are not a reason to withhold planning permission in this case.

Jon Seymour CMLI
September 2021



Head Office

Rodbourne Rail Business Centre
Grange Lane
Malmesbury
SN16 0ES
Tel: 01666 825646

Surrey Office

Courtyard House
Mill Lane
Godalming
GU7 1EY
Tel: 01483 425714

Hampshire Office

Suite 6
Crescent House
Yonge Close
Eastleigh
SO50 9SX
Tel: 02382 026300

Email: mail@acdenv.co.uk

Website: www.acdenvironmental.co.uk

ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS * PROTECTED SPECIES LICENSING * MITIGATION * IMPACT ASSESSMENT
ARBORICULTURAL SITE MONITORING AND SUPERVISION * ARCHAEOLOGY
LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT * LANDSCAPE AUDIT * PROJECT MANAGEMENT
EXPERT WITNESS* LANDSCAPE DESIGN & PLANNING LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT