



## **Shoreham Airport - design guidance for development**

Submission Adur Local Plan: strategic site allocation (policy 7)

December 2016

1 Introduction 2

## 1.1 Study scope and purpose

This paper summarises Adur District Council's expectations for development on land allocated for employment at Shoreham Airport in the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan<sup>1</sup>.

#### It takes account of:

- evidence from landscape and visual impact and heritage impact studies which have been prepared to inform the emerging Adur Local Plan;
- implementation of the adjacent Adur Tidal Walls scheme; and
- emerging plans for a new roundabout junction on the A27, which is required to deliver allocated development at New Monks Farm and Shoreham Airport.

Its purpose is to provide a set of strategic design principles to guide development on the allocated site.

Adur District Council recognises that new employment is needed to fulfil economic objectives, but considers that such development must be carefully sited and designed to minimise the risk of adverse environmental impacts in this sensitive location.



Shoreham Airport - location plan

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan 2014, Adur District Council



View to Shoreham Airport from the historic Shoreham Tollbridge

## 1.2 Report structure

The remainder of this report is subdivided into three sections:

- Section 2 reviews the policy context for the Shoreham Airport strategic site allocation
- Section 3 reviews the evidence and issues relevant to this site arising from recent impact and design studies
- Section 4 sets out relevant design guidance for the Shoreham Airport strategic allocation site.

2 Policy context 4

## 2.1 Planning policy context

### 2.1.1 Overall planning policy context

Figure 1 shows the planning policy context and sites allocated for development in the Submission Adur Local Plan<sup>2</sup>.

Adur district has a limited amount of developable land and the emerging policies within Adur's Local Plan have been developed to balance the need for new development with the need to maintain and enhance local landscape character and the individual identity of Adur's settlements. The following two emerging policies in the Submission Adur Local Plan are relevant:

- Policy 13: Adur's Countryside and Coast, which addresses the management of land outside the Built Up Area Boundary (BUAB) and the enhancement of landscape character; and
- Policy 14: Local Green Gaps, which seeks to retain the separate identities and character of the settlements of Worthing, Lancing, Sompting and Shoreham-by-Sea by protecting the remaining countryside areas that separate them and ensuring any permitted development does not (individually or cumulatively) lead to the coalescence of settlements.

The two policies are complementary but have specific purposes and separate boundaries. The

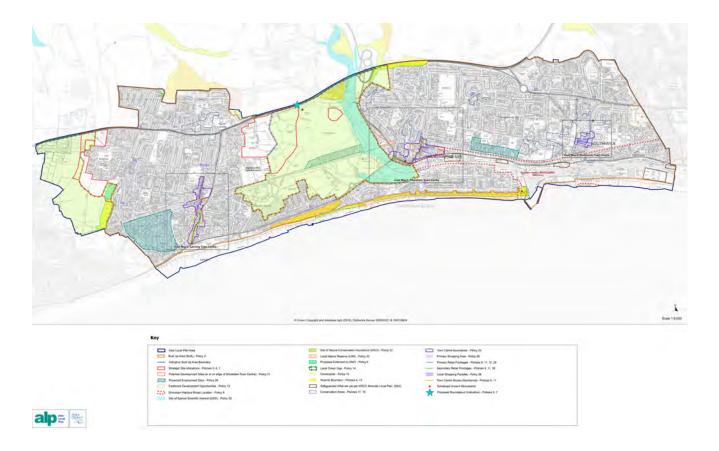


Figure 1 - Policies Map (Extract from the Submission Adur Local Plan, 2016)

Submission Adur Local Plan 2016, Adur District Council

Built-Up Area Boundary defines the boundary between the built up areas and countryside; while the Local Green Gap boundary defines the area of undeveloped landscape between settlements that is required to provide an effective landscape setting for those settlements.

The alignment of the Built-Up Area and Local Green Gap boundaries in the Lancing-Shoreham area are shown on Figure 2. The Shoreham Airport allocated site is included within the proposed Lancing-Shoreham Local Green Gap. This drawing also shows public rights of way, open access land, public open spaces, industrial/employment areas and Conservation Areas.

### 2.1.2 Site specific planning policy context

Policy 7 of the Submission Adur Local Plan refers to the Shoreham Airport site:

Approximately 15,000 sq m of new employment generating floorspace (both aviation and non-aviation related), including a mix of B1 (business), B2 (general industry) and B8 (storage) / hangar uses, will be provided on the north-eastern side of the Airport.

