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1 INTRODUCTION

Stantec has been instructed by Southern Water to produce a Landscape and Visual Technical Note (LVTN) to appraise the potential Landscape and Visual impact of a proposed Pipe Bridge at Mannings Heath (“the Site”) as a part of Mannings Heath Water Treatment Works (WTW) Transfer Scheme.

The purpose of this LVTN is to provide an initial overview of the key landscape and visual considerations for the Site and advise on the potential suitability of the Site for the proposed development, in landscape and visual terms.

This LVTN is based upon a desktop review of relevant background information of the Site and its surrounding landscape (the study area), supported by site photography undertaken as part of initial surveys.

Landscape and visual analysis notes and narrative are provided below for the Site, within a 1km study area, followed by an outline of opportunities and constraints for extending the WTW. The document concludes with recommended landscape and green infrastructure principles for enhancement and mitigation.

2 THE SITE

2.1 Location

The proposed Mannings Heath Pipe Bridge is proposed within a small steep sided wooded valley, located immediately west of Mannings Heath Water Treatment Works (WTW), Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 6JT. The WTW lies approximately 100m to the north of Mannings Heath village, approximately 1.2km to the south-east of Horsham town and approximately 3km to the south-east of Horsham Conservation Area (CA). The location is set within the High Weald Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB).

2.2 Study Area

The study area has a quiet rural enclosed character with gently rolling pastoral farmland together with significant woodland cover. A substantial portion of it is ancient woodland but with urban influences on the eastern and southerly aspects which includes the settlement of Mannings Heath. Trees and hedges along Brighton Road (A281) help to visually reinforce the connection of Mannings Heath to its rural surrounding while providing a sense of enclosure and limited views. The topography of the wider area is undulating and

rising to a number of localised high points but these are relatively low-lying no higher than 100m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Despite the presence of these localised high points, due to the site location within small steep sided wooded valley, views towards the site are screened. As a result of this restricted visibility within the local landscape context and based on our professional experience of similar schemes, the study area has been set at a 1km area, offset from the proposed Site boundaries.

2.3 The Site and Context

The site lies in the valley bottom of a **deeply incised** “ghyll” stream valley, within a belt of ancient woodland at approximately 30m AOD. The woodland is unmanaged and steepness of the slopes has resulted in a number of tall leggy trees species to fall across the ghyll.



Photo 1 of pipe bridge location across the steep sided wooded valley adjacent to the WWTW

There is an existing outfall pipe which in a state of disrepair. Remains of headwall has fallen into the stream and water currently bypasses this flowing freely down the slopes to the stream. There is also evidence that the stream is used as a drinking hole for the local deer population.



Photo 2 outfall



Photo 3 Headwall collapse

The WTW is located immediately to the east on operational land and contains a number of above ground structures associated with the treatment of waste water.



Photo 4 Mannings Heath WWTW

The immediate landscape to the north has extensive blocks of woodlands, locally known as Gaggle Wood and Northland Wood, designated Ancient Woodlands. To the west lies small to medium scale arable fields and to the east and south is the village of Mannings Heath.

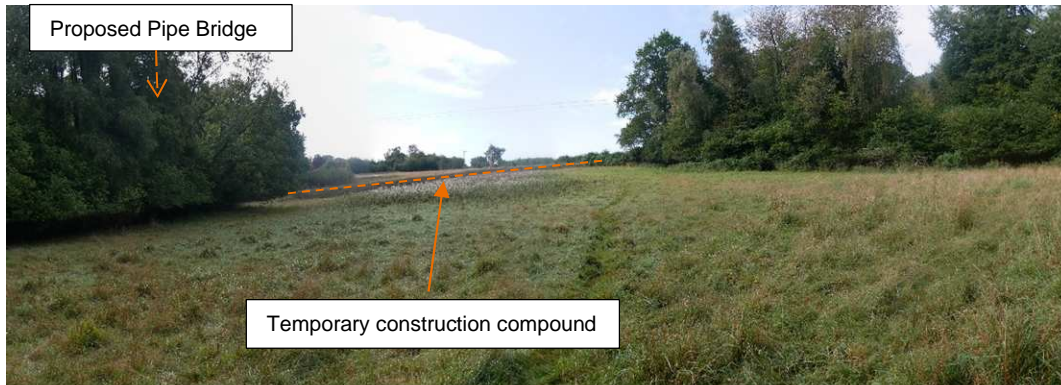


Photo 5 Temporary construction compound location west of the Site

3 BASELINE CONDITIONS

3.1 Landscape Character

The Site and the study area is within The High Weald Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB), which is nationally important landscape. The High Weald Management Plan 2019-2024 highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing its distinctive character.

