



TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

PLANNING APPEAL BY PERSIMMON HOMES LTD

Development comprising 206 dwellings, access road from Peak Lane maintaining link to Oakcroft Lane, stopping up of a section of Oakcroft Lane (from Old Peak Lane to access road), with car parking, landscaping, substation, public open space and associated works

Land east of Crofton Cemetery and west of Peak Lane, Stubbington

APPEAL REF:
APP/A1720/W/21/3275237
LPA REF: P/20/0522/FP

PROOF OF EVIDENCE ON LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL MATTERS

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on behalf of Fareham Borough Council

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1.0 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 1.1 I am Philip Russell-Vick, a Director of Enplan, landscape, planning and environmental consultants. I hold a Diploma in Landscape Architecture and I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute.
- 1.2 I have over thirty-five years of experience in landscape consultancy and have provided landscape and visual impact advice on a wide range of residential, commercial, industrial, mineral, infrastructure and other development, as well as a range of landscape design projects, throughout the UK and overseas for both private and public sector clients. I have undertaken concept schemes and been involved with masterplanning various major green and brown field residential development projects across England, including the redevelopment of a former hospital at Leybourne Grange, near Maidstone, 850 homes at Bromley, 750 homes at Uckfield, East Sussex, 700 homes at Stoneythorpe, Warwickshire, 800 homes at Brighton and, currently, a new village settlement of 2,800 homes near Tunbridge Wells.
- 1.3 I formed Enplan in December 2000 with partners. We offer consultancy advice in the fields of landscape architecture and planning. We have offices at Lewes in East Sussex and at Milton Keynes. Prior to forming Enplan I worked in private practice for seventeen years for a well-established landscape architectural, heritage and environmental consultancy.
- 1.4 Enplan were approached by Fareham Borough Council in June 2021 to consider the appeal and to review the current proposals for 206 dwellings, the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment¹, the Design and Access Statement² and Planning Statement³ submitted with the application, as well as other relevant landscape related documents, including the review of the preceding application by Persimmon Homes for this site (P/19/0301/FP) by Landscape Design Associates⁴ (the LDA review) and the landscape comments contained within the Officer's Report to Committee⁵. I first attended site in early July 2021 to consider the landscape and

¹ CD 1.19

² CD 1.5

³ CD 1.4

⁴ CD 7.6

⁵ CD 2.1

visual implications of the scheme in terms of its design and the degree to which it would complement or detract from the character and appearance of the area.

1.5 I am familiar with the character of this part of Hampshire, of the landscape and settlement that forms the immediate context of the proposal and of the appeal site. I have visited the area on several occasions in preparing my evidence for the inquiry.

1.6 I understand my duty to the Inquiry and have complied, and continue to comply, with that duty. I confirm that this evidence identifies all facts which I regard as being relevant to the opinions that I have expressed, and that the Inquiry's attention has been drawn to any matters which would affect the validity of those opinions. I believe that the facts stated within this proof are true and confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2.0 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

2.1 This Public Inquiry concerns an appeal against the planning refusal by Fareham Borough Council of a full application for a development comprising 206 dwellings, access road from Peak Lane maintaining link to Oakcroft Lane, stopping up of a section of Oakcroft Lane (from Old Peak Lane to access road), with car parking, landscaping, substation, public open space and associated works (refer to Figure 1 for the appeal site's location). My evidence addresses the issues raised by the Council's reasons for refusal (dated 18 February 2021), insofar as these relate to landscape and design matters. This includes the landscape and visual effects on the countryside setting; the effects of the proposal on the key characteristics of the area, including consideration of green infrastructure proposed, and its connection to surrounding green/public spaces; and whether the design and layout is of the requisite "high quality". The reason for refusal, in so far as is relevant to my evidence, stated follows:

"The development would be contrary to Policies CS2, CS4, CS6, CS14, CS15, CS17, CS18, CS20, and CS21 of the Adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy 2011 and Policies DSP1, DSP2, DSP3, DSP6, DSP13, DSP14, DSP15 and DSP40 of the Adopted Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies Plan, and is unacceptable in that:

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

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

iv) the quantum of development proposed would result in a cramped layout and would not deliver a housing scheme of high quality which respects and responds positively to the key characteristics of the area. Some of the house types also fail to meet with the Nationally Described Space Standards".

2.2 In respect of reason for refusal (iv), I understand that, following a proposed amendment to the plans, the Council is now satisfied that the space standards would be met.

2.3 In considering the landscape and design issues, I shall:

- Review the design-related planning policies and design guidance relevant to this proposal, including the National Planning Policy Framework, the Planning Practice Guidance, saved policies of the Adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy (2011), specifically Policies CS14 (Development Outside of Settlements), CS17 (High Quality Design) and DSP6 (New Residential Development Outside of the Defined Urban Settlement Boundaries) and DSP40 (Housing Allocations) of the Adopted Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies Plan, as well as the National Design Guide (2019) and the Fareham Borough Design Guidance SPD (2015);
- Also review the emerging policy position for the land, as defined in Policy HA54 of the Revised Fareham Local Plan 2037 (Regulation 19 stage);
- Describe the landscape and context of the appeal site, examining the site's immediate environs in particular;
- Provide my appraisal of the landscape and visual effects of the development of the site on the immediate countryside and on the key characteristics of the area;
- Provide my appraisal of the design of the development proposal, including the Green Infrastructure elements of the scheme and the interconnectivity of this within the scheme generally and with adjacent open spaces and Public Rights of Way;
- Consider these and the quality of the proposals and the response to the key characteristics of the area, in the context of the Framework, the PPG, The National Design Guide, local planning policies and local design SPD; and
- Provide my conclusions.

Approach to the appraisal

- 2.4 The approach to my landscape and visual impact assessment evidence within this proof is in accordance with the principles of the 3rd Edition '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*'⁶ (GLVIA3). Whilst this evidence is not a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment, the general approach of GLVIA3, in which the process of assessment consists of evaluating and making judgements as to the value, susceptibility and sensitivity of receptors, both on elements of the landscape and its character, as well as the visual effects on people and the enjoyment of the amenity of their surroundings, has been followed.
- 2.5 The baseline position for the appraisal allows for the Council's proposal to allocate the land for development, as identified by Policy HA54 of the Regulation 19 Local Plan, with an indicative yield of 180 dwellings. This draft allocation in the Regulation 19 Local Plan indicates that, in principle, this site may be suitable for development subject to certain parameters, including being broadly consistent with the identified numbers (180 dwellings), building heights being limited to 2 storeys, provision of a linked network of footpaths to the existing Public Rights of Way and that the scale, form, massing, and layout to be designed to respond to nearby sensitive features.
- 2.6 Accordingly, the focus for the appraisal is on the effects of the scheme on the site and surroundings, as per the current position on the ground, but with consideration given to the design and effects of the scheme where these may conflict or differ from the requirements of Policy HA54.

⁶ CD 7.7

3.0 LANDSCAPE AND DESIGN RELATED PLANNING POLICY AND PLANNING GUIDANCE

- 3.1 This section describes the background of relevant national and local planning policies, in so far as they relate to design matters, against which the development proposals will be determined. In addition, I refer to the guidance on design and the processes of design as set out in the ‘*Design: process and tools*’ section of the PPG, and in the National Design Guide⁷ and Fareham Borough Design Guidance SPD⁸.

The Framework

- 3.2 The Framework (as revised July 2021) defines three overarching objectives for the planning system to contribute to achieving sustainable development; these are economic, social and environmental. For the social objective, at Paragraph 8(b) the planning system should seek to foster a well-designed and safe built environment. Whilst for the environmental objective, at Paragraph 8(c), the planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.
- 3.3 Within Section 12 “*Achieving well-designed places*”, Paragraph 126 sets out that “*The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*”.
- 3.4 Paragraph 130 requires that planning decisions should ensure that developments: will, inter alia, function well and add to the overall quality of the area over the lifetime of the development; are visually attractive, including as a result of good layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change; or maintain a strong sense of place, optimise the potential to accommodate and sustain an

⁷ CD 7.8

⁸ CD 7.9

appropriate mix and amount of development (including green and other public open space).

- 3.5 Paragraph 134 sets out that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design and, conversely, significant weight should be given where development proposals do reflect such policies and guidance and/or are “*outstanding and innovative*”, or help raise the standard of design in an area, so long as they fit in with the form and layout of their surroundings.
- 3.6 Within Section 15 “*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*”, paragraph 174, (a) and (b) respectively, requires that planning policies and decisions contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, inter alia, “*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...*” and by “*recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside*”.

