



**SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK
AUTHORITY**

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING

ACT 1990

(SECTION 78 PLANNING APPEAL)

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PROOF OF EVIDENCE
Landscape and Visual Matters

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APPENDICES

Appendix 01: Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

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I. INTRODUCTION

Qualifications & Experience

- I.1. My name is Ruth Childs, I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Oceanography with Geology (with honours) and a Masters of Science degree in Integrated Environmental Studies from the University of Southampton. I have been a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) since 2020.
- I.2. I have worked in the landscape sector for over 16 years and the environment sector for 20 years. Through my career I have worked for Charitable, Public and Private organisations, providing landscape advice to policy and development planners since 2012.
- I.3. I have worked for the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) as the Landscape Officer for 7 years. I provide landscape and visual consultee advice across the Authority. My role is within the Major Applications Team where I advise on policy, planning applications and enforcement matters. I am involved in a range of applications, although my focus is often the larger or more complex schemes in sensitive locations both within the SDNP and its setting. I provide an expert witness role at inquiries, appeals and hearings, alongside Examinations of Plans.
- I.4. Prior to my current role I specialised in providing landscape advice for planning in sensitive landscapes, protected sites and world heritage sites for both public and private organisations.
- I.5. The evidence that I have prepared and provide for this appeal is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the Landscape Institute (LI) Code of Practice (December 2021) and guidance of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). I confirm that the opinions expressed are my own and are formed from professional judgement based on my knowledge and best practice.

Scope & Structure

I.6. In this submission I provide evidence within my remit as the landscape witness for the SDNP. My evidence will expand upon the second reason for refusal, cited in the Decision Notice. The landscape evidence sits within the following structure, akin to Russian dolls – landscape is a framework within which all other matters (except planning) fit, shown in **Fig.01**.

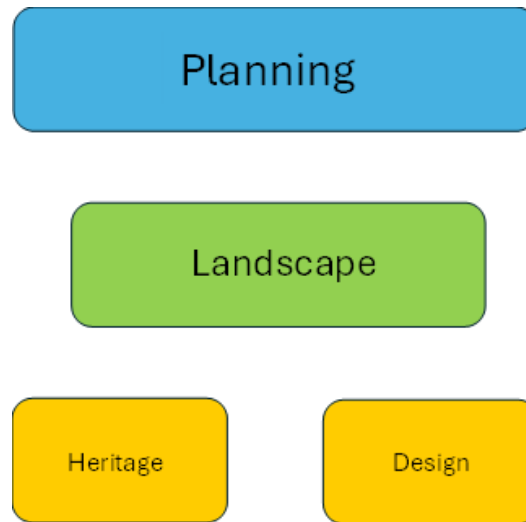


Fig. 01 Structure of evidence

I.7. This landscape evidence is structured as follows:

- i. **Section 2** deals with landscape-specific legislation and policy;
- ii. **Section 3** refers to the proposed development;
- iii. **Section 4** sets out the key aspects of landscape and landscape character needed to apply policy;
- iv. **Section 5** sets out the context to the Site, describing the landscape character context of Selborne and its immediate setting.
- v. **Section 6** is the site-based assessment of the proposals;
- vi. **Section 7** sets out my conclusions.

I.8. **Sections 5** and **6** draw out the effects of the proposal upon landscape character, using Design and Heritage comments and with a focus upon the following four landscape elements, introduced in **Section 4**.

- Buildings
- Spaces
- Routes
- Vegetation

I.9. It is the pattern of these elements which together create Selborne's distinctive character. It is this distinctive character that SDNPA is charged with conserving and enhancing, through the Purposes and Development Plan.

2. LEGISLATION & POLICY CONTEXT

Legislation

- 2.1. The Statement of Common Ground sets out the National Park legislation. For my evidence, the following legislation is important to understand. It clarifies the legislative framework and key definitions which apply to landscape as used to direct planning decisions.
- 2.2. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is a treaty signed in 2006 by UK Government via the Council of Europe. The Convention outlines that landscape is a key part of individual and social well-being everywhere, an essential component of human beings' surroundings and an important part of their quality of life.
- 2.3. The Convention provides a definition of landscape in Article 1, which is adopted by Government and applied by Natural England (NE) and the SDNPA:

'an area, as perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.'

- 2.4. This definition is inclusive of all landscapes – urban and rural, pristine and in poor condition. It means I will be referring to built and semi-natural parts of landscape in this Evidence. The Convention encourages landscape to be used to inform decisions. The aims of the ELC are to promote landscape protection, management and planning (development and policy).

Policy & Guidance

- 2.5. Relevant planning policy and guidance is described in Mr. Ferguson's Evidence. Specific guidance in relation to landscape, is highlighted and provided where relevant in **Section 4**.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 For a description of the development, please refer to the Statement of Common Ground.

4. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Landscape Character

- 4.1. This section provides background to landscape character, this is needed alongside planning to get the right development in the right place. Policy SD4(1) requires proposals to ‘*conserve and enhance landscape character*’ and along with Purpose 1, is a golden thread which runs through the Local Plan. Therefore, a landscape character baseline is needed to judge a scheme against. This baseline is gathered using Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) **CD34**, a method that can be applied at any scale, guiding strategies or development design at a site-level.
- 4.2. Landscape character is defined as;
‘a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse’. (**CD34 & CD3**).
- 4.3. More simply, it can help to think of landscape character as:
The explanation behind how a place makes you feel.
Landscape elements are; (see **Appendix 01**).
‘Individual parts which make up the landscape, such as, for example, trees, hedges and buildings.’
- 4.4. Landscape character is therefore only as good as the sum of its parts (elements). In coherent landscapes, all elements are characteristic. Conserving landscape character per SD4 means reinforcing characteristic patterns and precedents. Identifying these is critical to meeting policy and achieving a landscape-led design, but a precedent does not automatically mean it is characteristic or worthy of repeating. Understanding character, context and value tells us what is positive.
- 4.5. Elements not only express a consistent pattern, but they might also be historic, support wildlife, undertake functions (ecosystem services), produce views/visual character and perceptual qualities.
- 4.6. In summary, in a National Park, protected and valued for its landscape character, positive precedents determine landscape-led designs; in this way proposals can integrate, and landscapes can be conserved and enhanced.

Landscape Capacity

- 4.7. Over-development occurs when a site exceeds its landscape capacity, often resulting in negative effects to, or a change in landscape character. Some landscapes can receive a change to one or two elements yet retain overall character. The more landscape elements that are negatively affected by a proposal, the more likely a fundamental change in character would result.
- 4.8. Landscape Capacity is defined as;

'the amount of specified development or change which a particular landscape and the associated visual resource is able to accommodate without undue negative effects on its character and qualities'.(**CD35**)

4.9. This definition is important because it overlaps with Policy SD4, whose main tenet is about supporting development proposals *where they conserve and enhance landscape character*. A scheme which exceeds the capacity of a site is therefore unlikely to meet SD4.

Addressing Landscape Character in Terms of the Proposals

4.10. To determine if something is characteristic, I question 'if it were removed, would it still feel like Selborne?' If the answer is no, these key characteristics are '*...those combinations of elements which help to give an area its distinctive sense of place.*' (**CD34**)

4.11. Patterns are referenced in SD4 and 5. The latter highlights the following landscape elements:

- Routes (roads or paths)
- Spaces
- Buildings
- Vegetation

4.12. These elements together give Selborne its distinctive sense of place, highlighted at paragraph 4 **CD18** and most affected by the proposals. I have highlighted these in **Fig. 02 (Section 5)**. Many other elements contribute to character but are not the focus of this Appeal.

Landscape-led Design

4.13. The local plan advocates a landscape-led approach to design (SD5). Like landscape character, this is scalable. The landscape-led approach is 'good contextual design'. This is why my Proof begins the assessment with Context. The approach is described in **CD5**.

4.14. Landscape-led design occurs throughout the design process (fig. 4 page 9 of **CD5**). This shows each decision point being influenced and the design iterated, by landscape evidence, from the patterns (siting) and scale through to materials, fenestration and species. In terms of these details **CD24** sums up landscape-led design '*Development [in the Conservation Area] will need to respect the details, materials and pattern of existing buildings in the village and seek to blend in with them.*'

5. LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

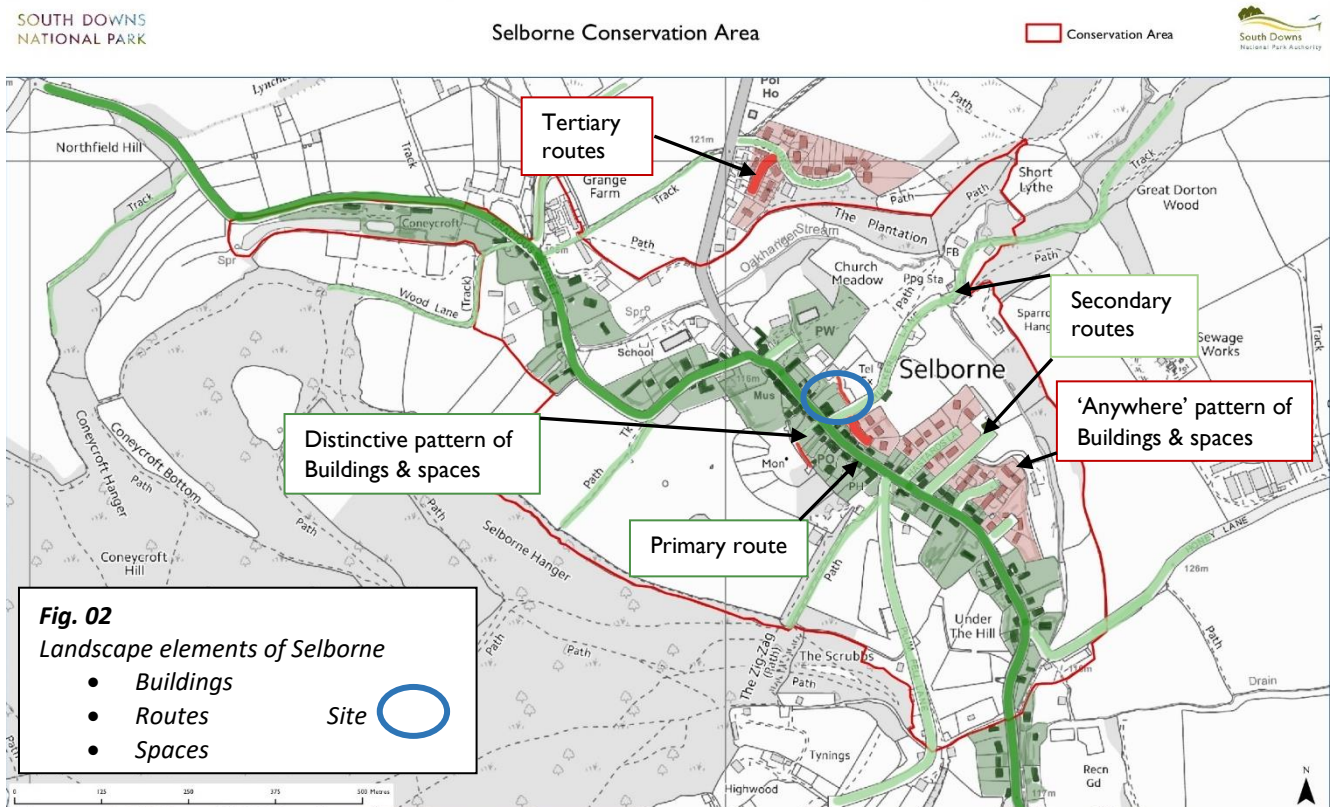
Contextual Landscape Character

5.1. This section describes the landscape character context to ‘the Site’. The Statement of Common Ground provides a site description. However, below I describe the landscape *character* of Selborne and its context. This differs from a site description because, using evidence it identifies the positive character or patterns of elements, not everything nearby. Contextual landscape character sets the scene, determines positive characteristic elements to conserve, and those in need of enhancement. It is the starting point for all landscape-led design.

Introduction

5.2. Selborne is a deeply rural historic village, described as ‘one of the most attractive villages in Hampshire’ (CD24) and located within the ‘East Hampshire Greensand Terrace’ Landscape Character Area (LCA). A description of the character of this landscape can be read at CD36.

5.3. The plan below Fig. 02 and 04, highlight the elements referenced at paragraph 4.10, pertinent to this Appeal and considered through the assessment in this Proof. In Fig. 02, the landscape elements that positively contribute to the distinctive character of Selborne are shown in green. Landscape elements whose pattern does not positively contribute, are shown in red.



Pattern of Settlement & Buildings

- 5.4. Selborne is characteristic of its context **CD36** (LCA). Selborne Conservation Area (SCA) is large, illustrating the importance of its rural setting to settlement character, further recognised in **CD10** '*strong landscape setting*'.
- 5.5. The settlement has a linear pattern, and buildings characteristically address roads. This is particularly clear along the High Street, described as '*small-scale historic buildings, set up close to the winding streets*' (**CD24**).
- 5.6. Development at-depth is not a characteristic of Selborne, but within a plot or space individual buildings frequently have related ancillary structures behind, reinforcing the linear character and creating a positive transition to the countryside. See Ms. Tushingam's Evidence (**paragraph. 3.4**)
- 5.7. Buildings enclose the road and a hierarchy of built form can be experienced along the route as well as through the plots (spaces). This linear pattern of development is a key part of Selborne's distinctive character.
- 5.8. Characteristic secondary routes, including Huckers Lane, support infrequent buildings, often enclosed by blank or 'working' elevations (**CD24**), they quickly dissipate once the route meets the countryside. Characteristic materials are noted in the SCA (**CD24**) and include timber frames, malmstone and brick, limewash and render alongside, thatch, tile or slate roofs.

Pattern of Spaces

- 5.9. Patterns of spaces frequently relate to buildings, helping us understand the pattern and evolution of a settlement SD4 (1b), and our experience of it - Purpose 2. This is highlighted in **CD10** '*Selborne is special because there are open areas (including pastureland) within the village that afford views to the surrounding countryside which helps to maintain the sense of rural tranquillity.*'
- 5.10. Frequently garden spaces create the settlement edge of Selborne. With little development at depth, rear gardens back on to open countryside, lined by trees. Other spaces are associated with key buildings, parklands or past land use, and are sometimes semi-public.
- 5.11. **Fig. 03** highlights (hatch), the historic garden spaces in Selborne. Many of these remain unchanged, increasing their contribution to character. The Wakes (associated with Gilbert White), Plestor (near the church) and graveyard are all examples of larger characteristic spaces. The Site includes one of these garden spaces behind the pub. Many of these spaces (large/small) create positive experiences, afford views to the countryside and include glimpses of the subservient or subordinate buildings behind. This latter point noted at paragraph 20 of **CD20**.



Fig. 03 (<https://maps.nls.uk/> National Library of Scotland) 1872 showing spaces within the village. 2023 aerial image beneath. Site highlighted in red.

Pattern of Roads, Tracks & Paths

- 5.12. Selborne's valley-bottom location creates narrow, winding streets (**CD24**). The primary route is the High Street, running N-S, orientated with the contours.
- 5.13. Perpendicular and subservient routes meet the High Street. These secondary routes, are very narrow, often unmade with increasing informality they sometimes become a path as they reach the countryside. The pattern of these routes is shown in **Fig. 02**, together creating a strong and distinctive route hierarchy, comprising:
- A single primary route (High Street).
 - Many secondary routes – subservient (smaller and more informal), perpendicular to main route.
 - Few tertiary routes – not characteristic of Selborne.
- 5.14. The character of the High Street, Huckers Lane and Gracious Street are all highlighted in **CD24**. Primary and secondary routes in the centre of the village retain much of their historic form and fabric and therefore character.

Patterns of Vegetation

- 5.15. Trees relate to landform, lining streams or on steep ground forming hanger woodland. They characterise the settlement edge, shown in **Fig. 04**.



Fig. 04 (Google 2023) Patterns of trees in Selborne, linear belts characterise the settlement edge. Site highlighted in red.

