

Cuckmere Pathfinder Project
Public evidence meeting 8 February 2011

Landscape Study

David Huskisson Associates



The Brief

- *“To extend the existing landscape assessment [**Jacobs Babbie - March 2006**] to include an assessment of the impact and significance of the Coastguard Cottages and the sea defence works associated with them in the landscape.*
- *A baseline assessment of the landscape and visual significance of the Coastguard Cottages and the Cable House... [and] the area of artificially reinforced cliff sea defence wall.*
- *The character assessment should take into account the cultural significance of the cottages and the Cable House.”*

Background – *existing landscape assessment*

- Purpose and scope of the Environment Agency's 2006 Landscape Assessment work (Jacobs Babtie)
 - For Landscape and Visual Effects the strategic objective was:
- *“to maintain and enhance the landscape character in keeping with natural processes and the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast.” (Our emphasis)*

Background – *existing landscape assessment*

- *“features associated with a natural self-sustaining floodplain are considered to be of greater importance. Although many of the established introduced features in the landscape may be attractive in their own right they are given a lower value as they are not considered inherent landscape characteristics in an estuarine landscape.” (Our emphasis)*

Baseline Landscape

Significant changes since 2006 report

- South Downs National Park
- took effect from 31 March 2010
- full statutory powers and functions in April 2011
- **additional purpose to that of conserving and enhancing the landscape is** of promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities by the public.



Baseline Landscape

Significant changes since 2006 report

- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), designated open access land.
- CROW Open access land is now designated on the valley flank and downland on the eastern side of the valley at Cliff End.
- CROW access at High and Over

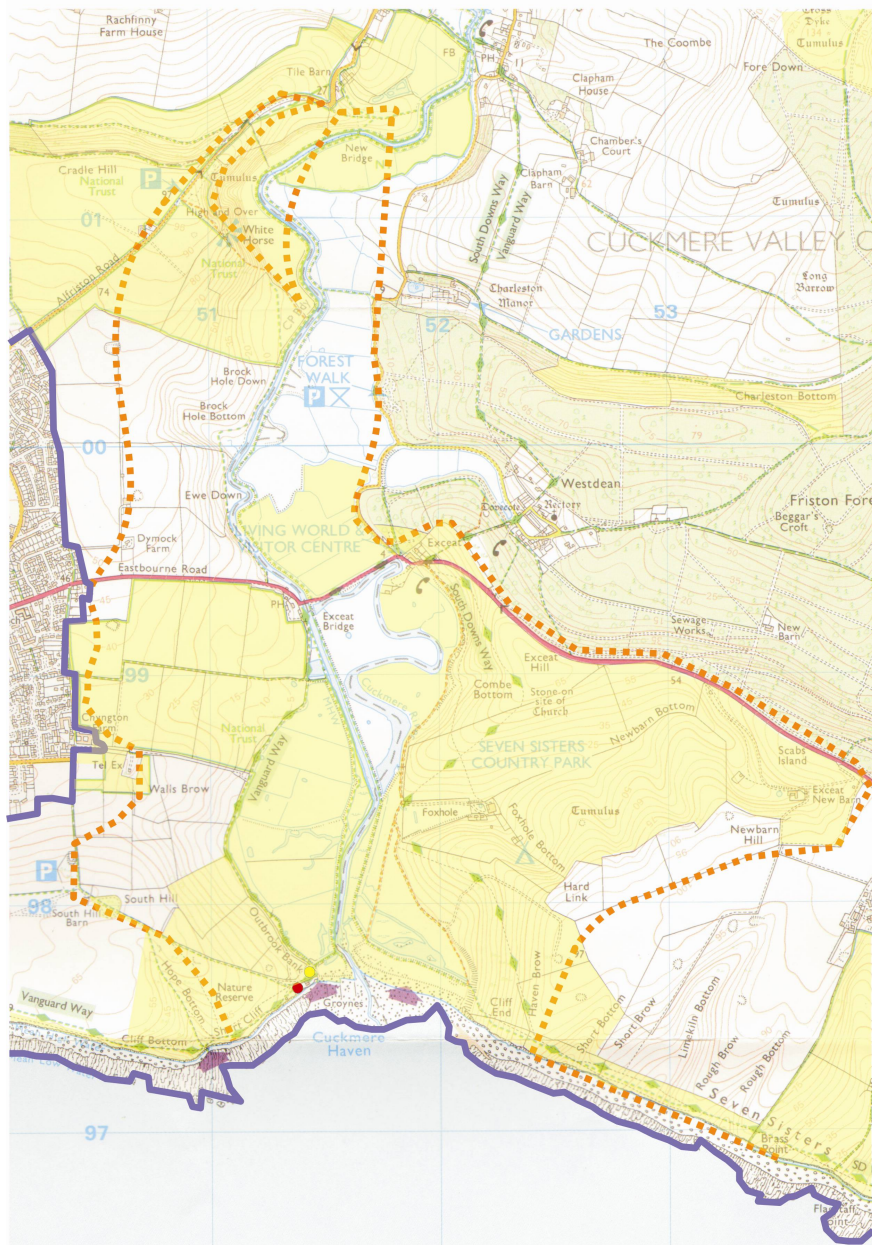


Baseline Landscape

Other changes since 2006

- South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment
- Landscape Type A: Open Downland:
Character Area A1: Ouse to Eastbourne Open Downs.
- Landscape Type F: Major river floodplains;
Character Area F1: Cuckmere Floodplains.
- Landscape Type G: Major valley sides:
Character Area G1: Cuckmere Valley Sides.
- Landscape Type R: Shoreline:
Character Area R1: Seaford to Beachy Head.





Key

- The Coastguard Cottages
- The Cable House
- Approximate land boundary of main visual envelope of options likely to be considered
- General extent of access land including CROW Open Access and National Trust land. Access limitations apply.
- South Downs National Park boundary
- ↗ Public access to foreshore

Reproduced and based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown copyright reserved. Licence No. AL543365

FIGURE 1
Location and visual envelope,
South Downs National Park and Open Access Land

Baseline Landscape

Other changes since 2006

- *East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment*
- Main study area lies in Area 22: **Lower Cuckmere Valley.**
- Identified problems include:
 - *“general tourist and visitor pressure.....the river engineering in some stretches detracts from natural appearance and characterand fast traffic on the A259”.*
- A landscape action priority is *“in the longer term, consider restoring a more varied and natural river valley”.*



Coastguard Cottages and Cable House Baseline Assessment



Coastguard Cottages and Cable House Baseline Assessment

- These features contribute to provide the unique sense of place and human scale and activity which contrasts with the dramatic large scale coastal scenery, emphasising not only the strategic nature of the Haven but underscoring the attritional nature of the location.
- The contribution these features make to the landscape value of Cuckmere Haven should not be underestimated.
- Having regard to the cultural significance of these features it is considered that the Coastguard Cottages and possibly the Cable House should be accorded a **high landscape sensitivity**.
- High sensitivity is defined in the earlier assessment as:
“distinctive landscape feature of particular importance susceptible to relatively small changes”.