Local Planning Policy

- 3.7 The relevant local planning policy includes saved policies of the Adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy (2011), specifically Policies CS4 (Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Geological Conservation), CS14 (Development Outside of Settlements), CS17 (High Quality Design) and CS21 (Protection and Provision of Open Space), DSP6 (New Residential Development Outside of the Defined Urban Settlement Boundaries) and DPS40 (Housing Allocations) of the Adopted Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies Plan.
- 3.8 These policies are set out in Section 6.0 of the Council’s Statement of Case and summarised in Section 4 of the Planning Statement of Common Ground. Mr Jupp addresses all of the local policies in full in his evidence. I highlight the following policies and matters contained within the policies that particularly apply to design and appearance matters relevant to my evidence:

- **Policy CS14** Development Outside of Development Boundaries seeks to protect the countryside, outside development boundaries, from development which would adversely affect its landscape character, appearance and function;

-
- **Policy CS17** High Quality design requires that all development, buildings and spaces will be of a high quality and proposals will need to demonstrate, inter alia, that they have responded positively to key characteristics of the area;
 - **Policy DSP6** New Residential Development Outside of the Defined Urban Settlement Boundaries of the Adopted Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies Plan, in seeking the protection of the character, appearance and function of the landscape, requires that there will be a presumption against new residential development outside of the defined urban settlement boundaries; and
 - **Policy DPS40** Housing Allocations, sets out that where it can be demonstrated that the Council does not have a five year housing land supply, additional housing sites may be permitted outside the urban area boundary, where (ii) proposals can be well integrated with the neighbouring settlement and (iii) sensitively designed to reflect the character of the neighbouring settlement and to minimise adverse impact on the countryside.

3.9 Policy HA54 of the Revised Fareham Local Plan 2037 (Regulation 19 stage) proposes to allocate the land east of Crofton Cemetery and west of Peak Lane for 180 dwellings (indicative yield) requiring that the amount of development be broadly consistent with the indicative yield; that the “*scale, form, massing and layout of development to be specifically designed to respond to nearby sensitive features.....*”, that building heights should be limited to two storeys and that a network of linked footpaths within and connecting the site to PRow shall be provided.

Planning Practice Guidance

3.10 The ‘*Design: process and tools*’ section of the PPG refers to the National Design Guide which sets out what good design means in practice and to local design guides, such as the Fareham Borough Design Guidance SPD, that can set out general principles and standards that development proposals should follow.

National Design Guidance 2019

- 3.11 The 2019 National Design Guide⁹ (NDG) forms part of the suite of supporting planning guidance of the Framework and is based on national planning policy, practice guidance and objectives for good design as set out in the Framework. The NDG addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places through ten characteristics. These characteristics reflect the Government's priorities and provide a common overarching framework. More specific guidance can then be locally formulated, such as the Fareham Borough Design Guidance SPD, although this of course pre-dates the NDG and is, I would suggest, somewhat out of date with the current approach taken by the NDG and the National Model Design Code, noting the latter is not directly relevant to this appeal in my view.
- 3.12 The ten characteristics include 'Context' and 'Public Spaces'. 'Context' is defined as "*the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings*". Paragraph 42 states that:
- "Well-designed new development is integrated into its wider surroundings, physically, socially and visually. It is carefully sited and designed, and is demonstrably based on an understanding of the existing situation, including:*
- *the landscape character and how places or developments sit within the landscape, to influence the siting of new development and how natural features are retained or incorporated into it;*
 - *patterns of built form, including local precedents for routes and spaces and the built form around them, to inform the layout, form and scale.....*
 - *public spaces, including their characteristic landscape design and details, both hard and soft."*
- 3.13 Paragraph 43, however, highlights that "*well-designed places do not to copy their surroundings in every way. It is appropriate to introduce elements that reflect how*

⁹ CD 7.8

we live today, to include innovation or change such as increased densities, and to incorporate new sustainable features or systems”.

3.14 For ‘Public Spaces’ the NDG considers that the quality of the spaces between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves and that the design of public space should encompass its siting and integration into the wider route network.

3.15 Paragraph 100 states that:

“Well-designed places:

- *Include well-located public spaces that support a wide variety of activities and encourage social interaction.....;*
- *Have a hierarchy of spaces.....”*

3.16 At Paragraph 107 the NDG considers that a well-designed public space, that encourages social interaction, is sited so that it is open and accessible, and connected into the movement network, preferably so that people pass through it.

Fareham Borough Design Guidance SPD 2015

3.17 The Fareham Borough Design Guidance SPD sets out detailed design guidance for the new residential development. Its focus is on establishing principles for layouts and the relationships within developments between streets, housing and open spaces, rather than the broader principles considered by the NDG.

3.18 For larger developments, the SPD sets out that these *“will be expected to provide new well designed and thought out public spaces which function successfully. New development adjacent to existing public spaces will take every opportunity to improve and enhance these spaces and where possible should connect to surrounding public spaces.....”*¹⁰

¹⁰ Page 16 of the Fareham Borough Design Guidance SPD 2015

4.0 THE LANDSCAPE AND BUILT CONTEXT

Published Landscape Character Assessments

- 4.1 Existing landscape character assessments provide analyses at national, county and district level. The immediate context of the appeal site includes one national landscape character area (NCA 126 South Coast), one county landscape character area (Hampshire County Integrated Character Assessment 2012: 9F: Gosport and Fareham Coast Plain) and, at the borough level, one landscape character area is relevant (Fareham Landscape Character Assessment 2017: LCA7: Fareham/Stubbington Gap). The key characteristics of LCA7 and the assessment's findings on value and sensitivity are set out and summarised respectively in the Landscape Statement of Common Ground¹¹.

The Appeal Site and its Local Context

- 4.2 The appeal site is located to the north of Stubbington, as identified at Figure 1. The site is some 19.4Ha in area and includes land to the north and south of Oakcroft Lane and the general arrangement of its features and boundaries are set out within the Landscape Statement of Common Ground.
- 4.3 The main development parcel of the site would be the arable field, of about 8Ha, to the south of Oakcroft Lane, which has its eastern and southern boundaries with the existing settlement of Stubbington and the development around Mark's Tey Road in particular. The eastern boundary is against rear gardens, for the most part, but this is densely vegetated with an almost complete line of mature former hedgerow trees, with the former hedgerow grown out under these. The southern boundary is formed by existing public open space, in the form of an open grassed area beside Mark's Tey Road, with a larger wooded area to the west. It too has a largely wooded edge set against the arable field. The western boundary is partially with the Crofton Cemetery. This part of the western boundary is comprised of a hedgerow without hedgerow trees. The cemetery land is essentially open, grassed with rectilinear layout of paths and drives. To the north of this, the western boundary is with Oakcroft Lane, and as with the northern boundary this is formed

¹¹ CD 7.10

of a tightly spaced single line of mature Hybrid Black Poplars at around 20m in height. The appeal site slopes gently and evenly from north-east to south-west and contains no features of landscape interest within it.

4.4 The appeal site to the north of Oakcroft Lane includes a small field of pasture and a larger arable field. The northern and north-east boundaries of this is formed by the Stubbington Bypass, which is under construction. Whilst the western boundary of the main field is vegetated, this part of the appeal site is open to the north, although landscape proposals associated with the bypass will change this somewhat, although I understand that the landscape design is for fairly low-level planting, in the form of informal hedgerows with scattered trees, in-keeping with much of the landscape context.

