

September 2018

Land west of Satchell Lane,
Hamble

Proof of Evidence

Of:

**Silke Gruner BHons (Landscape
Architecture) CMLI**

in respect of:

Landscape Matters

LPA Ref: O/17/80319

Pins Ref: APP/W1715/W/18/3194846

on behalf of:

Mr R. Janaway and Mr S. Bull

Report No: CSA/3212/03



Report Reference	Revision	Date	Prepared by	Approved by	Comments
CSA/3212/03		3/7/2018	SG	CS	Draft
CSA/3212/03	B	6/7/2018	SG	CS	General updates
CSA/3212/03	C	26/7/2018	SG	CA	General amendments
CSA/3212/03	D	31/7/2018	SG	CA	Minor comments
CSA/3321/03	E	4/9/2018	SG	CA	Minor comments
CSA/3321/03	F	17/9/2018	SG	CA	Minor comments



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1.0 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 1.1 This evidence has been prepared by Silke Gruner ((BHons) Landscape Architecture, CML), Associate Landscape Architect and Urban Designer, of CSA Environmental.
- 1.2 I am a Chartered Landscape Architect. I hold an Honours Degree in Landscape Architecture and a Diploma in Urban Design. I have 13 years experience undertaking landscape assessments, predominantly in relation to residential development throughout the country, ranging from single properties to mixed-use developments of over 2,000 dwellings.
- 1.3 I am employed at CSA Environmental, a multi-disciplinary environmental planning practice which was established in 1999. The practice acts for the public and private sector and has an in-house team of urban designers, ecologists and landscape architects. We operate from offices in Sussex, Hertfordshire and Worcestershire.
- 1.4 CSA Environmental is currently involved in projects that range from the masterplanning of major urban extensions to redevelopment of inner city brownfield sites. We work throughout the UK, in both the rural and urban environment and have worked on a number of schemes in and around Eastleigh Borough in the past five years.
- 1.5 I have given landscape and urban design advice on numerous schemes, and been involved in the preparation of evidence for Planning Appeals.
- 1.6 The evidence I have prepared and provide for this appeal is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2.0 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE, BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 This evidence is submitted on behalf of Mr R. Janaway and Mr S. Bull ('the Applicants') in respect of an appeal against the refusal of an outline planning application ('the Application') for the erection of up to 70 dwellings, associated landscaping and amenity space provision as well as a means of access from Satchell Lane ('the Appeal Scheme'), on land to the west of Satchell Lane ('the Appeal Site'). The Application is in outline with all matters reserved save for access.
- 2.2 My evidence should be read in conjunction with the evidence of Mr Brown who deals with planning matters.
- 2.3 CSA Environmental has been involved from the outset of the planning application, and we produced the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, as well as the Development Framework Plan, Illustrative Masterplan and Design and Access Statement ('DAS') that were submitted in support of the application. I shall draw upon that information as part of my evidence. A copy of the Development Framework Plan is contained in **Appendix K**, the Illustrative Masterplan in **Appendix L**, and the Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan in **Appendix M**.
- 2.4 The Application was refused by Eastleigh Borough Council's Planning Committee on 21 September 2017. The refusal notice identifies five reasons for refusal. My evidence is concerned with the first reason which states that:
- Reason 1.** The proposals represent an inappropriate and unjustified form of development which would have an unacceptably urbanising and visually intrusive impact upon the designated countryside, to the detriment of the character, visual amenity, and the quality of the landscape of the locality. The application is therefore contrary to Saved Policies 1.CO, 18.CO, 20.CO and 59.BE of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011), and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.*
- 2.5 Eastleigh Borough Council's Statement of Case alleges that the Appeal Scheme will have a fundamental and adverse impact on the designated countryside and intrinsic character of the landscape, with specific reference to the Landscape Character Assessment of Eastleigh Borough (December 2011).

Methodology

- 2.6 To inform my assessment and in order to provide my advice, I have visited the Appeal Site and surrounding area on a number of occasions and I have undertaken an assessment of the effects of the proposed development. I have had the benefit of seeing the Appeal Site when the vegetation was both in and out of leaf.
- 2.7 My assessment takes into account the guidance contained in the third edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('GLVIA'). The methodology for my assessment is contained in **Appendix P**, along with a summary of the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the Appeal Scheme.
- 2.8 Photographs contained in **Appendix C** have been taken from within the Appeal Site or from public vantage points within the vicinity. Photographs were taken using a digital camera with a lens focal length approximating to 50mm, to give a similar depth of vision to the human eye. In some instances images have been combined to create a panorama. Photographs were taken during periods of good visibility.

3.0 LANDSCAPE POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The policy background relevant to the appeal is identified in the evidence of Mr Brown, and as such, I do not repeat it here other than to highlight those policies that are relevant to my evidence. For ease of reference I have highlighted in bold the policies that are cited in the reasons for refusal.

Local Planning Policy

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011)

- 3.2 The following 'saved' policies are of relevance to this evidence.
- 3.3 **Policy 1.CO** states that planning permission will not be granted for development outside the urban edge unless it is one of the exceptions listed within the policy.
- 3.4 Policy 3.CO states that planning permission will only be permitted for appropriate development in a local gap, if it cannot be acceptably located elsewhere, and it would not diminish the gap, physically or visually. The Appeal Site lies to the south of, and outwith the Local Gap.
- 3.5 **Policy 18.CO** states that development which fails to respect or has an adverse impact on the intrinsic character of the landscape will be refused.
- 3.6 Policy 19.CO relates to the protection of locally important features in the landscape including water courses, ponds and lakes.
- 3.7 **Policy 20.CO** covers areas identified for landscape improvements. Proposals which would prejudice such improvements or which would be detrimental to the quality of the landscape in these areas, will not be permitted. Developers' willingness to contribute towards landscape improvements will be a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications.
- 3.8 **Policy 59.BE** relates to promoting good design in new development. Development proposals should take account of the following criteria which are of relevance:
- i. they take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character and appearance of the locality or neighbourhood and are appropriate in mass, scale, materials, layout, density, design and siting, both in themselves and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views, natural features and trees worthy of retention; and

- ii. they provide a high standard of landscape design and appropriate planting where required. Development should use native plants in landscape schemes to benefit biodiversity. Development adjacent to or within the urban edge must not have an adverse impact on the setting of the settlement in the surrounding countryside.

3.9 Policy 152.OS proposes a number of dual purpose cycle and pedestrian links. The public footpath to the west of the Appeal Site is covered by this policy.

3.10 Policy 153.OS proposes a number of new bridleways in order to improve general access and off road links between existing bridleways and equestrian establishments, including one along Satchell Lane.

Submitted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 (not adopted)

3.11 The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 was submitted for formal examination in 2014. Following hearings held on 10-13 November 2014, the Government's Planning Inspector issued his Preliminary Conclusions. He concluded that the plan was not sound because it did not provide sufficient housing, with particular concerns about affordable housing provision. He recommended the Council produce a new Local Plan. As a result of these Preliminary Conclusions, the examination was concluded and work started on the new Local Plan. The submitted Local Plan has not been formally withdrawn, however, as set out in Mr Brown's evidence, the policies within it carry very little weight, and as they are not cited in the Reasons for Refusal, I have not included them here.

Proposed Submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036)

3.12 Eastleigh Borough Council have recently consulted on the Proposed Submission version of the new Local Plan (2016-1036). Until such time as this document is formally adopted, the 'saved' policies in the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001 – 2011) remain relevant insofar as they are in accordance with the NPPF. The draft policies of relevance to my evidence and the Appeal Site are set out below.

3.13 Strategic Policy S1 sets out that new development within the area should be sustainable. Sustainable proposals should take into account the following criteria which are of relevance:

- i. Take opportunities to maximise the density of new developments and redevelopments;
- ii. Maintain the local environment which includes enhancing the existing valued urban and rural environmental where possible as well as heritage assets; and

- iii. Maintain, enhance, extend and connect the natural habitats within and landscape value of the Borough, extending natural habitats into new and existing development.
- 3.14 Strategic Policy S7 deals with new development in the countryside, and sets out that there is a presumption against new development in the countryside, which is defined as all areas outside the urban edge as defined on the policies map. The Appeal Site lies outside the defined urban edge.
- 3.15 Strategic Policy 8 designates countryside gaps, including gaps between Bursledon and Hamble/Netley. The Appeal Site does not lie within a countryside gap.
- 3.16 Strategic Policy S10 sets out that new development in the Borough will seek to retain and enhance Green Infrastructure, including provision of, amongst other factors:
- i. Landscape scale strategic links to be incorporated to link the Borough's settlements and other areas such as the coast; and
 - ii. Incorporate existing historic buildings and landscapes within the wider Green Infrastructure to protect their setting.
- 3.17 Policy DM1 proposes general criteria for new development, including that development should:
- i. Not have an unacceptable impact on, and where possible enhance residential amenities of new and existing residents and the character and appearance of urban areas and the countryside;
 - ii. Take into account the context of the site including the character, appearance and land use of the area and be compatible with the adjoining uses. The mass, scale, materials, layout, design and siting should be considered, and where necessary, improve the character of the area;
 - iii. Not involve the loss or damage of existing vegetation or other landscape features of value to the character of the area, unless they can be replaced; and
 - iv. Include landscape schemes covering the design and layout of external spaces.

National Planning Policy Framework July 2018 ('NPPF')

- 3.18 National policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018; 'NPPF') and those parts relevant to this assessment are summarised below.

