



BOXGROVE Neighbourhood Plan
BOXGROVE HALNAKER STRETINGTON CROCKERHILL

Site Assessment Report

Impact of development site on the historic context and landscape character of Halnaker and Boxgrove Conservation Areas

July 2016

1. Background

The Boxgrove Neighbourhood Development Plan (BNDP) seeks to deliver 25 new homes on land located north of Boxgrove and between the two Conservation Areas of Boxgrove and Halnaker. It further proposes to change the road layout by closing the junction with the A285 and diverting the road to the south of the new development in order to make a safer junction and to reduce volume and speed of traffic through Boxgrove.

This site appraisal has been carried out on the site to determine the impact of the new development on the CA's and the more general historic context of the Parish.

The parish has a significant number of listed buildings as well as Scheduled Monuments such as the ruins of the Priory and the old Halnaker House.

The boundary of the South Downs National Park runs along the north edge of Halnaker beyond most of the existing housing but does encompass the ruins of the old Halnaker house, the Devils Ditch and Halnaker Windmill to the north.

The quarry to the north east of Halnaker is also the site of the discovery of 'Boxgrove Man'.

A Screening Opinion under Regulation 9 and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 determined that an environmental assessment of the Boxgrove NP would be required due to there 'being a likely significant environmental affect on the historic environment and heritage assets of the conservation areas and Listed Buildings in close proximity as a result of the proposals in the Plan'.

Historic England raised concerns about the 'degree and significance of any impact upon the special interest of the two Conservations Areas.

2. Site Context

Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency) has produced a Countryside Character Map of England which includes broad-brush descriptions of the different character areas. Natural England has recently revised its National Character Area (NCA) profiles.

The Site lies within NCA 126: South Coast Plains, revised and published in February 2014. Key characteristics for NCA 126: South Coast Plains includes the following:

- The plain slopes gently southwards towards the coast...;
- The underlying geology of flinty marine and valley gravels extends several miles inland to the dip slope of the South Downs and the South Hampshire Lowlands...;
- In places, streams and rivers flow south from the higher land of the Downs to the sea. Coastal inlets and 'harbours' contain a diverse landscape of narrow tidal creeks, mudflats, shingle beaches, dunes, grazing marshes and paddocks...;
- There are stretches of farmed land between developed areas, often with large arable fields defined by low hedges or ditches;
- There are isolated remnants of coastal heath in the west;
- Sand dune grasses and intertidal marsh communities are characteristic of the coastline, while small areas of species-rich meadow remain inland;

- The coastline [...] is also extensively used for recreation;
- Along the exposed, open coastal plain and shoreline, tree cover is limited to isolated wind-sculpted woodlands and shelter-belts;
- The area has significant urban development, with settlements along the coastline dominated by the Portsmouth conurbation, suburban villages and seaside towns including Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Worthing linked by major road and rail systems; and Historic fortifications along the coast..."

In terms of settlement patterns, the profile states that:

"East of Chichester numerous villages form a fairly continuous sprawl..." Landscape opportunities identified in the profile of relevance to the Site include:

"Plan for the creation of significant new landscapes that provide a framework for new and existing development and its associated infrastructure."

3. Site Characteristics

The land comprises of 2.13ha of open field bounded to the east by a beech hedge and mature beech trees and to the west by a beech hedge and a small scattering of trees.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders or other environmental designations affecting the study site. Many of the hedgerows have 'grown' out and removal of some trees may be beneficial.

The closest Listed Building is The Old Store which lies north-east of the study site on the other side of the A285. The proposed site is visible from the upstairs accommodation only.

A Scheduled Monument (Boxgrove Priory) lies approximately 500m south-east and has no sight lines into and out of the study site.

The ruins of old Halnaker House lie 800m north of the site and has no sight lines into and out of the study site.

The Priory Church lies over 500m southeast and has no sight lines into and out of the site.

Goodwood Park, a registered park, lies 1400m to the west and has no sight lines into and out of the site.