4.5 In terms of considering the likely effects of developing the appeal site on the landscape, views, amenity of the adjoining open spaces and rights of way, and on the character and appearance of the site and local context, the key landscape features and functions are as follows:

- 1) The north and north-west boundary formed by Oakcroft Lane and by the line of poplars is a distinct feature of the local landscape context. These elements, together with the subtle slope of the ground to the south, means that when seen from the north of the wider appeal site (for example, from Peak Lane or the public footpath to the north of this, PRoW 67), the surface of the main body of the site is not visible, and undeveloped without buildings on it, the site appears to be well contained and not part of the wider context of the landscape between Stubbington and Fareham;
- 2) The dense vegetation along the eastern and southern site boundaries, as well as the open uses to the south and west (i.e. the wooded open space and the cemetery), promotes some sense of separation from the adjoining settlement which gives the appeal site a comparatively rural character. Whilst it is evidently at the settlement edge in physical terms, contained by residential development on two sides, it is countryside in terms of its character;
- 3) A characteristic of the views from the north, from west of Peak Lane and east of Ranvilles Lane, back towards Stubbington, is how little of the built form of Stubbington is visible. The wooded edges to the north of Stubbington, including the eastern boundary of the appeal site, combine with the line of poplars to very largely screen this edge;

- 4) The character of Oakcroft Lane, from immediately west of Stubbington to Ranvilles Lane, is an essentially rural one. The single line of poplars is a striking feature, emphasised by the straight trunks with dense canopies. Despite the density of the planting, views into the site from Oakcroft Lane are possible from most of its length alongside it;
- 5) Crofton Cemetery, the churchyard of St Edmunds (Crofton Old Church) and the wooded open space within the appeal site, conjoin and combine to provide an evidently well-used and popular open space amenity. Readily accessible from Old Crofton, Mark's Tey Road and Oakcroft Lane, this open space appears to be used as part of local walking routes, together with Oakcroft Lane, the separated cycle/pedestrian link along Peak Lane, between Stubbington and Fareham, PRoW 67 and Ranvilles Lane. Pressure for access is evident in the use of the boundaries of the main body of the appeal site for walking, together with similar informal uses of the fields to the north towards Fareham;
- 6) The main characteristics of the existing developed areas to the east and south of the appeal site are the informality of the layout; of mainly but not wholly curved roads and footways, with some shared surfaces; front gardens extending to these roads with front parking arrangements; and mainly detached housing along the roads, with slightly denser housing arrangements along the shared surfaces. The buildings are overwhelmingly 2 storeys in height, with a few 2.5 storey units on Summerleigh Walk. The retained former landscape of trees is the primary landscape feature, with occasional, small incidental grassed open spaces. The only significant open space is the wooded one within the appeal site. This is a modest density arrangement, built in the 1980/90's and not untypical of its time; and
- 7) The introduction of the construction and shortly the use of the Stubbington Bypass into the landscape will have a permanent effect on the landscape context. Its present under construction appearance is quite raw, but with time and its landscape matured, the road and traffic on it should be partially absorbed. The low-level landscape scheme should screen a proportion of the moving traffic and hide the road itself.

Public Viewpoints

4.6 The principal public viewpoints of the appeal site include the following (refer to Figures 2 to 10):

- From locations within Crofton Cemetery and Oakcroft Lane, in the vicinity of the cemetery, and from within the burial grounds of Crofton Old Church (Viewpoints 1 to 5);
- From Oakcroft Lane to the north and north-west of the appeal site (Viewpoints 6 and 7);
- From locations within the open space to the immediate south of the appeal site and from the open space within the site (Viewpoints 8 and 9);
- From Peak Lane to the north of the appeal site (Viewpoint 10);
- From the Public Footpath that links Peak Lane with Ranvilles Lane (PRoW 67), to the north of the appeal site, and also from Stroud Green Lane to the north-east (Viewpoints 11 to 14); and
- Longer distance views from Peak Lane, further to the north and Rowan Way, on the south-west edge of Fareham (viewpoints 15 and 16).

5.0 APPRAISAL

5.1 This appraisal firstly considers the LVIA submitted with the planning application and the key findings of the LDA review¹². I then provide my overall landscape and visual assessment and, next, I focus on the design proposals and their effect on the character and appearance of the local area, and from where this would be perceived, and, in particular, where the scheme design would differ or conflict with the requirements of Policy HA54 of the Regulation 19 Local Plan. This addresses , in particular, the following three aspects:

- The design at the edges of the site, including the width of the setbacks for landscape planting, the adequacy of some of the planting given its location under the canopies of the poplars, and the siting of development in relation to these boundaries, particularly the 2.5 storey units;
- The inadequacy of the internal open spaces and ‘green corridor’ between them, the inadequate external provision for pedestrians, the inadequacy of the connections with the adjoining open spaces and Public Right of Way, and failure to grasp the opportunity to enhance the amenity of the open space to the south; and
- The inadequacy of elements of the layout, specifically the continual presence of vehicular routes around the external perimeter of the layout, the inappropriateness of the regular rectilinear development form and the scattered use of 2.5 storey houses throughout the scheme fails to deliver architectural focal points within the scheme.

5.2 The appraisal also considers a Concept Plan (Figure 11), which I have prepared in order to demonstrate, indicatively, one way that a scheme design could be prepared that would accord with the requirements of Policy HA54. This seeks to address the Council’s concerns of the effects that the proposed development scheme would have on the adjoining countryside and nearby sensitive features, and how the Green Infrastructure could be adequately provided for in terms of general quantum and location to deliver the requirement for linked footpaths within the site and with the existing Public Rights of Way network.

¹² CD 7.6

The LVIA and the LDA Review

- 5.3 I set out below a brief critique of the LVIA, with reference to the LDA review of the LVIA. The LDA review was of the LVIA that accompanied the previous scheme (P/19/0301/FP), but as the LVIA for the previous scheme, is the same as submitted with the appeal scheme, the LDA review remains valid. I follow this critique with my own assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the appeal scheme.
- 5.4 The LDA review “*identified a number of methodological and presentational issues that are not entirely in line with LVIA best practice, and which raise some questions about the comprehensiveness of the assessment and the underlying rationale and rigour of some of the judgements made within it*”¹³. Whilst the LDA review agreed with many of the judgements of the magnitude of the visual effects, it identified several key weaknesses in the assessment of landscape effects, which in LDA’s view led to an underestimate of the landscape effects, concluding that the methodology “*departs significantly from the process recommended within GLVIA*”¹⁴.
- 5.5 I have reviewed the LVIA, and I concur with the findings of the LDA review. There are several stages of the assessment of the landscape baseline that are not in accordance with the approach advocated by GLVIA3 and there is a lack of any assessment on the landscape effects on the site and immediate local landscape context.
- 5.6 The methodology described at Appendix A identifies four different factors, ‘quality’, ‘value’, ‘character sensitivity’ and ‘landscape visual sensitivity’, that combine to give an overall weighted landscape sensitivity. Standard practice, as advocated by GLVIA3, is that *landscape sensitivity* is derived from the combined consideration of *landscape value* and *landscape susceptibility*, and that the combination of the magnitude of effect with the assessment of landscape sensitivity gives an overall affect or significance of that effect. The LVIA’s method considers landscape susceptibility as a part of the ‘character sensitivity’ assessment but not fully and are not combined with landscape value to determine landscape sensitivity.
- 5.7 As the LDA review identifies, the concept of ‘landscape visual sensitivity’ is not part of standard practice and is not relevant to landscape effects but the assessment of

¹³ CD 7.6 Paragraph 9.11

¹⁴ CD 7.7 Paragraph 2.6

visual effects. This confuses the assessments of landscape and visual effects, which GLVIA3 maintains should be separate assessments.

- 5.8 Whilst the method statement (paragraph 9.10) does apply the process of combining the overall landscape sensitivity with the magnitude of effect, as the LDA review highlights, “*there is no evidence in LVIA that this approach has actually been applied for all landscape receptors*”.¹⁵ Indeed, only one landscape receptor has been considered, this being LCA7, and there is no description of the character of the immediate landscape context or consideration of the landscape effects on the site itself, nor the immediate context, just the wider local landscape character area. Furthermore, the LDA review highlights that the LVIA does not comprehensively assess landscape value¹⁶ and fails to review and address the detailed findings of Appendix 2 of the Fareham Landscape Assessment. Overall, in my view the approach and methodology used for the assessment of landscape effects is not in accordance with standard practice and the guidance of GLVIA3. Its findings are consequently incomplete and unreliable and, where findings are provided, as the LDA review concludes, these amount to an underestimate of the value of the landscape of the site and its landscape context.

Overall Landscape and Visual Assessment

- 5.9 My own assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the proposals is not an exhaustive assessment of the kind that would be undertaken for an LVIA to accompany a planning application. Rather I have sought to provide a framework for understanding the key effects rather than all of the effects. I have followed the approach advocated by GLVIA3 and have set out the criteria used to determine both landscape and visual value, susceptibility, sensitivity, magnitude of effect and overall significance of the effect in my appendices and, where this is relevant, I have used the terms defined in my appendices.
- 5.10 For the assessment of landscape effects, I have provided my overview of the nature and magnitude of the effects on the basis of three landscape units. In doing so I recognise that the landscape and visual issues at this appeal are focussed on relatively detailed elements of the proposal, rather than on the principle and suitability of developing the appeal site. My assessment of landscape effects seeks

¹⁵ CD 7.6 Paragraph 2.12

¹⁶ CD 7.6 Paragraph 7.8

to provide context for the decision-maker and ensure completeness in the context of the appellant's case, the LVIA and the LDA review.