'The High Weald is an outstanding beautiful landscape cherished by people and celebrated for its scenery, tranquillity and wildlife. Its ridges and valleys are clothed with an intricate mosaic of small fields interspersed

with farmsteads and surrounded by hedges and abundant woods, all arranged around a network of historic routeways. One of the best surviving medieval landscape in North West Europe, the High Weald has remained a unique and recognisable area for at least the last 700 years. Covering 1500 km² and close to London, this extensive area offers millions of people opportunity to experience the beauty of nature within a working countryside. It was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1983.'

The Site and the study area also falls within western edges of the National Character Area 122 (NCA:122): High Weald which is a non-statutory regional designation provided by Natural England profiling an overarching classification of national landscape character. NCA 122 consists of a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. Wildflower meadows are now rare but prominent medieval patterns of small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape.

At a more local level, the study area sits on the north-western edge of and within Landscape Character Area The High Weald Fringes (LCA: 10) of the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex, 2003. The relevant Key Characteristics from LCA: 10 The High Weald Fringes are described as:

- *“Wooded, often confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity partly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);*
- *Western part drained by the headwaters of the River Arun;*
- *Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees;*
- *Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields;*
- *Biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland;*
- *Dispersed historic settlement pattern, close to Horsham, the principal settlements Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield and a few villages and hamlets;*
- *Some busy lanes and roads including A and B roads bounding the area to the west;*
- *Mill sites, hammerponds and ornamental lakes and ponds;*
- *Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.”*

Additionally, the study area sits within Landscape Character Type (LCT) Open Ridge & Valley Farmlands (LCT: N), and within Landscape Character Area (LCA) Mannings Heath Farmlands (LCA: N1) of the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (2003).

The relevant Key Characteristics from LCA: N1 Mannings Heath Farmlands are described as:

- *“Broad flat-topped ridge and undulating valley;*
- *Mixed arable/pasture farmland with a fragmented hedgerow pattern;*
- *Hammer ponds and field ponds;*
- *Local historic vernacular of sandstone, tile hanging and brick;*

- *Scattered farmsteads along roads. Small Linear village/hamlets of Mannings Heath.*

3.2 Visual Amenity

Due to the site location within a steep sided and wooded stream valley and enclosed landscape context of the site, the proposal is well screened within the surrounding area, and therefore there are no residential or public receptors impacted by this development on completion.

However, the main temporary construction compound is established adjacent to the A281/Brighton Road, on a small area of agricultural land, which is used for welfare parking and storage area. Also, the temporary 20m wide working easement runs east-west through the fields from Brighton Road to the proposed pipe bridge. Therefore, during construction there would be temporary views of construction traffic passing from residential receptors living along edge of the Masons Field Lane (including The Masons Grade II Listed residential property, located approximately 500m to the south-west).

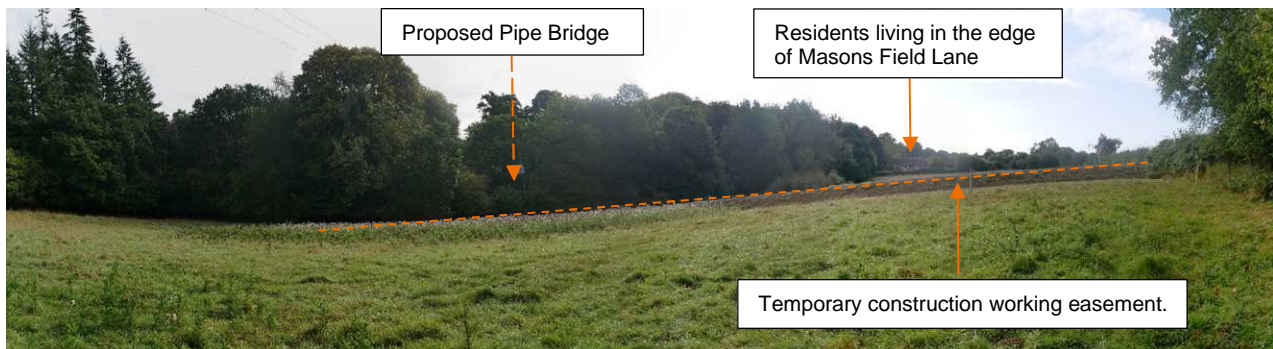


Photo 1: Taken from permissive path, looking east towards proposed Site.

Similarly, there will be temporary views of construction traffic passing from the residential receptors living along the northern edge of Pound Lane (including The Red Cottage, The old Smithy Grade II Listed residential property, located approximately 400m to the south-west) and Brighton Road.



