

Landscape Appraisal / Study

Proposed Garden Centre Extension & New Car Showroom
Mayberry Garden Centre, Old Shoreham Road, Portslade, E. Sussex

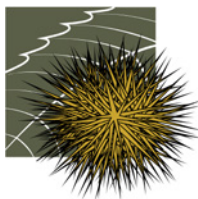


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PLANNING ISSUE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Brief and Background

- 1.1.1 Ramsay & Co has been commissioned by Mr. Trevor Meadows on behalf of Tate Brothers to undertake a Landscape Appraisal / Study in support of a planning application for an extension to the existing Mayberry Garden Centre, 7-17 Old Shoreham Rd, Portslade, Brighton and a new car showroom with associated parking.
- 1.1.2 The proposed scheme would be located immediately west of the existing Mayberry Garden Centre which extends south off the Old Shoreham Road. The site is currently an open area of rough grassland. A PROW: Footpath currently runs south-east off the Old Shoreham Road adjacent to the western edge of the garden centre and would require a diversion. A new car showroom would be located to the western edge of the proposed development site with associated parking to the east (between the new showroom and extended Mayberry Garden Centre).
- 1.1.3 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) state that: *The principles and processes of LVIA can also be used to assist in the 'Appraisal' of forms of land use change or development that fall outside the requirements of the EIA Directive and RegulationsLocal Planning Authorities may ask for such 'Appraisals' where planning applications raise concerns about effects on the landscape and/or visual amenity.....*
- 1.1.4 This report is not intended as a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal / Assessment (LVIA) and should not be interpreted as such. It does not strictly follow the methodology as laid out with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition).

1.2 The Purpose of the Report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a study of the existing landscape and visual condition in relation to the proposed development site area south of the Old Shoreham Road, Portslade.
- 1.2.2 The main objectives of this report are to:
- *describe the baseline condition of the proposed development site and surrounding area;*
 - *describe the proposed garden centre / car showroom scheme;*
 - *identify relevant, existing landscape character assessments;*
 - *describe the landscape character in relation to the proposed development scheme;*

- *record and describe representational views in relation to the proposed development site and assess likely visual effects in relation to the proposed development scheme.*

- 1.2.3 This report has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:
- *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment published by Natural England 2014;*
 - *Visual representation of Development Proposals: Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Published by the Landscape Institute.*

- 1.2.4 The following Landscape Character Assessments and digital resources were referred to - underlined text include a digital link to the original document:
- *Natural England - National Character Areas Profile: NCA 125 South Downs (2013);*
 - *MAGIC Interactive Map, Defra and Natural England.*

1.3 Field Survey Methodology and Viewpoint Images

- 1.3.1 The site survey visit was carried out by Andrew Ramsay BA (Hons) MALA CMLI on the 06th of August 2020 and was conducted from Public Rights of Way and Public Highways surrounding the proposed development site area - weather conditions were generally sunny. It should be noted the site survey was conducted during summer when deciduous vegetation was in leaf - views would be more open during late Autumn, Winter and early Spring when deciduous vegetation would be with little or no leaf cover.
- 1.3.2 The photographs were all taken with a Canon EOS 70D digital camera with a 30mm lens (providing an equivalent focal length of 48mm) approximately 1.5 - 1.7m above ground level. The appropriate relevant guidance has been interpreted with regard to the proportionate approach adopted for this report / assessment.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

2.1 Proposed Garden Centre Extension / Car Showroom Scheme

- 2.1.1 The proposed scheme comprises a new car showroom, associated parking and extension to the existing Mayberry Garden Centre. A new car showroom building and reception area would be located to the western part of the site with a new access off the Old Shoreham Road to the centre. Display / parking areas would be positioned to either side of the access – to the south would be a dedicated customer parking area with staff parking beyond. To the east, a new extension to the Mayberry Garden Centre would extend west with additional provision for external storage / shopping areas and a goods yard. The diverted PROW: Footpath

is proposed to run down the western edge of the extended garden centre area before turning ninety degrees east and then rejoining the original footpath route.

