

## Appendix 2.10 – Methodology for Landscape and Visual Assessments

### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In line with the objectives of the Brief, the following landscape evaluation methodology has been developed to be used to understand the landscape sensitivity and capacity for each site. To provide consistency, it closely follows the methodology and assessment criteria used in the 2014 Landscape Setting Study by CBA<sup>1</sup>. The landscape evaluation considers the following:

- The inherent **landscape sensitivity** of a site to change;
- The **landscape value** of a site; and,
- The indicative **landscape capacity** of a site to accommodate residential development

### 1.2 Landscape Sensitivity

1.2.1 Landscape sensitivity is a combination of the sensitivity of the landscape resource (in terms of both its character as a whole and the individual elements contributing to character); and the visual sensitivity of an area, assessed in terms of a combination of factors such as views, visibility, and the number and nature of people perceiving the landscape (visual receptors). For the purposes of this study, the term 'overall landscape sensitivity' is used to refer primarily to the inherent sensitivity of the landscape itself, irrespective of the type of change or development that may be under consideration.

1.2.2 Drawing on the information and analysis from the desk-based studies and field surveys, the overall landscape sensitivity of a site is evaluated on the basis of combining judgements about the site's strength of place and visibility.

1.2.3 The site's **strength of place** is evaluated in terms of its distinctiveness and continuity/time depth in accordance with **Matrix 1.1**.

<sup>1</sup> Chris Blandford Associates (2014) - Wealden Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment

**Matrix 1.1: Strength of Place**

<b>Distinctiveness</b>	<b>Unique/R</b>	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong
	<b>Distinct</b>	Weak	Moderate	Strong
	<b>Indistinct</b>	Very Weak	Weak	Moderate
		<b>Recent</b>	<b>Historic</b>	<b>Ancient</b>
<b>Continuity/Time Depth</b>				

1.2.4 'Distinctiveness' refers to the presence of positive features in a site which contribute to its special character and strength of place. For the purposes of this assessment, the following definitions apply with regards to the distinctiveness criteria for evaluating a site's strength of place in **Matrix 1.1**:

- **Indistinct:** Sites with limited positive features or characteristics.
- **Distinct:** Sites with notable positive features or characteristics that make a moderate contribution to its special character and strength of place.
- **Unique/Rare:** Sites with very distinctive positive features or characteristics that make a substantial contribution to its special character and strength of place.

1.2.5 'Continuity/time depth' refers to the historic dimension of the landscape in which the site is located and how old the landscape is in terms of its surviving features. For the purposes of this assessment, the following definitions apply with regards to the continuity/time depth criteria for evaluating a landscape's strength of place in **Matrix 1.1**:

- **Recent:** Landscapes predominantly dating from 1800 to present day (Source: Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation, August 2010)
- **Historic:** Remnant Historic Landscapes predominantly dating from 1600 to 1800 (Source: Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation, August 2010)
- **Ancient:** Remnant Historic Landscapes predominantly pre-dating 1600, as indicated by presence of Ancient Woodland, and Historic Landscape Character 'interpretation of character' listed below (Source: Natural England, May 2014; Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation, August 2010) :
  - Aggregate assart<sup>2</sup>
  - Cohesive assart
  - Consolidated strips
  - Co axial fields
  - Regular piecemeal enclosure
  - Assart wood
  - Medieval deer park
  - Medieval enclosure

<sup>2</sup> Assart - an area of land that has had trees and undergrowth removed and the ground broken up in preparation for cultivation (<http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/assart>)

- Brooks innings
- Strip fields
- Irregular piecemeal enclosure
- Ancient hill fort
- Ancient fort
- Prehistoric Earthworks

1.2.6 Further information and interpretation about the above terms can be found in Volume II of the Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (August 2010).

1.2.7 The inherent **visibility** of a site (ie. the extent to which the site is visible from the surrounding area) is evaluated in terms of the degree to which landform/topography and tree cover/buildings enclose the site and affect its visibility in accordance with **Matrix 1.2**.

**Matrix 1.2: Visibility**

<b>Landform</b>	<b>Dominant</b>	Moderate	High	Very High
	<b>Apparent</b>	Low	Moderate	High
	<b>Insignificant</b>	Very Low	Low	Moderate
		<b>Enclosed</b>	<b>Intermittent</b>	<b>Open</b>
		<b>Tree/Building Enclosure</b>		

1.2.8 'Landform' refers to the topography or physical shape of the site and immediately surrounding area. For the purposes of this assessment, the following definitions apply with regards to the landform criteria for evaluating a site's visibility in **Matrix 1.2**:

- **Insignificant:** Sites with limited topographical variation, within predominantly flat/low-lying landscapes.
- **Apparent:** Sites with a mixture of topographical features, within predominantly gently undulating landscapes.
- **Dominant:** Sites with dominant topographical features, within predominantly strongly undulating landscapes.