- 3.19 Paragraph 10 and 11 of the draft NPPF states that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be applied in relation to both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 3.20 Section 12 of the draft NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should support the creation of high quality buildings and places. Paragraph 124 states that design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.
- 3.21 Paragraph 127 states that planning policies and decisions, should ensure that developments, amongst others:
- i. will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - ii. are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - iii. are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.
- 3.22 Section 15 of the draft NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 170 of the document states that the planning system should contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural and local environment through, among other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan.
- 3.23 Paragraph 171 sets out that development plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, and allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value. Development plans should also take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure, and plan for the enhancement of natural capital.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.24 The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') which contains guidance on the design of new developments and on landscape and the natural environment, with reference to the relevant policies contained in the NPPF.
- 3.25 The Design section of the guidance describes the importance of good design as an integral part of providing sustainable development. Paragraph 6 (ID: 26-006-20140306) states:

'Design impacts on how people interact with places. Although design is only part of the planning process it can affect a range of economic, social and environmental objectives beyond the requirement for good design in its own right. Planning policies and decisions should seek to ensure the physical environment supports these objectives.'

- 3.26 It goes on to say that the following issues should be considered:
- i. local character (including landscape setting)
 - ii. safe, connected and efficient streets
 - iii. a network of greenspaces (including parks) and public places
 - iv. crime prevention
 - v. security measures
 - vi. access and inclusion
 - vii. efficient use of natural resources
 - viii. cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods.
- 3.27 The above factors have been taken into considerations in developing the proposals and Illustrative Masterplan for the Appeal Site, and these show how an appropriately (and sensitively) designed scheme can be brought forward on the Appeal Site. The detailed design and layout of the scheme will ultimately be a matter for the Reserved Matters applications.

Other Council Studies and Guidance

Small and medium greenfield housing sites background paper (June 2018; extract contained in **Appendix E**)

- 3.28 This background paper supports the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan and provides background information on the selection of small and medium greenfield sites as housing allocations in the Local Plan.
- 3.29 The Appeal Site is assessed as site 40a (also referenced as 8-5-C: Land west of Satchell Lane). The background paper considered site 40a inappropriate for residential development, as it is a 'Mineral Site' and on ecological grounds due to its proximity to the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation ('SAC'). It should be noted that Natural England did not object to the Appeal Scheme, nor did Hampshire County Council Planning (Minerals and Waste).
- 3.30 Site 40a (the Appeal Site) was also assessed in terms of its function in relation to Countryside Gaps (an extract of this study is contained in **Appendix E**), in particular its response to local character, history and reflecting the identity of the local surroundings. The background paper comments that site 40a does not lie directly between settlements and that physical separation is reinforced by the woodland. One of the assessment questions is '*Would development of this area result in a loss of 'a sense of*

transition' of leaving one settlement before entering another in this area?', with site 40a assessed as 'No'. Site 40a, the Appeal Site, was assessed as Good/Very Good overall in terms of 'potential for development to avoid impacting settlement coalescence'.

- 3.31 A Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal formed part of the background paper, with an extract showing site 40a's assessment contained in **Appendix E**. Site 40a was assessed as not having a strong topographic form/variety, and it contains no diverse landscape elements or strong landscape structure, but for the hedge line.
- 3.32 The assessment includes the question '*Are there few human scale features and a lack of urbanising features?*' with the assessment noting '*No*', and commenting that there is housing. The assessment notes that there is in part an intact landscape pattern and defined sense of enclosure, as it is partly enclosed by hedges. The assessment notes that there is not a complex landscape pattern and that the site is not in a comparatively remote location. It further finds that there is not a dispersed settlement pattern, and that there is modern development in the vicinity and an absence of vernacular buildings.
- 3.33 The assessment considers the visibility of site 40a, and sets out that there are not expansive, open or unfiltered views, but that there are, in part, key views from the public footpath.
- 3.34 Overall, site 40a (the Appeal Site) was assessed as having a Low Sensitivity, meaning that development may more easily be accommodated without significant negative landscape or visual impact, with limited mitigation. It further comments that the site is set back from the bulk of the former airfield [and] behind gardens. It is therefore clear that site 40a was not rejected as a potential development site due to potential landscape impacts.

Countryside gaps background paper (June 2018; extract contained in **Appendix F**)

- 3.35 The Countryside gaps background paper reviews the current Local and Strategic Gaps to ensure that future gap policies are compliant with national policy, and to inform the selection of preferred options for development by assessing the implication of the development on settlement pattern, character and identity. The Appeal Site does not lie within a Local or Strategic Gap, however, the land north of the Appeal Site, north of Satchell Lane, is within the Local Gap as set out in Saved Local Plan Policy 3.CO.
- 3.36 The proposed gaps within the Emerging Local Plan in the vicinity of the Appeal Site do not differ from those within the Adopted Local Plan.

Importantly, neither the Appeal Site nor the adjoining former airfield are proposed to be included within the gap. The Landscape and Visual assessment of existing gap area 11, states that the former airfield makes little contribution to the perceived gap between the settlements.

4.0 SITE CONTEXT, DESCRIPTION AND VISIBILITY

Site Context

- 4.1 The Appeal Site is 3.55ha in size, and occupies a roughly triangular piece of land along the northern edge of the settlement of Hamble. The Appeal Site location and its immediate context are illustrated on the Site Location Plan and Aerial Photograph in **Appendices A** and **B**, and on the photographs contained within **Appendix C**.
- 4.2 The Appeal Site lies within a curve formed by Satchell Lane, and is bound by the lane to the north, and by residential properties accessed off the lane to the east and south. To the west, the Appeal Site is bound by a hedgerow adjacent to a public footpath.
- 4.3 Satchell Lane along the north of the Appeal Site is bound by mature trees on either side, with a grassed field occurring to the north of the lane. To the north east is the Riverside Park Camping, Caravan and Holiday Park, with two new static caravans/lodges located along the north of the road, opposite the Site. The static caravans opposite the Appeal Site are similar in character to residential bungalows, being white rendered/clad with grey tile roofs, and planning permission exists for the siting of six static caravans/lodges within this area north of Satchell Lane (planning application reference: F/14/74903; certificate of existing lawful use reference: U/16/78020), meaning the number of caravans here are likely to increase to six. An application for the land and caravans to be permanently used for residential purposes was permitted by the Council in June 2018, and as such, the static caravans may now be used as permanent homes throughout the year (planning application reference: F/18/82639). Beyond the holiday park to the north is the Mercury Yacht Harbour, with the River Hamble located to the east.
- 4.4 A short row of late 20th Century terraces known as The Halyards, lie opposite the Appeal Site to the north east, south of the holiday park, and, along with the adjoining static caravans/bungalows, form the northernmost extent of residential development within the settlement.
- 4.5 The existing houses west of Satchell Lane which back or side onto the Appeal Site have deep rear gardens, and comprise large, detached, one or two storey homes. East of Satchell Lane in the vicinity of the Appeal Site, is 20th Century estate housing, accessed off cul-de-sacs leading from Satchell Lane, with the River Hamble located beyond to the east.
- 4.6 The centre of the village is located around 900m south of the Appeal Site and accessed via Satchell Lane.

- 4.7 An area of open land forming the former Hamble Airfield lies to the south west and west of the Appeal Site. The field is currently informally used for walking and dog exercising, and comprises rough grassland and scrub. A gas compound lies to the west of the north western Appeal Site corner.
- 4.8 Around 400m south of the Appeal Site, along the southern edge of the former airfield and the northern edge of the residential development here, lies a recreation ground, including The Pavilion (function hall, meeting rooms and changing facilities) and two Multi-use Games Areas.
- 4.9 Hamble Lane lies to the west of the former airfield, and leads north from Hamble village towards Hound. To the north west of the former airfield is the railway line between Fareham and Southampton, as well as Hamble railway station.

National Landscape Character

- 4.10 Natural England has produced profiles for England's National Character Areas ('NCA'), which divides England into 159 distinct natural areas, defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, cultural and economic activity. The Appeal Site lies within the South Hampshire Lowlands National Character Area (NCA 128) which is described as a low lying plain between the chalk hills of the Hampshire and South Downs and Southampton Water.
- 4.11 The NCA profile describes the area as a gently undulating lowland river landscape which supports pasture in small to medium sized fields, bounded by agriculturally managed hedgerows. Hedgerow oak trees are described as common with the landscape generally being well wooded, with the exception of the coastal plain, in which the Appeal Site lies, which is described as more open. Arable land and fruit production are described as being confined to small, isolated pockets of higher, more free-draining ground.

Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment – Hampshire County Council (2011; extract contained in **Appendix G**)

- 4.12 Hampshire County Council have prepared the Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment. The Appeal Site and the landscape to the east lies within Landscape Character Area ('LCA') 3D: Hamble Valley, and within Landscape Character Type ('LCT') Coastal Plain Open. The former airfield to the west lies within LCA 9D: Netley, Bursledon and Hamble Coastal Plain.
- 4.13 The key characteristics of LCA 3D are described as follows:
- i. Well defined strong valley landform with dense, semi-natural woodland along the valley sides and tops;

- ii. Distinctive yachting character and intensively used recreational waters;
 - iii. Large detached residences set within mature woodland along the valley tops and water's edge with substantial gardens and secluded character; and
 - iv. International and national wildlife designations associated with the estuary, intertidal habitats and semi-natural woodland in the upper reaches.
- 4.14 The assessment further states that the heavily wooded valley sides create a strong sense of enclosure, although it is well-settled. There are extensive views along the estuary, but few views from the top of the valley. The valley is described as being extremely important for biodiversity, as recognised by the high proportion of designations in the area.
- 4.15 In describing the experiential/perceptual characteristics of the LCA, the assessment notes that due to the visual enclosure, the character area feels distinctly separate from its surrounding landscapes. The assessments notes that there are different levels of tranquillity along the length of the valley, with the waterside area south of the M27 often being bustling and colourful and sometimes feeling crowded, while the valley sides offer a tranquil, wooded setting. The wooded valley sides and natural waterside edge are said to impart a strong sense of naturalness, with the land use away from the river channel a mixture of agricultural land supporting improved grassland, arable land and nurseries, and patches of urban development comprising mainly residential land which provides habitat variation through gardens. There are also patches of woodland, mainly broadleaved. The assessment states that there are over 40 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation ('SINC') within the LCA, as well as three local nature reserves.
- 4.16 The assessment sets out that the historic field pattern in the south of the LCA was altered by 19th Century houses with views over the Hamble, and more extensive 20th Century development which has subsumed much of the original field structure.
- 4.17 The built environment is described as comprising nucleated valley settlements south of Bursledon bridge, and that Hamble was originally a port settlement at the entrance of the estuary.
- 4.18 From my own assessment, I would agree with the above description, however the Appeal Site lies in close proximity to the existing urban area and 20th Century housing, and is subject to a number of urbanising influences. It also lies adjacent to LCA 9D which encompasses the adjoining former airfield.