Proposed Mitigating Planting

- 2.1.2 New planting areas would be located to the edges of the diverted footpath which would soften and filter views as well as providing seasonal change – the allotment area boundary would be enhanced with new tree and shrub planting. The Old Shoreham Road frontage would also benefit from new planting which would enhance the streetscape. The edges of the proposed parking / display areas would be softened with new tree and ornamental shrub planting to the edges.
- 2.1.3 The development proposals are illustrated within: *RCo343 / Fig 01 / Masterplan*.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

3.1 District Planning Policy Overview

- 3.1.1 The proposed site area straddles two local planning authority areas. The Mayberry Garden Centre extension falls within Brighton and Hove City Councils authority and the car showroom, associated car parking and footpath diversion lies within Adur District Council's jurisdiction. As the proposed landscaping enhancements lie to the west of the LPA boundary it is considered for the purposes of this report only Adur District Council planning policies are relevant to this study. (The proposed Mayberry Garden centre extension is considered to be limited to architectural matters.)

3.2 Adur District Council – Adur Local Plan (2017)

- 3.2.1 The Adur Local Plan was adopted at a meeting of Adur Full Council on 14th December 2017. The new Local Plan sets the strategic development and land-use priorities for Adur (outside of the South Downs National Park) up to 2032, and contains the policies against which development management decisions within that area will be made. It replaces the saved policies of the Adur Local Plan 1996 as the Council's Local Plan.
- 3.2.2 There is one planning policy considered to be relevant to the proposed development site:

Adur local Plan Policy 12 – Southwick and Fishergate

- 3.2.3 *Within the primary frontage of Southwick town centre (as shown on the Policies Map), A1 (shop) uses will be supported. A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (food and drink), A4 (drinking establishments), A5 (hot food takeaways) and appropriate D1 (non residential institutions) uses will also be permitted where they would not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre. Environmental enhancements in Southwick Square will be supported. Traffic*

management measures to minimise the impact of HGVs on residential areas will be implemented and the use of agreed lorry routes will be promoted. The “Former Eastbrook Allotments Development Brief” identifies potential alternative uses/development opportunities for land at Eastbrook Allotments, Manor Hall Road Former Market Garden and the former Manor Hall Nursery in Southwick and any proposed development should be in accordance with this document.

4.0 EXISTING BASELINE CONDITIONS

4.1 Landscape Context

4.1.1 The proposed development site lies in an urban location to the south of the Old Shoreham Road, Portslade and comprises an area of rough grassland. To the eastern edge is a PROW: Footpath with the existing Mayberry Garden Centre and associated parking beyond. To the south is a large allotment area with a gated access track which runs diagonally through the middle and continues north through the proposed development site area. Immediately west is a large electricity sub-station with an associated access off the Old Shoreham Road to the north.

4.1.2 Several large electricity pylons lie to the south of the proposed development site which dominate views from locations to the surrounding urban landscape.

4.2 Existing Vegetation

4.2.1 The site comprises a rough grassland field with boundary vegetation limited to intermittent, self-seeded shrubs and immature trees. Within the wider landscape, there are trees to the edges of highways and typical residential garden planting including hedgerows, trees and ornamental shrubs.

4.3 Proposed Development Site Area: Baseline Topography

4.3.1 The proposed development site area and surrounding landscape is generally even in character with limited variations in topography although there is a noticeable drop in level between the proposed development site and the southern area of the existing Mayberry Garden Centre.

4.4 Public Rights of Way

4.4.1 A PROW: Footpath lies to the eastern edge of the proposed development site (and immediately west of the existing Mayberry Garden Centre). This footpath links Fishergate Railway Station to the south with the South Downs to the north of Portslade.

5.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

5.1 Existing Landscape Character Assessments - Overview

National Landscape Character: National Character Area 125 – South Downs

5.1.1 The proposed development site area lies to the southern edge of National Character Area 126: *The South Downs National Character Area (NCA) comprises a ‘whale-backed’ spine of chalk stretching from the Hampshire Downs in the west to the coastal cliffs of Beachy Head in East Sussex; two per cent of the NCA between Eastbourne and Seaford is recognised as Heritage Coast. The majority of the area falls within the South Downs National Park, a recognition of its natural beauty and importance for access and recreation, and allowing for local decision making processes to manage this nationally important area. Some eight per cent of the NCA is classified as urban, comprising the coastal conurbation of Brighton and Hove in the east. The South Downs NCA is an extremely diverse and complex landscape with considerable local variation representing physical, historical and economic influences; much of it has been formed and maintained by human activity, in particular in agriculture and forestry. International Biosphere status was confirmed for Brighton and Lewes Downs in June 2014, securing it as the first completely new Biosphere site in the UK established for almost forty years and the first ever in south-east England.*