- 5.16. The character and appearance of Selborne is positively affected by trees (**CD24**). Within the village, its edge and setting, mature trees punctuate the roofscape. These trees integrate Selborne into its context, providing a sense of enclosure and backdrop to buildings and views.
- 5.17. Trees are valued, by the community ‘*an enduring part of Selborne’s charm is that it remains hidden from view*’ (**CD10**) and the previous Inspector when balancing the loss of the hedge with the proposal ‘*views of mature trees would remain apparent from the High Street*’ at paragraph 28 (**CD20**)
- 5.18. Parkland and formal tree planting are associated with designed landscapes and formal or status buildings and their spaces/gardens within the village. Victorian plant collectors shaped many British estates and gardens, with plants often including large conifers, becoming status symbols from the 1850s onwards. ‘Specimen’ trees characterise key spaces in Selborne, often from this era, for example The Wakes, a Park & Garden listed at Grade II*, and the Plestor, giving these spaces and their buildings status. This characteristic is found at the Site.
- 5.19. The High Street’s domestic spaces (**Fig. 03**) comprise formal vegetated boundaries. Formality reduces away from the High Street in concert with increasing rurality, thus vegetation (patterns and species) contributes positively to a transition to the countryside.
- 5.20. Selborne Hanger forms an unmistakable, characteristic backdrop and the significance of trees to character is highlighted by map 3 **CD10**.

Summary

5.21. In summary, the landscape character context to this site pertinent to the Appeal is summarised in **Fig. 05** below. It is important to remember the character and value of these elements results from them being experienced *together*.

Landscape Element	Patterns that contribute to distinctive qualities of Selborne
Settlement and buildings	
	Linear settlement, buildings address roads
	Strong building hierarchy, along streets and across plots
	Small-scale historic buildings, local materials
	Buildings (blank elevations) enclose roads
Spaces	
	Linear pattern of spaces relating to buildings; gardens, parkland
	Within the village, spaces afford views out to the countryside
	One plot deep, gardens back onto countryside
	Spaces contribute a rural character to village and its setting
Routes	
	Strong route hierarchy – (one) primary and (many) secondary
	Narrow, winding routes
	Routes retain historic form and fabric within village
	Secondary routes; very narrow, lack pavements and informal
Vegetation	
	Trees follow/mark settlement edge
	Mature trees punctuate roovescape and provide backdrop to views
	Hanger woodland, a consistent visual link within the village
	Formal/specimen trees provide status to key buildings and their spaces

Fig. 05 Summary of context - Selborne's distinctive landscape character

5.22. All of these elements are important in understanding how the appeal proposals respond to the local context, in order to conserve and enhance the landscape character that makes Selborne distinctive. These elements and their character influence my assessment of the proposals in **Section 6**.

6. SITE ASSESSMENT

Introduction

- 6.1. Moving on from Context, this section considers how the scheme affects the character of each element. This focuses upon the amount of development and its design, per element and how the two, when drawn together, impact the landscape character of the Site.
- 6.2. For each element, I consider the existing character of the Site and assess how the proposed changes 'fit' or otherwise with Selborne's contextual character (**Section 05**). I highlight where proposals support or undermine landscape character, with respect to layout (patterns) and design details - determining overall effects.

The Site

- 6.3. The Site forms a block of land between Huckers Lane (south) and Whites Cottage (north). Located centrally within Selborne, a paddock, a Local Greenspace sits adjacent (east) to the Site. The previous Inspector stated at paragraph 22, '*the wider appeal site... also makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the SLA*'¹. (**CD20**) This is agreed, the Site exhibits patterns of elements consistent with its context.

Buildings - Existing

- 6.4. The Site comprises the pub, its extensions and a separate barn. The pub is the primary building, constructed of local materials, it fronts the High Street. A subservient, single storey extension addresses the High Street and its gable encloses Huckers Lane. The barn is also subservient to the pub. Its scale and mass, materials, and few openings produce a 'working' informal character, in contrast with the pub's formal high street elevation.



Fig. 06 View looking SW
from within the Site

¹ Assumed typographical error - SCA

- 6.5. These existing buildings positively reinforce the character of Selborne, through their patterns, hierarchy and enclosure of a secondary route. **Fig. 05** illustrates this pattern and resulting roofscape, a key characteristic of the SCA (**CD24**). The visual link to the hangers is also important to sense of place (**paragraph 5.20**).
- 6.6. The extension and ancillary structures are considered in Ms. Tushingham's Evidence are set within the historic curtilage of, and associated with, the pub use. They are representative of Selborne and contribute a historic value individually and as part of this historically intact site. Together these buildings are '*existing features which contribute to the site's character, patterns and evolution*' required to be conserved and enhanced by SD4.