New development at the Airport must be designed to minimise its impact on the landscape as well as on the open nature of the Shoreham-Lancing Local Green Gap. Key views must be retained, and any impacts on the historic character of the Airport and the historic assets within it must be minimised. A Development Brief will be required to address these issues.



Figure 2 - Landscape Policy Context

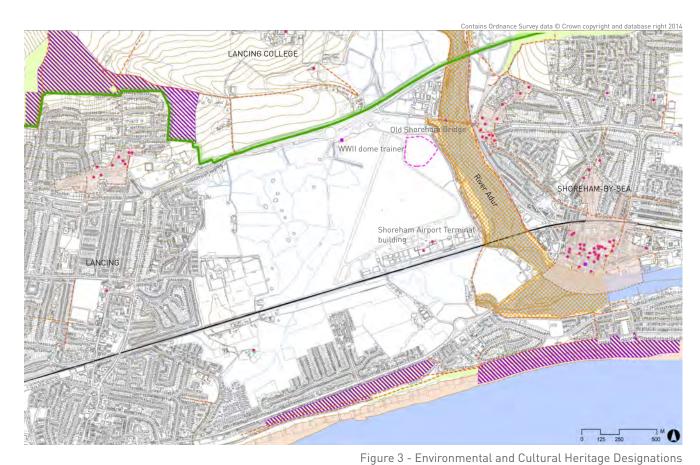




## 2.2 Relevant designations

In addition to the above spatial planning policy designations, relevant environmental, landscape and cultural designations (shown on Figure 3) are:

- the South Downs National Park (SDNP) designated in recognition of its nationally important scenic beauty and recreational value;
- the Adur Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is important for its combination of mudflats, saltmarsh, reedbeds and embankments;
- Sites of Nature Conservation Importance at Lancing Ring, the River Adur Valley, Widewater Lagoon and Shoreham Beach.
- Local Nature Reserves at Lancing Ring, the Widewater Lagoon and Shoreham Beach.
- Scheduled Monument the World War II dome trainer to the NW of Shoreham Airfield
- Listed buildings at Old Shoreham Bridge, St Nicolas' Church (Old Shoreham), Shoreham Airport's Terminal building and the adjacent Municipal Hangar
- Shoreham Conservation Area the historic centre of Shoreham, which is clustered around the listed buildings of St Nicolas Church and the Old Shoreham Bridge







### 3.1 Landscape & visual assessment

### 3.1.1 Local landscape character

Detailed information on landscape character at a local scale is provided in the District's 2006 Urban Fringe Study<sup>3</sup> and in the Adur Landscape and Ecological Surveys Report<sup>4</sup>. The latter provides a comparative analysis of the landscape and visual sensitivity of the Worthing-Sompting and Lancing-Shoreham Gaps, along with a more detailed analysis of potential landscape and biodiversity issues and impacts that could arise as a result of development on six sites which were then under consideration by Adur District Council as potential strategic allocations. One of the sites analysed in this report was at Shoreham Airport.

The assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area has been updated<sup>5</sup> to take account of the proposed development allocations, the construction of the Brighton and Hove Albion Football Academy, the planned implementation of the Adur Tidal Walls scheme and the findings of policy reviews to inform the emerging Local Plan. The Shoreham Airport allocated site falls within the Lancing-Shoreham Gap Landscape Character



Figure 4 - Local landscape character areas in the Lancing-Shoreham Gap (extract from the Adur landscape sensitivity assessment)

Urban Fringe Study, Adur District Council (Baker Associates and Enderby Associates), December 2006

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Landscape and Ecological Surveys of Key Sites within the Adur District, Sheils Flynn & The Ecology Consultancy, 2012

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 5}$  Assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area, 2016, Sheils Flynn

Area (LCA) 3, which is shown on Figure 4. The key characteristics of the Adur Gateway LCA are set out in Box 1.

### 3.1.2 Important views and patterns of access

The A27 broadly separates the sweeping farmland of the South Downs from the built development to the south, but the visual, cultural and physical links between the Downs and the urban areas on the coastal plain are important. The Lancing-Shoreham Gap forms part of the setting of the SDNP and the Downs form the backdrop to views from residential areas throughout Shoreham-by-Sea, Lancing and Sompting. The Gothic chapel at Lancing College is a striking landmark, marking the flank of the Adur Valley as it cuts through the Downs.