Photo 3: Taken from temporary construction road, looking south towards temporary working easement and residential properties.

Also, there are likely temporary views of construction traffic passing for the users of Brighton Road.

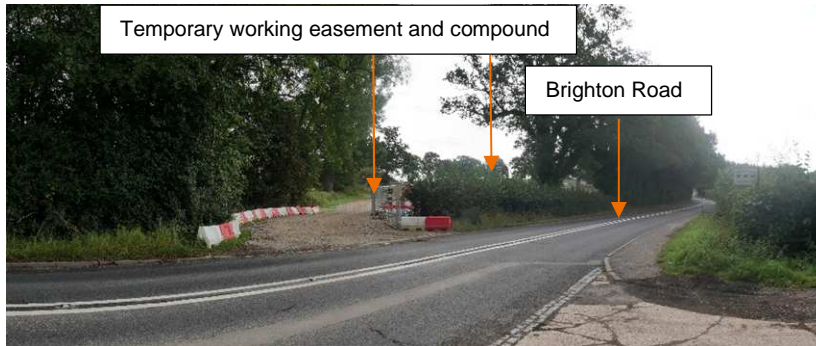


Photo 4: Taken from Brighton Road, looking east towards temporary construction compound and working easement.

There are few Public Right of Ways (PRoWs) within the locality which have locally recognised recreational value however, due to the Site location within wooded stream valley the proposal will be screened from these public receptors on completion. However, during construction users of PRoW Ref: 1693, located approximately 600m to the south-west of the Site, would experience generally screened views however towards the western end of PRoW, the users are likely to experience temporary minor fleeting views towards construction compound and construction traffic adjacent to Brighton Road.

3.3 Planning Context

As a designated AONB, the High Weald is protected by law to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. AONBs are designated by Government to ensure that the conservation and enhancement of the landscape is given high priority. The High Weald was designated in 1983 under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and is protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Local Development Plans must take the NPPF into account and it is a material consideration in planning applications.

The NPPF specifically sets out principles in relation to conserving and enhancing the natural environment (Section 15) and seeks to ensure that *“Planning policies and decisions should contribute and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- a) *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*

- c) *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Paragraph 174.*

It also states that “Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Park, the Broads and AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designated to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas. Paragraph 176.”

It goes further and states that “When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) *“the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) *the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated”*

West Sussex Waste Local Plan, 2014:

There are a number of policies relevant to the proposed scheme identified within this county level plan. These include the following:

- **Policy W11:Character** - *to protect and, where possible, enhance the special landscape character of West Sussex and it states that proposals for waste development will be permitted provided that they would not have an unacceptable impact on:*
 - a) *“the character, distinctiveness, and sense of place of the different areas of the County and that they reflect and, where possible, reinforce the character of the main natural character areas (including the retention of important features or characteristics); and*
 - b) *the separate identity of settlements and distinctive character of towns and villages (including specific areas or neighbourhoods) and development would not lead to their actual or perceived coalescence.”*
- **Policy W13: Protected Landscapes** – *“to protect the AONB from unnecessary and inappropriate development and its states that proposals for waste development within protected landscapes (the High Weald AONB) will not be permitted unless”:*

(ii) the proposal is for a small-scale facility to meet local needs that can be accommodated without undermining the objectives of the designation”.

- **Policy W14: Biodiversity and Geodiversity** –*“to protect and where possible. Enhance the natural environment and resources of the County and it states that proposals for waste developments will be permitted provided that:*
 - a) *areas or sites of international biodiversity importance are protected unless there are no appropriate alternative solutions and there are overriding reasons which outweigh the need to safeguard the value of sites or features, and provided that favourable conservation status is maintained;*
 - b) *there are no adverse impacts on areas or sites of national biodiversity or geological conservation importance unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impact on the objectives of the designation and on the wider network of such designated areas or sites*
 - c) *there are no adverse impacts on areas, sites or features of regional or local biodiversity or geological conservation importance unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impact on the objectives of the designation;* (d) *where development would result in the loss of or adversely affect an important area, site or feature, the harm is minimised, mitigated, or compensated for, including, where practicable, the provision of a new resource elsewhere which is of at least equivalent value;*
 - d) *where appropriate, the creation, enhancement, and management of habitats, ecological networks, and ecosystem services is secured consistent with wider environmental objectives including Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and the South Downs Way Ahead Nature Improvement Area; and (f) where necessary, the investigation, evaluation, and recording of important sites and features is undertaken and, where appropriate, representative features are preserved.”*