The proposed development is therefore considered to have a neutral effect on the settings of these designated assets.

There is one property to the north, The Bungalow, which will be demolished and the land incorporated into the development site. A further property, Blundens, will remain.

There are open fields to the south of the site which have a hedge boundary with the playing field on the northern edge of the Boxgrove settlement.

There are two Conservation Areas located in Boxgrove Village and Halnaker Village. Both CA's are the subject of Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Proposal reports which were published in 2010. They identified the key characteristics of each Conservation Area including significant views into and out of the Conservation Areas (CA's). See Plan A and Plan B for Townscape Appraisal Maps.

There are open fields to the south of the site which have a hedge/tree boundary with the playing field on the northern edge of the Boxgrove settlement.

A public footpath #367 runs NW/SE to the south of the site.

4. Development Treatment

Ensuring that the development sits well in the landscape, is well screened and uses materials sympathetic to the local vernacular are all important to the residents. Surveys have shown how much local people respect their environment and wish to retain their local heritage.

The BNDP proposes that the development is subject to a design brief which must include as a minimum the following elements:

- (i) Trees and hedgerows must be retained and wherever possible enhanced.
- (ii) The boundary to the west must be improved with planting to screen the houses from the road noise and settle the development in the landscape.
- (iii) All development will be no more than two storeys in height.
- (iv) Roofs will be pitched, gabled and where appropriate include dormers. Clay peg tiles and/or Welsh slate.
- (v) The 'high path' between Boxgrove and Halnaker will be retained.
- (vi) Traffic calming measures and disincentives for through traffic will be adopted.
- (vii) Properties will reflect the local vernacular and incorporate local materials such as red/blue brick and flint.
- (viii) New boundary treatments will be brick or flint with arched or triangular capping, native mixed hedges and chestnut post and rail fences.

The Boxgrove NDP comprises a number of policies which are designed to ensure that this development and all future development respect and enhance the heritage assets of the Parish.

Policy EH1 - Trees and Hedgerows
Policy EH6 - Landscape Character and Important Views
Policy EH7 - Dark Skies
Policy EH8 - Conserve and Enhance the Heritage Environment
Policy EH9 - SDNP

5. Conservation Areas Impact

Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations requires the development to show integration of environmental considerations and to address environmental problems. The impact on the two Conservation Areas has been assessed as follows:

5a. Halnaker CA Character appraisal (Plan B).

The Halnaker CA abuts the development site at its northern most point where the boundary is with a 20th century property known as Blundens and presumably only included in the CA to encompass the crossroads..

There are no important views identified in the direction of the crossroads site from the Halnaker CA.

The only Listed Building that the proposed site could be seen from is the upper floors of the Old Store Guesthouse.

The CA para 4.3 only refers to views to the south (actually shown SE on the CA map) from the crossroads outside the 'Old Store'. Views to the south east from the crossroads at road level are blocked by the hedges around Blundens and The Bungalow and the trees on the A285.

Development at the south western end of the Halnaker CA comprises 12 bungalows built in the mid 20c. These appear to have been included in the Conservation Area to encompass the crossroads as they are not built in the vernacular style.

The closure of the road at the crossroads would be the subject of discussion with WSCC Highways to determine the most appropriate materials to use to create the blockage but maintain vehicle safety.

5b. Boxgrove CA Character appraisal (Plan A).

The only important view identified to the north is actually north west from the village hall playing field. The playing field is bounded by a high hedge and therefore the site will not be seen from this point.

The site will be visible from the footpath which traverses the field north of the CA in a NW direction. This south western boundary of the new development will be planted with native trees and hedges on both sides of the new road to screen this view.

The only views which would be potentially impacted on in a negative way are those from the footpath 367. As the new diverted road would be screened by new native species trees and hedges, views to the development would be prevented as these matured.

6. South Downs National Park (SDNP)

The SDNP abuts the Parish of Boxgrove at its northern edge. The proposed development site lies on the opposite side of the A285 to the boundary with the Park. There is currently a tree screen on both sides of the road which prevents views into and out of the Park. These would remain if the development went ahead so the status quo would be maintained. There is however an opportunity to improve the tree screen with additional planting if required.