Buildings - Proposed

- 6.7. Small ancillary structures close to the pub have been partially knocked down. Whilst the lean-tos are not considered to be of individual merit, these small-scale additions together support building hierarchy and the functional, informal character behind the pub. Their loss (and replacement with bin/bike stores), contributes to the Site's negative change in character.
- 6.8. 2no. new buildings are proposed. One attached to the barn, plus a separate structure running alongside Huckers Lane. Both additions are acceptable in principle, and it is agreed the site has capacity for some new built form. However, this acceptability is dependent upon their detailed siting, scale and design being landscape-led.
- 6.9. The **barn** extension increases this ancillary building by 105% (**Appendix 02**). This is not considered a subservient extension, and it undermines the characteristic pattern of building hierarchy on Site. The roof lights and glazed connection exacerbate the uncharacteristic nature of the extension, imparting a new domestic character upon this working building. It does not meet the Design Guide SPD (**CD5**) for these reasons and is an uncharacteristic addition to the Site, in light of its history and context.
- 6.10. The **guest accommodation** proposed has the potential to positively enclose Huckers Lane, yet the design misses this opportunity. The building is slightly set back and does not adjoin the lane. This creates a narrow space, proposed with kerbs and a replacement privet hedge, see landscape plan in **CD22**. This is negative because whilst the building is adjacent to the lane, it is not directly abutting it as is characteristic (see **Fig. 10**), and whilst replacing the hedge is commendable, it is unlikely to thrive in such a constrained environment.
- 6.11. The length of this proposed building is 19m (**Appendix 02**), creating a relentless ridgeline and extensive boundary to Huckers Lane. There is no positive precedent for this scale of *ancillary* structure in the village centre, as a result it is likely to appear incongruous and overbearing. The building has the same ridge height (c.5m) as the pub extension, and so offers no subservient response in height terms, this could be overbearing, affecting the quality of space

within the Site and along the lane. Altogether, this building would not contribute to the ancillary character of buildings behind the pub.

- 6.12. This new block, proposed in weatherboard, includes a series of repeating windows facing the lane. Weatherboarding is found on small ancillary structures, but not buildings of this scale. Repeating windows emphasise the change of use and create a domestic character. Both maintenance and opening windows would be compounded by the hedge, reducing the long-term quality of this building and thus street scene.
- 6.13. During the application process I advised the building enclosed Huckers Lane, as one was lost post-war and it is a positive precedent. Secondly a building can be designed well once, and with suitable materials (brick/malmstone), improves with age. Boundary treatments are more likely to change, so a building affords better conservation of character, long-term. Thirdly, characteristic enclosing buildings (with mostly blank elevations) are a positive precedent, **Fig. 10** and noted in **CD20** paragraph 27.
- 6.14. Both proposed buildings are designed using domestic cues. Residential style fenestration (roof lights and residential-scale, repeating window patterns), dormers, porches and roof hips, all take a cue from domestic forms or the pub itself, *not* the simple ancillary working structures that characterise the rear of this plot. The building design is not landscape-led.
- 6.15. The result is a change in building hierarchy, building size increases towards the settlement edge instead of decreasing. This negatively affects the characteristic transition to the countryside and is compounded by the loss of trees.
- 6.16. In **summary** I disagree with the previous Inspector in relation to scale of buildings, see paragraph 24, **CD20** and conclude that neither building is appropriately scaled or designed in detail to meet SD4(1) and SD5. The siting and design of the guest accommodation and how this impacts the character of the Lane is in **Paragraph 6.39**. The design details fail to respond to building character, imparting a residential/suburban character where one previously did not exist. This generates negative impacts upon (i.e. would be incongruous to) landscape character.

Spaces – Existing

- 6.17. Spaces contribute to Selborne's distinctiveness, the pattern of development and experiential qualities that result. The latter point is picked up by the local community in their Village Design Statement (**CD10**) where they state spaces are; '*very desirable features which need to be protected as they contribute much to the sense of rural tranquillity, even when viewed from a busy road*'. This is the human response that results from the character or patterns described.
- 6.18. Buildings on the Site enclose spaces, this relationship facilitates and reinforces the long-established pub use, either as functional yards, garden or communal spaces. Without the spaces the building's historic function would be less appreciable. They contribute equally alongside

buildings, to the character of the Site. Conserving spaces therefore helps to conserve landscape character SD4(1), supporting people’s understanding and enjoyment of the National Park (Purpose 2), through their appreciation of important local buildings, and their evolution.

6.19. Key spaces are shown in **Fig. 07** below. I refer only to those highlighted in grey.

	Key Space	Currently:	Proposed for:
i	Yard adjacent to High Street	Parking	Parking
ii	Yard to rear of barn	Hardstanding (parking)	Private garden and drive
iii	The garden	The garden	Parking
iv	Small frontage to extension	Hardstanding	Hardstanding

Fig. 07 The Site’s characteristic spaces and proposed changes to them

6.20. The **garden** space is one of the oldest (see **Fig. 03** identifies the pub garden in 1872) surviving landscape elements on the site, along with the roads and pub cellar (see Ms. Tushingam’s Evidence **paragraph 7.2**). It makes a positive contribution in several ways. It expresses a characteristic pattern, i.e. it is related to a key building, supporting its function and forms part of the characteristic settlement edge. It provides ecosystem services (drainage, soil health, wildlife, see **CD3 SD2**) and as an open space within the village, it affords visual connection to the countryside, a key characteristic described in **paragraph 5.9**. Together these contribute to the garden’s value and status and make it important to conserve.

6.21. The yard behind the barn is hardstanding. In the recent past this space has been used as parking for the pub – with a characteristic access perpendicular to the High Street. This area of hardstanding contributes positively to the working character of the barn – giving a working building a working context. These spaces together are one element of the ‘*existing features which contribute to the site’s character, patterns and evolution*’ that SD4 requires are conserved and enhanced.

Spaces - Proposed

6.22. The proposals result in less space, implicating other elements of the landscape, notably buildings and vegetation. The green space on site is almost entirely removed and replaced with hardstanding. The quality of and benefits (ecosystem services and amenity) accrued by the remaining spaces would be poor.