- 5.11 The Landscape Statement of Common Ground summarises the judgements of landscape value, susceptibility and sensitivity. For the assessment, I have reviewed the detailed assessment for LCA7 at Appendix 2 of the Fareham Landscape Assessment¹⁷ and the LDA review, which conclude that the value of LCA7 is moderate to high, and I have considered the various factors of the May 2021 guidance of the Landscape Institute on landscape value (Technical Note 02/21¹⁸). Such aspects may include whether the landscape is or has been afforded any local value designation and/or any management policies which recognise landscape values, its condition, distinctiveness, natural and cultural heritage interests, recreational value, functional value, perceptual aspects (such as scenic value and tranquillity/remoteness) and, also, its associations, typically in art or history. It is also important to define the area being considered. In my judgement, there are three landscape units that should be considered; the whole of LCA7, that part of LCA7 between Stubbington and Fareham that excludes the area east of Stubbington and is the landscape context for the site, and the appeal site and its immediate context. The landscape value of these three units is broadly consistent and of *Moderate or Local Value* and not a 'valued landscape' for the purposes of Paragraph 174(a) of the NPPF.
- 5.12 The assessment of landscape susceptibility is based on judgements of the degree of susceptibility of the various landscape to the specific form of development envisaged. For the wider LCA7 area, the Fareham Landscape Assessment concludes that the overall susceptibility to change by development is high¹⁹, on the basis that the distinctive character of the area relies on its openness, rural agricultural character and the absence of prominent urban features, and it takes into account the likely change with the introduction of the Stubbington Bypass. I agree with this assessment. For the assessment of the more contained landscape unit between Fareham and Stubbington, I consider that the landscape is slightly less susceptible to the effects of development than the wider LCA7, because of the presence of 'pockets' of more contained landscape overall within the area and judge the susceptibility to be *Moderate to High Susceptibility*. For the appeal site and its immediate surrounds, the presence of the Mark's Tey Road development,

¹⁷ CD 7.10 Pages 136 to 145

¹⁸ CD 7.11

¹⁹ CD 7.10 Page 138

albeit fairly well screened, roads and Stubbington Bypass, within a smaller landscape unit, mean that the susceptibility is reduced to *Moderate Susceptibility*.

- 5.13 Similarly for the assessment of landscape sensitivity, I consider the sensitivity of the three landscape units to be slightly less than overall judgement of the Fareham Landscape Assessment for LCA7, which is high. Combining my judgements of the value and susceptibility of the three units, leads to sensitivity assessments of *Moderate to High* for LCA7, *Moderate* for the local context landscape and *Moderate* too for the appeal site and its immediate surrounds.
- 5.14 For the assessment of the magnitude of change of the landscape effect of the proposal and the overall effect when combined with sensitivity, using the LVIA criteria the LDA review concluded²⁰ for 264 units that the effect on the site (south of Oakcroft Lane) would be a major/moderate effect, the effect on the landscape immediately north of Oakcroft Lane would be a moderate effect and on the wider landscape of LLCA7.1a the effect would be a minor effect. My landscape units are slightly wider than these three, but in turn I consider the magnitude of change and overall effect or significance, to be *Substantial* and *Major-Moderate* for the site and surrounds, *Moderate* and *Moderate* for the that part of LCA7 between Fareham and Stubbington, and *Slight* and *Moderate to Moderate-Minor*.
- 5.15 For the visual impact assessment, I have considered the viewpoints selected in the LVIA and the findings of the LDA review. I have undertaken fieldwork and selected a range of similar and additional viewpoints to further inform my appraisal, as shown on Figure 2. Photographs for my viewpoints are illustrated at Figures 3-10 and I refer to these and those in the LVIA in my visual assessment below.
- 5.16 Table 1 of the Landscape Statement of Common Ground summarises the findings of my visual assessment in respect of the magnitude of change experienced by people at the LVIA's viewpoints, in order to make a comparison with the findings of the LVIA. Although the criteria used in the two methodologies are different, it is evident that there is a difference of judgement of the magnitude of change for the nearby views, but similar or the same findings for the longer range views. I do not elaborate on the nature of these effects, and I do not provide a detailed analysis of the nature of the visual effects that would be experienced at my selected viewpoints as one would when presenting an LVIA, because the visual issues at

²⁰ CD 7.6 Paragraph 7.26

this appeal are focussed on relatively detailed elements of the design, rather than on the principle and suitability of developing the appeal site. Accordingly, I address the detailed implications of those aspects of the scheme proposal that would give rise to visual changes on nearby receptors in the review of the scheme design at the edges of the site below.

Scheme design at the edges of the Appeal Site and the visual effects on the adjoining countryside

- 5.17 In Section 3.0 Assessment and Evaluation, the Design and Access Statement²¹ sets out an appropriate set of objectives for the treatment of the scheme at the perimeter of the site (DAS page 15), but the scheme fails to deliver on these in a number of key respects, as set out below.

North and north-western boundary beside Oakcroft Lane

- 5.18 The DAS sets the objective for the provision of a substantial landscape buffer to the countryside beyond. In terms of width, there is a notable difference between that shown on the plan at page 15 of the DAS and the scheme layout. Whilst I appreciate that the figure at page 15 is a diagram, the difference in width is stark. On the Site Layout (Revision I)²², in the north-east corner (length 1), to the east of the access, I measure this to be only around 5m for much of its length. In the north-west corner against Oakcroft Lane (length 2), I measure this to be between 6m and 15m, whilst along the cemetery boundary (length 3), this is largely 10m, with one wider section at 18m. For lengths 1 and 2, much of the area for landscaping lies under the dense canopies of the poplar trees. I recognise that these are to be thinned, with the removal of the weaker specimens, but the majority of the canopy spread would be maintained and would fill out again in the near future once the weaker trees have been removed. The Site Layout shows the canopy taken, I believe, from and consistent with the Arboricultural Assessment²³, but the green space would appear to have been overlaid on some of this, giving the appearance of a wider, non-shaded area than would be the case. The landscape proposals²⁴, which supplemented the application, show landscape planting within these areas and largely within the tree protection fencing proposed by the arboriculturist, comprising strips of hedge planting and native shrub mixes, with a

²¹ CD 1.5

²² CD 1.2.2

²³ CD 1.10

²⁴ CD 1.22

few (some 9/10) new trees. The gaps in the proposed planting would obviously mean that the screen would not be continuous but more significantly, the dense shading and the lack of availability of moisture, because of the poplars, for the young planting would mean it would struggle to thrive and may fail altogether. A successful landscape planting scheme is important along this boundary to protect the rural character of Oakcroft Lane and to ensure a mid to long term softening of visual effects of the buildings and development to minimise the harm to the visual amenity of the countryside to the north. For a successful landscape scheme to be established along this boundary, either many more of the poplars need to be removed, which would evidently increase the visibility and visual effects of the scheme, or a wider buffer strip would need to be provided to allow the planting to be located beyond the canopy line and, preferably, outside of the fenced area for tree protection. Typically, a further 10m would need to be provided to make this edge successful; some 15-25m wide overall.

- 5.19 Moving the built development edge further back from the boundary would also help reduce the visual effects on users of Oakcroft Lane. The splayed built form around the curve in the north-west corner, presents an almost entirely solid built elevation of houses and garages (refer to the submitted revised elevations included at my Figure 12) with a pair of semi-detached 2.5 story houses located in the north-east corner. My viewpoints 6 and 7 correspond closely with LVIA viewpoints 1 and 5. The greatest magnitude of visual effect would be experienced at my viewpoint 7 (LVIA 5). I judge this to be a Very *Substantial* magnitude of change which, on high sensitivity receptors, such as people walking along this country lane, would be a *Major* + overall effect or significance. The new access road would be a contributor to the magnitude of change, but the housing would be the greater. The landscape proposals appear to fail to provide screening of the open view at the double gates, where there is a break in the line of poplars, and where these would have the greatest chance of thriving. Screen planting at this location, setting back the development further into the site with planting outside of the canopy spread of the poplars, and by limiting the storey heights to two, would all contribute to an important reduction in the visual effect, particularly in the mid to long term as the landscaping matured. At viewpoint 6 (LVIA 1), and for users of Oakcroft Lane along the boundary of the appeal site, similar benefits would occur, from moving the development back to achieve the increased gap and improved conditions for the planting.