- 4.19 The report sets out the key characteristics of the Coastal Plain Open LCT, including:
- i. Extensive and flat or gently sloping plain;
 - ii. Tree shelter belts and low hedgerows;
 - iii. Predominantly a large scale intensive arable farmland landscape, with grassland also occurring; and
 - iv. Medium to very large sized fields.

4.20 In terms of the visibility of the Coastal Plain Open LCT, the report states that the landscape is lower lying than the land to the north, and there are very few high spots where views of the LCT are available from. From my own assessment, I would note that the Appeal Site and adjoining land is not particularly reflective of this LCT, as the area around the Appeal Site is either wooded, developed or part of the former airfield, with only a small area of grassland in the vicinity.

Landscape Character Assessment for Eastleigh Borough (December 2011; extract contained in **Appendix H**)

- 4.21 Eastleigh Borough Council undertook a Landscape Character Assessment in December 2011. That assessment identifies the Appeal Site as lying within the 'Hound Plain' (Area 13) local landscape character area. The 'Hamble Valley' (Area 19) local landscape character area lies to the north east of the Appeal Site, encompassing the Riverside Holiday Park and the Mercury Yacht Harbour.
- 4.22 Area 13 is described as a gently domed landform which falls towards the coast and the wooded valleys on the edge of Southampton and Bursledon. With the exception of the shallow wooded depression between Butlocks Heath and Old Netley, the area is described as being largely devoid of trees, except for roadside trees and those that occur around buildings in the Hound.
- 4.23 The majority of the land is noted as being in mixed arable and pastoral use with some horsiculture around the Hound and the derelict airfield on the edge of Hamble which gives an urban fringe character to some places. Views across the landscape are described as extensive and long-ranging with the urban edges of settlements such as Newtown, Netley, Hamble, Bursledon, with the high-rise developments in neighbouring Southampton clearly visible.
- 4.24 In terms of landscape character sensitivity, the area is described as being defined mainly by its relative flatness and the feeling of an open landscape. It goes on to say that 'development within this open area could reduce the distinctiveness of the character area'.

- 4.25 The key issues for the area are described as:
- i. The degraded landscape character due to the fairly intensive use of land for horsiculture; small scale agriculture and horticulture and disused land;
 - ii. The detrimental impact of small industrial development on the open landscape;
 - iii. Inconsistent management practices of farmland, small holdings, paddocks and boundary treatments;
 - iv. Development pressure to diversify land uses from agriculture; and
 - v. The contribution of the open character to the visual separation between the settlements of Bursledon, Southampton, Netley and Hamble.

- 4.26 From my own assessment of the character of the area I would note that the description above is accurate in relation to the former airfield west of the Appeal Site, but that the Appeal Site's character is more influenced by the adjoining housing and landscape character to the east, as the Appeal Site slopes towards the east from the edge of the more open plateau which contains the airfield.

Urban Character Areas Appraisals – Bursledon, Hamble-le-Rice and Hound SPD – Roger Evans Associates (January 2008; extract contained in **Appendix I**)

- 4.27 The purpose of this urban appraisal was to provide guidance to ensure new development in the Borough is appropriate to its surroundings and helps retain the character which gives each area its identity. The Appeal Site lies adjacent to character area BHH 32. The summary description of character area BHH 32 states the following:

- i. Victorian to present day linear development west of Satchell Lane, in a fair condition.
- ii. Situated on a main thoroughfare.
- iii. Terraced and detached houses.
- iv. Brick and render walls with tile roofs.

- 4.28 The assessment concludes the area has a moderate strength of character, with guidance for the area including:

- i. Maintain the 'lane' character; and
- ii. Ensure any backland development is subordinate to the existing development and accessed via a separate access road.

Hamble Conservation Area (2008; extract contained in **Appendix J**)

- 4.29 The document contains a description and assessment of the Hamble Conservation Area, which extends south from around 520m south of the Appeal Site. The document states that the setting for the village is a low wooded hill on the west bank of the river. The Appeal Site is similarly located along this low hill on the western bank of the river. The document includes a sketch from the river towards the village, which shows the existing properties and roofs of the houses along Satchell Lane partially visible between and behind the intervening trees and vegetation along the western bank.

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations

- 4.30 The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside Map ('MAGIC') and the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001 – 2011) Proposals Map identify that the Appeal Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character or quality. Please refer to MAGIC Map Extract and Heritage Plan in **Appendix D**.
- 4.31 The Appeal Site is covered by Saved Policy 20.CO which identifies it for landscape improvements.
- 4.32 The River Hamble and its banks are covered by several ecological designations. The Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar Site lies along the river to the north, east and south of the Site, as does the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation ('SAC').
- 4.33 Around 170m east of the Appeal Site, the banks on either side of the river are designated as the Lee-On-The-Solent to Itchen Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI'), with the Mercury Marshes Local Nature Reserve ('LNR') located on the western bank, and the Hook and Warsash LNR located on the eastern bank which includes the woodland further east. The Holly Hill Woodland Park LNR extends further north east inland from the river. The Appeal Site is separated from the designated areas along the river, by intervening houses and the holiday park to the north east and east.
- 4.34 Around 370m north of the Appeal Site lies the Lincegrove and Hackett's Marshes SSSI, with Hackett's Marsh LNR located further north.

Conservation Area, Scheduled Monument and Listed Buildings

- 4.35 The southern edge of the Old Bursledon Conservation Area lies just over 300m north of the Appeal Site, and extends north, encompassing Lincegrove and Hackett's Marshes as well as the historic village core. There is no intervisibility between it and the Appeal Site.

- 4.36 The Hamble Conservation Area lies around 520m south of the Appeal Site at its nearest edge, and stretches to the south, covering the historic village centre.
- 4.37 The nearest Listed Buildings lie around 830m south of the Appeal Site along the High Street, within the Hamble Conservation Area. There is no intervisibility between the Appeal Site and these Listed Buildings.

Public Rights of Way

- 4.38 Public footpath number 1 runs along the outside of the western Appeal Site boundary, linking Satchell Lane in the north to Hamble House Gardens and the High Street in the south. There are no further public footpaths or bridleways within the immediate vicinity of the Appeal Site.

Tree Preservation Orders ('TPO')

- 4.39 There are no trees covered by TPOs on or adjacent to the Appeal Site.

Site Description

- 4.40 The Appeal Site comprises a single, roughly triangular grass field currently used for horse grazing, and is 3.55ha in size. The northern boundary is marked by a steep bank and fence, with Satchell Lane located beyond. The bank contains a large number of mature trees, including areas of mixed broadleaved trees, including ash and oak. A group of elm and scrub lies along the north eastern edge of the Appeal Site. A ditch also occurs within the wooded verge, as does a defunct concrete pillbox.
- 4.41 The Appeal Site is bound to the east by the rear gardens of the large, detached properties on Satchell Lane, with the rear boundaries marked by a combination of hedgerows, timber fences and wire fences. These properties have deep rear gardens between the houses and the Appeal Site, although the northernmost property sides onto the Appeal Site, with the house thus located closer to the Appeal Site boundary.
- 4.42 The western Appeal Site boundary is marked by a gappy hedgerow and fence, with the route of the public footpath and a scrub-covered fence located beyond.

Topography

- 4.43 The Appeal Site lies along a rounded, east-facing ridge, with the high point located roughly mid-way along the western Appeal Site boundary, at approximately 18m Above Ordnance Datum ('AOD'). The Appeal Site slopes down to a low point around 11m AOD on the eastern boundary, and also slopes down gently to the north western corner (approximately

17m AOD) and to the south western corner of the Appeal Site (approximately 15m AOD).

- 4.44 The land continues to fall to the east towards the River Hamble, before rising to around 50m AOD at Sarisbury on the opposite side of the river bank.
- 4.45 To the south, the land falls gently to Southampton Water, while the land to the west remains relatively level along the plateau where the airfield used to be. To the north, the land falls gently to the marshes, before rising to Old Bursledon at around 25m AOD.

Visibility

- 4.46 I have undertaken an assessment of the visibility of the Appeal Site and taken a series of photographs from public vantage points, rights of way and public highways. The assessment was undertaken in February when the trees were out of leaf and the Appeal Site was at its most visible in views from the wider area. The viewpoints are illustrated on the Location Plan and Aerial Photograph contained in **Appendices A** and **B** and on the photographs in **Appendix C**. Summer photographs have been added since the original assessment was undertaken, and are included on the photosheets in **Appendix C**.
- 4.47 From my assessment, it is apparent that the Appeal Site is well contained in views from the wider area by virtue of the existing trees and development along the Appeal Site's boundaries. The key representative views of the Appeal Site are described in the tables contained in **Appendix P** and are summarised below.

Near distance views

- 4.48 In views from Satchell Lane to the north, the Appeal Site is partially visible over and through the intervening scrub and trees which occur along the bank between the lane and the Appeal Site. The southern part of the Appeal Site is obscured in these views, due to the local ridge within the centre of the Appeal Site (Photographs 1 & 14).
- 4.49 Views from further west along the lane are however screened by the trees and vegetation along the road embankment (Photograph 2).
- 4.50 Views from the static caravans to the north of the lane will be further filtered by the intervening trees on the northern side of the lane (as seen in Photographs 8 & 12).
- 4.51 There are partial, filtered views of the Appeal Site from the first floor windows of the properties at The Halyards, over and through the

intervening vegetation on either side of the lane (as seen in Photograph 8).