6.23. The proposal changes two spaces (ii and iii) as shown in **Fig. 07** above. The design, with each space swapping its landcover, is not influenced by landscape character and fails to demonstrate a landscape-led approach. The result is the characteristic and historically important open space (garden) see Ms. Tushingam’s Evidence (**paragraph 7.13**), is lost to a car park. The characteristic ‘yard’ which reinforces the ancillary status of the barn, is lost to

residential curtilage. This fencing divides the Site, separating the barn from its 'host' building and undermining this historic association and resulting character.

- 6.24. The loss of the garden would reduce opportunities for visitors' to experience the positive character of Selborne, whilst affecting health and well-being more directly (see SD2 and **Appendix 02**), forcing pub-goers to sit alongside a busy road (currently), or in seating between buildings and a car park (proposed). Neither are positive being either shaded, a pollution risk, or poor amenity - exposed to what the previous inspector described as 'paraphernalia' behind the pub. See landscape plan (**CD22**). This negatively affects site character and experience, amenity and sense of place. See also Ms. Tushingham's Evidence at **paragraph 7.16**.
- 6.25. The previous Inspector suggests in **CD20** that the car park is acceptable, in part because other parking already exists in the area. They state at paragraph 24; '*However, even if some visibility [of the new parking area] were to occur, given the presence of other parking areas behind the main frontage in the surrounding area, this would not appear incongruous to this context*'.
- 6.26. I contend a different logic is needed in a National Park, where Purpose 1 applies. The approach made suggests if something is already there (even if negative) then it is acceptable to repeat. This does not meet Purpose 1 or the ambitions of the Development Plan. The incidental parking areas that for example, support neighbouring Honeysuckle Cottage and the Dowlings, are not characteristic spaces of Huckers Lane or the wider village. The loss of these parking areas would not harm Selborne's character or SCA; therefore, they should not be inspiring future change.
- 6.27. In **summary** the loss of key spaces, leads to a significant change to the character of site and the context of non-designated heritage assets. The result is a site which is cramped, with insufficient space is available for mitigating this change, let alone enhancement. The quality of the remaining spaces would be poor as highlighted in **Appendix 02**.

Routes - Existing

- 6.28. The Site's character derives in part, from its relationships to the High Street and Huckers Lane. Both are historic routes and strong determinants of settlement pattern. Huckers Lane is described in **CD24** as one of its '*five areas of interest*'. Its contribution to the character of Selborne is therefore high.
- 6.29. Routes are the place from which people most frequently experience the landscape. Huckers Lane links the village to the rights of way to the east, including the Writer's Way – a 17-mile promoted route. The lane itself is considered part of the 'Via Canorum' which was a route to Selborne Priory, an Augustinian Priory, found at Grange Farm (**CD24**).
- 6.30. The character of Huckers Lane and High Street are very different, resulting from their different relationships to other elements of the landscape. **Huckers Lane** is a narrow

secondary route, it lacks kerbs, pavements or other engineering. There is no lighting and no painted lines. It is bound tightly by vegetation, some buildings, or walls.

6.31. The access off this lane to a parking area, creates a tertiary route. This has been present since at least the late 1990s, it is not historic. This route was further formalised when neighbouring Plum Tree House was built in the early-mid 2000s. This route does not contribute to distinctive character (**Fig. 02**). Furthermore, the edge of settlement is not characterised by routes, rather by back gardens and trees.

6.32. The informal or incidental character of the access has in the past been aided by the hedgerow. This served to visually narrow the access and screen parked vehicles. The effect can be seen in **Fig. 08** and **09** below, showing in 2011, the hedged boundary dominating,

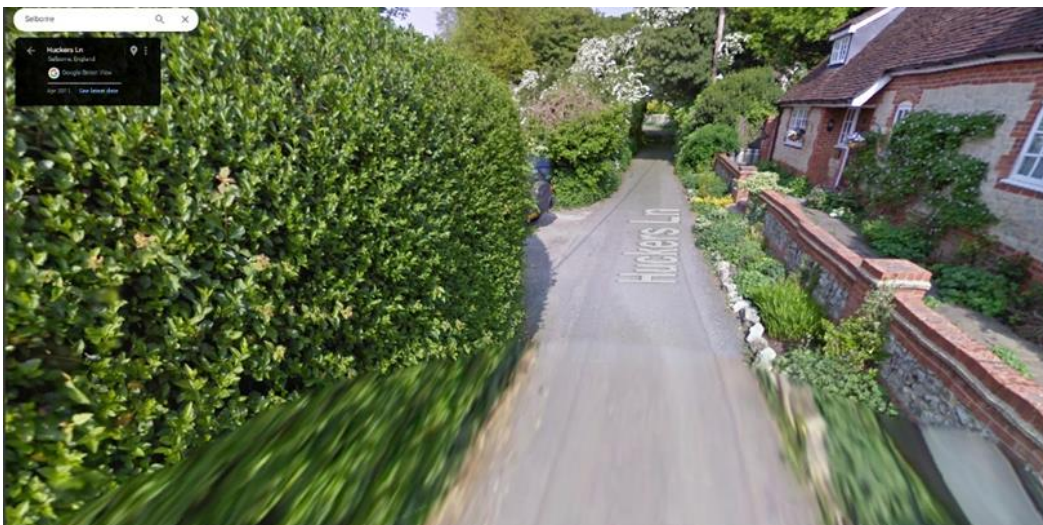
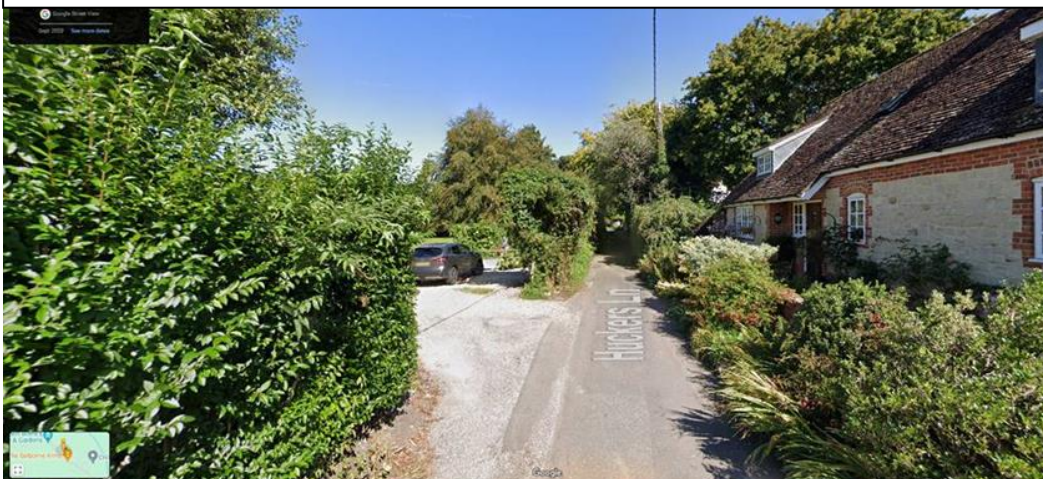