Western boundary and impact on the cemetery

- 5.20 Length 3, by the cemetery, would not suffer the same issue with the poplars and plant establishment would not be an issue, all bar a short section at the northern end of the cemetery boundary. My concern with this boundary is the proximity of the buildings to it, whether the set-back is appropriate, and whether the presence of roads and drives along this frontage is appropriate, given its proximity to a sensitive open space. The Site Layout shows the buildings to be 20-25m from the hedge with more than half the dwellings being 2.5 storeys. In my judgement, it would be preferable to have the presence of 2 storey houses as a maximum along this boundary (in line with Policy HA54), with a 30m wide buffer or set-back, with more variation in the profile, than indicated, as well as the minimum presence of roads and drives to limit views of parking and the disturbance that comes with moving vehicles.
- 5.21 My viewpoints 1 to 3, are views from well-frequented locations within the cemetery, and LVIA viewpoint 2 is located within the cemetery and very close to the boundary with the appeal site. The magnitude of visual effects of the proposal on people within the cemetery would be *Substantial*, in the round, which would be a *Major* effect overall or significance. A considerable part of the visual context of the cemetery, which is a well-used public open space, would considerably alter, and all reasonable steps should be taken to reduce the effects and the scheme proposals fail to do this.

Views from the west, north-west and north

- 5.22 Views across the cemetery from Oakcroft Road would also be affected, refer to my viewpoint 4, in which the rural setting of the cemetery would be altered to a suburban one. Viewpoint 5 is located within the churchyard of St Edmunds Church. The appeal site is just visible in summer, and more so in winter I would assume. Whilst the magnitude of the effect on users of the churchyard would not be considerable, it is another reason, albeit a less significant one, to look to minimise the effects.
- 5.23 From the north, from my viewpoints 10 to 16 located along Peak Lane, on PRoW 67, on Tanners Lane east of Peak Lane and from Rowan Way on the southern edge of Fareham, the poplars would have some mitigating effect in softening the appearance of the housing in summer, but substantially less so in winter I would estimate, as illustrated by the thin foil the poplars present on the photograph provided for LVIA viewpoint 6. The importance of the success of the landscape

planting to mitigate the scheme is highlighted again in these views. It is especially important that it succeeds because it is, almost entirely, the only housing to the south and views of the edge of Stubbington that would be in these views.

Southern boundary and views from the south

- 5.24 Along the southern edge of the appeal site, the building line is set back from the boundary with the open space by around 40m. This allows for the storm drainage attenuation pond and swale and the frontage access roads and drives. The set-back distance is a reasonable one, but external roads and hard drives are less desirable, whilst the run of four blocks, nine properties in all, at 2.5 storeys tall would increase the visual effects on users of the public footpath to the south and open space by Mark's Tey Road. The 2.5 storey houses would be on the open sightline into the site from my viewpoint 8 and in plain view from my viewpoint 9. A maximum of two storey development along this boundary would be preferable, together with the minimisation of the external roads in close proximity to the open space.

Dwelling numbers

- 5.25 The 'additional' 26 dwellings, i.e. by the difference in the proposals and the Council's 180 dwelling indicative yield, would also have an additional effect on the nearby views, depending exactly on the distribution. For example, the Site Layout indicates just over 40 units along the western and northern boundaries. The removal of even a small number of these units would soften the development edge, allowing for greater spaces between the buildings and some more landscaping. The removal of the 26 from the scheme, would create space for open space uses, landscaping and to enhance the internal green links.

Conclusions on the scheme layout at the edges of the appeal site

- 5.26 Overall, I find that the scheme has failed to minimise the visual effects, and therefore causes adverse visual effect on the immediate countryside setting which is not necessary from the residential development of the site. This is as a result of inadequate landscape buffers which do not allow for the development built edge to be set far enough back from the site's boundaries to provide for the proper provision of landscape planting, as well as the failure to set the development back to an appropriate degree on the northern and western boundaries. The presence of

2.5 storey buildings on the northern, western and southern boundaries also unnecessarily increases the visual effects, as does the presence of almost continual roads around the development's perimeter with front parking and, in part, the 'additional' 206 units (over the Council's indicated 180 units), which gives rise to the presence of more buildings along the countryside edges than necessary. Reducing the numbers, even by a few along this edge, would allow for a more 'broken' built edge with more opportunity for landscaping.

- 5.27 I have a more minor concern with the accuracy of the Arboricultural Assessment, along the eastern boundary buffer, as compared with the Site layout. The two drawings submitted with the Arboricultural Assessment do not show the short lengths of pedestrian footways indicated along this edge. The northernmost path along the eastern edge would appear to have to be constructed within the Root Protection Area of several TPO trees and within the shown fenced protection area. A greater width of buffer should be provided along this section to accommodate the path outside of the fenced protection area. I accept that this could be resolved through the submission of a minor amendment and/or through the submission of material to satisfy the appropriate planning condition.

Scheme design of the Green Infrastructure and interconnectivity

- 5.28 The Green Infrastructure provision, internal to the scheme, comprises two areas of public open space, linked by a very slightly enhanced landscaped corridor. The northern open space is a triangular area around 40x30m and the southern, a rectangular area, around 60x20m. The enhanced links comprise a footway set back from the road with a 3m grassed verge, with scattered street trees along the verge, and narrow strips of shrub planting along the built edge. These do not, in my view, meet the reasonable objective set by the diagram and supporting text in the DAS page 15, which describes the links and open spaces as a 'Green Corridor', connecting through the development from north to south. This treatment would not provide a sense of a green corridor, it would be dominated not by landscape, but by the roads, parking drives and housing. It would not be a distinctive landscape feature or generate a sense of place. Consequently, whilst I accept it would function as a pedestrian route, it would not be perceived as a green corridor and would not constitute high quality design or meet the objectives of the NDG or Fareham Borough Design Guidance.

- 5.29 The design of the external Green Infrastructure (GI) of the landscape buffers is compromised and limited. The pedestrian route along the eastern edge is made up of sections of separate pedestrian paths which link with shared surface drives and other footways alongside lengths of road. There is no separate provision at all alongside the road in the south-east corner, although there is space to deliver this. The same occurs in the south-west corner, where there is no provision, although there is again space to provide it. The remaining southern, western and northern edges have a mixed provision of shared surface drives and unconnected footways by roads, with no separated provision at all for pedestrians or cyclists. There is a clear opportunity to provide a wholly separated GI link for pedestrians and cyclists around the perimeter of the whole site which has not been taken.
- 5.30 Linkages of the GI on site with the external GI are limited to a footway alongside the access road from Peak Lane and a single footpath link into the open space to the south by Mark's Tey Road. Opportunities for several access points to the open space have not been taken, similarly for Oakcroft Lane to the west and in the north-east corner, where a separated footway link could have been provided back into the existing residential area to the east.
- 5.31 Opportunities to enhance the open space to the south, within the red line, have also not been taken. These could include the upgrading of the footpath provision, with appropriate surfacing of the well-worn path between Mark's Tey Road and the cemetery and churchyard.
- 5.32 The approach to the design of the external GI has limited vision and has failed, almost entirely, to integrate the proposals with the local context and missed clear and readily available opportunities to do so. Consequently, the scheme has demonstrated that it has not responded to its setting and context and would not be well integrated physically, socially and visually with the adjoining community and the locally important GI network.

Scheme layout

- 5.33 The scheme layout does not deliver the design character claimed in the DAS, at page 17. The 'Rural Edge', in the north-west corner, although having a splayed built form around the designed curve, would present an almost entirely solid built elevation of houses and garages, and there would be no more landscaping along

this edge than elsewhere around the boundary of the scheme. The 'Rural Edge' along the eastern boundary is no different, in its make-up of roads, shared drives and parking, than any of the other edges. The 'Rural Lane', to the west, is a combination of roads and shared surface drives which has the same character as the other boundaries. There is nothing especially distinctive about these arrangements and the design fails to meet the objectives set by the DAS.

- 5.34 The regular, rectilinear design form of the housing blocks does not reflect the largely more fluid and informal arrangement of housing locally. It would have a more urban grain and urban character, and one not especially well suited to housing at the countryside edge. Where the only parking court is used towards the middle of the scheme, housing is able to front directly onto the southern open space and directly onto a short length of the road to the north. This presents a much more satisfactory and higher quality street scene than the prevailing use of frontage parking throughout much of the rest of the layout. A more balanced mixture of approaches would have been preferable.
- 5.35 The scattered use of 2.5 storey buildings throughout the scheme, including at the site's edges, not only increases the visual effects of the proposals on external views but it fails to fully grasp the opportunity to establish focal built form within the scheme. I accept that some of the 2.5 storey buildings are located at the ends of some straight roads, as focal points, and in framing one of the two open spaces, but the use of different building types to lift the character of the urban design is largely absent. The concept at page 15 of the DAS illustrates a clear intent for forming a clear, prominent built character for the central core of the layout but the scheme fails to deliver it.
- 5.36 Overall, the layout design does not demonstrate any meaningful association with its context and has failed to respond to the attributes of its context. As the NDG sets out, good design does not need to mimic its surroundings and, in this case, the not all of the attributes of the locale are entirely positive, in this regard I have in mind the overwhelmingly detached nature of the development, with front gardens and drives onto the street, but the scheme should have responded to the sense of informality of the adjoining area and its well-landscaped form.