- 4.52 The northernmost house adjacent to the eastern Appeal Site boundary (no. 161 Satchell Lane) has views over the Appeal Site from the first floor windows, and partial views from ground floor windows, over the intervening boundary hedgerow (as seen in Photographs 4 & 8).
- 4.53 The properties which bound the Appeal Site to the east and south east have partial, filtered views of the Appeal Site from rear windows and rear gardens, although views are in some cases screened by the intervening vegetation along their rear boundaries (as seen in Photographs 4, 6 & 8).
- 4.54 Views from along public footpath 1, from south of the Appeal Site, are prevented by the existing boundary fencing and vegetation along the rear gardens of the houses on Satchell Lane (Photograph 11). The Appeal Site only becomes visible from the footpath once the viewer is north of no. 133 Satchell Lane (Photograph 12).
- 4.55 Views of the Appeal Site from the public footpath to the west of the boundary are intermittent, often being screened by the intervening hedgerow (Photographs 13 & 16). Where views are available, the houses to the east of the Appeal Site are visible behind it. There is no official public access to the former airfield west of the Appeal Site, however, there is evidence of walkers using it informally. Views from here of the Appeal Site will be limited to places where there are gaps in the intervening hedgerow, with the lower parts of the Appeal Site screened due to the fact that the land falls away to the east (Photographs 23 & 24).

Middle and long distance views

- 4.56 Middle and long distance views from the north are prevented by the intervening woodland around Badnam Copse, as well as the fact that the land falls away towards the north.
- 4.57 The Appeal Site is partially visible in long distance views from the public footpath along the eastern bank of the River Hamble, however, views from further public vantage points on the eastern bank are prevented by the many trees and woodland here (Photographs 20, 21 & 22). In these views, the Appeal Site is partially visible in heavily filtered views, through the intervening trees and properties to the east of it. The existing built settlement of Hamble is visible in the foreground.
- 4.58 There will be similar views from a number of the houses located on the rising ground on the eastern river bank, over the intervening development and trees (reciprocal views evident in Photographs 4 & 16).

Landscape Quality, Sensitivity and Value

- 4.59 The Appeal Site and immediate surroundings are not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character or quality. It contains few landscape features of note and possesses relatively ordinary landscape characteristics. The eastern part of the Appeal Site is influenced by the rear gardens of the adjoining properties, and the adjacent caravan park to the north is evident from within the northern part of the Appeal Site. The pasture is currently used for horse grazing and is poached in places, however, the trees along the northern Appeal Site boundary are of good quality and contribute to the character within the north of the Appeal Site. Overall the Appeal Site is considered to be of medium landscape quality and medium to low sensitivity to residential development.
- 4.60 In terms of the wider landscape to the east and south east of the Appeal Site, the River Hamble and its banks are the subject of several ecological designations, and the village centre is designated as a Conservation Area. These areas are considered to be of high landscape/townscape quality and value.
- 4.61 The adjoining residential area at Satchell Lane comprises mostly modern housing dating from the latter part of the 20th Century. It is generally pleasant but undistinguished and is considered to be of medium townscape quality and value.
- 4.62 The former airfield to the west of the Appeal Site is vacant, and contains scrub and grassland. There is no formal public access to this land, however, there is evidence of the field being used informally by walkers. To the north of the Appeal Site is the caravan park. The landscape quality of the surrounding land to the west and north is assessed as being medium to low. The Eastleigh Borough Landscape Character Assessment notes that the Hound Plain area has an urban fringe character in places, including due to the derelict airfield. The assessment also states that the Hound Plain has a degraded landscape character.
- 4.63 There is no public access to the Appeal Site, although a public footpath occurs along the western boundary. I have assessed the Appeal Site's quality as medium, and it does not contain particularly important examples of key characteristic elements found within the landscape character area or type. The Appeal Site lies adjacent to, for the most part, 20th Century housing of no particular historic or architectural value or interest. Although the adjoining former airfield may be of some historic interest, as is the pillbox along the north of the Appeal Site, the Appeal Site does not play a major role in the setting or value of these heritage assets.

4.64 Neither the Appeal Site nor the adjoining land is covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape value, nor are any features on or around the Appeal Site identified for their landscape value or quality within the Council's development plan. The Appeal Site is therefore not, and does not form part of a valued landscape in relation to paragraph 170 of the NPPF, a point which has been agreed within the Statement of Common Ground. Nevertheless, I have assessed the Appeal Site against Box 5.1 of the GLVIA, and the judgement by Justice Ouseley in relation to the case associated with the Leonard Stanley appeal (Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/A/13/2207324). This is a generally accepted method of assessing whether a site is a valued landscape in relation to the 2012 NPPF. My assessment is set out in **Appendix P**, and it also shows that the Appeal Site does not exhibit demonstrable physical attributes which takes it out of the ordinary.

5.0 THE ABILITY OF THE APPEAL SITE TO ACCOMMODATE THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 In the following section I assess the ability of the Appeal Site to accommodate the proposed development and consider potential impacts on landscape character and visual amenity. In Section 6, I then go on to address the specific issues identified in the reasons for refusal.

5.2 A description of the development proposals is contained in the Design and Access Statement which accompanies the application, and are shown on the Development Framework Plan (a copy of which is contained in **Appendix K**), as well as on the Illustrative Masterplan and Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan (**Appendices L and M**). The key development principles are as follows:

- i. Development of up to 70 new dwellings, up to 2 storeys in height;
- ii. New vehicular access off Satchell Lane in the north east, located to minimise tree loss;
- iii. Swales and a drainage basin in the east of the Appeal Site, in the low lying areas;
- iv. Retention of the vast majority of trees and hedgerows along the Appeal Site boundaries, except for those which require removal to facilitate vehicular access;
- v. Strengthening of the existing boundary vegetation along the northern, western and eastern boundaries to create strong ecological corridors, while providing visual screening between the new and proposed houses;
- vi. Creation of new pedestrian access onto Satchell Lane and the adjoining public footpath to the north west, and the incorporation of a pedestrian and cycle link along the north of the Appeal Site between the public footpath in the west and the footway on Satchell Lane to the east;
- vii. Land within the visibility splays of the new access road to be planted with low-growing vegetation;
- viii. Provision of a new equipped children's play area within the south of the Appeal Site; and
- ix. Incorporation of recreational footways around the new homes, offering walking routes and connections to the footway on Satchell Lane and the public footpath.

5.3 The following section considers the key landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.

Relationship to Existing Settlement

- 5.4 The new homes will be well related to the existing built development in Hamble, being bound by the existing properties on Satchell Lane to the south and east. To the north, the development will be bound by Satchell Lane as it curves to the west, with the existing terraces at The Halyards located to the north east of the Appeal Site opposite the lane. The static caravans, which have the character of residential bungalows, further bound the proposed homes to the north.
- 5.5 To the west, the public footpath currently forms the western edge of the built development along Satchell Lane to the south of the Appeal Site, and will similarly form the western edge of the proposed development at the Appeal Site.
- 5.6 Development at the Appeal Site will thus not extend the built edge of Hamble any further west or north than its current western and northern extents within the east of the village.

Impact on Landscape Features

- 5.7 The landscape features of note on the Appeal Site are contained to the boundaries, and include a mature tree belt between the north of the Appeal Site and Satchell Lane. The vast majority of existing boundary vegetation is capable of being retained in the development proposals, save for three Category C trees and one Category B tree which require removal to create the new vehicular access. A group of young elm and bramble (Category C) along the edge of Satchell Lane, south of the proposed access, will also require removal to allow for sufficient visibility at the new access junction, however, a replacement hedgerow and woodland planting is proposed behind the new visibility splay, to compensate for this loss and to reintroduce structural vegetation to this part of the Satchell Lane frontage, reflecting its current vegetated character. The hedgerow (Category C) north of the lane, west of The Halyards, will require cutting back to allow for the new footway along the north of Satchell Lane.
- 5.8 The exact details of the access proposals have developed through consultation with the authorities since the Application was submitted, and a small additional area of vegetation clearance is now required to accommodate both the vehicular and the pedestrian visibility splays. In addition, some regrading of the land adjacent to the access is also required. However, when considered along the length of the lane adjacent to the Appeal Site, I do not consider that the landscape effects will be materially different from those as assessed in relation to the original access proposals, as part of the outline application.

- 5.9 To compensate for these losses, large areas of new native thicket and tree planting are proposed to be incorporated along the Appeal Site's boundaries. In addition, new trees are proposed to be incorporated along the east of the new access road to continue the tree line which exists to the west of the access, as shown on the Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan at **Appendix M**. New trees and structural vegetation will also be incorporated within the housing areas and the proposed areas of public open space, resulting in a net gain in tree cover, and species and age structure. The Council's Tree Officer did not object to the application, and agreed that the long term impact from an arboricultural point of view, considering the replacement planting proposed, would be relatively low.
- 5.10 The proposed swales and drainage basins on the Appeal Site will also offer the opportunity to introduce new habitat into what is currently a grassed field, and these will be sown with wildflowers to provide further biodiversity enhancements. Overall, it is considered that the proposed development will result in a biodiversity gain overall, and increase the landscape structure and diversity of the field.