7. Archaeology

Chichester DC Archaeology Section has responded thus - Although the District HER references no find or deposit within the site it is acknowledged that the general area has some potential to contain archaeological interest. This comes both from its location alongside Stane Street, the Roman road between Chichester and London, and from the fact that this part of the West Sussex coastal plain is particularly fertile and quite well drained and has always been attractive to settlement. The site will need to be investigated prior to development in order that structures and deposits of interest that might be present can be properly preserved, either in-situ or through archaeological excavation.

8. Conclusion

The impact of the new development on the existing Conservation Areas and heritage features would be minimal even without the measures being taken to ensure that the new site is screened. The reduction in traffic through The Street will bring improvements to the CA.

None of the significant views identified in the Townscape Appraisal Maps are affected by the proposal.

The production of a strong design brief will be important in ensuring that the development meets the community aspirations for a professionally designed sympathetic development, that also maintains the setting of both Conservation Areas.

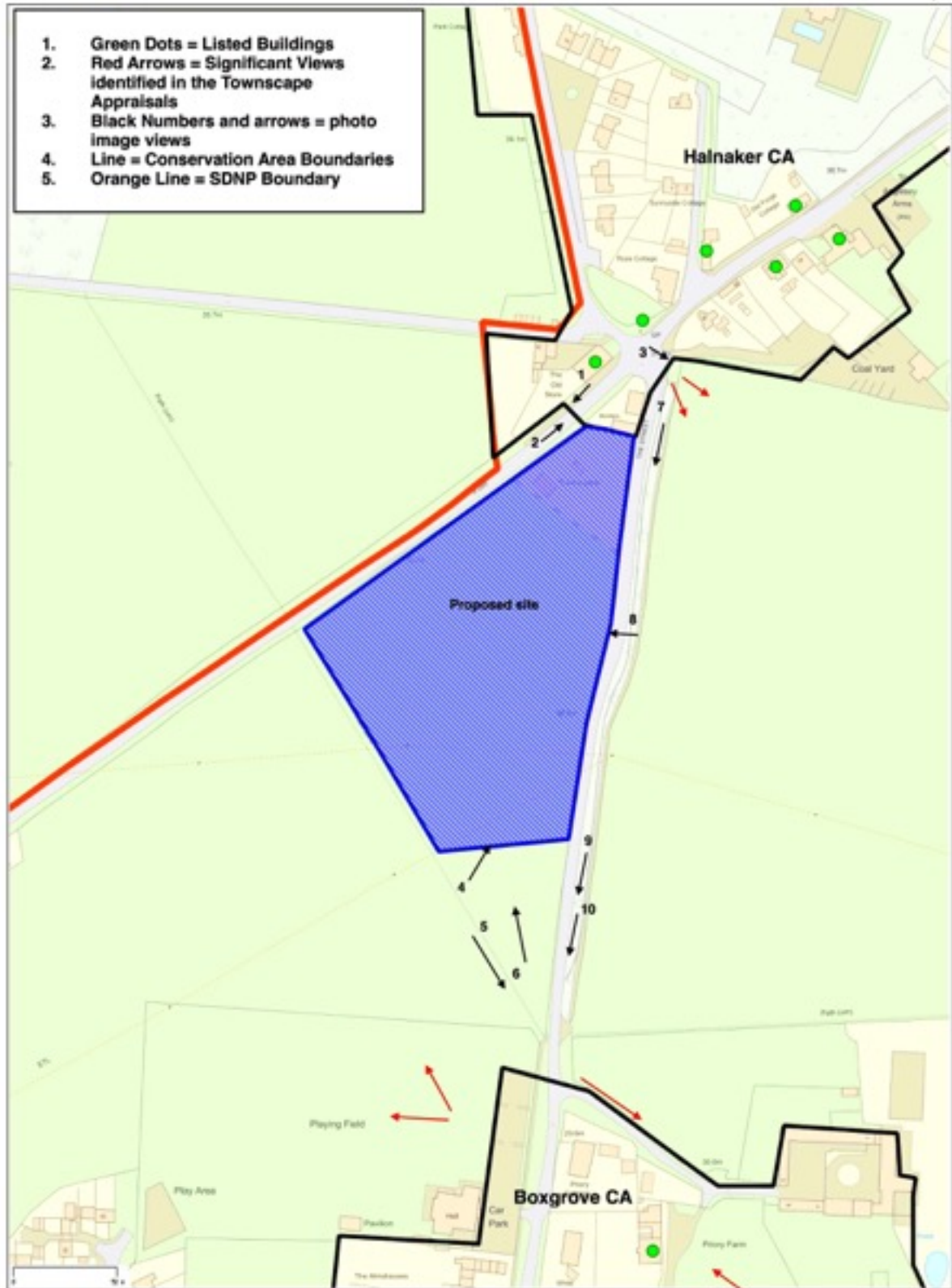
The proposed site complements the cluster of 12 bungalows built in the mid 20c to the south west of Park Lane on the northern side of the Halnaker Crossroads junction.