Concept Plan

- 5.37 I have developed a Concept Plan for the site, to indicate how a scheme could be designed to address the Council's concerns at this appeal and to meet with Policy

HA54 of the emerging Local Plan (refer to Figure 11). This is my own personal approach; it has not been appraised by officers or members and it is indicative, much along the same lines as the diagram at page 15 of the DAS. A calculation of the areas involved suggests that the arable field part of the appeal site, i.e. the main development area, is some 7.76Ha in area. The net developable area shown on the Concept Plan is around 4.7Ha, including the internal roads, which at 180 dwellings would be a net developable density of 38dph and a gross development density of around 25dph. I calculate the net developable area of the appeal scheme to be around 5.5Ha, which with 206 dwellings would be a net density of 37.5dph and a gross density of 26.5dph. Therefore, the appeal scheme and Concept Plan would have comparable densities, but the Concept Plan would provide for 0.8ha of additional open space which would be put to use at the boundaries of the site, to mitigate the scheme's effects on the countryside and local context, and also within the site, for the betterment of the urban design.

5.38 The key features of the Concept Plan are as follows:

- An 'entrance' open space is provided in the north-east corner. This would set the built line significantly back from Oakcroft Lane and provide the development with an immediately attractive frontage a strong sense of place;
- A similarly functioning open space in the south-west corner, setting the built form well back from the sensitive views in from the adjoining open space by Mark's Tey Road and providing the location for a play area to serve the new development and local community;
- A larger single open space, rather than two smaller, less impactful spaces, giving the space a dominating 'green' presence at the centre of the scheme, adding to its distinctiveness and sense of place;
- A wider central green corridor, with a tree lined and a largely separated pedestrian route (from the roads), linking with the internal and external green spaces and providing for views through the scheme and out to the countryside;
- An almost entirely separated external pedestrian and cycle looped route set in a wider green corridor;

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- Two access points to the footpath through the open space to the south and an enhancement of this route. A further access onto Oakcroft Lane and enhanced provision on Oakcroft Lane back into the existing residential area to integrate the new scheme and link communities. The retention and enhancement of the old route along the disused section Peak Lane into a pedestrian/cycle link, to join in with the existing popular provision along Peak Lane between Stubbington and Fareham, is also proposed;
 - A more informal built arrangement, with more parking courts to improve and provide more variety of built form along the street scene. The need to provide a 'curvy' layout, to mimic Mark's Tey Road, would not be important in my view, nor would it be particularly efficient. But a more 'fractured', irregular arrangement to the blocks, as opposed to regularly sized, similar rectangular blocks, as the Site Layout proposes, would be appropriate and would integrate better with the surroundings; and
 - Focal architecture in key locations; not necessarily through the use of 2.5 storey detached and semi-detached houses, but through the use of short rows of mixed character terraced cottages.

Conclusions in the Context of Planning Policy and Design Guidance

- 5.39 The recent changes to the NPPF have raised the profile of good design in the decision-making process. An emphasis has been placed on the necessity to create high quality places as being fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 130 sets out several key 'tests' for this, including that new development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area; be visually attractive, including as a result of good layout; be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; establish or maintain a strong sense of place, and optimise the potential to accommodate and sustain an appropriate mix and amount of development (including green and other public open space). Paragraph 134 sets out that development should be refused where it is not well designed, especially where it fails to reflect local and government design guidance.
- 5.40 The PPG refers to the NDG which emphasises the tests highlighted in Paragraph 130 and defines why these are important, stressing that well-designed new

development should be carefully sited and designed, based on a demonstrable understanding of the locale, and be integrated physically, socially, and visually.

- 5.41 For the reasons set out above, in my assessment, the scheme proposals have, by the virtue of the design, failed to minimise the visual harm and are not sympathetic to the local surroundings of Stubbington and the countryside. They do not function well in terms of the use of the GI within the layout and have failed to integrate successfully with the local GI and consequently socially with the local community, despite the clear opportunities to do so. The scheme proposals have also failed to establish a strong sense of place, through the scheme layout and/or the provision of attractive open space and successful GI. Consequently, the proposals conflict with the objectives of Paragraphs 126, 130 and 174(b) and do not accord with the requirements of the NDG.
- 5.42 In respect of local policies relevant to my evidence I also consider that the scheme proposals fail to comply with the requirements of these policies. Policy CS14 (Development Outside of Development Boundaries) seeks to protect the countryside, outside development boundaries, from development which would adversely affect its landscape character, appearance and function. In my assessment, whilst there will inevitably be some adverse effect on the adjoining countryside through the development of this site, the scheme proposals fail to minimise the adverse effects.
- 5.43 Policy CS17 (High Quality Design) requires that all development, buildings and spaces will be of a high quality and proposals will need to demonstrate, inter alia, that they have responded positively to key characteristics of the area. As set out above, I consider the scheme proposals are not of high quality and have not responded positively to key characteristics of the area.
- 5.44 Policy DSP6 (New Residential Development Outside of the Defined Urban Settlement Boundaries) of the Adopted Local Plan Part 2, in seeking the protection of the character, appearance and function of the landscape, requires that there will be a presumption against new residential development outside of the defined urban settlement boundaries. For the same reasons given in respect of Policy CS14, the scheme fails to accord with this policy too.
- 5.45 Policy DSP40 (Housing Allocations), sets out that where it can be demonstrated that the Council does not have a five year housing land supply, additional housing

sites may be permitted outside the urban area boundary, where (ii) proposals can be well integrated with the neighbouring settlement and (iii) sensitively designed to reflect the character of the neighbouring settlement and to minimise adverse impact on the countryside. For the same reasons given in respect of Policies CS14 and CS17, the scheme fails to accord with this policy too.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This Public Inquiry concerns an appeal against the planning refusal by Fareham Borough Council of a full application for a development comprising 206 dwellings, access road from Peak Lane maintaining link to Oakcroft Lane, stopping up of a section of Oakcroft Lane (from Old Peak Lane to access road), with car parking, landscaping, substation, public open space and associated works. My evidence addresses issues of landscape and visual effects, design and the effects on the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.2 The appeal site is located to the north of Stubbington. The site is some 19.4Ha in area and includes land to the north and south of Oakcroft Lane. The main development parcel of the site would be the arable field, of about 8Ha, to the south of Oakcroft Lane, which has its eastern and southern boundaries with the existing settlement of Stubbington and the development around Mark's Tey Road.
- 6.3 In terms of considering the likely effects of developing the appeal site on the landscape, views, amenity of the adjoining open spaces and rights of way, and on the character and appearance of the site and local context, the key landscape features and functions are as follows:
- 1) The north/north-west boundary formed by Oakcroft Lane and by the line of poplars is a distinct feature of the local landscape context. These elements, together with the subtle slope of the ground to the south, means that when seen from the north of the wider appeal site, the surface of the site is not visible, and undeveloped, the site appears to be well contained;
 - 2) The dense vegetation along the eastern and southern site boundaries, as well as the open uses to the south and west promotes some sense of separation from the adjoining settlement which gives the appeal site a comparatively rural character;
 - 3) A characteristic of the views from the north, from west of Peak Lane and east of Ranvilles Lane, back towards Stubbington, is how little of the built form of Stubbington is visible;

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- 4) The character of Oakcroft Lane is an essentially rural one. The single line of poplars is a striking feature. Despite the density of the planting, views into the site from Oakcroft Lane are possible;
 - 5) Crofton Cemetery, the churchyard of St Edmunds (Crofton Old Church) and the wooded open space within the appeal site, conjoin and combine to provide an evidently well-used and popular open space amenity. This open space appears to be used as part of local walking routes, together with Oakcroft Lane, the separated cycle/pedestrian link along Peak Lane, between Stubbington and Fareham, PRoW 67 and Ranvilles Lane. Pressure for access is evident in the use of the boundaries of the main body of the appeal site for walking;
 - 6) The main characteristics of the existing developed areas to the east and south of the appeal site are the informality of the layout; of curved roads and footways, with some shared surfaces; front gardens with front parking arrangements; and detached housing, with slightly denser housing arrangements along the shared surfaces. The buildings are 2 storeys in height, with a few 2.5 storey units on Summerleigh Walk. The retained former landscape of trees is the primary landscape feature, with occasional, small incidental grassed open spaces; and
 - 7) The introduction of the construction and shortly the use of the Stubbington Bypass into the landscape will have a permanent effect on the landscape context. Its present under construction appearance is quite raw, but with time and its landscape matured, the road and traffic on it should be partially absorbed.