Local residents and visitors can access the Downs via a series of public rights of way, many of them historic tracks, which lead from the urban areas of Shoreham and Lancing up to the chalk downlands at Lancing Ring and Mill Hill and link along the Downs between these popular sites.

Public rights of way run along both banks of the River Adur, connecting Shoreham to the SDNP. The Old Shoreham Tollbridge (a historic bridge over the River Adur) remains an important pedestrian/cycleway river crossing point. The path along the west bank of the River Adur is a public right of way; on the east bank a disused railway line is a national cycleway. Together, these popular routes form a circuit linking Shoreham Harbour, Shoreham, Shoreham Airport and the Ricardo Shoreham Technical Centre.

The footpath along the west bank of the River Adur, which runs alongside the allocated Shoreham Airport site, will be diverted to follow the crest of the new flood defence embankment within the Adur Tidal Walls scheme.

Referring closely to the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for the Adur Local Plan Area, a study undertaken in April 2013 considered the potential landscape and visual impact issues relevant to the assessment of development proposals at Shoreham Airfield<sup>6</sup>. This short report influenced the location and scale of the site allocated for employment uses at Shoreham Airfield in the emerging Local Plan (Policy 7), which is located to minimise visual impacts in views from the SDNP.

The assessment of visual issues considers the potential impacts on each of the sensitive viewpoints assessed in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and picks out Viewpoint 13 (view northwards from the public footpath along the west bank of the River Adur near the main block of airport buildings) and Viewpoint 14 (view south-west across the airfield from the Old Shoreham Tollbridge) as being of particular significance in relation to development proposals in the north-east corner of the airfield. These views (together with relevant notes from this report) are presented for reference on pages 9 and 10.

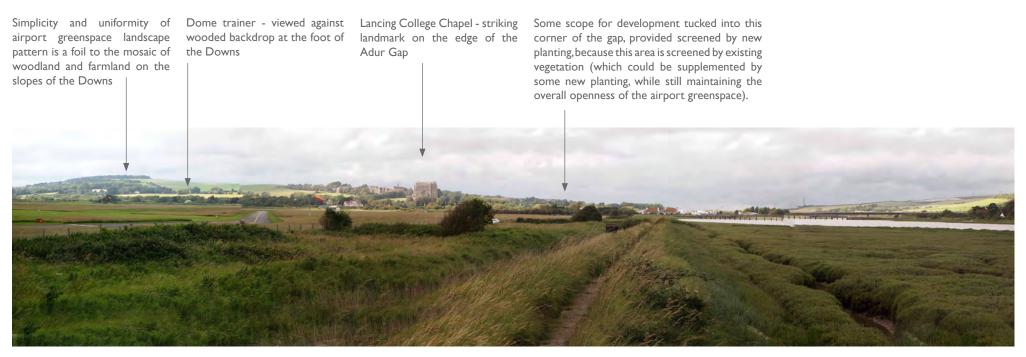
BOX 1

### Lancing-Shoreham Gap LCA 3: Shoreham Airport

Relevant key characteristics are:

- Completely flat, open airport landscape of mown grass with runways and taxiways
- Simple, uniform landscape character within airport; contrasts with the sweeping natural forms and patterns of the River Adur corridor, which includes intertidal mudflats and saltmarshes
- Riparian habitats along the River Adur margins, with a mosaic of wet grassland, reedbeds, ditches and pools contained by flood embankments
- Well used public footpath along the crest of the flood embankment with panoramic views leading up the Adur Valley to the South Downs Way within the SDNP
- Remains of two WW II red brick pill boxes on flood embankment
- Panoramic views to the Downs beyond the A27 to the north (Lancing College Chapel is a prominent landmark) and along the River Adur to the east (Shoreham Tollbridge, St Nicolas' Church and the railway bridge are landmarks in river views)
- Industrial area and elevated junction of A27 detract from views to NE
- Views to eastern edge of Lancing broken by overlapping effect of sparse vegetation within intervening land to west - urban edge indistinct
- The airport buildings (including the Art Deco Terminal Building) are prominent along the southern edge of the LCA and the area is busy, with regular aircraft movement on the airfield and traffic along road along its eastern edge.

