INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Growth Industry landscape architects and provides a strategic landscape overview to supplement the WYE3 Masterplan Report.

It summarises the design and consultation process undertaken in 2017 in relation to landscape matters of connectivity and character affected by the proposed masterplan development with the findings presented as a series of strategic landscape approaches.

In order to appreciate the immediate context and design opportunities associated with the WYE 3 sites, a brief wider appreciation of the Wye village context and connectivity is explored, highlighting the network of existing footpath and bridleway connections and how they relate to the proposed WYE 3 sites.

Potential development sites are presented in terms of landscape character and opportunities to inform the architectural proposals contained within the overall masterplan document.

A series of strategies are presented that outline the wider masterplan opportunities for the enhancements and additions to landscape character as well as improved connectivity brought about by proposed masterplan development.

CONTENTS

WIDER CONTEXT

The WYE 3 Sites Identified
General Topographic Setting
Wider Connectivity and Existing Connections
View From The Crown

EXISTING IMMEDIATE LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Summary of the Existing Landscape and the WYE 3 Sites

WYE 3 SITE SPECIFIC ANALYSIS

ADAS Site Analysis
ADAS Site Character
Occupation Road Site Analysis
Occupation Road Site Character
Olandight Road Landscape Considerations
Olandight Road Character

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Key Strategy Moves
Core Objectives
Proposed Landscape Connectivity
Path and Pavement Improvements
- Olandight Road Junction
- Olandight Road Streetscape
- Improvements to footpath between Olandight Road and the Church
- North Downs Way Improvement
- Churchfield Allotment Path Widening
- Strawberry Field Connection
WIDER CONTEXT

The WYE 3 sites identified

Telereal Trillium’s landholdings in relation to WYE 3 are as follows:

1. **Listed Building Campus**
   - Comprised of Listed Buildings and former teaching and research accommodation

2. **Former Science Buildings**
   - Former college teaching and research accommodation fronting the western side of Olantigh Road

3. **Russell Laboratories and Squash Courts**
   - Former college teaching, research and recreation facilities fronting the western side of Olantigh Road

4. **ADAS**
   - Former Government offices to the east of Olantigh Road surrounded by mixed-age woodland plantations.

5. **Wye School Site**
   - Local secondary school on land owned by Telereal Trillium but not forming part of the development proposals within the context of WYE 3

6. **Land North of Occupation Road**
   - Former college glasshouses, workshops and small areas of rough pasture.

7. **Land South of Occupation Road**
   - Assorted run-down former college buildings, redundant garages, glasshouses and storage facilities, two pairs of semi-detached houses, and an area of land covenanted for horticultural use.
WIDER CONTEXT

General topographic setting

To the east as the topography descends towards the village fringe and begins to flatten out, the steep wooded elevated downland of the Crown is replaced by productive agricultural fields on more gentle topography, defined with their locally characteristic formal linear enclosures of Poplar and Alder treed wind breaks. The geometric and orthogonal landscape character and scale of this farmland is in contrast to the more fluid and non-linear nature to the west of the village which is greatly influenced by the River Stour and its floodplain.
WIDER CONTEXT

Wider connectivity and existing connections

A series of wider regional routes as well as local footpaths surround and pass through Wye village.

The regional North Downs Way and Stour Valley Walk pass through the village east-west and converge along Occupation Road through to Church Street via the Churchyard. These two routes provide a good degree of pedestrian footfall and form important connections to the wider Kent path network. Similarly National Cycle Route 18 passes through Wye along Olantigh Road, along Upper Bridge Street onwards along Oxenturn Road. This provides a popular cycle route through the county from Canterbury along the Stour Valley via Wye to Ashford then on through Tenterden and the Weald to Tunbridge Wells.

Locally there are a number of footpaths that extend beyond the central road and footway network within the village generally following historic field boundaries.

The Wibberley Way is a permissive path that runs north-south across the organic farmland.

The village is served by both bus and train services linking to Canterbury, Ashford and beyond to London.
WIDER CONTEXT

View from The Crown

The view from the Crown landmark provides a good overview of the WYE 3 sites in context of the village and wider landscape of the North Downs ridge and the Stour Valley below.

Below the Crown, the landscape topography descends towards the Village, gradually becoming flatter to support agricultural fields with distinctive field boundaries and strong lines of shelter belt trees, behind which the WYE 3 sites are located. These vegetation belts also play a key role in creating a more comfortable microclimate, mitigating gusting winds off of the Downs. The new school fields are particularly exposed in this regard as they are open to the fields beyond with little or no vegetative buffer.