1.2.9 'Tree/Building Cover' refers to the enclosure of the site by woodland, hedgerow trees and field trees and/or existing buildings in the landscape surrounding the site. For the purposes of this assessment, the following definitions apply with regards to the Tree/Building cover criteria for evaluating a site's visibility in **Matrix 1.2**:

- **Enclosed:** Sites which are fully or nearly fully enclosed by vegetation/buildings with limited opportunities for views in and out of the site.

- **Intermittent:** Sites which are partly enclosed by vegetation/buildings with intermittent opportunities for views in and out of the site.
- **Open:** Sites with little or no enclosure by vegetation/buildings with widespread opportunities for views in and out of the site.

1.2.10 Key viewpoints with views towards the site were identified during the field survey. The criteria used for assessing the sensitivity of key points are set out in **Table 1.1** below.

<b>Table 1.1: Criteria for Visual Receptor Sensitivity</b>	
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>High</b>	Where the view is of <i>principal interest</i> to the receptor, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ residential properties (ground floor views);</li> <li>▪ informal recreation areas, key public rights of way (such as long distance footpaths, National Trails) and navigable waterways in designated landscapes;</li> <li>▪ culturally valued areas, e.g. curtilage of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas;</li> <li>▪ key public viewpoints.</li> </ul>
<b>Medium</b>	Where the view is of <i>moderate interest</i> to the receptor, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ all other public rights of way;</li> <li>▪ formal areas of recreation, e.g. playing fields;</li> <li>▪ roads designated for their scenic views, e.g. scenic drives;</li> <li>▪ residential properties (views from upper floors);</li> <li>▪ roads with scenic views such as within designated landscapes/scenic drives.</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	Where the view is of <i>cursory interest</i> to the receptor, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ views without any landmark features;</li> <li>▪ all other roads, railways, etc.;</li> <li>▪ places of work or commercial premises such as shops, offices;</li> <li>▪ public buildings such as schools, libraries.</li> </ul>
<b>Negligible</b>	Where the view is of no interest to the receptor.

1.2.11 The **overall landscape sensitivity** of a site is evaluated on the basis of combining judgments about the site's strength of place and its inherent visibility in accordance with **Matrix 1.3**.

**Matrix 1.3: Overall Landscape Sensitivity**

<b>Strength of Place</b>	<b>Very Strong</b>	Moderate	Moderate	High	Very High	Very High
	<b>Strong</b>	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Very High

	<b>Moderate</b>	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High
	<b>Weak</b>	Very Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
	<b>Very Weak</b>	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Low	Low
		<b>Very Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Very High</b>
<b>Visibility</b>						

1.2.11 For the purposes of this assessment, the overall landscape sensitivity categories are as defined in **Table 1.2**.

**Table 1.2: Overall Site Landscape Sensitivity Definitions**

<b>Overall Landscape Sensitivity Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Very Low</b>	The site is assessed as having a lack of distinctiveness and continuity/time depth (the site is of recent origin with few features of historic interest), and it may also have very limited visibility due to dominant landforms and a high level of enclosure by trees and/or buildings.
<b>Low</b>	The site is assessed as having few distinctive features and characteristics that provide continuity/time depth, and typically has limited visibility due to apparent landforms and intermittent enclosure by trees and/or buildings.
<b>Moderate</b>	The site is assessed as having some distinctive features and characteristics that provide continuity/time depth, and typically has moderate visibility due to apparent/insignificant landforms and intermittent/open tree/building enclosure.
<b>High</b>	The site is assessed as having some unique/rare characteristics that are distinctive and provide continuity/time depth, and typically has high visibility due to limited topographical variation and tree/building enclosure.
<b>Very High</b>	The site is assessed as having many unique/rare characteristics that are very distinctive and provide considerable continuity/time depth (the site is of ancient origin with many features of historic interest), and it may also have very high visibility due to very limited topographical variation and tree/building enclosure.