Shoreham Airport proposed development masterplan broad overview of landscape and visual issues, 2013, Sheils Flynn



Viewpoint 13 - from the public footpath along the River Adur embankment, looking north towards Lancing College Chapel and the Adur gap through the South Downs

An extensive part of the Lancing Gap is visible from this viewpoint, which is highly accessible to residents within the urban areas of Shoreham and South Lancing, particularly as there is a car park at the Outdoor Activities Centre (just to the south of the viewpoint) and the potential to walk northwards along the embankment, across the Adur footbridge to Shoreham and out to the South Downs National Park along the 'Downs Link' long distance footpath

Viewpoint 13 has high sensitivity. It provides a close, clear view of the Lancing Local Green Gap from an exceptionally well used and accessible recreational route (leading to the National Park) on the edge of an urban area. The viewpoint is unique in that there are no other public rights of way within either of the two strategic gaps.

The Shoreham Airport buildings are on the far left of the photograph and the airfield is in the centre of the view. Lancing College Chapel is a focal landmark, drawing the eye towards the edge of the Adur valley as it cuts through the Downs. This is an exceptionally wide view - as the photograph on this page shows, the panorama includes the whole of the Adur valley and extends round to Shoreham, where it includes the slopes of Mill Hill as a backdrop to the town.



**Viewpoint 14** - from the pedestrian footbridge over the River Adur, which is a historic (Grade II\* Listed) tollbridge, looking south west across the Lancing -Shoreham Gap to Shoreham Airport and (in the distance) Lancing

Viewpoint 14 has high sensitivity. It is from a listed structure on an exceptionally well used public right of way which connects to the South Downs Way via the Downs Link path along the Adur valley.

There is a clear view to the airport buildings and to part of the enclosed landscape in the SW fringes of the Lancing-Shoreham Gap. The gable ends of the housing on the edge of Lancing is visible in the distance, demonstrating that the view extends (east-west) right across the Gap. Foreground vegetation obscures views to the northern part of the Gap.

# 3.1.3 Distinctive landscape settings of Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea

The Adur landscape study update<sup>7</sup> describes how components of the open 'green' Lancing-Shoreham Gap landscape contribute to the landscape settings of both Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea. This report suggests that the landscape setting of settlements is typically structured by the sequence of gateway views on the arrival to settlements and the 'vital sense of space around a settlement that enables us to take stock, assess and understand its relationship to its surroundings'. Key factors in making a judgement about the extent of space required for an effective landscape setting are the length of publicly accessible views to the edge of a settlement and the character of these views.

The Shoreham Airport allocated site is an important component of the gateway views from the A27 and from sensitive viewpoints on the southern slopes of the South Downs (eg Lancing Ring, Lancing College Chapel and Mill Hill in the SDNP).

Figure 6, an extract from the Adur Landscape Study Update, shows the key landscape features, landmarks, and views which are distinctive within the Lancing-Shoreham Gap. It also shows the 'landscape edges' which structure the way we perceive the landscape in views from the principal gateway approaches via roads and the railway and from publicly accessible footpaths and viewpoints.

The centre of Shoreham Airfield, the fields either side of New Salts Farm and the slopes of Mill Hill on the northern fringes of Shoreham are highlighted as prominent open spaces on Figure 4 because they are highly visible in these defining views and because they enhance our appreciation of the physical, natural landscape elements that structure this landscape.

The analysis of the distinctive landscape character of the Lancing-Shoreham Gap in the Adur landscape study update highlights the importance of the River Adur as a key landscape feature within the Lancing-Shoreham Gap. The majority of the publicly accessible viewpoints within the gap are from the bridges across or paths alongside the river and the sinuous river corridor provides a striking and distinctive focus for local views. It points out that the juxtaposition of the open green turf of the airfield and the River Adur brings emphasis to the natural curve of the river.

At a strategic scale, Shoreham Airfield is part of the landscape setting of both Shoreham and Lancing. This is demonstrated within Section 2.2 of the Adur Landscape Study Update, which includes a drawing showing the landscape settings of Lancing and Shoreham. The description in Box 2, which is an extract from the Adur Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for the Shoreham Airport LCA 3, summarises the contribution that the Shoreham Airport area makes to the landscape setting of the River Adur, the towns of Lancing and Shoreham and the Local Green Gap.