Public Rights of Way

- 5.11 There will be no direct impacts to the adjoining public footpath. The proposals show new recreational footways within the Appeal Site which will link with the public footpath to form a series of walking routes and links within the development and to the surrounding village.
- 5.12 Hampshire County Council Countryside Services commented on the application, and welcomed the proposal for the Appeal Scheme to link to the existing footpath, and noted that the increased use of the footpath will have an adverse impact on the footpath's amenity value.
- 5.13 I would note from my assessment that the public footpath currently runs between houses or along the rear boundaries of existing houses for the majority of its length (for approximately 900m from the High Street northwards towards the southern edge of the Appeal Site, with the remainder of the footpath alongside the Appeal Site further to the north measuring approximately 280m). This has an urbanising effect on the character and experience along the route, and the experience of walking along the footpath is therefore not comparable with a recreational walk in the countryside. In addition, this footpath does not continue north of the Appeal Site, with users either having to walk east along Satchell Lane towards the footways within Hamble, or walk along the lane to the west, to a bridleway which leads further north from a point around 550m north west of the Appeal Site along the lane. The footpath's sensitivity and amenity value is thus lower, and the proposed development and increased use will not have a material effect on the

public footpath's amenity value. The proposed foot/cycle link along the north of the Appeal Scheme will however create the opportunity to walk east from this footpath, from the connection at the north western corner of the Appeal Site, without having to walk along the lane.

Visual Impact and Effects

- 5.14 The visual appraisal in Section 4 identified that the Appeal Site is well contained in views from the wider area by virtue of the existing built development and the well-treed landscape. A summary of the impact of the proposals on the key views of the Appeal Site is contained in Table SVE 1 in **Appendix P** and these are discussed briefly below.
- 5.15 The new homes will be partially visible through the intervening trees in views from Satchell Lane to the north. In views from along Satchell Lane, the existing caravan park and housing at The Halyards are already visible, and the new homes will thus not appear discordant within the surrounding landscape/townscape.
- 5.16 In views from further west along the lane, from the approach into the village, the new homes will be partially visible in heavily filtered views through the intervening trees along the lane, and will not become apparent until the viewer is near the Appeal Site's north western corner, with the entrance to the marina and part of the caravan park further east becoming visible a short distance further east along the lane.
- 5.17 The views from the static caravans opposite the Appeal Site of the new homes will be heavily filtered by the trees on either side of Satchell Lane.
- 5.18 The new homes and access will be partially visible from The Halyards across the new access and associated visibility splay, however new landscaping along the Appeal Site's boundaries will filter these views as it matures. The new homes will also be set back behind an area of open space along Satchell Lane, to mitigate the impact on views from The Halyards.
- 5.19 Several of the existing houses east of the Appeal Site will have views of the new development from rear windows and gardens. The proposals allow for a band of thicket and tree planting along the eastern Appeal Site boundary and this vegetation will filter and screen views of the new houses as it matures. The new homes have also been set back from the eastern boundary to limit the effects on the views.
- 5.20 There will be opportunities for views of the new homes from the public footpath adjacent to the Appeal Site, however the proposals allow for new thicket and tree planting along the existing hedgerow west of the Appeal Site, to ensure the views are heavily filtered. Although there is no

official public access to the former airfield west of the Appeal Site, there is evidence of walkers using it informally. The tops of the new homes will be visible over the intervening existing and proposed vegetation along the western Appeal Site boundary, in views from within the former airfield in the vicinity of the Appeal Site.

- 5.21 In long distance views from the footpaths on the opposite river bank to the east, the tops of the new homes will be partially visible along the horizon, however, they will be filtered by the existing and proposed trees. In addition, they will be seen behind the existing housing to the east of the Appeal Site and within the context of the houses to the south, and will appear as a small extension to the existing skyline of Hamble along Satchell Lane.
- 5.22 The new homes will be partially visible in heavily filtered views from a number of houses on the rising ground on the opposite river bank.
- 5.23 Further long distance views are prevented due to the surrounding built development and the local topography.

Landscape Change and Effects

- 5.24 As set out in Section 4, the Appeal Site is not covered by any statutory designations for landscape character or quality. Overall the Appeal Site is assessed as being of medium landscape quality and value, and medium to low sensitivity to residential development. The important landscape features of the Appeal Site are contained to its boundaries, and include the boundary trees and hedgerows. The majority of the Appeal Site's landscape features are capable of being retained within the proposed development.
- 5.25 Development will result in the loss of a single horse grazing field at the edge of the settlement which is subject to a number of urbanising influences, including the neighbouring housing. The visual assessment found that views of the Appeal Site are relatively localised and the landscape effect of development will therefore not extend much beyond the proposed development extent. The Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan at **Appendix M** shows how new structural and ornamental planting can be incorporated within the proposed development, to soften views of the new homes, create a soft development and urban edge, and reflect the treed character of Satchell Lane and the residential areas in the vicinity of the Appeal Site.
- 5.26 The proposed development is well related to the adjoining built development, and is compatible with the existing settlement pattern. I have assessed the adjoining landscape/townscape quality and sensitivity

as medium to medium/low. Although there will be a moderate (year 1) to slight adverse (year 15) effect on the Appeal Site's character, the effects on the surrounding landscape and townscape will be no more than slight to negligible adverse, as the Appeal Site's boundaries are well defined, and as views of it are limited. In addition, at the Reserved Matters stage, the new homes and landscape can be designed to reflect and respect the adjoining landscape/townscape. The proposed development is contained from the wider countryside beyond by the western and northern boundary vegetation, as well as Satchell Lane and the vegetation along it, and the fact that the Appeal Site slopes away from the adjoining land to the west. Development at the Appeal Site will thus have no more than a negligible effect on the wider landscape.

- 5.27 Accordingly, it is considered that a residential scheme which follows the principles shown on the Development Framework Plan can be accommodated at the Appeal Site without giving rise to any significant harm to the neighbouring countryside. A summary table detailing the anticipated landscape effects can be found in Table SLE 1 in **Appendix P**.

6.0 RESPONSE TO THE REASON FOR REFUSAL

- 6.1 The first Reason for Refusal alleges that the proposal would have an unacceptably urbanising and visually intrusive impact upon the designated countryside, to the detriment of the character, visual amenity, and the quality of the landscape of the locality. It states:

The proposals represent an inappropriate and unjustified form of development which would have an unacceptably urbanising and visually intrusive impact upon the designated countryside, to the detriment of the character, visual amenity, and the quality of the landscape of the locality. The application is therefore contrary to Saved Policies 1.CO, 18.CO, 20.CO and 59.BE of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011), and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 6.2 For ease of reference I have broken the Reason for Refusal down into its constituent parts and comment as follows.

Character of Appeal Site

- 6.3 Reason for Refusal 1 alleges that the proposed development would have an unacceptably urbanising impact on the landscape of the locality, with the Officer setting out in the Report to Committee that the proposed development would be a significant urbanisation which would be to the detriment of the intrinsic character of the landscape.
- 6.4 As set out earlier, the Appeal Site's landscape quality has been assessed as medium and its sensitivity to residential development as medium to low. It is not covered by any designations for landscape quality or value. Its character is influenced by the adjoining properties, and the Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment highlighted that the former airfield which adjoins the Appeal Site gives an urban fringe character, and that the Character Area has a degraded character due to the fairly intensive use of land for horsiculture.
- 6.5 The paddock which forms the Appeal Site is an example of where horsiculture in the area has degraded the landscape character, with areas of ground within the Appeal Site poached and bare in places. While the field itself is of lower landscape quality, the mature trees and hedges along the Appeal Site boundaries are of higher landscape quality, and are proposed to be retained where possible, with new native tree and thicket planting incorporated within the proposals to mitigate for any losses. In addition, the swales and drainage basins and proposed areas of long grass/wildflower present the opportunity to enhance the Appeal Site's biodiversity, which is an objective of the Local Plan.

- 6.6 While the Appeal Site's character will change from open land to residential development and associated open space, this is an inevitable consequence of developing any greenfield site. I have set out in Section 5 that proposed residential development at the Appeal Site would be well related to the existing, adjoining houses, and the resultant character of a residential development at the Appeal Site will not be out of character with the surroundings.
- 6.7 At the detailed design stage, the new homes and streets can be designed to reflect the positive elements of the surrounding architecture and the historic vernacular of Hamble. While the Appeal Site's character will change, the proposals will result in a new character which is compatible with the surrounding landscape and townscape. The result will not be substantially uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.

Visual Effects

- 6.8 Reason for Refusal 1 alleges that the proposed development will have a visually intrusive impact upon the designated countryside. I have set out in Section 5 that views of the proposed homes will be limited to those from the adjacent lane, houses and footpath, with limited long distance views from the opposite river bank to the east.
- 6.9 Where the new homes are visible from Satchell Lane, they will be seen in filtered views behind the existing vegetation and trees along the bank to the south of the lane, and the proposals allow for additional vegetation to be incorporated along the northern Appeal Site boundary, to further filter these views. There will be clear, partial views of the proposed development from adjacent to the new access road into the Appeal Site from Satchell Lane, however, the new homes will be seen within the context of the white static caravans/bungalows opposite the lane, as well as the built form at The Halyards.
- 6.10 Where the new homes are visible from the adjoining public footpath, they will be seen within the context of the existing adjoining houses south along the path, which are also partially visible along its length. The development proposals allow for new thicket and tree planting along the western boundary hedgerow, to further filter the views from the path of the new homes. The new homes will also be outward facing, presenting a positive outlook onto the footpath, as opposed to the rear boundaries of the properties along the built edge which are currently visible from here.
- 6.11 Although there is no formal public access to the former airfield west of the Appeal Site, there is evidence of the land being used informally by walkers. Views from within the land to the west will be of the tops of the new houses over the intervening existing and proposed vegetation. These

new houses will however not appear out of character within the views, as the existing houses to the south are similarly partially visible.