The development would have no negative impact on the historic context of the parish or the buildings and features of the Conservation Areas. Conversely the expected reduction in volume and speeds of through traffic would significantly enhance the experience of the residents and visitors alike by connecting the areas and features on both sides of The Street.

Both CA Appraisals refer to the speed and volume of traffic through Halnaker and Boxgrove. This proposed development has positive benefits to both. Since the designation of the CAs Halnaker now has a 30mph speed limit which is helping in this respect and this would be extended to the south to include the area where the 'New Street' joins the A285. An important part of the development is the diversion of The Street around the development. This will make the crossroads junction much safer and afford the opportunity to reduce both speeds and volume of traffic in Boxgrove by changing priorities and introducing subtle traffic calming measures without more signage clutter thereby enhancing the CA. There are no other alternative sites that would allow the traffic calming measures to be implemented.

The new development is sufficiently remote from Boxgrove to maintain the distinction between Halnaker and Boxgrove but close enough by road and footpath to connect them in a sustainable way as one parish.

Appendix A - Proposal Map showing Heritage Assets



Appendix B - The following series of photographs show views into and out of the proposed development site (these match numbers 1 to 10 on the map at Appendix A.



Figure 1 - This is current view from the nearest LB looking down the A285 from the junction. The proposed site is on the left side beyond The Bungalow behind the hedgerow. On the right beyond the Old Store is the SDNP boundary.



Figure 2 - This is a view looking north east along the A285 from the SDNP side of the road with the site of the development on the right.



Figure 3 - This view is not on the map. It shows the northern entrance to The Street which is intended to be blocked off. The track in the centre is to the existing coal-yard and access to the rear of properties known as 38,39,40 and 41.



Figure 4 - This view is from the centre of footpath 367 looking north east towards the Old Store guest house. Blundens and The Bungalow are also in view. The proposed site will be situated here.



Figure 5 - This is taken from the same position as fig 4 looking south east down the footpath. The trees to the south boundary the playing fields and the Boxgrove Village Hall beyond (looking back into the Boxgrove CA).



Figure 6 - This view is not on the map and is outside the CA looking north west up the footpath 367. In the background is The Old Store guesthouse and The Bungalow. The new development would be seen from here although screened by new tree planting.



Figure 7 - This is looking down the Street from just below the junction with the A285. The building on the right is part of Blundens. The new development would commence just beyond the existing building and run along the line of the hedgerow which is planned is to be retained/enhanced.



Figure 8 - This is part of the mixed hedging and mature trees which lines the Street. this view is looking onto the site of the proposed development.