- **Policy W16: Air, Soil, and Water** – *“to protect and, where possible enhance the natural environment and resources of the County and states that proposals for waste development will be permitted provided that:*
 - a) *there are no unacceptable impacts on the intrinsic quality of, and where appropriate the quantity of, air, soil, and water resources (including ground, surface, transitional, and coastal waters); and*
 - b) *the quality of rivers and other watercourses is protected and, where possible, enhanced.”*

Horsham District Planning Framework (Local Plan), 2015

There are a number of policies relevant to the proposed scheme identified within this district level plan. These include the following:

Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character – *“to protect The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats against inappropriate development. The Council will support development proposals which:*

1. *Protects, conserves, and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking*

into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation;

- 2. Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.”*

- **Policy 26: Countryside Protection** – *“to protect the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria:*

“Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;

In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including:

- 1. The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change;*
- 2. The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; and*
- 3. The landform of the area”.*

- **Policy 30: Protected Landscapes states that:**

- 1. “The natural beauty and public enjoyment of the High Weald AONB and the adjoining South Downs National Park will be conserved and enhanced and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities will be promoted. Development proposals will be supported in or close to protected landscapes where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts to the natural beauty and public enjoyment of these landscapes as well as any relevant cross boundary linkages.*
- 2. Proposals should have regard to any management plans for these areas and must demonstrate:*
 - a) How the key landscape features or components of natural beauty will be conserved and enhanced. This includes maintaining local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the protected landscapes, and if necessary providing mitigation or compensation measures.”*

- **Policy 3: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity states that:**

“Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and /or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks”.

3. *“Where felling of protected trees is necessary, replacement planting with a suitable species will be required”.*
4. a) *“Particular consideration will be given to the hierarchy of sites and habitats in the district as follows:*
 - i. *Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)*
 - ii. *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs)*
 - iii. *Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and any areas of Ancient woodland, local geodiversity or other irreplaceable habitats not already identified in i & ii above.”*
- b) *“Where development is anticipated to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on sites or features for biodiversity, development will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that:*
 - i. *The reason for the development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and,*
 - ii. *That appropriate mitigation and compensation measures are provided”.*

4 Proposal

Mannings Heath WWTW is a key Southern Water operational site that provides wastewater treatment services to the village of Mannings Heath. The proposed pipe bridge works at Mannings Heath WTW is required to enable compliance with an enhanced environmental permit for phosphorous (phosphorus limit (P) of 0.5 mg/L (Annual Average) with an iron limit (Fe) of 4 mg/l (95%) and 8 mg/l upper tier) as set by the Environment Agency and are required to be completed by 22nd December 2024. The works will therefore improve the quality of the treated effluent that is discharged to the environment.

There isn't space within the WWTW site to install all the required plant to bring the effluent up to standard, therefore a pipeline/pipe bridge is required to accommodate this.

5 ANALYSIS

5.1 Landscape Analysis

The landscape character of the study area displays a plateau and valley undulating landscape to the west with woodland cover mostly concentrated around Mannings Heath and associated with the tributary watercourse which flows north to meet the Goldings Stream. The local landscape has small to medium field patterns of pastoral and arable farmland bound by fragmented hedgerows giving a more open character to the west of Mannings Heath compared with the central areas of the High Weald to the north and east beyond Mannings Heath itself.

Due to the limited geographical extent of the change associated with the proposed pipe bridge and the ecological mitigation measures associated with reducing impacts to the ancient woodland and increasing the potential of this habitat to naturally regenerate, the (partially reversible) impacts upon the local

landscape character is **minor adverse**, with these effects only experienced within the site and within the immediate setting.

The greatest effects would be upon the highly sensitive ancient woodland, which is an important landscape feature and characteristic of this area. The proposed works will result in impacts to a maximum of 250m² of ancient woodland habitat which in reality will result in removal of an area of scrappy thin Holly and Hazel on the east side of the stream, the removal of a denser area of Holly scrub, and 1 No. middle-aged Beech tree. In addition approximately eight large well-developed multi-stemmed Hazels, which of high ecological value along the western edge of the woodland, will be coppiced down to ground level, the roots will then dug up and retained throughout the works period. Following completion of works, the Hazels will be placed into the ground at a suitable location as part of the site reinstatement. Two of the largest hazel multi-stem specimens will be coppiced down to ground level and left to regrow following completion of works. Similarly, numerous patches of non-woody vascular plants, including several Ancient Woodland Inventory species are required to be dug up in clumps and replanted back at suitable locations as part of the site reinstatement following completion of works, which is anticipated to last approximately 2-3 weeks.