From this vantage point, the WYE 3 sites east of Olantigh Road are highlighted as follows:

The ADAS site lies to the north of the WYE 3 masterplan and presents a relatively sunken and discrete site, contained by mixed woodland on its eastern boundary to the fields and mature 25m high Arboretum woodland and mature Beech trees along Olantigh Road. The double roof height of the existing ADAS building and tall water tower are evident in the view.

Occupation Road (North) is a well enclosed series of field enclosures lying in front of the Existing Wye Free School building with its distinctive roof clearly visible.

Occupation Road (South) is identified by the gable ends of the existing glasshouses partially visible behind the Alder shelterbelt. The cluster of poplar, willow and trees surrounding the existing pond create a dense cluster of vegetation screening.

View from The Crown
EXISTING IMMEDIATE LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Summary of the existing landscape of the WYE 3 Sites

The adjacent diagram illustrates current landscape typologies and distributions of land use across the WYE 3 masterplan area.
WYE 3 SITE SPECIFIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

ADAS Site

The former ADAS site (Agricultural Development and Advisory Service) is located to the north of the village and contains derelict offices and glasshouses. The buildings are currently screened by surrounding woodland blocks to create a relatively enclosed and secluded site.

Topography

The site presents a crossfall level change of around 10m, with site contours falling from east to west from approximately +50m AOD at the eastern edge of the Donkey Field to +39m at Olantigh Road.

The site presents three principal level areas, separated by sloping ground, as follows:

A. Site entry at approx contour +39-40m
B. Mid plateau at +43m
C. Donkey Field, falling westwards from +50 to +46m

The level changes between plateau are as follows:

D. Grassland quad between existing buildings falling from +43 to 40m at a 1 in 10 gradient
E. Steep embankment below Donkey Field falling from +46/47m to 43m at a 1 in 2 gradient

The opportunity exists to select housing typologies that can exploit the average 3m level differences between the embankments and plateau and thus reduce their visual impact in this location by one storey (3m being the typical residential storey height).

Gateways and enclosure

The sole point of vehicular access into the site is formed via a formal brick walled gateway to the west off Olantigh Road. This entry point forms one of the few openings in the historically significant linear brick wall that fronts much of Olantigh Road heading out of the village. Views out through this gateway provide a focussed view of the North Downs across the Stour Valley.

To the south the adjacent school fields site is enclosed by a continuous perimeter mesh fenceline with a couple of gated access points for ball retrieval.

Visual Enclosure and Landscape Features

The site is surrounded by a series of mature stands of woodland trees in the form of:

- The Arboretum (TPO protected) alongside Olantigh Road, offering upto 25m high trees and good landscape screen to the west.
- Evergreen screening and Sycamore planting (circa 2000) to the south which will provide important visual screening to the new MUGA facility at the school.
- Long plantation on neighbouring land to the north providing a deciduous sycamore buffer as a site backdrop.
- The Donkey Field and maturing ‘Man of Kent’ mixed woodland to the east, provides filtered views onto the organic farmland and onwards towards the elevated topography of the North Downs and Crown.
- A number of trees surrounding the site have associations with the former Wye College, some of which are memorials.

Connectivity

The site has no formal internal footpath connections although there is a pavement running to the eastern side of Olantigh Road connecting to the site entrance. To the east cutting across the farmland runs the permissive Wibberly Way. Informal dog walking pathways currently cut across the mixed deciduous woodland to the east. The site is currently enclosed by security fencing.

Filtered views
Screened views
Long views
Woodland Blocks / Tree Belts
Gateway / Entry points
Vehicle routes
Footpath connections
Site Contours
Level change / Embankment
Wall
Fenceline
WYE 3 SITE SPECIFIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

ADAS site character

Site photograph locations

1. Mature Beech trees define site entrance framing view westwards to the North Downs
2. Existing sloping central courtyard space enclosed by buildings with TPO woodland to rear
3. Pronounced level change at foot of Donkey Field
4. Donkey Field looking towards ADAS
5. Young mixed woodland looking north to Long Plantation
**WYE 3 SITE SPECIFIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS**

**Occupation Road sites**

The Occupation Road sites lie north and south of Occupation Road (the route of the North Downs Way) and include a range of principally horticultural glasshouses and light industrial sheds, with a small amount of single storey commercial units and two pairs of semi-detached housing facing Occupation Road.