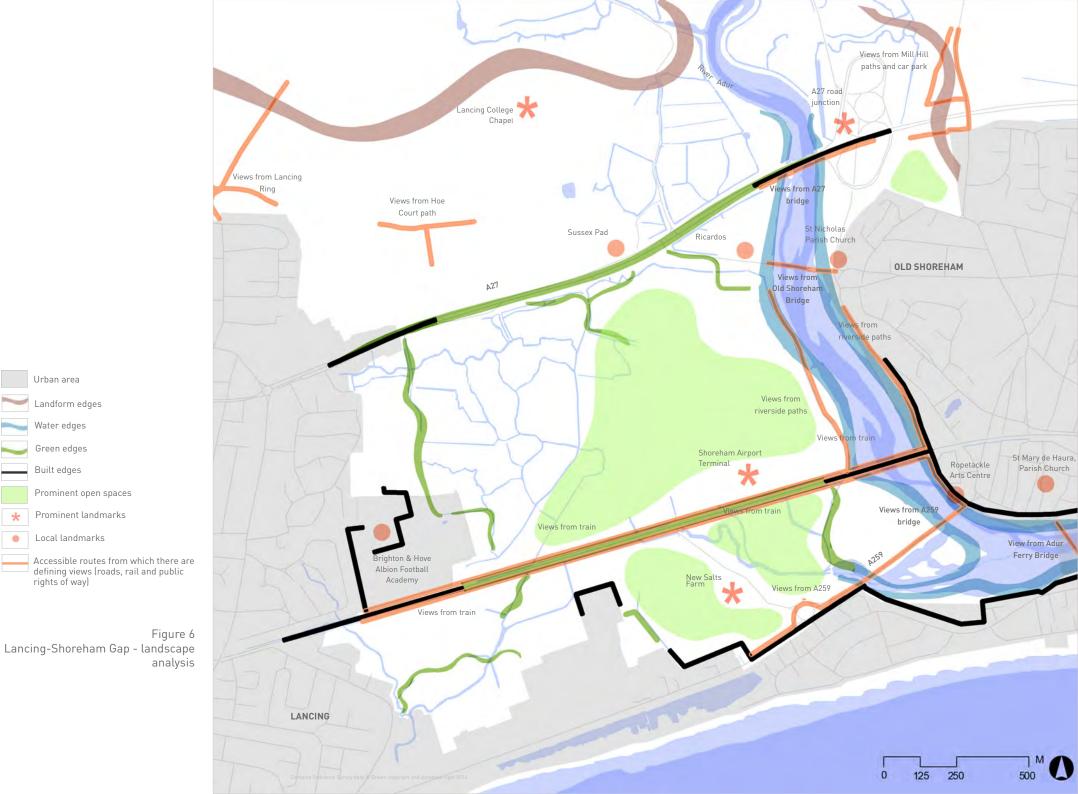
BOX 2

## Adur Landscape Sensitivity Assessment: LSG LCA 3 - Contribution to landscape setting

The extensive open green turf of the airfield makes a strong contribution to the impression of open, extensive greenspace in the Lancing-Shoreham Gap, enhancing the sense of separation between Shoreham and Lancing and providing a striking landscape setting for the lower stretches of the River Adur as it winds towards the sea. The flat, open airfield functions as a spacious green 'forecourt' to the airport buildings and the River Adur, enabling long views across the Lancing-Shoreham Gap and contributing to the immediate landscape setting of Shoreham.

The flatness and openness of the airfield also allows long views across the gap towards the edge of Lancing from the west Adur flood defence embankment and from parts of the footpath/cycleway along the east bank of the river. The flood defence embankment will become higher when the Adur Tidal Walls scheme is implemented, enabling more extensive views from the west bank, but potentially restricting views to the airfield from the east bank.

Adur landscape study update, Local Green Gap and Built-Up Area Boundary policy checks for the emerging Adur Local Plan, 2016, Sheils Flynn



Urban area

Water edges

Green edges

Built edges

Prominent landmarks

Local landmarks

rights of way)

Landform edges

### 3.1.4 Landscape sensitivity

With reference to a government Topic Paper<sup>8</sup> the Adur Landscape Sensitivity Assessment<sup>9</sup> explains that judgements about the overall landscape sensitivity of LCAs should take account of:

- landscape character sensitivity a measure of the robustness of distinctive character: and
- visual sensitivity the visibility of the landscape and its ability to accommodate change without adverse impacts on character.

