

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Policy EMP1(x) Land at Woodcut Farm,**

#### **Ward: North Downs**

#### **Parish: Hollingbourne**

#### **Current use: agriculture**

There is a unique opportunity in the borough to provide a prestigious business park at Junction 8 of M20 that is well connected to the motorway network and that can provide for a range of job needs up to 2031. This will help to diversify the range of sites available to new and expanding businesses in the borough to help accommodate future demand.

Land at Woodcut Farm is allocated to provide for a mix of business uses comprising industrial, offices and distribution/logistics. High quality office development is sought, such as that required by company headquarters for example, providing complementary provision to the town centre.

The site, which is some 25.8ha in size in total, is situated to the west of the A20/M20 junction (junction 8). It comprises the wedge of land lying between the M20 to the north east and the A20 to the south west. The site is agricultural land, divided into fields by hedgerows which predominately run in a north-south direction. The site is also bisected north-south by a watercourse which eventually runs into the River Len to the south of the A20. The land is undulating, the ground rising up from either side of the watercourse. To the south the site borders a number of dispersed properties which front onto the A20 (Ashford Rd). To the south east the site is bounded by Musket Lane. To the north west lies Crismill Lane and a substantial tree belt which fronts onto this lane. The site boundary then follows the hedge belt which adjoins Crismill Lane approximately half way down its length and links to the complex of buildings at Woodcut Farm and turns south to the A20, running along the eastern boundary of the fields which front onto the Woodcut Farm access.

The site is located in the countryside and lies within the setting of the nationally designated Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The site falls within the White Heath Farmlands landscape character sub-area Landscape Character Area Assessment 2012 - ref 49-2 where landscape condition is poor overall, partially because of the fragmentation caused by the existing highway infrastructure. Landscape sensitivity for the character sub-area is recorded as moderate, the landscape providing the setting of the Kent Downs (AONB).

The site itself has been specifically assessed in the Maidstone Landscape Capacity Study (2015). This finds that the site has a high degree of sensitivity in landscape

terms and an accordingly low capacity to accommodate new employment-related development.

This being the case, development proposals must be planned with very careful attention to the site's visual and physical relationship with the AONB, responding to the site's topography and natural landscape features in terms of the scale, design, siting, use, orientation, levels and lighting of buildings and associated development will be defined alongside infrastructure and landscaping requirements.

To achieve a high quality scheme in this prime location, a campus style development will be delivered in a parkland setting. This will be created through the retention and enhancement of existing tree and hedge belts, including those subject to tree preservation orders TPO 19 of 2007 & TPO 17 of 2007, and substantial additional structural landscaping within the site in the form of shaws and woodland blocks. This should include the retention and reinforcement of the streamside vegetation. Landscape buffers will also be established along the principal site boundaries, including to help provide a setting to the Grade II listed Woodcut Farmhouse and to help secure the residential amenity of nearby residential properties.

Buildings will cover no more than 40% of the site. This figure excludes the western most field, of some 9ha in area, which is reserved as an undeveloped area to include an enhanced landscape buffer to establish a clear and strong boundary between the development and the wider countryside to the east of Bearsted.

The flatter area of the site, to the east of the stream, is better able to accommodate larger footprint buildings up to 10,000sqm with heights restricted to a maximum of 14m. To the west of the stream the land rises and is suited to smaller footprint buildings up to 8m in height. The siting, scale and detailed design of development within this area must also have particular regard to the setting of Woodcut Farmhouse (Grade II listed)

There are archaeological remains in the immediate vicinity of the site, including an Anglo-Saxon burial site. Measures appropriate to the actual archaeological value of the site, revealed by further survey as needed, will be addressed. There are no statutory or non-statutory sites of nature conservation importance within the site and the County Ecologist advises that the potential for impacts on designated sites is limited. As is normal practice for a proposal of this nature, an ecological scoping study will be required to establish the presence of, and potential for, any impacts on protected species.

Vehicular access to the site will be taken from the A20 Ashford Road and a Transport Assessment will identify the scope of improvements required to the junctions (and associated approaches) at:

- the M20 Junction 8 (including the west-bound on-slip and merge);
- the A20 Ashford Rd/M20 link road roundabout;
- the A20 Ashford Rd/Penford Hill junction;
- the A20 Ashford Rd/Eyborne Street/Great Danes Hotel access; and
- the Willington Street/A20 Ashford Rd junction.

The site is located on a bus route (A20) but without significant additional dedicated measures it is highly likely that workers and visitors travelling to and from the site will be highly reliant on their private cars. A Travel Plan will be required to demonstrate how development will deliver significantly improved access by sustainable modes, in particular by public transport but this could also include cycling, walking and car share initiatives.

### **Policy EMP1(x) - Land at Woodcut Farm**

Land at Woodcut Farm as identified on the policies map is allocated for mixed employment development. The site will provide up to 49,000sqm of mixed employment floorspace comprising light industry (B1c), general industry (B2) and high quality offices (B1a) with distribution/warehousing (B8).

The employment, landscaping and infrastructure elements will be delivered in an integrated and co-ordinated manner that respect the site's visual and physical relationship with the North Downs AONB. :

Planning permission will be granted if the following criteria are met.

#### **Design & layout**

1. The proposals create a spacious parkland setting for development through the addition of substantial internal landscaping which will help to break up the visual appearance of the development in particular in views from the AONB; buildings will cover not more than 40% of the developed site area;
2. Landscape buffers of at least 15m in width are established along the site's boundaries to M20 and to Musket Lane which will also to help secure the setting to Woodcut Farmhouse (Grade II listed) and the amenity of residential properties at Chestnuts and White Heath. Development will have a landscaped frontage to A20;
3. An area of 9ha to the north and north west of Woodcut Farm is secured as an undeveloped landscape area including the addition of a landscape buffer of at least 30m along the eastern boundary. Future management of this area will be secured by means of legal agreement;
4. Larger footprint buildings are accommodated in the field to the east of the stream up to a maximum unit size of 10,000sqm with building ridge heights not to exceed 14m. Units should be orientated end-on to predominant views to and from the AONB;
5. Development on the field to the west of the stream comprises smaller units with graded building heights that take account of the site's topography with building ridge heights not to exceed 8m. The siting, scale and detailed design

of development must have regard to Woodcut Farmhouse (Grade II) and its setting ;

### **Landscape and ecology**

6. The development proposals are designed to take into account the results of a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) undertaken in accordance with the principles of current guidance. The assessment will specifically address the impact of development on views to and from the North Downs AONB escarpment.
7. The development proposals are designed to take account of the results of a phase 1 habitat survey and any species specific surveys that may as a result be necessary, together with any necessary mitigation and enhancement measures

### **Archaeology**

8. The proposals are designed to take account of the archaeological interest on the site as revealed through appropriate survey.

### **Access**

9. Vehicular access to the site will be from A20 Ashford Road.

### **Highways**

10. Development will contribute, as proven necessary through a Transport Assessment, to improvements at the following junctions:
  - i. the M20 Junction 8 (including the west-bound on-slip and merge);
  - ii. the A20 Ashford Rd/M20 link road roundabout;
  - iii. the A20 Ashford Rd/Penford Hill junction;
  - iv. the A20 Ashford Rd/Eyehorne Street/Great Danes Hotel access; and
  - v. the Willingdon Street/A20 Ashford Rd junction.
11. Development will deliver a significant package of sustainable transport measures to secure access to the site by a range of sustainable modes and must be supported by the implementation of a Travel Plan.