### 1.3 Landscape Value of site

1.3.1 For the purposes of this assessment, landscape value is concerned with the relative value that is attached to different sites. In a policy context at the wider landscape scale, the

usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is through the application of a local or national landscape designation. At a site level the following factors contribute to the landscape value of a site: perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; the influence and presence of other conservation interests; or the existence of a consensus about importance, either nationally or locally. Within this assessment, the landscape value of a site also includes its value as an undeveloped area in the wider landscape, its importance in relation to the local settlement pattern and its role in maintaining a gap or sense of separation between settlements.

1.3.2 For the purposes of this study, the landscape value of the site is assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- **Landscape condition:** the physical state of the site, and its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character of the site.
- **Scenic quality:** the way in which a site appeals primarily to the visual senses.
- **Rarity:** the presence or absence of unique/rare features and elements on the site.
- **Representativeness:** whether the site contains a particular character, and/or features and elements, which are judged to be worthy of representing (such as pockets of ancient remnant woodland or an intricate network of hedgerows for example).
- **Conservation values:** the presence of features of particular wildlife, geological, archaeological, historic/cultural conservation interest and value (as recognised by established designation systems) that add to the value of the site and wider landscape as well as having value in their own right.
- **Sense of openness/tranquillity:** the absence of built development and characteristics of relatively remote areas in the landscape. Such areas are typically characterised by low levels of disturbance, an absence of detracting elements (such as built development, industry, traffic, noise, movement, the presence of people and artificial lighting) and the presence of positive landscape features (such as the naturalness of the landscape, presence and visibility of rivers and sea and the visibility of woodland).
- **Extent of separation or connectivity with existing developed areas:** whether the site is connected to an existing settlement area or forms part of a wider area with an undeveloped or dispersed settlement pattern
- **Role of site in maintaining sense of separation between settlements:** whether the site contributes to a wider area of undeveloped/rural landscape which maintains a sense of separation between settlements

1.3.3 Drawing on the information and analysis from the desk-based studies and field surveys, the landscape value of a site is evaluated on the basis of the categories set out in **Table 2.2**.

**Table 1.3: Landscape Value Categories**

<b>Landscape Value Category</b>	<b>Definition/Criteria</b>	<b>Typical Examples/Features</b>
<b>Very High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very many and/or extensive important features of conservation value</li> <li>• Very strong landscape condition due to very unified landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites within areas of exceptional remoteness very distant from existing settlements and part of a</li> </ul>

Landscape Value Category	Definition/Criteria	Typical Examples/Features
	<p>pattern and few visual detractors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very prominent culturally important landmarks provide orientation/very strong strength of place</li> <li>• Very many rare landscape features/characteristics contribute to a very strong strength of place</li> <li>• Very strong sense of wildness/tranquillity</li> <li>• Very strong cultural associations with prominent people/important events</li> <li>• Total absence of any development or detracting elements</li> <li>• Very remote and within a very large area of undeveloped land</li> </ul>	<p>very extensive area of undeveloped landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites within the AONB</li> <li>• Relatively most tranquil areas</li> <li>• Wildlife areas of international or national value</li> <li>• Providing setting for internationally important buildings or cultural features</li> </ul>
<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many and/or extensive important features of conservation value</li> <li>• Strong landscape condition due to unified landscape pattern and limited visual detractors</li> <li>• Prominent culturally important landmarks provide orientation/strong strength of place</li> <li>• Many rare landscape features/characteristics contribute to a strong strength of place</li> <li>• Strong sense of wildness/tranquillity</li> <li>• Strong cultural associations with prominent people/important events</li> <li>• Absence of any development or detracting elements</li> <li>• Remote and within a very large area of undeveloped land</li> <li>• A significant part of a wider area which provides a sense of separation between settlements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites within areas of remote countryside, distant from existing settlements and part of a substantial area of undeveloped landscape</li> <li>• Sites which are an important part of a wider area which is significant in maintaining a sense of separation between settlements</li> <li>• Sites with wildlife areas of national value</li> <li>• Sites which provide setting for Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments or nationally important cultural features</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some important features of conservation value</li> <li>• Moderate landscape condition due to relatively coherent landscape pattern and some visual detractors</li> <li>• Culturally important landmarks present but not prominent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites on the perimeter of wider undeveloped landscape areas</li> <li>• Sites with well-used PRoW passing through</li> <li>• Wildlife areas of local value</li> <li>• Providing setting for locally valued buildings or cultural</li> </ul>