Due to minor nature of permanent removals i.e., one beech tree and the potential of this habitat to naturally regenerate with the above mitigation this would result in a **minor adverse** (and partially reversible) landscape impact upon the ancient woodland.

The proposed development forms a very small part of the High Weald AONB. The proposal will result in barely perceptible change to a steep-sided wooded gill stream landscape feature. Due to the expansive scale of the High Weald AONB and the limited scale of proposal the Site would be an imperceptible element within it, resulting in **negligible adverse** (and reversible) impact upon the High Weald AONB.

The proposed development forms a very small part of identified NCA 122: High Weald, The High Weald Fringes (LCA: 10), Open Ridge & Valley Farmlands (LCT: N) and Mannings Heath Farmlands (LCA: N1). Due to the sites' location and the limited scale and height of the proposal preventing intervisibility of the proposals there will be a **negligible adverse** (and reversible) impact upon these non-statutory designations, which would be only experienced within or adjacent to the site itself resulting in just discernible changes to the general characteristics these much wider designations.

5.2 Visual Analysis

As described in Section 3.2 of this report, views towards the Site from the surrounding landscape are screened due to the site location within a small steep sided wooded valley and therefore there are no residential or public receptors impacted by this development on completion.

However, during construction there would be temporary views of construction traffic passing through adjacent fields and the construction compound from some properties along Masons Field Lane, Pound Lane and Brighton Road. This would result in **negligible adverse** (and temporary) visual effects during construction.

Also, there are likely fleeting views of construction traffic from the users of Brighton Road, resulting in **negligible adverse** (and temporary) visual effects during construction.

Similar, there are fleeting views of construction compound and construction traffic from the users of PRoW Ref: 1693, resulting in **negligible adverse** (and temporary) visual effects during construction.

5.3 Policy Review

It is considered that the development proposals accord with the local and national policies, detailed within Section 3.3 of this report.

5.4 Constraints

The Site and proposal presents the following design related constraints:

- The Site is located within The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- The Site is located within ancient woodland which will result in minor (and partially reversible) loss of ancient woodland habitat; and
- Steep sided nature of the site means the temporary compound will be located on flatter and more accessible farmland to the immediate west of the site.

5.5 Opportunities

- Limited visual envelope of the Site due to the location within a steep sided and wooded stream valley;
- Opportunity to remove the existing and broken brick outfall and headwall and make good the ground suitable for natural regeneration of the ancient woodland habitat.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Potential Landscape Design Principles

Whilst it is considered that the proposed works will not cause any significant Landscape and Visual effects, the scheme will include mitigation proposal to ensure these conclusions remain. This will include:

- Ecological mitigation of the ancient woodland habitat in the vicinity of the proposal where possible. Refer to the Ecological Impact Appraisal for more details on translocation of hazel shrubs roots and perennial ground flora species;
- Various woodland management techniques such as removal of invasive rhododendron and cherry laurel species from the vicinity of proposals, using any cut woody material to enhance the dead wood resource by creating log piles and creating loggeries for stag beetles. Also very focused thinning to diversifying the structure of the woodland;
- During the works temporary holding area should be identified where valuable ground flora and Hazel coppice root balls can be stored until reinstatement following completion of the works;
- Removal of the existing and broken brick outfall and headwall and make good the ground suitable for natural regeneration of the ancient woodland habitat;

- Following the disassembling and removal of the site compound, the arable field the compound is located within should be levelled, tilled and then sown with an appropriate seed mix. This will help prevent any scarring within the landscape forming.

7 CONCLUSION

The proposals will not have significant impact on any identified landscape character areas at a national, regional, or local level. The proposal will result in **minor adverse** (and partially reversible) effects on the local landscape character as a result of one permanent middle aged tree removal and the potential of this habitat to naturally regenerate. In addition there will be **minor adverse** (and partially reversible) effect upon the ancient woodland.

The proposal will also result in **negligible adverse** (and reversible) impacts upon the High Weald AONB, NCA 122: High Weald, The High Weald Fringes (LCA: 10), Open Ridge & Valley Farmlands (LCT: N) and Mannings Heath Farmlands (LCA: N1).

The proposed development has a limited visual envelope due to the location within a small steep sided wooded valley and therefore the proposal will have no impact on visual receptors on completion. However, during construction some minor (and temporary) visual effects on residential receptors living along edge of the Masons Field Lane, Pound Lane and Brighton Road and for users of Brighton Road are expected.

There is also likely negligible (and temporary) effects experienced from the western end of the PRoW (ref 1693) on Brighton Road.

As such, it is considered that the proposed extension will result in no significant effects on visual amenity or upon the local landscape character or High Weald AONB or upon the ancient woodland.