5.1.2 Key relevant characteristics include:.....

- *Roads and villages concentrated in the river valleys, the more elevated areas sparsely settled with scattered farmsteads. The eastern end of the Downs is squeezed against the coastal plain conurbations of Brighton and Hove, and Worthing, which contain a wealth of architecture and give the area a strong sense of identity. There is also an almost continuous string of seaside towns: Rottingdean, Saltdean, Peacehaven, Newhaven and Seaford.*
- *Public rights of way following drove roads and ancient routes along the accessible downland tops, benefiting from panoramic views across the downs and the Low Weald NCA. Roads and lanes striking across the downs perpendicularly and following historic tracks that originally brought livestock to their summer grazing.*

Proposed Development Site: Landscape Character Assessment

5.1.3 The proposed development site is a rough grassland field which is constrained to the edges by a combination of residential / commercial buildings and electricity sub-station infrastructure. To the northern edge is the old Shoreham Road, the proximity of traffic to this busy, four lane highway limits any sense of tranquillity and contributes to the urban context.

5.1.4 To the eastern edge is the Mayberry Garden Centre and a row of shop fronts to the southern edge of the Old Shoreham Road. A PROW: Footpath lies to the western

edge of the garden centre, this narrow path is edged with steel mesh and palisade fencing, it is considered recreational walkers would be likely to use this footpath for access only as views east and west are extremely limited.

- 5.1.5 To the south is a large allotment area with an access which runs diagonally across the centre of the proposed development site area. To the west is a large electricity sub-station with an associated access off the Old Shoreham Road. Several large electricity pylons to the south and north of the proposed development site area dominate the local landscape.
- 5.1.6 There are views across the proposed development site area however the combination of residential and commercial buildings, even landform and electricity sub-station means the site is constrained and enclosed in character.
- 5.1.7 The existing site and boundary features are shown in *Appendix A: Existing Landscape Features / Receptors*.

6.0 MITIGATION

6.1 Proposed Mitigating Measures

- 6.1.1 The proposed development scheme would seek to enhance the boundaries, improve green infrastructure and ecological connectivity. To the northern boundary (Old Shoreham Road), a new hedgerow would be introduced with some ornamental planting to the new car showroom frontage. The north–south section of the PROW: footpath which is proposed to be diverted would be enhanced with hedgerows and hedgerow trees to the edges. The east – west section would be more informal in character with areas of native understorey shrub planting and standard tree specimens which would provide foraging opportunities and shelter for birds and invertebrates.
- 6.1.2 To the south-west corner a new badger sett is proposed and this area would be enhanced with mixed, native species understorey shrub planting and tree specimens. Within the proposed car parking areas, hedgerows and ornamental shrub planting areas would soften boundaries with tree specimens adding verticality.
- 6.1.3 The proposed scheme is illustrated on *RCo343 / Fig 01 / Masterplan*.

7.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

7.1 Viewpoints and Anticipated Visual Impact

7.1.1 The viewpoint photographs are shown in *Appendix A: Viewpoint Photographs* and locations are shown on *RCo343 / Fig 01 / Viewpoint Locations and PROW*.

7.1.2 The degree of visual effects with regard to the proposed scheme are defined within Table 01 below:

Table 01: Overall Degree of Visual Effects: Definitions and Descriptions	
No Change	<i>No part of the proposed development would be discernible in the view.</i>
Negligible	<i>There would be little effect within the context of existing landscape character and visual amenity.</i>
Low/Slight Adverse	<i>The proposals would constitute only a minor component within the existing landscape character / Awareness of the proposals would not have a marked effect upon the existing landscape quality, pattern and landform.</i>
Moderate Adverse	<i>The proposals would form a visible and recognisable new element within the existing landscape and negatively affect the existing landscape character.</i>
Substantial Adverse	<i>The proposals would form a significant new, man-made component within the existing landscape which would be unable to be fully mitigated.</i>

Viewpoint 01 – Old Shoreham Road Looking South-West

7.1.3 This viewpoint is located to the north-east of the proposed development site area and looks south-west. The access to the existing Mayberry Garden Centre is clearly visible to the east of the parade of shops to the southern edge of the Old Shoreham Road with the large electricity pylons to the rear. To the left of the image is a Texaco petrol station and to the right is the entrance to Applesham Way. The view demonstrates the urban character of the Old Shoreham Road and generally even topography. The new car show room would be perceptible from this location however it would be within the context of the Old Shoreham Road character. There would be little change in views from this location and therefore anticipated overall degree of visual impact as a result of the proposed scheme is assessed to be **Negligible**.