- 6.12 The proposed development at the Appeal Site will therefore not have a significant visual impact, and will be well contained in views by the existing and proposed vegetation, as well as being seen within the context of the existing adjoining built development.
- 6.13 The Council's background study on 'Small and medium housing sites' (contained in **Appendix E**) identified the Appeal Site as site 40a, and found that the Appeal Site was not subject to open, expansive or unfiltered views. The assessment also noted that there were, in part, views from the public footpath by users who have a high level of interest in the visual environments. The study concluded that site 40a had a 'Low Sensitivity' in relation to potential development avoiding impacts on sensitive landscapes, with the methodology for the study setting out that low sensitivity means that development may be more easily accommodated without significant negative landscape or visual impact with mitigation' (my underlining).

Character of the surrounding and wider landscape/townscape

- 6.14 Reason for Refusal 1 alleges that the proposed development would have an unacceptably urbanising and visually intrusive impact upon the designated countryside, to the detriment of the character and quality of the landscape of the locality. I have set out above that there will be no significant visual effects due to the proposed development at the Appeal Site, and the proposed homes will not be visually intrusive.
- 6.15 I have also highlighted in Section 4 that the Council's own Landscape Character Assessment sets out that the former airfield results in an urban fringe character, and that the Character Area which includes the Appeal Site has a degraded landscape character. The Council's Urban Character Areas Appraisals sets out that the townscape character area associated with the housing east of the Appeal Site on Satchell Lane, is in a fair condition with a moderate strength of character. From my assessment of the surrounding landscape and townscape, I agree with the studies' assessment of the surrounding area's character and quality, and I have assessed these as being of medium to medium/low landscape/townscape quality, and a medium to medium/low sensitivity to change.

Landscape

- 6.16 The Officer's Report cites the 'Council's Landscape Officer', however, there appears to have been no person employed by the Council at that time with that title, nor are there any consultation responses in relation to

the Application available from a Landscape Officer, and indeed, the comments in relation to the potential landscape effects of the Application were made by the Council's Head of Planning Policy and Design. While the Officer's Report cites the 'Council's Landscape Officer', I have assumed that the Officer had meant to refer to the 'Council's Landscape Character Assessment', which the Officer notes has highlighted that the intrinsic, open landscape character of the Hound Plain Landscape Character Area is vulnerable to the visual intrusiveness of new development to its fringes. From my assessment and as seen in Photograph 24 in **Appendix C**, the former airfield to the west of the Appeal Site is more representative of this open character, with the Appeal Site having a different, more contained character, being a much smaller field, bounded by housing, hedgerows and trees.

- 6.17 The Officer's Report states that the Appeal Site and former airfield are visually integrated, with only a sparse hedgerow between the two. It is evident that the landform of the Appeal Site falls away from the plateau which contains the airfield, towards the adjoining built development, and only the westernmost, highest parts of the Appeal Site have any intervisibility with the former airfield. As seen in Photograph 23, summer views of the Appeal Site from the former airfield are screened, while winter views are partial and filtered by the intervening hedge, as are views from the Appeal Site towards the former airfield (Photograph 7).
- 6.18 In views from Satchell Lane in the vicinity of the Appeal Site, the intervening hedgerow along the south of the lane heavily filters views of both the Appeal Site and the former airfield, and they do therefore not appear visually integrated in these views.
- 6.19 When walking along public footpath 1 between the airfield and the Appeal Site, the viewer is aware of the level, open airfield on the western side, partially visible through the boundary vegetation, while the land to the east of the viewer slopes down, and there are partial views through the intervening vegetation over the Appeal Site's field, towards the housing beyond. The character of the views east and west are thus different, and the Appeal Site is therefore not experienced as visually integrated with the airfield in views from this footpath. Therefore, the Appeal Site is not perceived as part of the former airfield. Development at the Appeal Site will therefore not be seen as part of the former airfield, and as the Appeal Site does not form part of the wider, characteristically open countryside, the effects of the proposed development on the airfield and wider countryside to the west will be limited.
- 6.20 I have set out in Section 5 that the Appeal Site slopes away from the open plain to the west which contains the former airfield, with the Appeal Site located on a similar topography and slope as the existing settlement. Due

to the landform of the Appeal Site in relation to the adjoining open area, it does not visually form part of the 'intrinsic, open landscape'. I have also explained that public views of the proposed homes will be very limited from the wider countryside to the west. Where the new homes are visible from the west, they will be seen within the context of the existing houses on the edge of Hamble, and will not appear out of character or intrusive within the open landscape. The proposed homes on the Appeal Site will therefore not have a material effect on the character or openness of the Hound Plain LCA.

Townscape

- 6.21 The townscape character of the adjoining homes to the north, east and south is, for the most part, of no architectural or historic merit or value. There are no Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the Appeal Site, and the Hamble Conservation Area lies around 520m south of the Appeal Site. At the detailed design stage, the new homes at the Appeal Site can be designed to reflect the positive design elements within the surrounding townscape, as well as the historic vernacular of Hamble. The Urban Character Areas Appraisal sets out guidelines for the Satchell Lane Urban Character Area, including maintaining the 'lane' character and ensuring backland development is subordinate to the existing development and accessed via a separate access road.
- 6.22 Development at the Appeal Site is proposed to be accessed off a new vehicular road from Satchell Lane. As set out below in my evidence, there will be a change in character along a short section of Satchell Lane, however, the 'lane' character will remain. By containing and setting back the proposed built form behind the existing tree and hedge line and a linear area of open space, the new homes will be subservient in public views when travelling along Satchell Lane, in comparison to the existing homes to the south east along the lane, which are clearly visible from the street and which form the key element in the streetscene here. In views from the vicinity of the Appeal Site and its proposed access, the treed and vegetated bank will form the key element in the streetscene, with the new homes partially visible in filtered views beyond. The proposed development can thus be accommodated in line with the guidance set out in the Urban Character Areas Appraisal.
- 6.23 The static caravans to the north of the Appeal Site are partially visible from Satchell Lane between the intervening trees, and are white in colour, rendered and/or clad, and have grey tile roofs and brick plinths (as seen in Photographs 10 and 25 in **Appendix C**). For all intents and purposes, they have the appearance of permanent, residential bungalows, and as such, are an urbanising and visible element to the north of the Appeal Site, and therefore form part of the built form of the settlement.

- 6.24 I have set out in Section 5 that the proposed development is well related to the existing built form of Hamble, being bound by existing houses to the south and east, and by the static caravans/bungalows to the north. The proposed development at the Appeal Site will not extend the built form of the settlement any further west than its current extents, and will be bound to the north by the static caravans/bungalows. The proposed development will extend approximately 20m to the north of The Halyards.
- 6.25 The effects of the proposed development at the Appeal Site will be very well contained, and there will be no significant impacts on the character of the wider landscape or the townscape of Hamble.

Relationship between the Appeal Site, the settlement edge and the countryside

- 6.26 The Officer's Report sets out that development at the Appeal Site will appear as a 'straggling addition on the fringe of the village'. Below I describe the effects of entering and leaving the settlement in the vicinity of the Appeal Site, both in terms of views as well as the character along the lane, to illustrate that the proposed development will not significantly affect the relationship between the settlement and the adjoining countryside, nor will it affect the point at which the built form at Hamble becomes evident when entering Hamble along Satchell Lane.
- 6.27 The Council's background study 'Small and medium greenfield housing sites' (**Appendix E**), assessed the Appeal Site as site 40a in terms of its development potential, and in response to the assessment question '*Would development of this area result in a loss of a 'sense of transition' of leaving one settlement before entering another in this area*', the assessment responds '*No*'.

Satchell Lane

- 6.28 I have explained above how the proposed development is well related to the existing built edge of Hamble, as illustrated on the plans at **Appendix N**. As seen on **Plan 1**, when travelling east along Satchell Lane, views of the built development at Hamble first become available approximately 50m west of the Appeal Site's north western boundary (at point A on **Plan 1**, where the entrance to the Mercury Marina and the static caravans beyond are visible). The new homes will become partially visible through the intervening vegetation from the north western edge of the Appeal Site (at point B on **Plan 1**). The proposed development will therefore not extend the point at which the settlement becomes visible any further west than the current location, when entering Hamble from the east along the lane.
- 6.29 In terms of the character of the landscape/townscape along the lane and the transition between the countryside and the built form when travelling

along it from the east, the length of Satchell Lane where the character of the lane can be considered rural, between the static caravans north east of the Appeal Site (i.e. the current urban edge of Hamble here) and the railway line at Hound, is around 900m (i.e. approximately 900m between the railway line at Point C and the current settlement edge at Point D, as shown on **Plan 2** in **Appendix N**). At the settlement edge (Point D), the lane enters a transition area between the countryside to the west and the suburban form further east. In this transition area, the lane is bound by built form to one side, and this transition area currently extends to approximately 150m between Points D and E, with the lane further south bound by housing on both sides (Point E and beyond to the south, as shown on **Plan 2**). Post development, when travelling east into the settlement, this transition area along the lane will occur approximately 125m further east than currently (between Point F and Point D on **Plan 3**), however, the remaining approximately 775m of Satchell Lane to the west will remain rural in character (between Point C and Point F on **Plan 3**). The suburban form and character experienced along Satchell Lane will therefore only extend approximately 150m further west than is currently the case, from Point D south eastwards.

- 6.30 The transition between the countryside and the built extent of the settlement in the vicinity of the Appeal Site when travelling east along Satchell Lane, will therefore occur approximately 125m further west along the lane, once the viewer has passed the north western corner of the Appeal Site. The majority (approximately 775m) of the journey along Satchell Lane, from Hound to the settlement at Hamble, will however remain rural in character.
- 6.31 Similarly, when travelling west along Satchell Lane out of Hamble, the suburban character of the settlement will be extended by around 150m further west (extending from Point E to Point D on **Plan 3**), with the transition area extending approximately 125m further west than currently (moving from Point D to Point F). Once the traveller/viewer has past the north western corner of the Appeal Site (Point F), the remainder of the journey (approximately 775m between Point F and Point C) along Satchell Lane into Hound will remain rural in character.
- 6.32 The transition area, where the character experienced along the lane changes from rural to suburban, currently measures approximately 150m in length, and the length of this transition area will reduce slightly post development to approximately 125m. Therefore, when entering Hamble along Satchell Lane, the transition will occur approximately 125m further west than currently. As seen on the plans at **Appendix N**, the Appeal Scheme will not result in a significant extension of the built form into the countryside, nor will it result in a straggling addition to the village. Indeed,

it will be well related to the existing settlement form, and will form an appropriate and considered new edge to Hamble in this location.