**Topography**

The site presents a constant fall from +57m to +49m giving a gradient of approximately 1:40 running east to west along the spine of Occupation Road.

**Connectivity**

The sole point of vehicular access into the site is along Occupation Road passing the gated entrance to the Wye School site off Olantigh Road. The road is an approximately 5m wide tarmacked road and leads to the horticultural and commercial units located in the south west corner of the site. Pedestrian access is focussed on the route of the North Downs Way, running along an east-west alignment and sharing the carriageway of Occupation Road before becoming a single rural walking track heading eastwards towards the Crown landmark. A north-south permissive route (Wibberly Way) extends north across the organic fields following the eastern site boundary.

**Visual Enclosure and Landscape Features**

The site presents in part a more open character, centred around the open grassland of the Weather Station Field and Strawberry Field to the east of the site with partial views to the adjacent farmland and elevated downland beyond. These fields are bounded by the historic and strong enclosure of traditional Alder and Poplar lines acting as windbreaks to the former Hop Gardens that once occupied the fields. An overgrown former orchard lies in the north east corner of the Strawberry Field. These blocks of vegetation provide a valuable natural screen to the wider farmland and downland beyond.

To the west, the site occupied by in part Wye Bugs forms a well defined research site, being enclosed by tall dense fir hedgerow and beech hedging principally to the south. It is more open along its northern and north western boundary with the Wye School.

South of Occupation Road, the existing glasshouses, residential, commercial units and their associated yards and parking areas occupy much of the existing land holding. However, the traditional Alder field boundary and mature Willow and Poplar tree clusters partially screen much of this development when viewed from the east.

In between the glasshouse site and the allotments lies a piece of covenanted land for agricultural or horticultural use. An existing retention pond, surrounded by dense trees, previously received water runoff from the glasshouses and presents a strong natural feature within the site. The rest of the undeveloped covenanted land is rough grassland.
WYE 3 SITE SPECIFIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Occupation Road character

(1) Strong Alder shelter belt as field enclosure alongside Wibberley Way

(2) North Downs Way on approach from the east with Alder line to site boundary

(3) Occupation Road

(4) Existing pond and Glasshouses within Covenanted land

(5) Open grazing fields (Strawberry Field) towards the former Orchard
Olantigh Road forms a direct and historic point of entry into Wye village from the north. Due to the straight nature of this rural road, there are observed issues with vehicle speed and narrow or inconsistent pavements which need addressing to ensure better pedestrian comfort and safety going forward as building plots become developed including the Wye School expansion.

**Topography**

The straight road is generally flat around +47m closer to the village, starting to descend gradually to +39m outside the ADAS entrance.

**Connectivity**

Olantigh Road terminates at the junction with High Street, Upper Bridge Street and Scotton Street. It forms a strong linear approach to the village and offers access to a range of sites as follows:

- ADAS, Wye School, Occupation Road and local houses along its eastern edge.
- Private houses, former student union, Russell Labs, Science block, Squires Cottages and Listed Building campus to the west.

The existing junction where Olantigh Road meets Occupation Road forms a key arrival point in to the village as well as being the sole access to Wye School whilst also being a crossing point for the North Downs Way and farm access to the west.

The road provides a 2 way tarmacked surface with parking provision along its western kerb. Pedestrian pavement space is lacking in terms of width (between 600-900mm to the west) and non-continuous on both sides. In particular there is a narrowing pavement in front of the school boundary wall that tapers to nothing which presents an unsafe break on the eastern pavement that forces pedestrians to cross the road. There are no formal designated pedestrian crossings or pavement buildouts to reduce vehicle speeds.

**Visual Enclosure and Landscape Features**

The road is contained along its southern length by built development as described above along its approach into the village. In front of the western buildings, a 4m wide grassed verge is located planted with occasional small-medium fruiting trees.

A particular landscape feature along the eastern edge is the mature woodland and historic lines of deciduous trees nearer the ADAS site and further north. Beneath these trees a near continuous brick wall continues along the eastern side of the road heading north forming a strong linear landscape element.

To the west, open views are offered over agricultural land looking towards the Stour valley and North Downs beyond.
WYE 3 SITE SPECIFIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Olantigh Road Character

(1) Olantigh Road western pavement width is too narrow at approximately 900mm.