6.4 My appraisal considers the LVIA submitted with the planning application and the key findings of the LDA review. I then provide my overall landscape and visual assessment and, next, I focus on the design proposals and their effect on the character and appearance of the local area, and from where this would be perceived.

6.5 I have reviewed the LVIA, and I concur with the findings of the LDA review. There are several stages of the assessment of the landscape baseline that are not in accordance with the approach advocated by GLVIA3 and there is a lack of any assessment on the landscape effects on the site and immediate local landscape context.

- 6.6 My assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the proposals is not an exhaustive assessment of the kind that would be undertaken for an LVIA. Rather I have sought to provide a framework for understanding the key effects rather than all of the effects. I have followed the approach advocated by GLVIA3 and have set out the criteria used to determine both landscape and visual value, susceptibility, sensitivity, magnitude of effect and overall significance of the effect in my appendices and, where this is relevant, I have used the terms defined in my appendices.
- 6.7 For the assessment of the magnitude of change of the landscape effect of the proposal and the overall effect when combined with sensitivity, using the LVIA's criteria the LDA review concluded for 264 units that the effect on the site (south of Oakcroft Lane) would be a major/moderate effect, the effect on the landscape immediately north of Oakcroft Lane would be a moderate effect and on the wider landscape of LLCA7.1a the effect would be a minor effect. My landscape units are slightly wider than these three, but in turn I consider the magnitude of change and overall effect or significance, to be *Substantial* and *Major-Moderate* for the site and surrounds, *Moderate* and *Moderate* for the that part of LCA7 between Fareham and Stubbington, and *Slight* and *Moderate* to *Moderate-Minor*.
- 6.8 The Landscape Statement of Common Ground summarises the findings of my visual assessment in respect of the magnitude of change experienced by people at the LVIA's viewpoints, in order to make a comparison with the findings of the LVIA. The visual issues at this appeal are focussed on relatively detailed elements of the design, rather than on the principle and suitability of developing the appeal site. Accordingly, I address the detailed implications of those aspects of the scheme proposal that would give rise to visual changes on nearby receptors.
- 6.9 Overall, I find that the scheme has failed to minimise the visual effects, and therefore causes adverse visual effect on the immediate countryside setting which is not necessary from the residential development of the site. This is as a result of inadequate landscape buffers which do not allow for the development built edge to be set far enough back from the site's boundaries to provide for the proper provision of landscape planting, as well as the failure to set the development back to an appropriate degree on the northern and western boundaries. The presence of 2.5 storey buildings on the northern, western and southern boundaries also unnecessarily increases the visual effects, as does the presence of almost

continual roads around the development's perimeter with front parking and, in part, the 'additional' 206 units (over the Council's indicated 180 units), which gives rise to the presence of more buildings along the countryside edges than necessary. Reducing the numbers, even by a few along this edge, would allow for a more 'broken' built edge with more opportunity for landscaping.

- 6.10 In respect of the Site Layout, the approach to the design of the external GI has limited vision and has failed, almost entirely, to integrate the proposals with the local context and missed clear and readily available opportunities to do so. Consequently, the scheme has demonstrated that it has not responded to its setting and context and would not be well integrated physically, socially and visually with the adjoining community and the locally important GI network.
- 6.11 Overall, the layout design does not demonstrate any meaningful association with its context and has failed to respond to the attributes of its context. As the NDG sets out, good design does not need to mimic its surroundings and, in this case, the not all of the attributes of the locale are entirely positive, in this regard I have in mind the overwhelmingly detached nature of the development, with front gardens and drives onto the street, but the scheme should have responded to the sense of informality of the adjoining area and its well-landscaped form.
- 6.12 I have developed a Concept Plan for the site, to indicate how a scheme could be designed to address the Council's concerns at this appeal and to meet with Policy HA54 of the emerging Local Plan. Compared with the appeal scheme, the Concept Plan would increase the open space uses by some 0.8Ha whilst maintaining the net and gross developable densities. Its key features include:
- An entrance open space and SW corner open space.
 - A larger single open space, rather than two smaller, less impactful spaces. Central play space potentially, although this could be located in the SE corner open space
 - A wider central green corridor providing a largely separated pedestrian route (from the roads) linking with the internal and external green spaces.
 - An almost entirely separated external pedestrian and cycle looped route.
 - Two access points to the footpath through the open space to the south and an enhancement of this route. A further access onto Oakcroft Lane and

enhanced provision on Oakcroft Lane back into the existing residential area to integrate the new scheme and link communities. Retain and enhance the old route of Peak Lane into a pedestrian/cycle link, to join in with the existing popular provision along Peak Lane between Stubbington and Fareham.

- A more informal built arrangement, with more parking courts to improve and provide more variety of built form along the street scene.
- Focal architecture in key locations; not through the use of 2.5 storey detached and semi-detached houses, but through the use of short rows of mixed character terraced cottages.

6.13 In my assessment, the scheme proposals have, by the virtue of the design, failed to minimise the visual harm and have not been as sympathetic to the local surroundings of Stubbington and the countryside setting. as they should or could be. They do not function well in terms of the use of the GI within the layout and have failed to integrate successfully with the local GI and consequently socially with the local community, despite the clear opportunities to do so. The scheme proposals have also failed to establish a strong sense of place, through the scheme layout and/or the provision of attractive open space and successful GI. Consequently, the proposals conflict with the objectives of Paragraphs 126, 130 and 174(b) and do not accord with the requirements of the NDG or local plan policies CS14, CS17, DSP6 and DSP40 (ii) and (iii).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Visual Receptor Value Criteria

Value of Location or View	Description
Very High or National Value	A scenic view in a landscape that has been designated at a national level, e.g. National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, particularly views from a national long distance trail or promoted routes in these landscapes, or a recognised view to or from a distinctive feature designated at a national level, e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monument, Listed Building and Registered Historic Park & Garden.
High or County Value	A view from within a designated landscape or a popular view recognised in publications and/or visitor guides for promoted routes and locations of interest.
Moderate or Community Value	A view in an undesignated landscape which may be locally valued and displays evidence of responsible use.
Low or Unvalued	Where the landscape has been despoiled and there is evidence that society does not value the view or landscape.
Private Value	A private view, e.g. from a residential property, that is likely to be valued by the occupants.

APPENDIX B: Visual Receptor Susceptibility

Receptor Group	Location Susceptibility
Residents	<p>High - would view the proposed development in the primary views from their property (e.g. principal living rooms and sitting areas in gardens), would be stationary or moving slowly about their property, would see the development on a daily basis, could be orientated towards the development, and would value these views.</p> <p>High/Moderate - would view the proposed development in the secondary views from their property (e.g. bedrooms and driveway), would be stationary or moving slowly at these locations, would see the development on a daily basis, could be orientated towards the development, and would value these views.</p> <p>Moderate - would view the proposed development from limited locations on their property (e.g. bathrooms and attic windows), would be stationary or moving slowly at these</p>

	locations, would see the development on a daily basis, could be orientated towards the development, and would value these views.
Recreational receptors	<p>High - are stationary or moving slowly (e.g. walking, cycling or horse riding), can be orientated towards the development, are at that location primarily in order to enjoy the view/landscape.</p> <p>High/Moderate - are stationary or moving slowly (e.g. walking, cycling or horse riding), can be orientated towards the development, are at that location primarily in order to enjoy the view/landscape but also for other purposes.</p> <p>Moderate - are stationary or moving slowly, can be orientated towards the development, may be at that location in order to enjoy the view/landscape but would have another primary purpose for being there (e.g. playing sport).</p>
Road and rail users (motorists, passengers, bus and train travellers)	<p>High/Moderate – in locations where they are moving steadily/swiftly, can be orientated towards the development, are likely to be at that location primarily in order to enjoy the view/landscape.</p> <p>Moderate - in locations where they are moving steadily/swiftly, can be orientated towards the development, may be at that location in order to enjoy the view/landscape but may also have other purposes (e.g. journey to work).</p> <p>Moderate/Low - in locations where they are moving swiftly, with a direction of travel that is oblique or side-on to the development, are likely to be travelling for a purpose other than in order to enjoy the view (e.g. higher speed long distance travel).</p>
Outdoor workers	<p>Moderate - outdoor workers and school children in locations where they may be moving slowly, can be orientated towards the development, may experience the view on a daily basis, may be at that location in order to enjoy the view but will have other purposes.</p> <p>Medium/Low - outdoor workers in locations where they may be moving slowly, can be orientated towards the development, may experience the view on a daily basis, but are at that location primarily to undertake activities unconnected with the view.</p>
Indoor workers	Low - indoor receptors with limited views in this direction, who are in that location primarily to undertake activities unconnected with the view.