Public footpath 1

- 6.33 The Officer's Report states that, when walking northwards alongside the outer edge of the Appeal Site on public footpath 1, there is a clear sense of leaving the built up area and having entered the countryside. As set out in paragraph 5.13 earlier in my evidence, for much of the length of the footpath, when moving north from the centre of Hamble, the viewer passes along the rear gardens of the existing properties on Satchell Lane. As the viewer passes the Appeal Site, the existing adjoining homes to the east remain partially visible through the intervening hedgerow, and these still exert an urbanising influence on the character of the path. The viewer is therefore still very much aware of the built settlement, and the feeling of entering the countryside does not occur adjacent to the Appeal Site, but in fact only occurs once the traveller reaches Satchell Lane. Post development, as the viewer passes the proposed development on the Appeal Site, the new homes will be seen after moving past the existing houses, and will form a continuation of the built edge, albeit that the development is proposed to front onto the footpath, as opposed to back onto it. In addition, the western hedgerow boundary is proposed to be strengthened with additional native thicket and tree planting, and this will further filter views from the path of the new homes.
- 6.34 When travelling south along the footpath, the new homes will be partially visible from the junction of Satchell Lane and the footpath, and as they are proposed to be outward facing, the new homes, where they are visible behind the intervening existing and proposed vegetation, will be seen as the entrance to the settlement along the path. In views from along the footpath, the new homes will appear well related to the existing built edge, and will follow a similar line to the existing built form to the east of the footpath, while the land to the west of the footpath will remain open. Although the character along this section of the footpath will change, the proposed houses will face onto the path and create a pleasant outlook, as opposed to views of the rear aspect of the built edge which currently exists to the south. The proposed additional vegetation will soften the built form and filter views of the new homes. In addition, the point at which the traveller enters or leaves the open countryside will not materially change.

Character of Satchell Lane

- 6.35 The Officer comments on the semi-rural character of Satchell Lane adjacent to the Appeal Site. While the intrinsic characteristics of the Appeal Site and its surroundings ensure that the proposed built form is well related to the settlement form at Hamble, as explained above, the

proposed access road has also been located as far east as possible, to maximise the physical and perceptual connection between the existing adjoining residential development along Satchell Lane and the proposed residential development at the Appeal Site. Positioning the access as far east as possible also aids in minimising the effect of the development on the character of the more rural parts of Satchell Lane to the west.

- 6.36 I have set out above how the static caravans/bungalows form the current edge to the built settlement of Hamble, along Satchell Lane. The new access will be located around 20m west of the western edge of The Halyards. When moving east along Satchell Lane towards Hamble, the new access road will become visible once the viewer is adjacent to the entrance to the Mercury Marina, at which point the existing layby and access road into The Halyards is also visible (as seen on Photograph 25 in **Appendix C**), and the static caravans/bungalows adjacent to the entrance are clearly visible in the near distance. The proposed location of the access road will therefore have no additional effects on the character of the majority of Satchell Lane, above those associated with the new homes, as set out earlier.
- 6.37 When travelling away from Hamble along Satchell Lane, the proposed access road is located just beyond the westernmost extent of the properties opposite the Appeal Site at The Halyards, with the static caravans/bungalows located beyond, opposite the proposed homes within the Appeal Site. The new access road will become visible from along Satchell Lane from a point approximately 20m beyond (north west) the entrance to no. 161 Satchell Lane, with The Halyards, the static caravans/bungalows and entrance to the Mercury Marina also visible beyond this point, and the static caravans/bungalows and entrance to the Mercury Marina located beyond the new access road. The proposed access, as well as the associated built form, will therefore be seen adjacent to the existing settlement and will be well integrated with it, and although there will be a localised direct effect on Satchell Lane and its character, there will be no significant effects on the overall character of the lane to the east and west of the Appeal Site.
- 6.38 As shown on the Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan in **Appendix M**, low-growing planting is proposed to be planted within the visibility splays associated with the new access road, to ensure safe visibility for vehicles and pedestrians is maintained. This new vegetation will ensure a verdant verge along the regraded land, and the proposed road and vegetation will not appear out of character within the surrounding townscape/landscape. New structural vegetation is proposed behind the visibility splay, including hedgerow and tree planting to filter views of the new homes and reflect the treed character of the lane. These appropriate

landscaping measures will ensure the regraded land and development frontage is reflective of the character of Satchell Lane, ensuring no significant effects on the overall character of Satchell Lane.

Gap and Coalescence

- 6.39 The Officer states that the open space (i.e. the former airfield and Appeal Site) collectively form a valuable 'gap' between the settlements along the Hamble peninsula, and that development within this gap would weaken the effectiveness of the gap. The Appeal Site does not lie within a designated Strategic or Local Gap. I have explained earlier in my evidence that the Appeal Site and the adjoining former airfield are not intrinsically visually linked, and do not form part of the same open space.
- 6.40 The Council have undertaken studies in relation to the 'Countryside gap' (Countryside gaps background paper, June 2018; **Appendix F**), and in relation to the Netley and Hamble gap, the study states 'the former airfield makes little contribution to the perceived gap between settlements... Development between Satchell Lane and Hamble Lane on the former airfield site would significantly change the urban form of Hamble but would not fundamentally undermine the separation between Hamble and Netley providing the fields south west of Hound Corner remain undeveloped'(my underlining). The study did not consider that the former airfield, which lies closer to Netley than the adjoining Appeal Site, was fundamental in retaining a gap between Netley and Hamble, and it is thus reasonable to deduce that the Appeal Site, which lies further away from Netley, similarly does not play a fundamental part in maintaining this gap.
- 6.41 In terms of the separation between Hamble and Bursledon to the north of the Appeal Site, the Countryside gaps background study states that the distance between the northern tip of the land around the Mercury Marina in Hamble (which is located north of the Appeal Site) and the houses on Salterns Lane in Bursledon is 400m, and that the risk of coalescence is limited by the river, mature vegetation and the railway corridor. The Countryside gaps background study goes on to recommend that the area of land to the north and north west of the Appeal Site, north of the former airfield and the Mercury Marina, is removed from the Local Gap designation (Local Plan Review 2006-2011). The Council's own studies thus find that the land to the west and north of the Appeal Site are not required to be designated to maintain separation between Hamble, Netley and Bursledon, and it is therefore fair to say that the Appeal Site, which lies further south and east of the study areas, similarly does not play any meaningful role in separation of the settlements.
- 6.42 The Council's background study on 'Small and medium greenfield housing sites' (**Appendix E**) identified the Appeal Site as site 40a, and

concluded that site 40a had a 'Good/Very Good' potential to be developed without impacting upon settlement coalescence.

6.43 The length of Satchell Lane between the static caravans north east of the Appeal Site, i.e. the current urban edge of Hamble here, and the railway line at Hound, where the character of the road changes markedly, is around 900m. Were the Appeal Site to be developed, this distance along Satchell Lane between the built edge of Hamble and the railway, will reduce by approximately 125m (as seen on Plan 3 in **Appendix N**). Furthermore, development at the Appeal Site will still be around 1.5km from the eastern edge of Netley to the west. To the north, development at the Appeal Site will reduce the current distance between The Halyards and the railway line on the southern edge of Bursledon, by 20m, from approximately 700m to approximately 680m, and will be located further south than the adjoining static caravans/bungalows.

6.44 It is evident that the Council's own studies in relation to Countryside Gaps and preventing coalescence, do not consider the land around the Appeal Site, which is closer to the adjoining settlements than the Appeal Site itself, as necessary to prevent coalescence between Hamble, Netley and Bursledon. In addition, the Appeal Site does not visually form part of the former airfield (which in itself is not considered essential to maintaining the gap), and if the Appeal Site were to be developed, there would still be significant areas of intervening land between the settlement edge at Hamble and the adjoining settlements. The Appeal Site does not lie within an area designated as a Local or Strategic Gap, and development at the Appeal Site will therefore not lead to a material change to the effectiveness of the gaps around Hamble.

Saved Policy 1.CO

6.45 Mr Brown's evidence deals with the proposals in relation to Saved Policy 1.CO.

Saved Policy 18.CO

6.46 Saved Policy 18.CO requires development to respect the intrinsic character of the landscape. I have explained in my evidence that the Appeal Site's character differs from that of the adjoining former airfield and also from that described in Eastleigh Borough's Landscape Character Assessment. I have also set out that the proposed development at the Appeal Site will not have a material effect on the character of the wider landscape.

6.47 The supporting text to the Policy sets out that the important features which contribute to the quality of the landscape should be retained. The proposals show how the majority of the Appeal Site's boundary trees and

vegetation are proposed to be retained and strengthened, thereby enhancing the structure and quality of the Appeal Site's important landscape features.

Saved Policy 20.CO

- 6.48 Saved Policy 20.CO covers the Appeal Site and identifies areas where landscape improvements are proposed. The Policy states that proposals which would prejudice such improvements, or which in themselves would be detrimental to the quality of the landscape, will not be permitted. The Policy also states that developer's willingness to contribute towards landscape improvements will be a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications.
- 6.49 The supporting text to the Policy sets out the improvements the Council will seek, including:
- i. Removing eyesores such as dilapidated buildings and fences;
 - ii. Improve and bring into positive use degraded land;
 - iii. Improve and reinforce boundaries between built up and green areas and link these areas through appropriate landscape treatment; and
 - iv. Plant trees, shrubs, tree groups and hedgerows on expanses of open land in order to improve visual amenity.
- 6.50 The Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan (**Appendix M**) for the proposed development shows how new trees, shrubs, hedgerows and thicket are proposed to be incorporated along the eastern and western development boundaries, filtering views of the new homes and enhancing the landscape structure. The Appeal Site's field has been assessed as being of medium to low quality, and while it is not derelict, it does partly have a degraded character. The proposed development includes new areas of public open space, including amenity grass, long grassland, drainage features and new structural planting, which will enhance the degraded landscape of the Appeal Site. In addition, a well-designed residential scheme will not appear discordant within the surrounding context, as set out within the Design and Access Statement. As such, it is considered that the Appeal Scheme accords with the Policy and its supporting text.