Viewpoint 02 – Old Shoreham Road Looking South-West

7.1.4 Viewpoint 02 also looks south-west from a location to the northern edge of the Old Shoreham Road close to the PROW: Footpath which runs adjacent to the western edge of the Mayberry Garden Centre. This view shows the electricity sub-station to the south-west of the proposed development site area as well as the lower parts of the large electricity pylons. The new car showroom would be perceptible in views

from this location however it would be within the context of the existing urban character and the residential buildings which lie to the western edge of the proposed development site area. The proposed planting to the frontage would enhance the setting of this view and soften and filter views south. The proposed scheme would result in a **Low / Slight Adverse** overall degree of visual impact in views from this location.

Viewpoint 03 – Old Shoreham Road Looking South

- 7.1.5 This viewpoint is located to the west of Viewpoint 02 and looks south. The view is dominated by the electricity sub-station and large pylons to the south. The view also shows the intermittent, self-seeded shrubs to the northern edge of the proposed development site area. The car showroom would be a new component in near-distance views from this location but would be viewed within the urban context of the Old Shoreham Road. New planting to the frontage would soften and filter views to the car parking areas. The anticipated overall degree of visual effect would be **Substantial Adverse** as the proposed car show room would be a new man-made component in near-distance views.

Viewpoint 04 – Old Shoreham Road Looking South-East

- 7.1.6 Viewpoint 04 lies to the north-west of the proposed development site and looks south-east. The perceptibility of the north-western area of the proposed development site is partially limited by intervening residential dwellings to the southern edge of the Old Shoreham Road. The large electricity pylons are a dominating presence in views from this location. The proposed car show room would be new, man-made component in near-distance views although the frontage would be softened and filtered with new planting, there would be a **Substantial Adverse** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed scheme in views from this location.

Viewpoint 05 – Access Track to an Allotment Area Looking North

- 7.1.7 This viewpoint looks north from an access track to the allotment area south of the proposed development site area. There are near-distance views of the large electricity pylons over intervening vegetation to the north which limits views of the proposed development site area. The existing Mayberry Garden Centre building is partially perceptible. Although the new garden centre extension would be partially visible, it is not considered it would detract from the setting of this location given the proximity to the pylons and the intervening trees and shrubs. Therefore, it is anticipated there would be a **Negligible** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed scheme.

Viewpoint 06 – PROW: Footpath Looking North-West

- 7.1.8 This viewpoint lies on a PROW: Footpath which runs south-east off the Old Shoreham Road to the western edge of the Mayberry Garden Centre. The palisade fencing which lies to the western edge and dense vegetation to the eastern edge constrains views. The setting of this narrow footpath is considered to be of poor quality and the lack of space means social distancing is not possible. The footpath is

proposed to be diverted further to the north and views of the new extension would be limited by new planting and the existing fencing. There would be a **Negligible** visual effect as a result of the proposed scheme.

Viewpoint 07 – PROW: Footpath Looking South

- 7.1.9 This viewpoint looks south from a location to the PROW: Footpath immediately south of the Old Shoreham Road. The view demonstrates the constrained nature of this footpath – it is considered the route would be used for access only (as opposed to recreation) with fencing and dense vegetation limiting views east and west. The footpath is proposed to be diverted with the start/end of the Old Shoreham Road located immediately west of this location and would be enhanced with hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The corresponding view (located to the northern end of the new, diverted footpath location) is judged as likely to experience a **Low / Slight Beneficial** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed scheme as the setting would be enhanced with more space and new planting

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Landscape Character

- 8.1.1 The proposed scheme would extend the existing Mayberry Garden Centre building and external (frost protection) storage areas - Brighton and Hove City Council are the local planning authority for this element of the proposed development scheme. To the east, the proposed car show room, associated parking and landscape enhancements fall within the jurisdiction of Arun District Council. This area was formally allotments prior to being sold by Brighton and Hove City Council in 2005 for the purpose of “business development”. The land currently comprises rough grassland which is assumed to be maintained to prevent scrub from dominating.
- 8.1.2 As a ‘green field’ site there would inevitably be adverse landscape character impacts with the garden centre extension, new car showroom and associated parking. However, the proposed soft landscape scheme would offer the opportunity to enhance the old Shoreham Road frontage and diverted footpath to the eastern edge of the proposed development site area. New hedgerows and tree planting would provide seasonal change as well as enhancing green infrastructure and biodiversity.
- 8.1.3 The proposed development site landscape character is dominated by the large electricity pylons, overhead power lines and electricity sub-station to the western edge. The Old Shoreham Road is characterised by a mix of residential dwellings, retail frontages including the existing Mayberry Garden Centre and Petrol Filling Station to the east. It is considered the proposed scheme would be in keeping with the existing urban character of the old Shoreham Road – adverse landscape character impacts would be confined to the immediate context of the proposed development site area.