APPENDIX C: Visual Receptor Sensitivity Criteria

Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Description
Very High Sensitivity	Where the receptor would be stationary or moving slowly, would be likely to be exposed for consistent and prolonged periods and/or whose attention or main interest would be likely to be the landscape and views; particularly, but not necessarily limited to, users of promoted Public Rights of Way within landscapes designated at a national level, users of national trails and promoted long distance routes or at heritage assets, in these landscapes or other valued landscapes, where awareness of changes to visual amenity is likely to be acute.
High Sensitivity	Where the receptor would be stationary, moving slowly or steadily, would be likely to be exposed for consistent and prolonged periods and/or whose attention or interest is likely to include the landscape and views; typically

	residents at home, users of Public Rights of Way and country lanes, where awareness of changes to visual amenity is likely to be elevated.
Moderate Sensitivity	Where the receptor would be moving steadily or swiftly, would be likely to be exposed to the change for infrequent and short periods, and/or whose attention and interest may include the landscape or views but not primarily; typically travellers on roads, rail or other transport routes where awareness of change to visual amenity is likely to be limited.
Low Sensitivity	Where the receptor would be moving swiftly, would be exposed to the change occasionally and for very short periods, and/or whose attention or interest is not on views or landscape; typically people engaged in higher speed travel, engaged in organised outdoor sport (which does not involve an appreciation of views) and outdoor workers where the setting may be of importance to the quality of working life.
Negligible Sensitivity	Where the receptor would be predominantly inside and at their place of work focused on their work activity and where setting is not important to the quality of working life and awareness of change to visual amenity is likely to be negligible.

APPENDIX D: Magnitude of Visual Effects Criteria

Magnitude of Change	Description
Very Substantial	Where the proposed development would be openly visible in its entirety or near entirety, the development would be in stark contrast to the landscape context and may be perceived to be close to the viewpoint, such that it would be the dominant adverse/beneficial feature in the scene.
Substantial	Where the proposed development would be visible in its entirety or partly screened, the development would contrast with the landscape context and may be perceived to be in the near or middle distance, such that it would stand out as a prominent adverse/beneficial feature in the scene.
Moderate	Where the proposed development would be visible in its entirety or partly screened, the development may contrast with the landscape context and may be perceived to be in the middle distance or at closer distances if more screened, such that it would be evident as a noticeable adverse/beneficial feature in the scene.
Slight	Where the proposed development visible in its entirety or partly screened, the development may contrast with the landscape context and may be perceived to be in the distance or far distance, or at closer distances and largely screened, such that it would be a visible adverse/beneficial feature in the scene.
Negligible	Where the proposed development would be almost entirely screened, the development may contrast with the landscape context and may be perceived to be in the far distance, or at closer distances and substantially such that it would be a barely discernible adverse/beneficial feature in the scene.

APPENDIX E: Landscape Value Criteria

Landscape Value	Description
Very High or International Value	Where the landscape has been designated at an international level, e.g. a World Heritage Site, and the purposes of which include landscape and/or recreational opportunities.
High or National Value	Where the landscape has been designated at a national level, e.g. National Parks (England, Scotland and Wales), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England, Wales and NI), Heritage Coasts (England and Wales), LANDMAP VSAA Outstanding Overall Evaluation (Wales) or where a landscape feature has been designated at a national level, e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monument, and forms a highly distinctive landscape feature.
Moderate-high or County/District Value	Regional Parks, landscape designations in Structure, Unitary or Local Development Plans, LANDMAP VSAA High Overall Evaluation (Wales) or a landscape feature that has been designated at a County/Borough/District level and forms a distinctive landscape feature.
Moderate or Local Value	For undesignated landscapes and landscape features which are locally valued, LANDMAP VSAA Moderate Overall Evaluation (Wales) and display evidence of responsible use and value.
Low or Unvalued	Where the landscape and/or landscape features have been despoiled and there is evidence that society does not value the landscape and/or landscape features, e.g. fly tipping, abandoned cars, litter, vandalism, etc.

APPENDIX F: Landscape Susceptibility Criteria

Landscape Susceptibility	Description
Very High susceptibility	Where the clarity of the key characteristics are very strongly expressed and/or their robustness to change is fragile and/or views are an essential characteristic, and/or policies and strategies aim to achieve “no change” to landscape character, and the changes to landscape character that could be brought about by a development of the type, scale and location proposed would be incompatible with these factors.
High Susceptibility	Where the clarity of the key characteristics are strongly expressed and/or their robustness to change is weak and/or views are an important characteristic and/or policies and strategies aim to conserve the key characteristics, and the changes to landscape character that could be brought about by a development of the type, scale and location proposed would have a poor compatibility with these factors.

Moderate susceptibility	Where the clarity of the key characteristics are clearly expressed and/or their robustness to change is moderately strong and/or views contribute to landscape character and/or policies and strategies promote or accept limited changes to key characteristics, and the changes to landscape character that could be brought about by a development of the type, scale and location proposed would have a moderate compatibility with these factors.
Slight susceptibility	Where the clarity of the key characteristics are vaguely expressed and/or their robustness to change is strong and/or views are incidental to landscape character and/or policies and strategies promote or accept that the landscape could evolve, and the changes to landscape character that could be brought about by a development of the type, scale and location proposed would have a good compatibility with these factors.
Negligible susceptibility	Where the key characteristics are muddled and/or their robustness to change is very strong and/or views are irrelevant to landscape character and/or policies and strategies promote or accept major changes to key characteristics and the changes to landscape character that could be brought about by a development of the type, scale and location proposed would have excellent compatibility with these factors.

APPENDIX G: Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

Landscape Sensitivity	Description
Very High sensitivity	A landscape likely to be of international or national value and/or with features, elements, areas or special qualities of international or national value, that could be very susceptible to the type, scale and location of development proposed.
High sensitivity	A landscape likely to be of national or County/Borough/District value and/or with features, elements, areas or special attributes of value, that could be very susceptible or susceptible to the type, scale and location of development proposed.
Moderate sensitivity	A landscape likely to be of national, County/Borough/District or local value and/or with features, elements, areas or special attributes of value or local value, that could have a moderate or slight susceptibility to the type, scale and location of development proposed.
Low sensitivity	A landscape likely to be of local value and/or with features, elements, areas or special attributes of value, that could have a slight susceptibility to the type, scale and location of development proposed.
Negligible sensitivity	A landscape that is likely to be unvalued and/or with features, elements, areas or special qualities that are unvalued, and that could have a slight or a negligible susceptibility to the type, scale and location of development proposed.

APPENDIX H: Magnitude of Landscape Effects Criteria

Magnitude of Change	Description
Very Substantial adverse (or beneficial)	Where the proposals would become a defining characteristic of the landscape, would override and be in stark contrast with (or would substantially enhance) the existing landscape context, would be in the context of no similar developments (or would reinstate particularly valued features that had been previously lost or degraded) and would be a dominant additional feature(s).
Substantial adverse (or beneficial)	Where the proposals would become a key characteristic of the landscape, would compete with and detract from (or enhance) the existing landscape context, would be in the context of few similar developments (or would reinstate particularly valued features that had been previously lost or degraded) and would be a prominent additional feature(s).
Moderate adverse (or beneficial)	Where the proposals would become an equal characteristic of the landscape and would contrast with (or complement) the existing landscape context, may be in the context of a few similar developments (and/or would reinstate valued features that had been previously lost or degraded) and would be a noticeable additional feature(s).
Slight adverse (or beneficial)	Where the proposals would become a minor characteristic of the landscape and would contrast with (or complement) the existing landscape context, may be in the context of some similar developments (and/or would reinstate features that had been previously lost or degraded) and would be a visible additional feature(s).
Negligible adverse (or beneficial)	Where the proposals) may contrast with (or would complement) the existing landscape context, may be in the context of several similar developments (and/or would reinstate minor features that had been previously lost or degraded) and would be a barely discernible additional feature(s).

APPENDIX I: Overall Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects Criteria (Significance)

	Magnitude of Change				
Sensitivity	<i>Very Substantial</i>	<i>Substantial</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Slight</i>	<i>Negligible</i>
<i>Very High</i>	Major ++	Major +	Major	Major - Moderate	Moderate
<i>High</i>	Major +	Major	Major- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Minor
<i>Moderate</i>	Major	Major - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Minor	Minor
<i>Low</i>	Major - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Minor	Minor	Minor - Negligible
<i>Negligible</i>	Moderate	Moderate - Minor	Minor	Minor - Negligible	Negligible

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