Saved Policy 59.BE

6.51 Saved Policy 59.BE sets out a series of criteria which new development must meet. Below, I have commented on how the development at the Appeal Site is proposed to meet the relevant requirements.

- i. *Take account of the context of the site and the character and appearance of the locality, including natural features and trees worthy of retention* – The Design and Access Statement sets out how the proposals have been shaped by the Appeal Site’s context and character. At the detailed design stage, the new homes and layout can be designed to reflect the positive built elements within the locality as well as the historic vernacular. The Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan shows how the majority of the mature trees and vegetation at the Appeal Site boundaries are proposed to be retained and enhanced, and how they have shaped the proposed development form.
- ii. *Provide a high standard of landscape design, and development adjacent to the urban edge must not have an adverse impact on the setting of the settlement in the surrounding countryside* - The Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan shows the landscaping proposals for the Appeal Site, and at the detailed design stage, the exact species and planting layout can be agreed. I have set out earlier in my evidence that the proposed development at the Appeal Site will not significantly affect the character of the settlement in and adjoining countryside.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

7.1 This evidence is submitted on behalf of Mr R. Janaway and Mr S. Bull in respect of an appeal against the refusal of an outline planning application for the erection of up to 70 dwellings, associated landscaping and amenity space provision as well as a means of access from Satchell Lane, on land to the west of Satchell Lane. The Application is in outline with all matters reserved save for access.

7.2 The Application was refused by Eastleigh Borough Council's Planning Committee on 21 September 2017. The refusal notice identifies five reasons for refusal. My evidence is concerned with the first reason which states that:

***Reason 1.** The proposals represent an inappropriate and unjustified form of development which would have an unacceptably urbanising and visually intrusive impact upon the designated countryside, to the detriment of the character, visual amenity, and the quality of the landscape of the locality. The application is therefore contrary to Saved Policies 1.CO, 18.CO, 20.CO and 59.BE of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011), and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

7.3 The Appeal Site is 3.55ha in size, and occupies a roughly triangular, single field of pasture/horse grazing, on land along the northern edge of the settlement of Hamble. The Appeal Site lies within a curve formed by Satchell Lane, and is bound by the lane to the north, and by residential properties accessed off the lane to the east and south. To the west, the Appeal Site is bound by a hedgerow adjacent to public footpath number 1, with the former Hamble Airfield located beyond.

7.4 Eastleigh Borough Council commissioned and produced several background studies to support the preparation of their new Local Plan (2016-2036). The 'Small and medium greenfield housing sites background paper (June 2018)' identified the Appeal Site as site 40a, and assessed the potential development sites against a series of criteria, including:

- i. their function in relation to Countryside Gaps – The study found that development at site 40a (the Appeal Site) would not result in a loss of a 'sense of transition' in leaving one settlement before entering another. It assessed site 40a as Good to Very Good in relation to the 'potential for development to avoid impacting settlement coalescence'.
- ii. their landscape sensitivity – The study assessed site 40a as: not having a strong topographic form/variety; containing no diverse

landscape elements or strong landscape structure, but for the hedge line; not having a complex landscape pattern; not being in a remote location; not having a dispersed settlement pattern; and having modern development in the vicinity and an absence of vernacular buildings.

- iii. visibility - The study sets out that there are not expansive, open or unfiltered views, but that there are, in part, key views from the public footpath.

- 7.5 The study concluded that site 40a had a 'Low Sensitivity' in relation to potential development avoiding impacts on sensitive landscapes, with the methodology for the study setting out that low sensitivity means that development may be more easily accommodated without significant negative landscape or visual impact with mitigation' (my underlining).
- 7.6 The Council's 'Countryside gaps background paper (June 2018)' considered the existing and potential countryside gaps in the Borough. The Appeal Site does not lie within a gap, and was not assessed within the study. The former airfield to the west of the Appeal Site was however considered within the study, with the findings setting out that the former airfield makes little contribution to the perceived gap between the settlements.
- 7.7 The Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment places the Appeal Site within Landscape Character Area '3D: Hamble Valley', and within Landscape Character Type 'Coastal Plain Open'. From my own assessment, I agree with the description of the key characteristics of the Hamble Valley LCA, and some of the characteristics are evident on and adjacent to the Appeal Site, however the Appeal Site lies in close proximity to the existing urban area and 20th Century housing, and is subject to a number of urbanising influences.
- 7.8 The Landscape Character Assessment for Eastleigh Borough places the Appeal Site within the 'Hound Plain (Area 13)' Local Landscape Character Area. From my own assessment, the key characteristics described in the Landscape Character Assessment apply to the land to the west of the Appeal Site, whereas, the Appeal Site has a very different character to that described as characteristic of the Hound Plain, as the Appeal Site is more contained, and its character influenced by the adjoining housing and landscape character to the east, with the Appeal Site sloping towards the east from the edge of the more open plateau which contains the airfield.
- 7.9 Neither the Appeal Site nor the adjoining land is covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape quality or value, although there are several designations for nature and habitat conservation

covering the River Hamble and associated landscapes, a short distance to the north and east of the Appeal Site. The Appeal Site does not lie within or adjacent to a Conservation Area, Scheduled Monument or Listed Buildings. No trees on, or adjacent to, the Appeal Site are covered by Tree Preservation Orders.

- 7.10 The Appeal Site is well contained in views from the wider area by virtue of the existing trees and development along the Appeal Site's boundaries. Partial views of the Appeal Site are available from the adjoining lane and public footpath, with the adjoining homes having clear or partial, filtered views of the Appeal Site. The Appeal Site is partially visible in long distance views from the public footpath along the eastern bank of the River Hamble, seen within the context of the many trees and houses on the western bank of the river.
- 7.11 The Appeal Site contains few landscape features of note and possesses relatively ordinary landscape characteristics. The eastern part of the Appeal Site is influenced by the rear gardens of the adjoining properties, and the adjacent caravan park to the north is evident from within the northern part of the Appeal Site. The pasture is currently used for horse grazing and is poached in places, however, the trees along the northern Appeal Site boundary are of good quality and contribute to the character within the north of the Appeal Site. Overall the Appeal Site is considered to be of medium landscape quality and medium to low sensitivity to residential development.
- 7.12 The adjoining residential development is generally pleasant and undistinguished and is assessed as being of medium townscape quality and value, while the landscape quality of the surrounding land to the west and north is assessed as being medium to low. The Eastleigh Borough Landscape Character Assessment notes that the Hound Plain area has an urban fringe character in places, including due to the derelict airfield. The assessment also states that the Hound Plain has a degraded landscape character.
- 7.13 There is no public access to the Appeal Site, although a public footpath occurs along the western boundary. Neither the Appeal Site nor the adjoining land is covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape value, nor are any features on or around the Appeal Site identified for their landscape value or quality within the Council's development plan. The Appeal Site is therefore not, and does not form part of a valued landscape in relation to paragraph 170 of the NPPF.
- 7.14 A description of the development proposals is contained in the Design and Access Statement which accompanies the application, and are shown on the Development Framework Plan (a copy of which is

contained in **Appendix K**), as well as on the Illustrative Masterplan and Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan (**Appendices L and M**).

- 7.15 The landscape features of note on the Appeal Site are contained to the boundaries, and include a mature tree belt between the north of the Appeal Site and Satchell Lane. The vast majority of existing boundary vegetation is capable of being retained in the development proposals saved for that which requires removal to facilitate the new access and associated visibility splays. New tree, hedgerow and wildflower/long grass planting will mitigate for these losses, and ultimately result in a biodiversity gain overall, and increase the landscape structure and diversity of the field.
- 7.16 While the Appeal Site's character will change from open land to residential development and associated open space, this is an inevitable consequence of developing any greenfield site. The visual assessment found that views are relatively localised and the landscape effect of development will therefore not extend much beyond the proposed development extent. The proposed development is well related to the adjoining built development, and is compatible with the existing settlement pattern. The proposed development is contained from the wider countryside beyond by the western and northern boundary vegetation, as well as Satchell Lane and the vegetation along it, and the fact that the Appeal Site slopes away from the adjoining land to the west. Development at the Appeal Site will thus have a minimal effect on the wider landscape.
- 7.17 It is evident that the Council's own studies in relation to Countryside Gaps and preventing coalescence, do not consider the land around the Appeal Site, which is closer to the adjoining settlements than the Appeal Site, as necessary to prevent coalescence between Hamble, Netley and Bursledon. In addition, the Appeal Site does not visually form part of the former airfield (which in itself is not considered essential to maintaining the gap), and if the Appeal Site were to be developed, there would still be significant areas of intervening land between the settlement edge at Hamble and the adjoining settlements. The Appeal Site does not lie within an area designated as a Local or Strategic Gap, and development at the Appeal Site will therefore not lead to a material change to the effectiveness of the gaps around Hamble.
- 7.18 There will also be no material effect on the character of Satchell Lane between Hamble and Hound Corner due to the proposed development at the Appeal Site, although there will be localised changes.
- 7.19 Accordingly, it is considered that a residential scheme which follows the principles shown on the Development Framework Plan can be

accommodated at the Appeal Site without giving rise to any significant visual harm or significant harm to the neighbouring townscape or countryside.



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