Figure 7 shows the overall landscape sensitivity of the Lancing-Shoreham Gap (LSG), as assessed in the Adur Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. It shows that LSG LCA3 - Shoreham Airport is classified as 'high' overall landscape sensitivity, taking account of the following combined scores:

- a 'medium-high' score for landscape character sensitivity which reflects the importance of Shoreham Airport in providing a distinctive landscape setting for the River Adur and the towns of Shoreham and Lancing; and
- a 'high' score for visual sensitivity which reflects the visibility of this area from well used public rights of way and local roads, including recreational routes within the SDNP.





Note: landscape sensitivity classification only shown on land, although the River Adur is part of LCAs 3,4 and 5  $\,$ 



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Landscape Character Assessment Series: Topic Paper Six - Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity, The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2005

Assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area, 2016, Sheils Flynn

### 3.2 Heritage value

# 3.2.1 Heritage assessment of Brighton City Airport (Shoreham)

An assessment of the impacts of development proposals on the heritage value of Shoreham Airport was prepared as part of the evidence base to inform the Adur Local Plan.<sup>10</sup>

This report includes a fascinating overview of the history of Shoreham Airport, which is the oldest municipal airport in the country. It also provides a robust assessment of the impacts of development proposals for commercial development (on an area which includes the allocation site) and its associated A27 roundabout scheme on the heritage assets on and near the airport.

The assessment method expresses significance in terms of historical, evidential, aesthetic and communal value. The following notes summarise the key findings of the relevant component heritage features of Shoreham Airport.

The airfield before 1918 - no buildings survive from this period, but Shoreham Airfield is considered to have medium value for its role in the history of early aviation. Its communal value for this period is also recognised as 'medium.'

The municipal airfield (1920-40) - the terminal building (1936) and the municipal hangar, together

with their setting within the bounds of the 19302 airfield, are of high historical value. The terminal building os also considered to be of high aesthetic value. The buildings are well documented and have medium evidential significance as examples of 1930s construction methods. The 1930s airfield, particularly the terminal building, have medium communal significance, not least because of their value to the many visitors who come to visit the restaurant and watch the planes.

### War-time defences and air-sea rescue (1940-42)

- One of the four second World War over blister hangars constructed at Shoreham survives today on the northern edge of the airfield and there is good survival of the defences along the east (river's edge) side of the airfield site, including pillboxes, gun positions and other structures. The complex of historical features from this period is considered to have medium evidential value and high historical value.

Dome trainer - The Shoreham Airport dome trainer is a rare example which is of high historical value. It is also the most prominent of the remaining WW2 airfield features, visible in views from the south to south-east. However, the context for the structure has been lost and research has demonstrated that its siting is fortuitous - the result of an ad hoc arrangement rather than military planning. Overall the setting of the dome trainer is given a score of medium historical significance.

Post-war airfield - The post-war period is



 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 10}$   $\,$  Brighton City Airport (Shoreham) Heritage Assessment, Acta, 2016

considered to have medium historical and medium communal significance because the essential features of the 1930s airfield have been retained and the flying field has remained in use. There are plans to construct a memorial for victims of the tragic crash at the 2015 Shoreham Show on the northern fringes of the airfield.

Views and the setting of historic buildings - The flat, green turf of Shoreham Airfield and the dome trainer form part of the assemblage of historic buildings in the long views northwards from the railway and river to the buildings of Lancing College in their downland setting. These views are of high historical and high aesthetic significance.

The close-range views of Old Shoreham Bridge and st Nicolas' church from the river bank are considered to be of high historical and aesthetic significance; the longer wider views northeastwards across the airfield to this same cluster of historic buildings is of medium historic and medium aesthetic significance.

The predicted impact of the Shoreham Airport development (in an indicative form) that was assessed in the 2016 Heritage Assessment report is considered to be:

- Pre 1918 airfield slight
- Municipal airfield and buildings (1920-40) moderate/large
- Wartime airfield (1940-42) Moderate/large

- Dome trainer moderate/large, although this is offset by the fact that the proposed development may provide an opportunity to arrest the ongoing decay of the structure and so stabilise its condition.
- Views and setting of historic buildings the development (including the roundabout) would have a large/very large effect on the view to lancing college and a moderate effect on the views from it. The close-range views of Old Shoreham Bridge and St Nicolas' Church would be unaffected, but there would be a moderate effect on views towards them across the airfield.