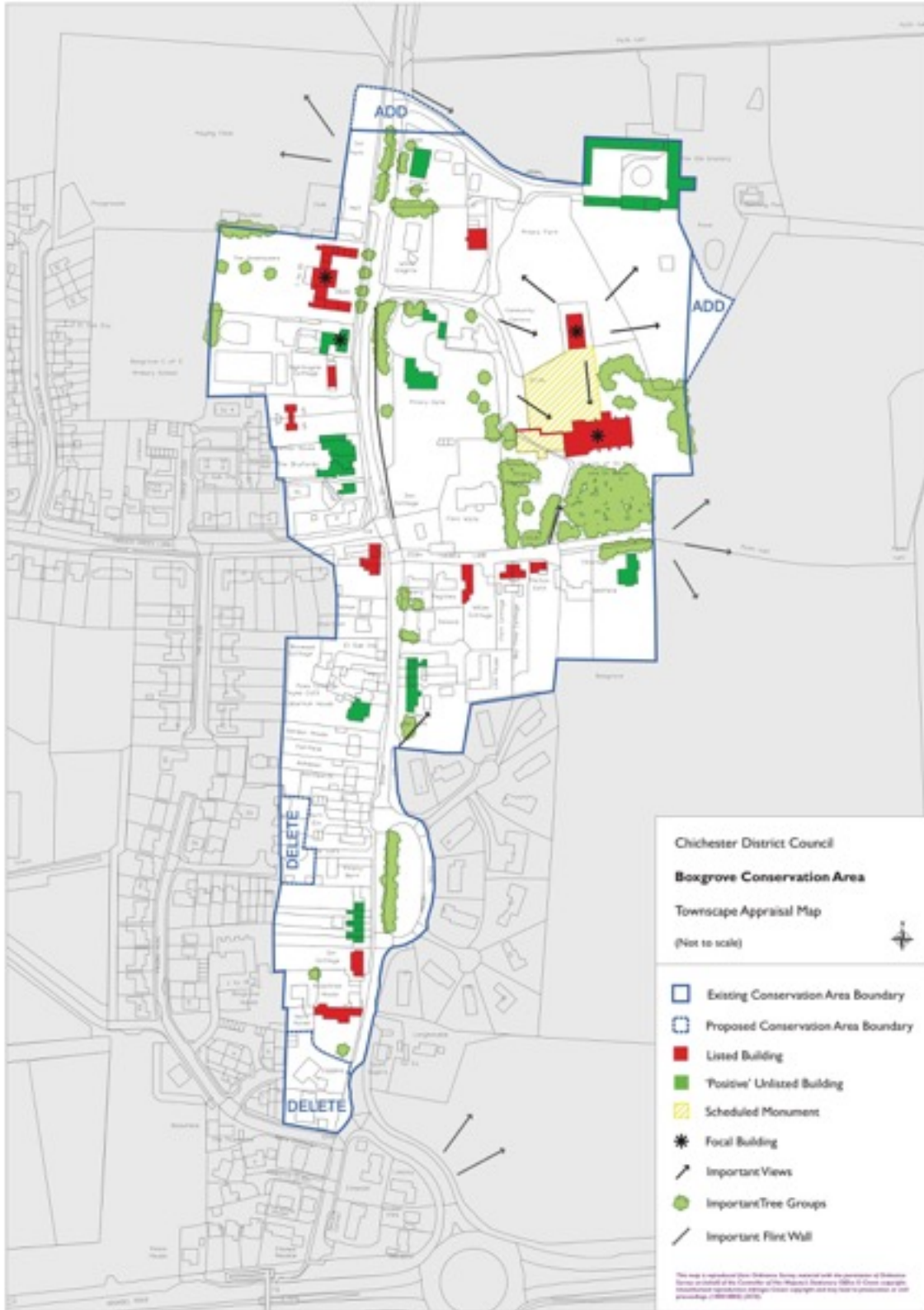


Figure 9 - This is a further view looking down The Street at the approximate location where the diverted road would join.



Figure 10 This view looking down The Street is at the lower end of the top section with the clear area adjacent to the village hall in the distance

Plan A - Boxgrove Townscape Appraisal Map



Plan B Halnaker Townscape Appraisal Map



Plan C - Schematic Site Layout