Landscape Value Category	Definition/Criteria	Typical Examples/Features
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some rare landscape features/characteristics contribute to a strength of place</li> <li>• Open, undeveloped character</li> <li>• On the perimeter of a wider undeveloped area of landscape</li> <li>• A minor part of a wider area which provides a sense of separation between settlements</li> <li>• Limited sense of wildness/tranquillity</li> <li>• Sites with significant recreational or amenity value</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	features
<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited important features of conservation value</li> <li>• Poor landscape condition due to incoherent landscape pattern and many visual detractors</li> <li>• No culturally important landmarks present</li> <li>• Few rare landscape features/characteristics</li> <li>• No sense of wildness/tranquillity</li> <li>• No cultural associations with prominent people/important events</li> <li>• Presence of substantial existing development within and/or adjacent to the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites adjacent to an existing settlement edge</li> <li>• Certain individual landscape elements or features may be worthy of conservation and landscape would benefit from restoration or enhancement</li> <li>• No areas of remote countryside</li> <li>• Relatively least tranquil areas</li> </ul>

## 1.4 Landscape Capacity

1.4.1 Landscape capacity refers to the ability of a landscape to accommodate change or development without significant adverse effects on its character. Landscape capacity reflects the inherent sensitivity of the landscape resource and its visual sensitivity, and the value attached to the landscape or to specific elements. For the purposes of this study, the term 'indicative landscape capacity' is used to refer to the landscape capacity of a site to accommodate residential development (typical 2-3 storey) within defined parameters.

1.4.2 Evaluation of a landscape or site's capacity to accommodate development is a complex issue and is not a scientific absolute. The evaluation of the landscape capacity of a site is based on the assessor's professional judgement about the sensitivity and value of the site and its wider setting.

1.4.3 The capacity evaluation for each site does not necessarily assume that this capacity applies consistently across the entire site (particularly for the larger sites). For example, it may be possible for a certain amount/scale of development, where carefully sited, well-designed and with suitable landscaping mitigation, to be accommodated within a site which is assessed as having an overall low or moderate capacity. Conversely, in a large site assessed as having an overall high capacity to accommodate development, it is possible for the capacity to be reduced in parts of the site due to site-specific constraints.

1.4.4 The indicative capacity of a site to accommodate development (taking into account the scope for mitigation) is evaluated primarily by combining judgments about its **landscape sensitivity** with judgments about its **landscape value** as set out in **Matrix 2.4**. In a few instances it was felt that the result of the matrix approach did not accurately reflect the complexities of the site and the result was adjusted to more closely reflect the assessment of the capacity of the site based on professional judgement.

**Matrix 1.4 : Indicative Landscape Capacity**

<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<b>Very Low</b>	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
	<b>Low</b>	Low	Moderate	High	High
	<b>Moderate</b>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	<b>High</b>	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
	<b>Very High</b>	Very Low	Low	Low	Low
		<b>Very High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Low</b>
<b>Landscape Value</b>					

1.4.5 For the purposes of this assessment, the indicative site landscape capacity categories are as defined in **Table 1.4**.

**Table 2.3: Indicative Site Landscape Capacity Definitions**

<b>Indicative Landscape Capacity Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Very Low</b>	The site is assessed as having very high landscape sensitivity and very high landscape value. Very limited potential to accommodate any scale of new development as this is highly likely to erode the positive key landscape features and characteristics of the site, which are desirable to safeguard in line with relevant national/local planning policy objectives.
<b>Low</b>	The site is assessed as having high landscape sensitivity and high landscape value. Large or medium-scale new development is

<b>Indicative Landscape Capacity Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	likely to erode the positive key landscape features and characteristics of the site which are desirable to safeguard in line with relevant national/local planning policy objectives. Taking into account site-specific constraints, there may be potential to accommodate some small-scale development in specific locations within the site with lower landscape sensitivity, subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation.
<b>Moderate</b>	The site is assessed as having very low to moderate landscape sensitivity and high landscape value, or moderate to high landscape sensitivity and low to moderate landscape value. Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation, medium and small-scale new development could potentially be accommodated without eroding positive key features and characteristics which are desirable to safeguard. Taking into account site-specific constraints, there may also be some sites with potential to accommodate some large-scale new development in specific parts of the site with lower landscape sensitivity, subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation.
<b>High</b>	The site is assessed as having low to very low sensitivity and low to moderate landscape value. Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation, large, medium and small-scale new development could potentially be accommodated within the site without eroding positive key features and characteristics which are desirable to safeguard.
<b>Very High</b>	The site is assessed as having very low landscape sensitivity and very low landscape value. Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation, large, medium and small-scale new development could potentially be accommodated without eroding positive key features and characteristics which are desirable to safeguard.