### 3.3 Adjacent development

#### 3.3.1 New Monks Farm

Delivery of the strategic site allocations at New Monks Farm and Shoreham Airport depends on the implementation of a new A27 roundabout junction with access roads to both sites.

The layout for the New Monks Farm development is not yet agreed, but the parameters of the scheme are set out in Policy 5 of the Submission Adur Local Plan. 11 Elements of the transport/access, drainage and flood risk management infrastructure for both schemes will be shared and there will be benefits in a strategic joint approach to landscape and open space planning and the alignment of public rights of way connections to the Downs. All with a view to mitigating the predicted landscape and visual, heritage and other impacts of the two developments.

The eastern part of the New Monks Farm allocation (which is outside the BUAB) will be a country park with open access, paths and cycleways. Extensive areas of the country park will be elevated as this area has been subject to aggregate tipping for many years and there will need to be areas of raised landform to accommodate the material that has been tipped.

The new, more extensive public access, including

park, will enable new eastward views across Shoreham Airfield in which the Shoreham Airfield allocated site is likely to be highly visible.

elevated viewpoints associated with the country

#### 3.3.2 Adur Tidal Walls scheme

The Adur Tidal Walls flood defence scheme, which is part of a wider flood risk management strategy to protect existing and proposed development and infrastructure in Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea. The scheme has planning approval and construction is underway, with completion anticipated during 2018.

The existing ditch and flood defence embankment alongside Shoreham Airport will be removed to create a new saltmarsh area. A new ditch and larger, higher embankment will be constructed alongside Cecil Pashley Way. The new embankment will be c. 3m high, with 1:2.5 slopes. A 2m wide footpath will run along the crest of the embankment. The historic pillboxes will be conserved (with access to them from the main route) on low embankments, which jut out as 'piers' within the new saltmarsh areas.

The new embankment, with the elevated footpath along its crest, will provide a vantage point for long views across the airfield, potentially increasing the visibility of the allocated site from the level assessed in the 2013 report. It is also relevant to note that the existing scrubby vegetation on the west bank of the River Adur that partially screens views across the airfield from the Old Shoreham

Bridge (Viewpoint 14 - see page 10) will be removed when the new flood defence embankment is built.

Submission Adur Local Plan, Adur District Council, 2016 Policy 5 - New Monks Farm, pp 33-34

Shoreham Airport proposed development masterplan - broad overview of landscape and visual issues, April 2013, Sheils Flynn

## 4 Design guidance for development of the Shoreham Airport allocated site

## 4.1 Design guidance

Drawing on the policies and research described in Sections 2 and 3, Box 3 sets out the that Adur District Council's broad design principles to guide development of the strategic site that has been allocated for commercial development at Shoreham Airport.

The guidance is illustrated on Figure 8 (page 18). This design guidance is not intended to be overly prescriptive, but it has been developed to minimise the potential adverse impacts to the landscape settings, views and heritage assets that have been identified as important and valued characteristics of this part of the Lancing-Shoreham Local Green Gap.

BOX 3

Shoreham Airport allocated site - design principles to guide development:

- Conserve the open, undeveloped character of the Shoreham Airport River Adur west river bank between the allocated site and the railway crossing. The analysis of views in the landscape sensitivity assessment demonstrates that this part of the Lancing -Shoreham Local Green Gap is prominent in sensitive views from the SDNP and is also a defining and highly distinctive component of the landscape setting of the River Adur and of the towns of both Lancing and Shoreham
- Incorporate extensive native tree planting within the northern part of the site, as shown on Figure 8. This planting should extend beyond the red line boundary of the site and be designed to connect visually with the existing trees and woodlands along the foot of the Downs, 'anchoring' the new development within its wider landscape setting and providing a backdrop to the new buildings in views from the south and east
- Development to be of relatively low, 1-2 storey buildings which can be partially screened by new planting in views from the Old Shoreham Bridge and which will (when new planting is mature) be viewed against a wooded backdrop
- Buildings should be constructed from relatively dark coloured, non-reflective buildings materials and should have have green or brown roofs, so that they do not not stand out in long views across the Gap from the SDNP, from the riverside paths along the River Adur and from the future views from the country park to be implemented as part of the forthcoming (allocated) New Monks Farm development.





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