(2) Olantigh Road looking north showing lack of pavement in front of the school to the east.

(3) Western pavement width reduces to approximately 600mm outside the former Science Buildings.

(4) The junction of Olantigh and Occupation Road occurs outside the former Squash Building and Free School entrance, combined with farm access road and North Downs Way crossover.

(5) North Downs Way between Churchfield Allotments and former Science Buildings on approach to the Church.

Site photograph locations
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Key Strategic moves

Nestled at the foot of the Downs, Wye is a village surrounded by open countryside: a rich agricultural tapestry of rectilinear fields bounded by strong hedgerows, tree belts and woodland plantations. The natural beauty of the countryside and this strong sense of rurality, acknowledged by the AONB classification, is part of what makes the village an attractive place to live and work. Any new development that seeks to occupy the edge or periphery of the village must respect the neighbouring landscape character rather than seek to impose a suburban character upon it. The transitions between open countryside, new residential neighbourhood and village core should be gentle, not jarring so that each appears merely an extension of, or progression to, the other. This can be best achieved by reflecting key characteristics of the village's built form; architecture, streetscape and materiality within the new development. In terms of landscape the aim would be to pull the essence of the countryside through the development, drawing in the surrounding landscape characteristics that are key to making Wye such a special place to live. This includes not only the tree and plant species characteristic of the locality but the fundamental form and structure of the wider landscape.

The three core tenets of the landscape strategy are put forward in direct support of the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Development Plan in particular WNP8 (respecting the qualities of the Kent Downs AONB) and WNP10 (enhancing connectivity and creating new green spaces). They are as follows:

**Draw the countryside in**

to bring the countryside right into the heart of the new development through the creation of strong linear green spaces that capitalise on key downland views, afford opportunities for informal recreation, space for sustainable drainage and that foster biodiversity.

**Foster positive links**
to link these linear green spaces with green thoroughfares that provide safe and attractive corridors for both wildlife and residents and that provide generous space for a legacy treescape which when combined with the existing boundary trees will have a positive aggregate effect in mitigating the visual impact of the development on the wider AONB landscape, especially when viewed from the downland above.

**Create circulatory routes**
to utilise these green links in the creation of a network of safe, traffic-free circulation routes for walkers and cyclists, linking to the wider footpath network, not only to positively support and encourage the notion of a 'Walkable Village' but to ensure that no part of the development feels independent or isolated from the village core and existing community and to celebrate and reinforce the route of the North Downs Way as it enters the village from the east.
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Core Objectives

1. Improve the junction, crossing, pavement provision and general streetscape on Glantigh Road.
2. Separate traffic and pedestrians along Occupation Road making the route of the North Downs Way the principal traffic-free thoroughfare, providing a safe and comfortable pedestrian and cycle link with the village.
3. Create a generous linear green space between the vehicular access to the development and Occupation Road/North Downs Way drawing the countryside into the heart of the development, providing scope for SUDS integration (linked to the existing pond) and opportunities for informal recreation.
4. Create green corridors between development parcels echoing the strong field boundaries of the surrounding landscape and providing opportunities for large scale, legacy tree planting to mitigate the visual impact of the development from the downland, to foster biodiversity and to provide traffic-free circulatory routes through the development.
5. Strengthen the landscape boundaries to surrounding farmland to create comfortable microclimates and to mitigate the visual impact of the development.
6. Create a buffer to the school grounds for the privacy of both pupils and new residents and to aid wind mitigation.
7. Retain the ADAS arboretum and enhance community access. Create a green link to allow pedestrian and cycle access through the woodland between the school and the former ADAS site.
8. Support use and enjoyment of North Downs Way through the provision of a dedicated parking area for walkers, picnic area and information board to create a ‘gateway’ to the North Downs Way.
9. Utilise the recently planted woodland to the east of ADAS as informal Open Space.
10. Improve and enhance existing footpaths and create new routes for better connectivity.
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Proposed landscape connectivity

A series of new or improved connections are proposed within the Wye 3 masterplan, reinforcing the walkability and connectivity between sites and within the overall village path network. These connections are primarily pedestrian improvements, although in the case of the North Downs Way extend to cyclists, and are outlined on the adjacent connectivity plan.