8.2 Visual Effects

- 8.2.1 The proposed development scheme would result in new buildings (Mayberry Garden Centre and Car Showroom) to the east and west of the proposed development site.

Table 02: Summary of Visual Effects	
VIEWPOINT	ANTICIPATED VISUAL IMPACT
Viewpoint 01 – Old Shoreham Road Looking South-West	Negligible
Viewpoint 02 – Old Shoreham Road Looking South-West	Low / Slight Adverse
Viewpoint 03 – Old Shoreham Road Looking South	Substantial Adverse
Viewpoint 04 – Old Shoreham Road Looking South-East	Substantial Adverse
Viewpoint 05 – Access Track to an Allotment Area Looking North	Negligible
Viewpoint 06 – PROW: Footpath Looking North-West	Negligible
Viewpoint 07 – PROW: Footpath Looking South	Low / Slight Beneficial

- 8.2.2 The changes to the frontage of the proposed development site would be most apparent with the new car show room to the north-western edge. The proposed extension to the existing Mayberry Garden Centre would be set back from the Old Shoreham Road frontage with the existing retail frontage remaining as existing. The Old Shoreham Road edge would be enhanced with new shrub planting and tree specimens.
- 8.2.3 *Viewpoints 01* and *02* lie to the north-east and north of the proposed development site and are anticipated to experience a **Negligible** and **Low / Slight Adverse** overall degree of visual effect respectively.
- 8.2.4 *Viewpoint 03* and *04* lie north and north-west of the proposed development site area. The new car showroom building would be a new, man-made component in near-distance views and therefore there would be a **Substantial Adverse** overall degree of visual impact for both locations.
- 8.2.5 To the south of the proposed development site area, *Viewpoint 05* lies to an access track to the allotment area. Existing intervening vegetation and new trees and shrubs to the southern edge of the proposed development site area would soften and filter views north. There would be a **Negligible** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed scheme.
- 8.2.6 A location to the PROW: Footpath south of the proposed development site (*Viewpoint 06*) demonstrates the constrained and enclosed setting of the existing

PROW: footpath. There would be a **Negligible** overall degree of visual effect as little of the proposed development would be perceptible in views from this location.

- 8.2.7 *Viewpoint 07* is located to the northern end of the PROW: Footpath which is proposed to be diverted. The setting of the new footpath would be enhanced with more space (enabling social distancing) and vegetation to either edge of the proposed designated route. Therefore, the corresponding viewpoint to the northern end of the diverted PROW: Footpath is assessed as being **Low / Slight Beneficial**.

8.3 Summary and Conclusions

- 8.3.1 The scheme proposes a new car showroom, car parking and extension to the existing Mayberry Garden Centre. The proposed site has an existing urban landscape character with residential properties, the Old Shoreham Road highway corridor, electricity sub-station and electricity pylons to the edges of an open, rough grassland area. The proposed development site has been designated by Adur District Council for: *Employment use in the form of 'business development'*.
- 8.3.2 A PROW: Footpath to the eastern edge of the proposed development site is proposed to be diverted creating an 'L' shape in plan. The new footpath would benefit from more space and new planting to either edge, enhancing the setting and offering potential for a biodiverse mix of native shrubs and tree specimens. The Old Shoreham Road frontage would be enhanced with a new hedgerow and tree specimens. Within the proposed development site, car parking areas would be enhanced with hedgerows, ornamental planting areas and tree specimens – softening and filtering near-distance views across the site area.
- 8.3.3 The large pylons and overhead power lines dominate views from locations within the local landscape and adverse character impacts would be largely constrained to the immediate context of the proposed development site area. Adverse impacts with regard to visual effects would be limited to a relatively short section of the Old Shoreham Road which has an existing urban character with retail frontages forming part of the highway corridor edges.
- 8.3.4 The perceptibility of the proposed scheme from locations to the wider urban landscape would be limited by existing residential and commercial buildings. The Mayberry Garden Centre extension and new car showroom would be viewed within the context of existing residential and commercial frontages.
- 8.3.5 It is therefore considered the proposed garden centre extension and car showroom could be accommodated within the proposed development site without undue harm to the surrounding Portslade urban landscape character and existing visual amenity.