Fig. 08 Above (2011) Huckers Lane and the hedge dominate.

Fig. 09 Below (2023) Access dominates the experience [both Google]



6.33. with the access interrupting the Lane in a minimal way. In 2023 the access dominates, with the hedgerow being manipulated to accommodate it's widening. Whilst subtle, this prioritisation affects character. Detailed design can either emphasise the positives or allow the negative change to dominate. It is a key part of mitigation. Huckers Lane and its boundary are

the positive and characteristic elements. They are historic and thus more sensitive to change. The tertiary access is not characteristic or of historic value, and therefore should be the subservient or more 'quiet' intervention in a landscape-led design.

- 6.34. The **High Street** is a wider route, with pavements, often only one side at a time. Pavements are slightly raised by setts, or traditional kerbs. It has no lighting and occasional painted roundels on the carriageway. It is bound by buildings on both sides.
- 6.35. Together these routes are one element of the '*existing features which contribute to the site's character, patterns and evolution*' that SD4 requires are conserved and enhanced.

Routes - Proposed

- 6.36. The proposals use Huckers Lane to access the Site and formalise the tertiary route to Plum Tree House. This route is proposed to be wider than Huckers Lane, with a new pavement to one side, undermining the pattern of route hierarchy. Note the lack of pavements characterising secondary routes in **Fig. 10**. This is further compounded as routes within the Site increase in scale, the opposite of the contextual route hierarchy. Design choices create a more assertive route, with an increased status emphasising incongruous changes.
- 6.37. The scheme proposes to introduce concrete kerbs along Huckers Lane (secondary) and the access way (tertiary) (**CD22** – landscape plan). The effect: an engineered 'anywhere' character derived from traffic management, not character. It spreads negative effects beyond the Site. By not respecting route hierarchy, the positive experience of using this historic route and transitioning between settlement and countryside is eroded for a variety of users.
- 6.38. The previous Inspector at paragraph 29 **CD20**, justified the works to the access because it would '*not conflict with the character of the area, given the varied nature of other vehicular accesses in the wider area*'. It is true that accesses, like most elements of landscape, do vary in Selborne. However, within this variation they have a set of shared characteristics and conform to a strong route hierarchy, see **Fig. 10** below. Historic routes fail today's highway standards – it is this very lack of standardisation that produces their character and value
- 6.39. In **summary**, I disagree with the previous Inspector and conclude that the treatment of Huckers Lane, the access and tertiary route conflicts with the character of routes in Selborne. A lack of landscape-led approach has led to engineered treatments; wider routes, pavements, kerbing, formalised parking bays and poor boundaries. Furthermore, the long elevation of the guest accommodation and its domestic design does not reflect local positive precedents, compounding the impact of the road design. All together these negatively change the rural character of these routes to more suburban and vehicle-dominated.


Routes / Accesses	Shared characteristics
	<p>'The Paddock'</p> <p>Secondary access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow • No pavement • Tightly bound by hedges and vegetation
	<p>'Hastards Lane'</p> <p>Secondary access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow • No pavement • Tightly bound by building (blank elevation), walls, vegetation
	<p>'Rear access to Selkwood House'</p> <p>Secondary access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow • No pavement • Tightly bound by walls, vegetation
	<p>'Mill Lane'</p> <p>Secondary Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow • No pavement • Grass strip • Tightly bound by walls, vegetation



Fig. 10 Images (Google) and characteristics of routes and their accesses in Selborne.

Vegetation - Existing

6.40. This section focuses upon trees but includes references to hedges and other planting. The Site has, until recently included a belt of trees along its eastern boundary. This tree-line was part of the consistent and characteristic edge of the settlement (**Fig. 04**) in the heart of the village. They were positive because they followed the garden's historic boundary, contributing to the character of the Site and SCA (**Section 05**). This fact was acknowledged in the 2015 TCA officer recommendation to withdraw (**CD33**), and by the previous Inspector at paragraph 28 of **CD20**, who acknowledged the mature trees provided a positive backdrop to the Site, when experienced from the High Street.