The masterplan proposes two principal areas of improved connections which are outlined below and explained on the following pages:

**Streetscape footpath improvements:**

1. Pedestrian priority crossings and junction improvement outside the Wye Free School (in association with traffic calming measures further along Olantigh Road)
2. Improvements to the streetscape experience along Olantigh Road, seeking increased footway widths on both sides of Olantigh Road connecting to the ADAS site
3. Enhancement to footpath connection between Olantigh Road and Churchyard passing by the Listed Building campus

**Rural footpath network enhancements:**

4. Enhancements to the North Downs Way as it passes along Occupation Road, to extend the rural character of this regional route as close to the village as possible
5. Enhancements to the North Downs Way as it passes alongside Churchfield Allotments en route to the Churchyard
6. New footpath connections throughout the Masterplan sites
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Path and Pavement Improvements:

Olantigh road junction

Pedestrian priority crossings and junction improvements are proposed outside the Wye School in association with traffic calming measures further along Olantigh Road.

Initial traffic studies have been undertaken which seek to improve junction visibility in conjunction with increases in pavement space to create a safer, more pedestrian priority junction where Olantigh Road meets Occupation Road.

The adjacent images present initial landscape and highway designs with the following opportunities:

- Creation of a raised table junction with new pedestrian priority crossings on all sides to create a slow speed gateway to the village.
- Increased pavement widths to minimum 1500mm (more than doubling existing widths).
- Introduction of a new pavement beside the eastern school wall to create better and more continuous connectivity to the eastern pavement connecting up to the ADAS site.
- Localised realignment and shift of the carriageway to the west to accommodate new pavements and reduced road width to control vehicle speeds.
- Slightly narrower grassed verge to the western pavement but with opportunity to reinforce green approach to the village with avenue tree planting.
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Path and Pavement Improvements:

Olantigh Road streetscape improvements

Improvements to the streetscape experience along Olantigh Road will provide increased pavement widths on both sides of Olantigh Road creating a safe and comfortable connection to the expanded Wye School and the new development sites along Occupation Road and at the former ADAS site.

Improvements to the footpath between Olantigh Road and the Church

Enhancements are proposed to the footpath connection between Olantigh Road and the churchyard passing by the Listed Building campus by more than doubling the footpath width to 2500mm. New trees, planting beds and better surveillance brought about by the proposed residences within the Listed Buildings present a significant improvement to the current route.

EXISTING narrow pavement past Science Buildings

EXISTING narrow paved footpath past Listed Buildings to the Church

PROPOSED Looking south along new widened pavement

PROPOSED enhanced footpath past Listed Buildings to the Church
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Proposed landscape connectivity

North Downs Way improvements

At present Occupation Road presents a fairly unattractive prospect in contrast to the picturesque open countryside lining the North Downs Way as it descends into the village from the east. The route follows the rough tarmac track of Occupation Road characterised by shabby commercial and former horticultural buildings, derelict garages and oppressive evergreen hedging, an environment seemingly incongruous with the scenic qualities of the wider village.

EXISTING views along Occupation Road. The route has a narrow, corridor-like feel with views to the wider landscape restricted to glimpses either end.

PROPOSED enhancement of the North Downs Way along a traffic-free Occupation Road with adjacent linear residential green space.
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Proposed landscape connectivity

Churchfield Allotment path widening

The objective is to maintain the mature beech hedging as an important edge to the development on this side of the village, offering visual screening from across the allotments and wider landscape. However, hard pruning and regular maintenance is required to reduce the width of the hedge to gain valuable footpath space.

Similarly the grass verge beneath the barbed wire fence to the allotments visually and physically narrows the path. Proposed enhancements may include:

- Cutting back the width of the beech hedge by up to 300-600mm (subject to horticultural assessment)
- Replacing the barbed wire fence to the allotments and consider siting further back to make the route feel more comfortable and to allow easier passing
- Relaying natural aggregate from fenceline to hedgeline to maximise the physical width of pathway to approximately 1250mm, similar to other footpaths in the village.

Strawberry Field connection

The Strawberry Field will remain as fenced pasture to ease the transition of the development into the open countryside beyond. However, in order to safeguard a long term connection to the new informal Public Open Space and the ADAS site a new north-south path is proposed running parallel with the Alder treeline. This will ensure that good connectivity is maintained if at any point in the future the Wibberley Way permissive path is closed.

The greenway, being attractive and beneficial to both residents and wildlife, also affords the opportunity to bolster the boundary treescape either side of the new route for further wind and visual impact mitigation.