6.41. The garden includes 2no. substantial Cypress trees, each with a canopy c.15m high. Estimated age is given in the application as 'middle age', based upon the trunk circumference this would be roughly 150 years. Non-native species such as Cypress are often associated with key buildings and spaces in Selborne. Consistent with its context (**Fig. 05**) these trees characteristically underline the status of the pub.

6.42. Together the tree-line comprised a connected boundary of green infrastructure, delivering important benefits for people and wildlife. Its retention and associated benefits were relied upon as part of the proposal's ecological mitigation. Whilst their removal (for some, due to disease) is understood, it results in the loss of positive features and functions of this site. Their loss has not been adequately mitigated for, and they themselves were relied upon for mitigation of the proposals.

6.43. Together these trees are one element of the 'existing features which contribute to the site's character, patterns and evolution' that SD4 requires are conserved and enhanced.

Vegetation - Proposed

- 6.44. Tree losses compound the impact of the Site's overdevelopment on landscape character and are likely to result in poorer wildlife connectivity and visual amenity for users of Huckers Lane. Furthermore, the amount of development, layout and the retained trees makes the characteristic reinstatement of this boundary along the historic garden boundary difficult.
- 6.45. The proposals include tree planting, located away from the settlement edge, within an adjacent field. I support native species, but their planting as a wide, short rectangle of trees and scrub, does not follow the pattern of vegetation described at **Section 05** and remains unconnected for wildlife. Overall, this mitigation is itself incongruous, changing the patterns of vegetation and the open character of the adjacent field.
- 6.46. The previous Inspector acknowledged, at paragraph 26 **CD20**, the important role played by mature trees in contributing to the transition in character from village to countryside. This transition is compounded by the tree loss, and the incongruous interventions which would be more obvious particularly from Huckers Lane. Proposed planting largely fills in the gaps leftover and has not been designed to contribute to landscape character.
- 6.47. I support the retained Cypress trees - their maturity and the backdrop they provide remains positive for the Site in light of its context. However, the historic status they impart upon the Site, (**paragraph 5.18**) is undermined by the loss of their associated space (garden). Appreciation of these specimen trees will be negatively affected due to the loss of their associated open space. The amount of development and its layout further constrains these trees. Alongside planting and construction within their root protection areas, these trees are under more environmental pressures, putting their long-term condition at greater risk. Whilst retained, these important trees would not be enhanced by the proposals.
- 6.48. The proposed, formalised, domestic-style and scale of planting does not support the Site's historic status and contrasts with its countryside context. The planting exacerbates the impact of the domestic building design, and the change of use/formalisation of spaces - a similar impact would be felt along parts of Huckers Lane. Along the High Street, however the formal planting could reinforce character, given an adequate soil root volume. This could be a matter for conditions.
- 6.49. The planting strategy, and that already undertaken, is yet to adequately mitigate for the loss of 2no. mature (c.100-150 yrs), category A and B ash trees and the previous connectivity provided by the tree belt. Small, non-native species planted within existing tree root protection areas, or other constrained locations are unlikely to be successful long-term. Planting highlights other incongruous changes, for example surrounding the car park with a hedge accentuates this feature. Should the appeal be granted we would do our best to negotiate a characteristic planting scheme, however the layout limits opportunity to do so.

6.50. In **summary**, vegetation would not be conserved and enhanced through this proposal. The planting strategy does not always reinforce the characteristic patterns of vegetation and in many instances highlights uncharacteristic interventions. Ornamental species serve to formalise and suburbanise the rural, working and historic character of the Site behind the pub. Overall, the planting does not provide adequate mitigation for tree losses, resulting in a poorer backdrop to views, a poorer transition to the countryside and a more incongruous site, contrasting with its context.

7. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. In **summary**, using evidence I have shown that each element proposed to change on this site has been poorly understood and designed within respect to the Site's landscape context. I have highlighted that existing positive precedents found throughout Selborne have not influenced the design of the four key elements proposed to change.
- 7.2. With little demonstrable awareness of positive landscape elements and their contribution to the distinctive character of Selborne, the design process has not been landscape-led. This means the piecemeal erosion of character on this site has occurred with each design decision, (broad to detailed) the scheme has moved further away from the existing positive character of Selborne.
- 7.3. This change is taken further, as the mitigation measures included in the design are themselves frequently harmful or contrary to character. Opportunities to minimise harm are missed.
- 7.4. The contrast on site between its formal frontage on the High Street and rear working character with its simple treatment, sense of informality and transition to the countryside has not been conserved. The whole site would become formalised and domesticated, with an abrupt and paraphernalia-dominated transition. This is a result of the design, not the uses *per se*.
- 7.5. In **conclusion**, this is an example of designing on top of a landscape, rather than integrating *into* its existing character. The changes have been forced onto this site, resulting in a cramped layout that exceeds the Site's capacity. These changes impact the quality and experience of important spaces, routes, buildings and their relationships (e.g. with the village setting, or between the pub and its ancillary structures).
- 7.6. It is the combined four elements *together* that create the character of this historic pub site. My assessment shows that each element has been negatively impacted through the proposals, resulting in a change in character, of both the Site and wider context. This change would make the Site incongruous – contrasting with its immediate surroundings and in conflict with SD4(I) and SD5 and Purpose 1.
- 7.7. This site has the capacity to receive some new development, and the principles of some change have always been supported. However, because of the amount of development and the design approach, reason for refusal 2 is justified, as I cannot say that this scheme conserves and enhances this part of the National Park.